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April 2020 Newsletter

All programs have been canceled until further notice.

Bernie Lashua Negatives

We were pleased to receive a substantial donation from the Bryant Chucking & Grinding Company Foundation to help finance the separating, cleaning, and repackaging the negatives in archival sleeves and boxes. We had accomplished quite bit until COVID-19 struck. We have the initial category sort done except for the damaged negatives. Next we will sort them again within the categories, replace sleeves as needed, inventory them and put them into archival boxes for proper storage.

A Bit of History

Because there is little going on at the Society other than going to the post office and checking the website, and Hugh and I going, once in a while, to do some sorting and computer work, this issue is going to be comprised of miscellaneous history tidbits.

From the June 18, 1886 Graduation Program—the Class Song

As Time rolls on his chariot,
Through ever changing space;
From old paths we must wander
And tread some unknown place;
For he who wins must e'er press on
And breast each hardship, gale and storm.

And now the conflict deepens,
Protected now no more
By these old friends and schoolmates
We dwell in peace secure.
We too must join that countless band
Which strives for victory, hand by hand.

But yet it grieves our spirits
To speak that parting word,
"A sound which makes us hunger,"
But yet—which must be heard,
So now farewell our own dear school,
Farewell, farewell kind schoolmates all.

Note: This song was composed by George Francis Kenney, one of the graduates. There is no hint to the melody. The Class of 1886 had four graduates, three boys and one girl. In 1886, the "high school" was in the old Wesleyan Seminary, on the corner of Park and Prospect Streets, then owned by the town and used as the high school from 1866 until the "new" high school (the towered, 2-story building on Park Street) was built in 1895. For a time perspective: Jones & Lamson Company and James Hartness had not yet come to town. J&L would arrive in 1888 and Hartness in 1889.

From a recollection: When school buses were horse and buggies

This family lived on Brook Road and, at that time, all children, unless they lived 1½ miles or more from the school, had to walk to school. When oldest son got a car, he checked the mileage and found they should be able to ride to school. The district used a school bus drawn by a team of horses. The children soon found that they could walk faster to and from school than the horses would walk, so many of the family chose to walk rather than ride the "school bus."

From the April Issue of the 1919 SHS Echos: Co-ops in Athletics

"The co-op department has furnished 90% of the athletes of the High School since it was founded [1913].

"A good instance of this superiority is found in the 1918 football team, all of whom but two were co-ops. Again on the '19 nine there is only two "regulars" on the team. And now there is only one from the rest of the school on the basketball team and he was a co-op once, Graham.

"The main reason for this is that the fellows who take the course get used to real hard manual work, and are hardened into the best of condition, which naturally makes them the candidates for athletes.

"This shows the great need of a gymnasium for the use of the school. All of the fellows should be in the same physical condition as the co-ops are now. We all look forward to the new town "gym" to help solve this question for the school, and all hope for a director of physical training in the schools."

Note: The "town gym" was referring to the Community House. J&L had moved most of its manufacturing to Clinton Street and the right side of the second floor was being converted into a gymnasium. When they built the 1895 High School on Park Street there was no gym because the school used the town hall (it was one room, two-stories high, at the time). The addition to the Park Street building which included a gym was not built until 1929.

The First Day of Fishing, by Sandy Bishop

May first is a magical day; fishing season opens and trout are the prize. It was Springtime on the farm in Vermont. The skis and sap buckets have been put away. Crocuses are up, daffodils showing their bright yellow heads and the grass is growing in the pasture across the road. The cows are frolicking in the new grass for the first time after being cooped up in the barn all winter. There is a small jump-across brook running down behind the barns. It comes from somewhere up above the woods and drops over a rock waterfall into a trout heaven pool behind the barn. The brook flows onward down through the pasture and woods to the Muckross Trout Club pond, a half-mile downstream. Growing up in south central Vermont in the 1940's and 50's provided young boys a natural capacity, (or was it instinct?), to remove some of those evasive Brookies from the tumbling brook.



Brook trout, the only trout native to Vermont and the rest of the east coast Appalachian area, are plentiful in the brook and just waiting for a 10-year old boy with a pole and a worm. Rainbows and Browns are also stocked in these waters, but are imports from the West or Europe. Early in the morning about daylight, I quietly leave the house, gather my pole, and head for the brook. I make a short stop down behind the barn where the milking parlor water drains out into a ditch. A few shovels full of wet dirt yields several nice juicy fish worms to put in the Campbell's Soup can.

The waterfall pool just behind the barn is the prime location, and a sure catch of at least two nice seven-eight inch Brookies. The large rocks on each side of the pool make an ideal place to sit and fish. The waterfall is not a natural phenomenon but probably made by my grandfather, or someone earlier, to form a ford across the brook to the pastures on the other side. Large rocks form the wall of an eight-foot drop into the pool, just brimming with Brookies waiting for a boy with a pole and a worm.

A nice fat worm on the number 6 hook, I skillfully place the worm just in front of the overhanging rock where I know they hang out. In a few minutes a strike, a quick jerk and fish number one is landed and gilled on a forked stick, cut from a poolside bush with my trusty jackknife. Wow! Can you believe the rainbow of colors on this little fish? Brook trout, also locally known as Speckled trout, have a wonderful array of rainbow colored speckles all along the body. Legal size is at least 6 inches, but most in this pool are eight to nine inches, and soon a second is landed and makes enough for breakfast. After I finish my morning chores feeding of the calves with the colostrum milk from the newly calved cows, I clean the fish and Mom will fry them in butter while I get ready

for school. Breakfast doesn't get any better than this. The school bus comes and takes me to an agonizingly long day, until I can get back on the brook.

After getting home about 3:30, the long awaited first day of fishing is the main event of the day. Back to the drain area behind the barn to get more worms and, with pole, hook, and worms in hand, I go down to the early morning visited waterfall pool. A repeat placement of the worm just in front of the overhanging rock soon yields a nice 9-inch Brookie to start the expedition. Moving on down the stream from one pool to the next, carefully approaching and dropping the worm in above the pool, drifting down to the unsuspecting trout, I whip him out of the brook and onto the forked stick. Working on downstream for the next hour, and soon I have the limit of 21 six- to nine-inch trout. I walk back up the road to the house, proudly holding my catch, so that all the neighbors passing by can admire what a good fisherman I am. At home on the back porch, I cut off the heads, slit the belly and remove all the insides, and the fish are ready for a meal for the whole family. Dipped in flour and corn meal and fried in butter, what an end to a perfect start of the trout season. Springtime magic for a Boy in Vermont.



Note: This is one of several written memories Sanford "Sandy" Bishop has shared with the Society. He lived on the Bishop Farm in Skitchewaung Trail and graduated in 1954. (revised by Sandy, 3/25/2016)

Springfield Local Bus Company

Way back on July 5, 1943 Springfield opened its first local bus service with a 33-passenger bus on loan from the Boston & Maine Railroad. It operated from 6 am to 11 pm. It looped around the east and west sides alternately. The fare was 15¢. From *The History of Springfield, Vt.* by K. Barney

Shoes in the Wall

The Society had never heard of "shoes in the wall" until one day Kathleen Marshall came through our door and said these old shoes were found in the wall of a house on Summer Street. Emily Stringham, our textiles curator, estimated the shoes were ca 1850. The woman who lived in the house at the time guessed that the house was built in the 1880s. We decided that this all sounded rather strange; there must be more to the story. So we went on line and sure enough, this is what we found.



"In the early modern period, people...believed in demons, ghosts, elves, goblins - but witches were the most frightening because they were in human form... Worst still, they were "usually someone living close by - your neighbor." History professor Malcolm Gaskill, at the University of East Anglia, was asked why people did this and he replied with a theory that the shoe had probably been left there as a decoy to lure "witches."

The solution was, he explained, "everyone" protected their homes against evil by hiding the shoes. [They had to be old shoes.] His "best guess" for why shoes were chosen was that they mould to

shape, so they might be considered "imprinted" with the "character and essence" of the wearer. In earlier centuries, it might have been protection from witches or the devil; the theory being that the shoes were intended to act as lures for witches, spirits, and other supernatural threats. The evil force believed the shoe to be the person, attacked the shoe, and became trapped inside of it--an early form of home insurance. It was also believed that you should not to take the shoe out of the house as it will bring bad luck. One finder from Kent (England) reported that removing the shoe from its hiding place brought "a whole catalogue of things that went wrong" - until it was returned. British homeowners are increasingly unwilling to donate their finds to Northampton Museum, a collector or hidden shoes, "just in case," curator Rebecca Shawcross said. It could a single shoe or a pair.

Starting centuries ago in the UK, the custom seemed to have died out by about 1900, but the practice was brought to the New World by early immigrants where it continued into the 1920s and 1930s. So many questions surrounding the tradition remain unanswered, one thing is certain, the superstitious aspect lingers on.

As to why the custom began and continues to remain unsolved: maybe it was so commonplace, there was no need to write about it, maybe it was only done illicitly, or it was kept secret because discussing it would cancel out its power, Dr. Ceri Houlbrook, historian at the University of Hertfordshire, suggests. "We are taking educated guesses as to the reasons behind the practice, but they are still just guesses." "That's the appeal - and the frustration." Rebecca Shawcross (Northampton Museum) said the earliest hidden shoe discovered in the British Isles was found behind the Winchester Cathedral choir stalls, installed in 1308.

She said she receives two or three notifications a month from as far afield as the US, Canada, and Australia. This information is from the BBC News 12/10/2017 website. According to *Wikipedia* it was primarily practiced in New England.

To be sure, we have no idea if this is why these shoes were in the attic but we are always eager to learn new, like these myths and legends.

2020 Calendar Sale

We still have a few 2020 calendars and they are on sale for \$5. For out of town residents, if you want your calendar mailed, you can send a check made out to SAHS for \$8.00 (\$5.00 + \$3 shipping) to PO Box 336, N. Springfield, VT, 05150 and we will get one right out to you.

New Member* or Donation Form

***If you are currently a member, you will receive a renewal reminder in the mail.**

We are working hard to expand and protect Springfield's history, please help us.
Checks should be made payable to SAHS and can be mailed to the address below:

SPRINGFIELD ART & HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P.O. Box 336, North Springfield, VT 05150

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