

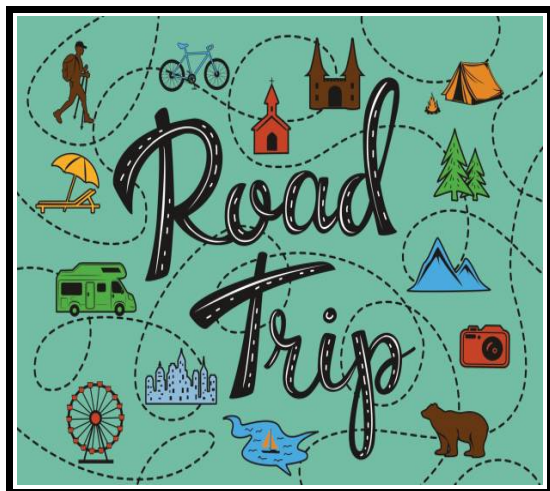


Newsletter

Colchester Vermont Historical Society

Spring 2021

Enjoy a Colchester History Tour!



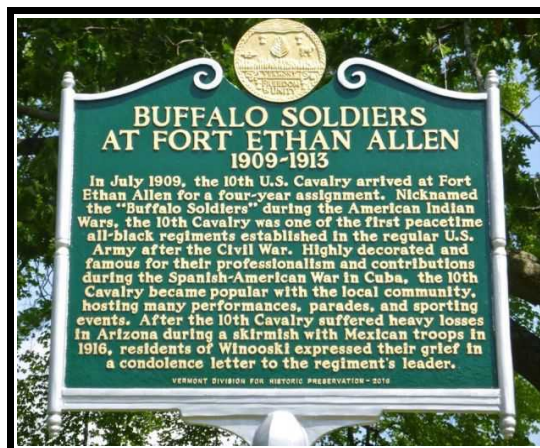
You probably already have seen most of our town's local historical sites. Or have you? And how much do you know about them? Inspired by the long COVID-19 health pandemic when people are eager for something safe and interesting to do, the Colchester Historical Society has compiled a Self-Guided Driving Tour of over forty Colchester historical landmarks. The tour is divided into four general geographical areas: Colchester Village, Malletts Bay, Airport Park, and Fort Ethan Allen. In addition, there is a section that covers six local cemeteries.

We recommend you begin your tour at the Bicentennial sign located between Burnham Memorial Library and the Meeting House, and go from there. Select your own route, depending on your interests and time schedule. There's no waiting, no fees, and no rush. Visit some of the landmarks or all of them, as you wish.

This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the origins of Colchester Pond, the professional baseball career of one of our local residents, the Vermont National Guard Museum, Niquette Bay State Park, Burnham Memorial Library, and many more sites of historical interest.

Please see our [website](#) for the trip details and to access locations and information about each landmark.. We hope you enjoy your trip around historic Colchester!

In Case You Missed These:



◆ The Vermont Historical Society hosted an introductory presentation about Colchester's Famous Buffalo Soldiers on February 18. In case you missed it, the program was recorded and is now available online. The program presenter is David Work, who holds a doctorate in American history. He currently teaches at Tacoma Community College in Washington. Meet Professor Work and [listen](#) to his research paper; be sure to stick around for the Q & A at the end of the presentation for additional interesting details.

Buffalo Soldiers originally were members of the all-black 10th Cavalry Regiment of the United States Army. They served at Fort Ethan Allen 1909 – 1913.

◆ An article featured in the *Colchester Sun* was written by Brian Behrens, a student at the University of Vermont. As part of his studies, Brian participates as a reporter for the Community News Service, a student-powered partnership with local community newspapers.

Brian interviewed members of the Historical Society to gather information and photographs. His work was published in the March 16 issue of the online local newspaper, and focused on the Log Schoolhouse, how the pandemic affected the Historical Society, and the recent presentation about Colchester's Buffalo Soldiers. Read it [here](#).

◆ If you haven't already seen it, be sure to take a look at page 53 of the [Town of Colchester's 99th Annual Report 2020](#). It's a summary of all the Historical Society's accomplishments last year.

Colchester Log Schoolhouse Re-opening This Summer?



Depending upon the progress of the COVID-19 suppression, the Colchester Log Schoolhouse may not open on Memorial Day weekend this year as usually scheduled. In 2020, it was closed for the entire summer. If and when it does open in 2021, volunteers will be needed to host visitors at this historical exhibit on weekends.

Located at Airport Park near the recreation path, the [Colchester Log Schoolhouse](#) functions as a visitor information center, interpretive venue for schools, and a museum for displaying Colchester history. This little museum is a wonderful volunteer and educational opportunity. Hours are very flexible. To volunteer and to find out more, please contact Carol Reichard at 802-497-3036.

Lively & Local Exhibit



The Colchester Historical Society has been invited to participate in a special exhibit at the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier. The exhibit runs April 7 through July 31 and will feature items from several of Vermont's local historical societies. Our exhibit features the Colchester Log Schoolhouse.

The exhibit is open to the public during regular museum hours (normally Tuesday-Saturday, 10

a.m.- 4 p.m.). There is an admission charge for the museum, which includes the Local History Gallery. Fees are: adults: \$7; families: \$20; seniors, students, and children: \$5; children under 6 and Vermont Historical Society members are admitted free of charge.

Visit the [Vermont History Museum](#) website to learn more about this exhibit and for directions and parking information.

Recent Acquisitions



The Colchester Historical Society was pleased to receive these donations recently. The chair and sign are artifacts from the Modern Woodmen of America building that once stood at 45 Main Street. Here's the history.

Back in 1860, a congregation of Methodists purchased a plot of land at 45 Main Street from Ira Robinson and constructed a church building. 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 church building and made many repairs. Unfortunately, in 1921, the building was destroyed by fire. The following year, the Woodmen replaced it with a 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 Colchester no longer has a chapter, a few local chapters are scattered throughout Vermont.

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)



Ethan Allen Camp #12466 of the Modern Woodmen of America in its early days.



The same building, just prior to demolition in 1980.

Vermont History Day

Every April, hundreds of Vermont students share their learning at the [Vermont History Day](#) state contest. Working individually or in small groups, students explore and study a topic related to Vermont history, U.S. history or world history. This year's theme is "Communication in History: The Key to Understanding."

Students then present their work to local historians, educators, and other professionals who participate as judges. Volunteer judges from the Colchester Historical Society for the 2021 competition include Inge Schaefer, Bob Furst, and Bonnie Potter. Students who win at the state level qualify for National History Day, held in June, usually in Washington, D.C. However, this year's events, both Vermont and national, will be conducted virtually.

Upcoming Events and Programs

As the dangers of the COVID-19 health pandemic linger, the Colchester Historical Society may not be hosting any in-person meetings or programs in the near future.

We are interested to know if you have any ideas or requests, especially for a program that could be conducted via Zoom.

Please email Bob Furst with your program ideas at bobfurst@comcast.net.

News and Updates at Your Fingertips

On Facebook, be sure to "Like" and "Follow" [Colchester Vermont Historical Society](#). Visit the Colchester Historical Society's [website](#) to stay up to date on news and programs and to view some fabulous vintage photographs.

Colchester Historical Society Officers 2020-2021

President: Nancy Burke

Vice President: Bonnie Potter

Treasurer/Director/Webmaster: Bob Furst

Secretary: (vacancy)

Director: Carol Reichard

Newsletter and Facebook page by Bonnie Potter