



# Newsletter

Colchester Vermont Historical Society

Spring 2022

## Log Schoolhouse to Open for Summer – Volunteers Needed



Colchester's historic Log Schoolhouse will be open on weekends this summer, June through August, and volunteers are needed to meet and greet the many people who visit. Open hours are 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Friday–Monday, and volunteer hours are very flexible. To volunteer and to find out more, please contact Carol Reichard at 802-497-3036.

This 24- x 28-foot log structure was originally one of the earliest schoolhouses in Colchester, built circa 1815. In August of 2000, the MacDonald family was building their new home on Spaulding East Shore Drive and looking to remove the existing camp. They found the camp was, indeed, this log structure and contacted a preservationist as well as the Colchester Historical Society. A committee was formed to save and renovate the schoolhouse, and it found a permanent site for the building at Airport Park at 500 Colchester Point Road. Learn more about the building's restoration process [here](#).



Teacher Elsie Gray stands next to the flagpole, circa 1927.

Today, the Colchester Log Schoolhouse functions as a visitor information center, interpretive venue for schools, and a museum for displaying Colchester history. Students of all ages are encouraged to visit this lovely little historic site to step back in time to the days of early school education. Parking and admission are free, but donations are always appreciated. We hope to see you there!

## Recent Acquisitions

The Colchester Historical Society extends its thanks and appreciation to Cyndy (Newell) Bell who recently donated some documents and fun photographs from the early 1950s pertaining to the Colchester Grange. Cyndy and family members worked hard to identify nearly all of the people featured in the pictures.

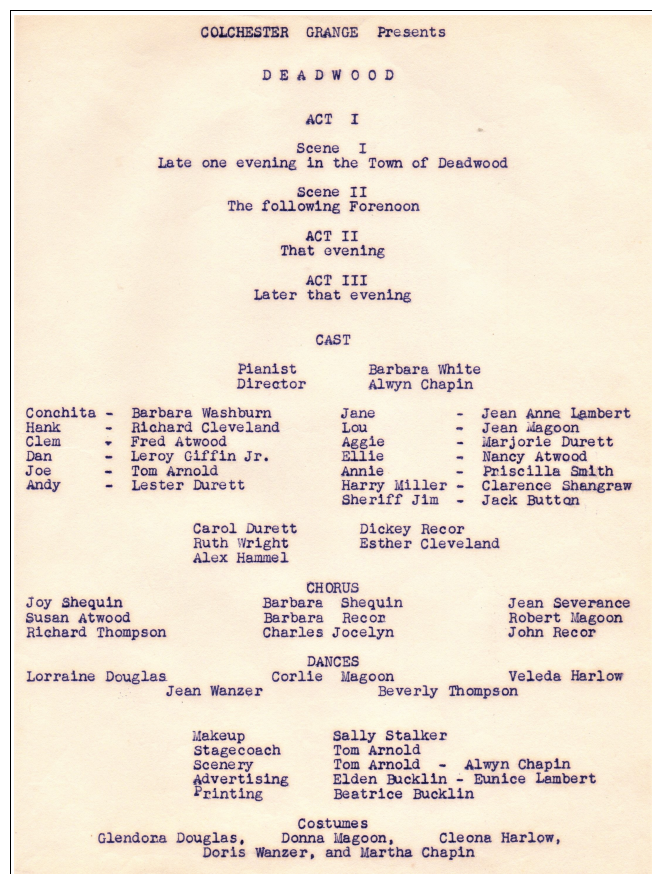
The following photographs are from a presentation of "Deadwood," a musical production directed by Cyndy's uncle, Alwyn Chapin, and featuring several local people whose names you may recognize. This collection is a treasure! The photographer was Walter K. Lewis of Burlington.



Dancers in their western costumes from the 1954 Colchester Grange production of "Deadwood" have been identified, left to right, as: Beverly Thompson, Lorraine Douglas, Coralie "Corky" Magoon, Jean Wanzer, and Velda Harlow. Cyndy's grandmother, Martha Chapin, made many of the costumes for this event.



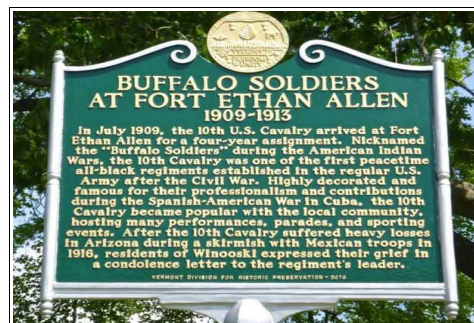
Admission was 50 cents. Do you see any familiar names on this program?



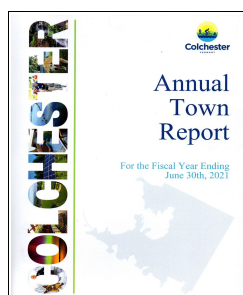
## Historical Recognition



February was **Black History Month**, and the Colchester Historical Society was pleased to receive some wonderful digital photographs of the famous [Buffalo Soldiers at Fort Ethan Allen](#) who served 1909-1913. The photographs came from William Parkinson of the Fort Ethan Allen Museum. This [Vermont Historical Marker](#) is located at the site.



## 100th Annual Town Report Dedicated to Colchester Historical Society



The Colchester Historical Society was pleased to be honored with the dedication of this year's Annual Town Report. Page one of the report states, "This 100th annual report is dedicated to the Colchester Historical Society for their active role in researching, preserving, and sharing our community history."

And, speaking of the Annual Town Report, please take a look at [page 46](#) to see all that your Historical Society accomplished throughout the last fiscal year.

The indoor riding hall, or drill hall, (pictured below) now serves as the Elley-Long Music Center and is part of Saint Michael's College. It was built in 1895 to provide indoor space to practice and exercise the cavalry. This was necessary, especially with Vermont's harsh winters, although there were still outdoor maneuvers even in the winter. The original cost of this structure (32,100 square feet) was only \$20,187. It was heated by stoves and originally had no bathrooms. It was not lighted until ten years later when electricity came to the Post.



In March, in commemoration of **Women's History Month**, the Colchester Historical Society chose to honor Electa "Etta" Cook Burnham (1863-1939) for her contribution in establishing Burnham Memorial Library.



*This portrait of Electa "Etta" Burnham is on display over the fireplace in the reference room at Burnham Memorial Library. The library trustees of her time praised her in their meeting minutes as follows: "She caught a vision, dreamed a dream, and laid foundation sure. She prayed, she planned, she worked and wrought to make a dream endure." The portrait was painted by K. F. Worcester.*

Etta Burnham was born in Colchester, the daughter of Francis and Eliza Day Cook, and grew up on a farm on Mill Pond Road. She married Herbert Burnham of Johnson, Vermont, in 1883. She remained active in the Colchester community until her death in 1939, and in her will, left most of her estate to "build, furnish, and maintain a library." Her stated preference was for a building similar to the one in Underhill Flats and that it be built on property then known as "Church Park."

In its early days, the library was open on Wednesday afternoons and evenings and featured a small table and chairs in the children's corner. Children and adult books were all located on the main floor. Colchester Village, at that time, was a busy hub of our town; in addition to the library, it featured working farms, a creamery, churches, stores, gas stations, the town clerk's office, and post office.

These days, [Burnham Memorial 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 details of this article, please visit the March 9 post on our [Facebook page](#).

## In Memoriam



We are saddened by the loss of William Claussen, founder and patriarch of Claussen's Florist, Greenhouse and Perennial Farm here in Colchester. Bill was a very kind and generous supporter of the Colchester Historical Society for many, many years. Read his full obituary [here](#).



*Claussen's Greenhouse as it appeared in the 1970s.*

It was fifty years ago that Bill purchased Carpenter Greenhouses and started Claussen's Greenhouses. Read more about its history [here](#). Today, it is considered one of the leading, most respected horticultural businesses in New England.

Hard work, due diligence and knowledge of how to grow and sell great plants was always the philosophy he carried and continues today in the very dedicated team he established and who will continue the business.



Top-quality Vermont grown plants  
A William Claussen tradition  
Since 1972



## What's Cookin'?

Old cookbooks are interesting to browse. Here's a fun-sounding recipe that was popular with followers when recently posted on our Facebook page. Originally submitted by Bette Grenon, this recipe was published in the *Holy Cross Parish Cookbook*, Malletts Bay, Colchester, Vermont (1982).

This cookbook is currently available to borrow at Colchester's Burnham Memorial Library.

| BUBBLE AND SQUEAK   |                     | Bette Grenon |
|---|---------------------|--------------|
| 4 medium potatoes<br>(peeled and quartered)   | 1 lb. sausage links |              |
| 1 small head cabbage<br>(cut into wedges)   | 1 tsp. salt         |              |
|   | dash pepper         |              |
| About 45 minutes total time.<br>Cook potatoes and cabbage together until tender, approximately 20 minutes.<br>Meanwhile: cook covered in large skillet, cook sausage in 2 tablespoons water for 5 minutes. Remove cover and brown sausages about 15 minutes. Add potatoes and cabbage (drained), salt and pepper. Cook about 10 minutes longer turning occasionally.<br>Serves 4-6. |                     |              |

## Cabin Fever Reliever

Spring is *here*! Are you looking to get out and about? Something interesting, educational, and *free*? Check out our Self-Guided Driving Tour. No lines, no waiting, no schedule.

We suggest you begin your tour at the large sign entitled "Colchester – The Early Years" (located between Burnham Memorial Library and the Meeting House) in Colchester Village, then create your own route according to your interests and schedule. The several featured historic landmarks have been divided into four geographic areas, plus a separate section for local cemeteries. Get started [here](#).



For example, walk, run, or bicycle the historical Colchester Causeway and imagine the days when this train, then known as the "Rutland Island Line" chugged along that very path to Alburgh, then onward to Montreal.

## Vermont Historical Society Offerings

### VERMONT HISTORY

#### April 13–14, 1–3 p.m.

Vermont History Museum, Montpelier, Vermont  
History for Homeschoolers – Mid-1900s & Newspapers and Magazines. Use printed materials from the World War II era to learn about life on the Vermont home front. This is also available as a virtual class.

#### April 17, 12 p.m., on Zoom

Speaker Sara Gregg will present "Room for Improvement: Landscape, Social Uplift, and the Changing Nature of Vermont."

#### May 11–12, 1–3 p.m.

Vermont History Museum, Montpelier, Vermont  
Explore Vermont through a timeline of maps and learn how highways shaped Vermont's recent history. This is also available as a virtual class.

For more information about these offerings and to sign up, please visit the Vermont Historical Society [website](#).

In addition to these offerings, The [Vermont History Explorer website](#) is full of interesting historical information. It has over 200 articles that can be read online, printed, or projected on a screen. And, it's a great place to find primary sources like photographs and historic documents.

## News and Updates at Your Fingertips

On Facebook, be sure to "Like" [Colchester Vermont Historical Society](#), and 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 2021-2022

President: Nancy Burke  
Vice President: Bonnie Potter  
Treasurer/Director/Webmaster: Bob Furst  
Secretary: (vacancy)  
Director: Carol Reichard  
Newsletter and Facebook page by Bonnie Potter