Issue Twenty

November 2010

Under the Hump

SOCIETY

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 9 meeting at CBMS, 7 pm

- Please bring your favorite photos of Camel's Hump to the meeting. We will select one to become the DHS's logo!
- Membership dues • for 2011 will be collected at the meeting: \$10/year

n November 9, following the business meeting, Skip Flanders and Don Welch will present an array of postcard photos depicting local area history memorabilia. Bring your friends! We will have refreshments and a time to chat. Please remember to bring your favorite photos of Camel's Hump to the meeting and we will select one to become the Duxbury Historical Society's logo.



BUSINESS

Membership dues for 2011 will be collected at the meeting. Dues are \$10/year per person.



"Duxbury Dishes" cookbooks are on sale and will be available at the meeting. They are only \$10 each and would make an excellent holiday gift for your family and friends. To purchase a copy, please see Kelly Welch at the meeting or give her a call, 244-5627.



UNDER THE HUMP

ANNUAL PICNIC

Our annual potluck picnic was held on Sunday, August 8. Lunch began at noon and a short business meeting followed. The three winners of our raffle were drawn. 3rd place went to Chrysta Daniels of Barre, 2nd place to Laura Titus of Waitsfield, and 1st place to Pattie Casari of Waterbury. The program then moved into the church featuring an abbreviated reenactment of the 1957 dedication service which followed the last time the church's steeple was replaced.

(Shawn Perry photos)







The reenactment of the 1957 dedication service is about to take place



Marianna Towne drawing a raffle winner's name



Justin and Becky Blackman enjoying the cookbooks

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DUXBURY ENTERTAINMENT

Round and Squares, Sparring and Sparking–All on a Saturday Night

By Steve Grace

guess it seems a trifle hokey now, a weekend evening of round and square dancing at one of the local dance halls in the mid-20th century, but it sure didn't seem that way at all back in those times. There were thriving dance halls sprinkled throughout rural Vermont communities in that era and I can personally attest to the fact that for many people, young and old, these dances were fun and festive affairs, drawing large and enthusiastic crowds. Dances were held in grange halls and community buildings, but the most memorable to me were those held in the local barns where the top floor of the barn had been converted into a dance floor.

Some of the barns were no longer used to house cows, horses, or other livestock, but there were also some that had herds of cattle or teams of horses quartered in the lower levels of the barn. Those venues that



were still active agricultural barns lent a special aura to the evening-made your best britches smell like a mixture of perspiration, baled hay, and cow dung the next morning. And, if you happened to mess with the wrong fellowor the wrong fellow's galat the dance. the britches often suffered more lasting damage from skid-

ding across the barn floor, the lawn area, or an often muddy parking lot. It made it pretty difficult to tell your dad that you hadn't attended the barn dance against his wishes the night before. These dances were appropriately referred to as barn dances and there were some popular ones in, and in close proximity to, Duxbury.

The community building, grange hall, and barn dances were all popular, well-attended affairs and all of them played similar music—popular tunes of the day and old favorites, but the most common numbers were country western tunes. But at the barn dances, it was predominately country music that filled the air—good old foot-stomping square dance stuff mixed in with waltzes

and jitterbug tunes. Get out of the way folks, I'm coming on through with my fine lookin' filly! At a barn dance it would be high heresy for anything other than a country western band to take the stage. As Charlie Daniels would later bellow in a classic country tune as he fiddled up a storm, "If you're gonna play in Texas, you gotta have a fiddle in the band." You could substitute a Vermont barn dance for Texas in that refrain and it would ring true in those bygone days.

One could fill many sheets of paper reminiscing about the fun and hell-raising that took place at those various dance halls and barn dances. I recall going to dances at the Moretown, Waitsfield and Fayston town halls where many of my Duxbury friends and neighbors attended dances and where the majority of the folks were from the Mad River valley towns. We were generally wellbehaved at those events; there were always a few of the valley fellows in attendance that had reputations as being very worthy opponents in a skirmish and they were in the majority. Discretion is the better part of valor, if you know what I mean. I attended these dances infrequently, usually going to dances closer to home and where there were larger representations of Duxbury and Waterbury attendees. I had many a good time at Nichol's Barn in Stowe, but since this tale is supposed to be a tale of Duxbury's history, my recollections will be of Hanley's Horse Barn in North Duxbury and the Grange Hall in 'downtown' Duxbury.



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HANLEY'S HORSE BARN



Harold Hanley, Al Tripp, Vic Fallardeau Photo taken in the 1950s

The horse barn was located In North Duxbury, just before you turn off the River Road to head up to Camel's Hump. Harold and Hazel Hanley, owners of Smith's Store in Waterbury, owned the horse barn and several adjacent acres. It was a big barn which housed work and pleasure horses used in commercial activities in that Duxbury enclave in an earlier era. There was a large building adjacent to the horse barn which in those earlier days was a prosperous inn; Harold and Hazel refurbished the barn into a dance site and at just about

the same time remodeled the inn into an apartment building. The refurbished barn, always referred to as Hanley's Horse Barn, opened in the mid 50s. It had a magnificent hardwood dance floor at the upper level of the barn. On the lower level, Harold installed a neat, roomy refreshment area. Hazel ran the refreshment area and you would often see her two young boys, James and Robert-Jimmy and Bobby as we called them-helping out with the food serving and cleaning chores. As in most of their business ventures. Harold preferred to be in on the wheeling and dealing part of the deal; Hazel rolled up her sleeves and took the primary role in putting the plan into

action. (Harold and Hazel were great people, community treasures, really, for Waterbury and Duxbury. We must devote a future article to their civic contributions in those times—they helped a lot of poor people through some tough times in our community.)

The band which opened the Horse Barn was <u>Don</u> <u>Fields and His Pony Boys</u>, a very popular band in those days. Don Fields had a large local and regional following at that time and it was an astute business decision to bring him to the Horse Barn for its inauguration; he brought instant success to the Horse Barn. Fields' heydays were the late 30s, the 40s, and 50s, so the Hanley's timing was perfect. A beautiful, new, huge hardwood dance floor; a location out of the center of the town where there were few complaints about noise, traffic and parking; and a hugely popular band. The crowds were large and enthusiastic, the music was first-class, and the concessions on the first floor were top notch. Ah...what a hell of a deal it was...

The Horse Barn had a supporting cast of characters which added to its uniqueness and brings a smile to the face and a humorous story to the surface for those oldtimers (like me) who frequented the place. Harold was a one-of-a-kind fellow—in retrospect I've often thought he had a bit of a W.C. Fields presence about him. I'm betting that Harold belonged to the Rotary Club and other 'respectable' white collar activities and clubs and fit in well with the movers and shakers. But I suspect that he was every bit as comfortable, and I suspect more so, riding the back roads in his trusty Jeep with a laboring man or men as passengers, drinking good whiskey out of a common bottle, a bottle always purchased by



Carl, Don, Zeke, and Flap Jack of "Don Fields and His Pony Boys"

HANLEY'S HORSE BARN

Harold, I might add. Or in the back room of his grocery store, sharing a drink of courage with his faithful meat cutter, AI Tripp, chuckling at some caper the two of them had pulled off. Harold was a ticket, that's for sure, but Hazel managed to look the other way at his transgressions.

There were well-posted warnings at the Horse Barn forbidding fisticuffs and the consumption of alcoholic beverages on the premises and Harold played by the rules. Well...sort of. One of his North Duxbury neighbors, Charlie Kennedy, was often the Officer of the Law at the dance, charged with keeping the peace and enforcing the nodrinking regulations mandated by the State of Vermont and the Town of Duxbury. Charlie was a good guy, an eccentric and highly intelligent fellow, known to enjoy a drink or two when not in performance of his law enforcement duties, maybe even sipping just a wee bit of courage in some safe, private haven while performing his Horse Barn civilian on patrol duties, and smart enough not to get in the way of two (or more) enthusiastic brawlers at the Horse Barn. Charlie would try his best to keep the confrontation calmed down enough to keep everyone out of jail, but it was always a few of Harold's friends who were considerably rougher around the edges than Charlie who would step in, risk trading a punch or two with the tough guys, and get the situation under control if Charlie's cerebral approach fell on deaf ears or weak minds. Charlie would walk around the parking lot before the dance and at intermission with flashlight aglow, making sure it was easily noticed, and those in violation of the drinking rules usually respected Charlie and Harold enough to show some discretion. It is possible that Charlie's flashlight intermission checks cooled the ardor of a few amorous Romeos and preserved the virtues of some of the

local ladies, but I fear he was not 100% successful in that worthy endeavor.

Another fellow who served on occasion as Harold's Saturday night constable was Earl (Spunger) Towne. Spunger was quite the opposite of Charlie. Short and muscular, unlike Charlie's lean and angular build; loud, brash, and a bit short-tempered to Charlie's politeness and courtesy; happy to get in the middle of a good fight, even if it meant a blow to his head which seemed to have been a bit harder than was Charlie's. Earl was a good guy beneath that rough exterior, though; he wasn't interested in seeing any of the local fellows get in any serious trouble. The two of them seemed to keep the situation under control; it was a rare occasion to see an 'official' police car show up at the scene to make arrests.

When Don Fields and His Pony Boys grew tired of the grind, Buddy Truax and his band moved in to share the dates with Fields and when Fields called it quits, Truax and his band, <u>Buddy Truax and the Playboys</u>, became the Saturday night regular band. Truax's band became a popular group, much in demand in Vermont, and kept the crowds coming to the Horsebarn. Buddy's sister, Lois Carey, was a band member and a fine singer, Lois's husband Smokey Carey was a member of the band and a fine musician, and Buddy's sons later played with the band on occasion.

There were other bands and other halls, but I think it is fair to say that for most of us, Hanley's Horse Barn was the place to be if you liked the round and square game. I know that whenever I broach the subject of barn dances in 'the old days,' the first words out of the mouth of almost every person is the Horse Barn. Harold, the old scoundrel, pulled a fine rabbit out of the hat when he resurrected that tired old horse barn.



William "Bill" Waldo, Barbara (Truax) Izzo, Sheldon "Bud" Truax, and Zeke Zelonis of "Buddy Truax and the Playboys"

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UNDER THE HUMP

Тне DILLINGHAM GRANGE HALL

also went guite often to the dances at the Dillingham Grange Hall located in the 40s and 50s just adjacent to Duxbury Corner, shortly before the bridge over the Winooski River, very close to Hazel and Harold Hanley's Smith Store. That building burned in 1959 and a new Dillingham Grange Hall was built on Route 100, across the road from what was then Howard and Katherine Sherman's farm. Howard and Katherine were active grange members and good, hard-working people with a large family. The Shermans donated the land upon which the new grange was built, a typical civic act by Howard and Katherine. They could certainly have used the money from the sale of that nicely situated piece of property, but a kind deed to an organization which gave a great deal of pleasure to many Duxbury friends and neighbors seemed the right thing to do for Howard and Katherine.

I believe that Don Fields and his band may have played at the Grange Hall on rare occasions. I am sure, however, that Buddy Truax and his band did play there. I recall Buddy's band playing there many times when I attended dances. Later on, in the late 1950s and through the 60s, Frank Grow and his band was the 'regular' band. Frank played the violin and fiddle, his wife Anna played the piano, his good friend Howard Lamos played the guitar, and Frank's daughter LuAnn was the female singer. LuAnn started singing with the band at a very young age and she could belt out a country tune with the best of them.

Many of our local friends and neighbors were active grange members in that era and they ran the show. I recall Howard and Katherine Sherman working at the dances and their older children worked there as well-I recall the oldest daughter, Rebecca (Becky), was charged with several responsible duties at a young age. Grace (Morse) Griffith was one of the workers that I remember well. Kenneth and Lillian Griffith, Dave Cheney and his wife, Anthony Germana and his wife, and Ruth Trask were other members of the supporting cast that made things happen. It was much more of a family affair, a much quieter scene than the more rough and raucous affair at the Horse Barn. The music was basically the same at both venues, however. Waltzes and polkas, jitterbug tunes, round and squares, stomping and strolling, and don't you dare miss the one where you kiss your gal in the center of the square dance circle.

stand out in my memory. I can honestly say that I never had any problems with any of the Saturday night officers at either of the dance sites, but I must also say that part of my enjoyment of the dances was to watch the role of the keepers of the peace. Their role at the dance was an



Photo courtesy of LuAnn Grow Machia

Anna Grow, Frank Grow, and Howard Lamos of "Grow's Orchestra"

entertainment event of its own for memost likely due to my twisted sense of humor. I recall Anthony (Tony) Germana performing police duties at the Dillingham. Tony was a neat, trim fellow, always wearing a uniform that fit just right, his police hat and badge looked like it had been purchased ten minutes before he arrived, hat cocked just right on his head, a shiny pistol



LuAnn Grow, lead singer of "Grow's Orchestra"

at his hip...Tony was a fine looking law enforcement officer. And he obviously enjoyed his role. Tony was not a big man; just the opposite in fact. But his size did not diminish his role in any way. What Tony may have lacked in size, he made up for in confidence. I don't ever recall any really serious brawling going on at the Grange Hall dances, so Tony must have been doing something right.

Then there was the exact antithesis of Tony—Bill Griffith. I seem to recall Bill doing the law enforcement duties more often than Tony, but it might be coincidence It is strange how the constables at the two dance sites that Bill was there more often on the nights I attended. Bill was considerably older than Tony, a generation apart I would guess. Bill was extremely low key, a short fellow with a round head and a big round belly, supported by some skinny legs that looked like they were hard put to carry that belly around for much of a distance. All I can

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think of as a descriptor when I recall Bill is that he seemed cherubic. Red-faced, a grin on his face just about all the time, always in good humor, soft spoken ... a good, kind man. I recall looking at Bill and thinking to myself that I couldn't imagine Bill putting handcuffs on a fellow. His uniform had seen its better days and seemed to always look like he'd hauled it off the clothesline minutes before his arrival-clean it was, but it didn't look like it had seen the warm end of a flatiron in a while. Bill's ample midriff put an awful strain on his shirt and pants buttons; I suspect they were purchased at an earlier time when he was carrying a bit less weight. His hat fit down too far over his head to look just right and it looked like some damned kid had sat on it just before he put it on. He just did not have the look of a law officer about him. But he got the job done and you'd be hard pressed to find anyone who did not like Bill.

Those were grand times for me. I loved country music; matter of fact I still do. 'Cept a lot of it these days doesn't

sound like country music to me anymore. That's not the fault of the music, it's just me growing old. But now and again I hear a song by George Strait, or Willie Nelson, or Alan Jackson and the image of a crowded dance floor at Hanley's Horse Barn or the Grange Hall appears from the recesses of these aging memory cells. And it brings a smile to my face. I can see those good-looking girls swinging by me as I perform my wallflower duties, smiles on their faces, dresses flowing out, in the arms of some lucky fellow...yes, indeed...those were some mighty fine times.

I would like to thank Becky (Sherman) Green, Robert Hanley, and Nancy (Hanley) Mackey for their input for this article. They kept me reasonably accurate on dates, names and activities and it was a pleasure to trade tales with them of those days.

The Dillingham Grange Hall was an important part of Duxbury and its culture. It was a central place where residents and friends could gather, hold meetings, and take part in festivities.



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THE DILLINGHAM GRANGE HALL

DILLINGHAM GRANGE Presents A HILLBILLY WEDDING

Directed by Florence Curtice

Combination Barn Dance, Minstrel Show and Musical Comedy

DILLINGHAM GRANGE HALL Thursday and Friday, August 1 and 2 8:00 P. M., Daylight Saving Time

Advance Tickets On Sale At Modern Pharmacy And By Grange MembersAdmission: Adults, Advance, 25c Plus 3c Tax—Total 28cDoor, 35c Plus 4c Tax—Total 39cChildren 15c

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THE DILLINGHAM GRANGE HALL



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OTHER DUXBURY ACTIVITIES

Duxbury Boys To Make Wreaths For Rest Homes

DUXBURY—The Live Wires Boys 4-H Club met Friday evening with Mr. and Mrs. Ralph P. Davis, their leaders. The county 4-H agent, Mrs. Judy Siccama, also attended.

Ralph C. Davis presided. Don Thurston read a letter from Bever l.y Osterberg, Vermont's 1965 IFYE to Sweden, cit ing differences of 4-H activities in Sweden.

James Abare reported on the last meeting and recent hay ride.

The boys voted to make three Christmas wreaths at the next meeting for each of the three nursing homes.

Mrs. Siccama asked the new club members their reasons for joining. Then, using a chart with "Peanuts," the comic strip character, she illustrated her talk. She said the author, who had used 4-H in his comic strip, had a son who was a 4-H member. She uncovered the four basic reasons why boys and girls join 4-H clubs.

Boys receiving pins were Dana Lowe, Roger and Glen Lowe, all former members, and James Abare, who received his second year seal. Receiving third year seals were Bradley Eldred, former member, Don and Dean Thurston. Receiving an eighth year seal was the president to received their seals, and the club received another seal to go on their charter, which was noted was the original one.

Mrs. Siccama mentioned that the club president would be attending 4-H Congress in November in recognition of his club work in electricity. She said she would also be attending as one of the agents.

November 18, 1965

Christmas Club Elects Officers In Duxbury

DUXBURY — The Busy Bees Christmas Club met at the home of Mrs. Ramona Patterson at Duxbury Corner Thursday evening with about 15 present. It being their annual Christmas meeting, a tree and gift exchanging took place.

The members are still at work piecing their quilt.

Election of officers was as follows: Mrs. Betty Marshall, president; Mrs. Anita Bissette, vice president; Mrs. Ramona Patterson, secretary; Mrs. Marion Smith, treasurer.

The group agreed to have a Sunshine Committee whose duty would be to keep track of anniversaries, illnesses, and the like, with Mrs. Geneva Casey and Mrs. Ramona Patterson comprising the committee.

The winning team for the year was captained by Mrs. Rose Grout, with the team of Mrs. Kitty Dalley, the losers. The losing team treat the winning team to a supper.

Mrs. Betty Marshall and Mrs. Zelda LaVanway are the new captains, the members being divided equally under those two.

The January meeting will be held with Mrs. Helen Green and Mrs. Ella Vaughn as cohostesses.

January 8, 1963

Christmas Gift Display Viewed By Duxbury Club

DUXBURY — The Busy Bees Christmas Club met April 27 at Mrs. Susan Wilder's in Waterbury. Eleven members were present. Co-hostess was Mrs. Kitty Daley.

Members displayed Christmas gifts and voted to hold their annual dinner May 7 in Montpelier.

May 5, 1966



October 19, 1961

The Duxbury Home Demonstration, the Hill 'n' Dale Club, met at noon Thursday at the home of Mrs. Maud Griffin. Twelve members were present with Mrs. Helen Green presiding, and a potluck dinner was enjoyed.

Mrs. Maud Griffin was acting secretary in the absence of Mrs. Stella Merchant who is confined to her wheel chair with fractured hips. A card was sent to Mrs. Florence Eastman who is ill.

The quilt which was pieced by the members, to be used as a fund-raising project, will be sold at town meeting. A report of the Heart Fund Drive which is sponsored in Duxbury by the Home Demonstration group showed that funds are being turned in slowly. Receiving blankets to be donated to the Elizabeth Lund Home were purchased and shown at the meeting. Pennies for friendship were collected.

The topic for the day, "Keeping Family Business Records," was led by Mrs. Anna Grow.

Mrs. Helen Davis led a game, "What Did She Wear?" which was won by Mrs. Violet Sherman.

February 27, 1965

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SOCIETY BUSINESS

Archival/Preservation Committee Report

Committee members: Eulie Costello, Lori Morse, Debbie Sweetser, Bonnie Morse, Mark Morse

The committee meets monthly to catalog donations of historical items received. These include documents, family genealogical information and artifacts. In the February newsletter we will provide a partial list of the items we have cataloged thus far and will include in upcoming newsletters new items we have received.

Debbie Sweetser and Mark Morse are in the process of transcribing and photocopying all the information we have on Duxbury families. Anyone who would like to contribute genealogical information to our extensive collection should contact one of the committee members. Anyone wishing to view any of the documents or artifacts should also contact one of the committee members. We would love to have people come and see some of the materials we have. You may find a relative you were never aware of or find out about other aspects of Duxbury's history.

Donated Items

After Ken Page's retirement, we received a teacher's chair and school bell from Crossett Brook Middle School. The chair and bell were used at the Duxbury Corner School by Anna Lamos until her retirement and remained at the school until it closed.

We received a granite plaque from the Alliance Church, owners of the former #281 Duxbury Grange Hall. Inscribed on the plaque are the names of the grange members who served our country during WWI and WWII.

Monetary Donations

General:

Audrey and Alan Quackenbush James Hanley Robert C. Murphy, MD Sherry and Gary Winnie Edwin Patterson Richard Perry Lindsley Anonymous <u>Newsletter Support:</u> Theresa and Gordon Wood <u>Memorials:</u> In memory of Pearl Callahan: Rebecca and Justin Blackman Judith Douglas Bonnie and Mark Morse Mary Reagan Amy and Jay Williams Willis J. Morse Evelyn and Wendell Parker



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DUXBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONTACT INFORMATION

President: Don Welch Vice President: Maureen Harvey Treasurer: Mark Morse Secretary: Eulie Costello Phone: 802-244-7558 Phone: 802-244-0956 Phone: 802-244-7080 Phone: 802-244-1742 E-mail: vermontmaplemary@yahoo.com E-mail: mharvey@harveygear.com E-mail: markmorsevt@myfairpoint.net E-mail: euliej@gmail.com

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If you have any comments or contributions for the newsletter we would love to hear from you.

www.DuxburyVT.com

Don't forget the next meeting - Nov. 9 Crossett Brook Middle School - 7 pm

DUXBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 804 VT ROUTE 100 SOUTH DUXBURY, VT 05660

