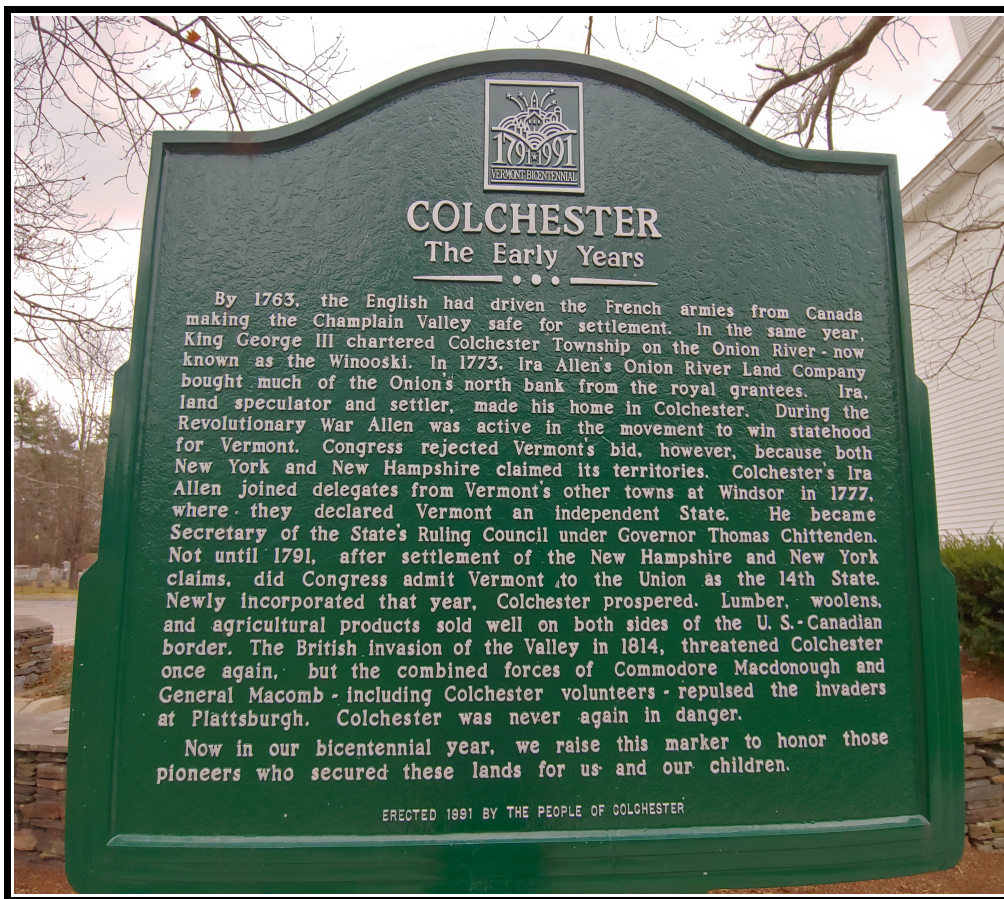


# **Welcome to the Colchester Historical Landmark Self-guided Driving Tour.**

**No lines, no rush, no fee.**

**Please begin your tour at this sign in Colchester Village, on “the green” on Main Street, then create your own route according to your own interests and schedule. The landmarks have been divided into four geographic areas, plus a separate section for cemeteries.**



**Enjoy!  
Brought to you by the  
Colchester Historical Society  
2021**

## **The Parsonage**

**Location: 828 Main Street**



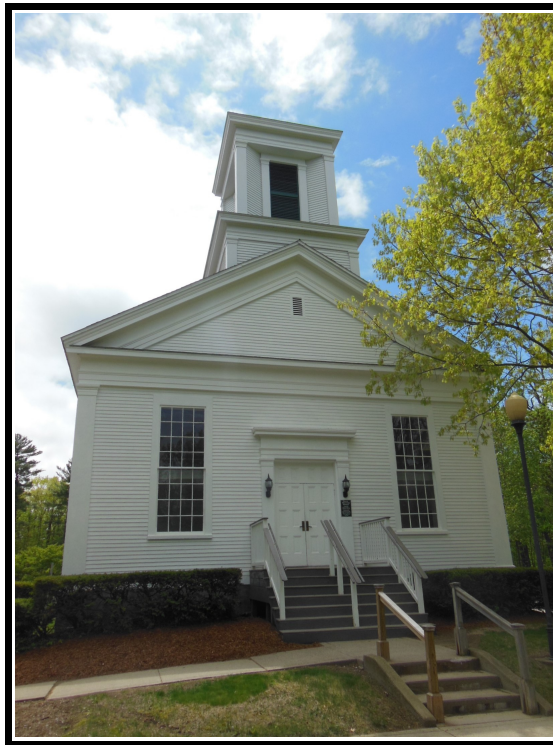
A parsonage is a home provided by a church for its pastor or minister. This lovely parsonage was built in 1899. Over the years, it served as the residence for several pastors and their families. It was originally affiliated with the building next door, now known as the Meeting House. That building was once the Baptist Church and was built in 1861.

Eventually, the Baptist Church merged with the First Congregational Church of Christ and later became the United Church of Colchester. In 1989, this parsonage building became the property of the Town of Colchester and is now the home of the Colchester Historical Society.

While none of the furnishings are original to the home, Historical Society members have furnished it with period pieces and restored much of the interior. Tours are available by appointment. Please contact any member of the board of directors to schedule.

Programs and meetings of the Colchester Historical Society are open to the public, free of charge. See the Historical Society website for updated contact information at <https://colchestervt.gov/422/Colchester-Historical-Society>.

**The Meeting House**  
**Location: 830 Main Street**



This beautiful building was originally built in 1861 and served as a Baptist Church for many years. It was purchased by the Town of Colchester in 1988 and converted to a Meeting House in 1999.

The basement of the Colchester Meeting House underwent renovations thanks to the generous donation by local library patron Sarah Crocker upon her death in 2015. At about the same time, the Burnham Memorial Library acquired stewardship of the Meeting House and uses the building for expanded programs and community meetings.

Source:

- *Colchester Sun* at [https://www.colchestersun.com/news/library-expanding-into-meeting-house-space/article\\_6e7deed5-2e04-5438-960a-6caa6cd74b00.html](https://www.colchestersun.com/news/library-expanding-into-meeting-house-space/article_6e7deed5-2e04-5438-960a-6caa6cd74b00.html)

**Burnham Memorial Library**  
**Location: 898 Main Street**



The first public library of Colchester was opened on September 14, 1901, in rooms above Wolcott's Store, located on the corner of Main Street and Mill Pond Road. The library consisted of 47 books and was run and partially financed by the King's Daughters organization. In 1911, the library began receiving municipal funding and changed its name to the Colchester Free Library.

In 1939, Mrs. Electa Burnham died and left most of her estate to build and furnish a new town library. The new Burnham Memorial Library was dedicated in 1942, with a final cost of \$8,650. The new addition was added in 1989, quadrupling the size of the building and providing the infrastructure necessary for the library's first computer. Internet access was added in 1996. In 2018, the library took over stewardship of the Meeting House, also known as the White Church, for expanded programming and community meetings.

Currently, the library houses more than 50,000 physical items and provides access to a growing digital collection. Programming spans offerings for babies to seniors, with something to meet all interests.

For more information about the Burnham Memorial Library, visit <https://colchestervt.gov/3100/Library>.

**Sources:**

- Photo, circa 1988-89, courtesy of Burnham Memorial Library
- Kelly McCagg, Library Director

**The United Church of Colchester**  
**Location: 900 Main Street**



The First Congregational Church of Christ was organized September 14, 1804, at first in a schoolhouse on the Farrand farm, standing on the west side of East Road near the railroad. From there, the church held its meetings in various schools, barns, or homes. In 1838, the brick church was built by the Congregational Church and shared with the Baptist Church until 1861 when the Baptist Church was built.

In 1919, it became the United Church of Colchester. Electricity was installed in both the parish house and the brick church in 1921. Some remodeling also occurred at that time, including installation of the stained glass windows. The kitchen, restroom, and a coatroom were added in 1927, as well as a furnace in the main room, and the horse sheds were torn down. Later, a new furnace was installed in the cellar.

During 2024/2025, the church steeple was renovated at a cost of approximately \$70,000. In addition, at an additional cost of \$15,000, the congregation voted to build new steps with handrails to provide safe entry to the front doors while preserving the historic rock porch; replace the steps to the front door of the Parish House, and repair the sidewalk leading to the front doors of the Brick Church and Parish Hall from the driveway and parking lot.

For more information about this church, visit its Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/colchvt>.  
The telephone number is 802-879-5442.

Source:

- Booklet: *A History of The United Church of Colchester, Colchester, VT 1804-1976*

**New Union School**  
**Location: 419 Main Street**



While waiting in line for ice cream at the busy Village Scoop during the warm summer months, have you wondered about this beautiful old building?

On land purchased by the Town of Colchester from Neal and Bernice Carpenter, this school, complete with running water and flush toilets, was built in 1930 at a cost of \$20,000. It was named the New Union School and later was known as the Paquette School, and even later as The White School.

Eventually the town built a new Union Memorial School nearby and sold this old school building as private property. Today, it serves both residential and commercial purposes.

Source:

- *Images of America - Colchester* by Inge Schaefer (Arcadia Publishing, 2003)

**Ethan Allen Camp #12466 of the Modern Woodmen of America**  
**Location: 45 Main Street**



In 1860, a congregation of Methodists purchased a plot of land at 45 Main Street from Ira Robinson and constructed a church building (top photo). It was similar in style to the Baptist Church (now known as the Meeting House). By the early 1900s, the group had disbanded and the building became unused. The former church building was purchased in 1906 by Murray W. Thompson.

In 1909, the newly formed Ethan Allen Camp #12466 of the Modern Woodmen of America purchased the building and made many repairs. Unfortunately, in 1921, the building was destroyed by fire. The following year, the Woodmen replaced the building with this square brick building which, at the time, was the largest hall in town. To pay for the building's construction, the Woodmen hosted several dances and also rented out the building for events and meetings.

Years later, the Colchester Center Volunteer Fire Department needed more space to accommodate modern firefighting equipment. Around that same time, the local chapter of the Modern Woodmen of America dissolved and gave a donation of \$200 to the Colchester Historical Society, newly formed in 1975. The fire company purchased the Woodmen Hall in 1978 and tore down the brick building two years afterward, replacing it with their new firehouse. Their original firehouse, just down the street, is now the site of the Colchester Community Food Shelf.

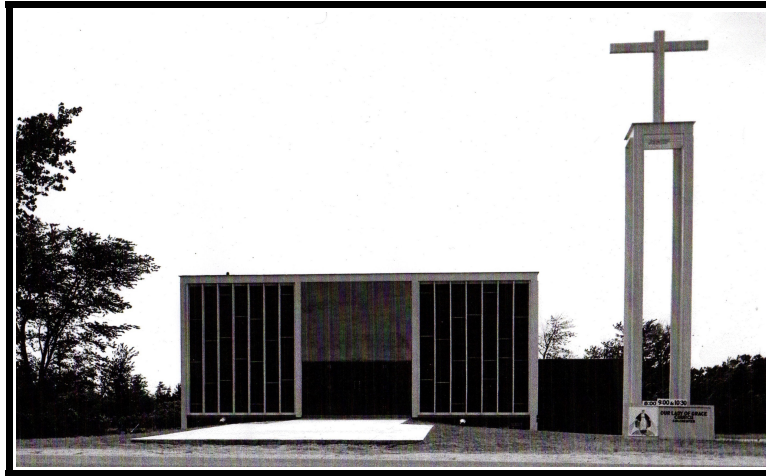
According to its website, Modern Woodmen of America is headquartered in Rock Island, Illinois. The organization began in 1883 as a fraternal benefit society. Today, there are approximately 1,300 locally chartered units nationwide. Although there is no longer a chapter in Colchester, there are a few local chapters scattered throughout Vermont. For more information, visit <https://www.modernwoodmen.org>.

Sources:

*Colchester Center – The Evolution of a Village* by Kenneth A. Degree (Queen City Printers, Inc., 2000)

*Images of America – Colchester* by Inge Schaefer (Arcadia Publishing, 2003)

**Our Lady of Grace Church**  
**Location: 784 Main Street**



Our Lady of Grace began as a mission of Saint Pius X in Essex Junction. As members of the Catholic faith in Colchester increased in numbers by the mid-1950s, the first Catholic services in the village were held in the former Modern Woodmen of America building at 45 Main Street. Father James B. Murray was appointed founding pastor and oversaw the building of the original church (pictured above) in 1959.

By 1973, the flat roof of the church proved to be ineffective against rain and snow, and the building's first renovation that year included a new pitched roof. At that time, a life-sized Italian Carrara marble statue of Our Lady of Grace was installed in a niche above the front door, and a large cross was placed beneath it.

By 1977, an additional Sunday morning Mass was added to the weekend schedule to accommodate the growing parish. In granting permission for this fourth weekend Mass, Bishop John A. Marshall requested that plans be made to enlarge the church, and a fundraising drive was begun. Building plans were finalized, and in 1993, the church was enlarged to accommodate over 400 people. During renovations, Mass was conducted in a large outdoor tent.

An outdoor shrine in honor of Our Lady of Grace in memory of the unborn was solemnly dedicated by Bishop Kenneth A. Angell in 1994. It serves as a place of comfort and prayer for those who have lost pre-born children. The statue of Our Lady of Grace that had been over the front door of the church was relocated to the shrine, along with the altar from inside the church. At some point in time, the outdoor bell tower, part of the original construction project, was removed.

A double-wide trailer served as a rectory for awhile, but in 1997, it was replaced with a new two-story parish center and office building with the upstairs serving as the rectory. A celebratory open house was hosted by the Women's Society on August 1 and 2, 1998.

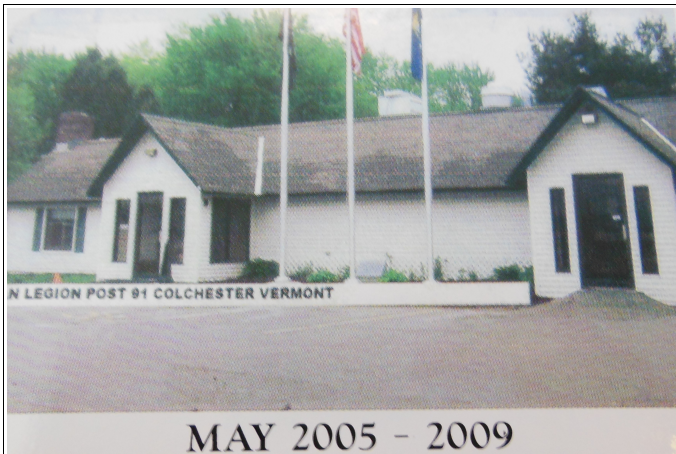
For more information about Our Lady of Grace Church, including Mass times, sacraments, and bulletins, please visit <https://holycross-olog.vermontcatholic.org> or call the parish at 802-878-5987.

**Sources:**

- Photo and history courtesy of Our Lady of Grace Church

- *Colchester Center – The Evolution of a Village* by Kenneth A. Degree (Queen City Printers, Inc., 2000)

**American Legion Post 91**  
**Location: 3650 Roosevelt Highway**



Our Local Post 91 of the American Legion actually got its start in Winooski at the Regular Veterans Association (RVA) in 1999. After meeting at the RVA for a few months, the group began fundraising towards the goal of acquiring its own building. Members and enthusiasts participated in Sunday coin drops, as well as other fundraising efforts, and eventually were able to lease space in Colchester at the former Zachary's Pizza building across from Fanny Allen Hospital. That location worked well for a time as it had a full kitchen, meeting space, and nearby support from both the Vermont Army and Air National Guards.

After approximately four years at that location, the members had raised enough money to purchase a building at the intersection of Routes 2A and 7, the former and well-known Pierre Restaurant. The members eagerly undertook restoration of the building, excited and proud to have achieved the honor of their own building. But in 2009, disaster struck in the form of an accidental electrical fire that destroyed the entire building and its contents.

Under a large tent loaned to the site by Camp Johnson, the post was able to successfully operate well into the chilly days of late autumn while recovery plans were made and implemented. In addition to a very dedicated membership, architects, engineers, plumbers, and carpenters all stepped forward to help design and build the three-story building that stands today. Kitchen equipment was acquired from the former Knights of Columbus building in Essex Junction.

Colchester's Local Post 91, now Vermont's second largest post, supports a broad array of services, including transportation, job training, food, heat, and clothing for veterans; assistance with the sign-up process for Agent Orange and Veterans Affairs benefits; and veterans' housing—including Dodge House in Rutland, Veterans' Place in Northfield, and the Vermont Veterans' Home in Bennington. Post 91 also supports a variety of children's programs including Special Olympics, educational scholarships, youth baseball, Boys and Girls State, toy drives for needy families, and more.

In May of 2025, a Blue Star Memorial was installed as part of a dedication ceremony near the building. This type of marker became a prominent symbol during World War II when it was seen on flags and banners in homes for those fighting the war. The Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont helped raise the \$3,000 to get the marker put up.

Anyone who has served on federal active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces since December 7, 1941, and has been honorably discharged or is still active, is eligible for membership in the American Legion.

For more information about the American Legion, visit <http://www.Legion.org>. Follow Post 91 on Facebook for updates about upcoming events, including meal menus and the ever-popular musical performances.

**Sources:**

- Barbara Bushaw, Past Post Commander and one of the original founders of our local Post 91.

## Colchester Pond

**Location:** In Colchester Village, turn on to East Road, and then turn right on to Depot Road. Continue on Depot Road, staying left (Depot Road becomes Colchester Pond Road) until you arrive at Colchester Pond.



In the book *Colchester Vermont From Ice-Cap to Interstate*, author Ruth Wright theorized that Colchester Pond may have been scraped out by the huge southern-moving glacier that covered our area millions of years ago. In more recent centuries, the property was used as farmland, and the pond once served as a water supply for Colchester Village. It also was once the site of a Boy Scout cabin for use by the local troop. In 1960, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as a flood-control measure, installed a dam that blocked the only outflow from the pond, nearly doubling the pond's size. This effort created a wetland on the southern tip and submerged trees and stumps in other areas around the pond.

Colchester Pond is a warm body of water with a maximum depth of 45 feet. The northern and eastern shores are surrounded by hills, and therefore, have steep slopes and cliffs, which plunge towards the bottom of the pond. This is where the deepest and coldest water in the pond can be found. The eastern and southern shores of the pond have gradual slopes and are bordered by fields and marshes. These sides have shallow water that warms quickly and supports an abundant amount of submerged vegetation. This pond is supplied by seasonal run-off from the surrounding basin. The main species of fish in the pond are northern pike, smallmouth bass, white perch, and bluegill.

Today, Colchester Pond is a public-access area managed by the Winooski Valley Park District and is a great place for canoeing, fishing, nature trips, hiking, and even swimming. Motors of any kind are not allowed on the pond, and vessels or equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and scrubbed or sun-dried for three days prior to launching. The strict regulations are an effort to keep the pond free from invasive species such as Eurasian milfoil and zebra mussels. The pond measures a mile in length and covers 182 acres, about a quarter of this park's property. The hiking trail is approximately three miles around the water's edge, and hikers must stay on the designated trails. The site is home to an abundant amount of wildlife and plants. Well-behaved dogs are allowed but must be kept on leash.

### Sources:

- *Images of America – Colchester* by Inge Schaefer (Arcadia Publishing, 2003)
- *Colchester Vermont From Ice-Cap to Interstate* by Ruth Wright (Queen City Printers, Inc., 1963)
- <https://www.wvpd.org/colchester-pond>
- <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/vermont/colchester-pond>

## **Mill Pond Road**

**Location:** Mill Pond Road runs between Main Street and Severance Road. The site of this mill (no longer standing) is next to the stream as you cross the small bridge.



Beginning in the early 1800s, there have been mill dams on Indian Brook where it is crossed by Mill Pond Road in Colchester. The most recent sawmill, known as Wright's Mill, was built in the 19th century and sadly burned in 1941. The dam was abandoned and slowly deteriorated over time, leaving a risk the dam could fail and release water and sediment that would cause property damage and environmental harm downstream.

In 2019, the property owner worked with the Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) to remove the dam and a portion of the impounded sediment. The goal of the dam removal was to restore the waterway to its natural condition, remove a fish passage barrier, reconnect habitat for aquatic animal and plant life, facilitate natural sediment transportation, improve water quality, and eliminate a safety hazard.

The VNRC prepared a comprehensive document about the history of the mill and the removal project. This report has been provided to the Colchester Historical Society and added to its website to ensure public access of the information, now and for years to come.

Source: <https://colchestervt.gov/422/Colchester-Historical-Society>

## Poor Farm Road

**Location:** Poor Farm Road runs from Route 7 to Blakely Road



Fear of going to the poor house was shared by many Vermonters in the 19th and early 20th centuries. When the mailbox filled with bills, some people grimly joked that their next stop was the poor farm. A town poor house or agricultural poor farm was established by many towns in Vermont during the early years of the 19th century as an alternative to the traditional practice of “selling” the poor as servants to the highest bidder. It also served as a facility for the mentally and physically handicapped before the advent of state-supported agencies for their care.

The institution of the poor farm, which did not end in Vermont until 1968, was never intended to be a perfect system of relief for the poor; rather, it was a desperate attempt to deal with community failure to care for a growing underclass. Poor farms in Vermont were a way to address the needs of those living on the margins of society.

Colchester's poor farm suffered disrepair and even a fire over the years. The building, as it once was, no longer stands. What did remain has been integrated into a newer home, and the land has been subdivided. Unfortunately, the Colchester Historical Society has no photographs of the local poor farm.

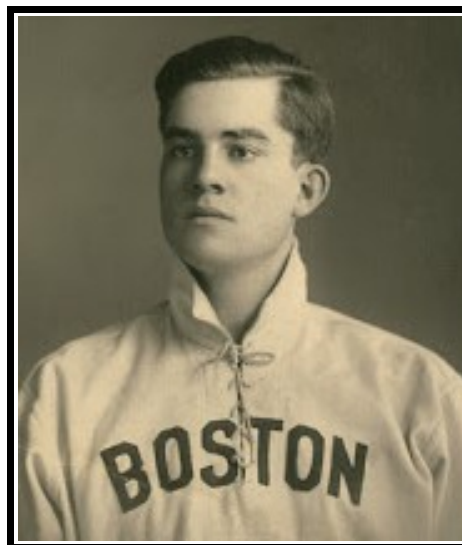
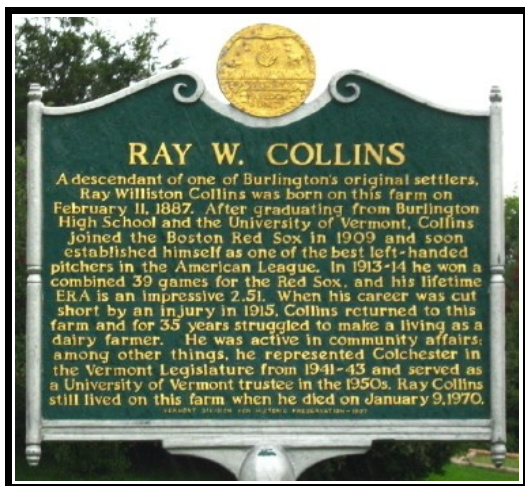
Source:

- *Remember the Poor* by Steven R. Hoffbeck (Vermont Historical Society, 1989) Colchester's poor farm is referenced on page 231. [https://vermonthistory.org/journal/misc/Remember\\_v57.pdf](https://vermonthistory.org/journal/misc/Remember_v57.pdf)

## Ray Collins Historical Marker

Location: Route 7, just north of Elm Hill Farm

(Note: Use caution if you visit this sign. It is located at the brow of a hill with no clear parking spot and close to the south-bound traffic lane. Do not park in the farmhouse driveway.)



A descendant of one of Burlington's original settlers, Ray Williston Collins was born on the farm next to this historic marker on February 11, 1887. After graduating from Burlington High School and the University of Vermont, Collins joined the Boston Red Sox in 1909 and soon established himself as one of the best left-handed pitchers in the American League. In 1913-14 he won 39 games for the Red Sox, and his lifetime earned run average is an impressive 2.51.

Ray was the starting pitcher in the first World Series game played at Fenway Park in 1912. He pitched in two games in that series, both in losing causes. In game two, which was the first one played at Fenway, he was relieved in the eighth inning with the Boston team down 5-4 against the New York Giants. Boston tied the score in the bottom of the eighth inning, and the game was finally called after 11 innings because of darkness and was officially ruled a tie. Ray pitched again in the sixth game, coming on in the second inning with Boston down 5-0 and pitched shutout ball for the rest of the game. Unfortunately, the Giants won 5-2. However, Boston did win the series in the eighth game to become World Champions.

Ray played for the Red Sox from 1909 until 1915 when his baseball career was cut short by an injury. He then returned to this Colchester farm and for 35 years struggled to make a living as a dairy farmer. He was active in community affairs; among other duties, he represented Colchester in the Vermont Legislature from 1941-43 and served as a University of Vermont trustee in the 1950s. Ray, a graduate of UVM and former star of the UVM baseball team, was inducted into the UVM Hall of Fame in 1969.

Ray Collins still lived on his farm until he died on January 9, 1970.

### Sources:

- *Colchester Sun* at [https://www.colchestersun.com/news/ray-collins-colchester-s-local-hero/article\\_fa664e54-9859-5a10-ab5b-e9c97181d40a.html](https://www.colchestersun.com/news/ray-collins-colchester-s-local-hero/article_fa664e54-9859-5a10-ab5b-e9c97181d40a.html)

- Robert Furst, local historian