



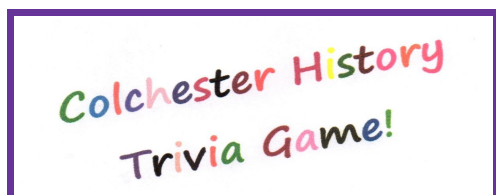
Newsletter

Colchester Vermont Historical Society

Winter 2023

Coming Events – Mark Your Calendars

◆“Twenty Questions” in January



This fun, new trivia game is co-hosted by the Colchester Historical Society and the Burnham Memorial Library. It will run throughout the month of January, and all questions pertain to our local history. Some answers will be easy to find, and we'll provide some hints as to where to find the answers. Or, perhaps you already know some of them. Other questions may be a bit more challenging, but it's all just for fun. There's no deadline, no fee, and you can participate at your own pace on your own time.

Stop by the [Burnham Memorial Library](#) or visit the [Historical Society website](#) to get your participation form. Then, test yourself on our local Colchester history. As a special bonus, we'll also provide the answer sheet to use when maybe you just can't figure out some of the answers. Enjoy!

◆ Projecting Colchester Recreation from the Past into the Future Saturday, February 11, 10 a.m. Meeting House, 830 Main Street, Colchester

From the historic days of [Clarey's Bayside Pavilion](#) to the proposal for a new recreation center, our speakers will give us the scoop on this important ballot issue for Town Meeting in March. Presenters will be Aaron Frank, Town Manager, and Glen Cuttitta, Director of Parks and Recreation.

◆Other Upcoming Events

Please stay tuned as plans for these events develop:

- March 11, 10 a.m. - Vintage Clothing
- April 10, 7 p.m. - Old Coins
- May 15, 9 a.m. - Field trip to Birds of Vermont Museum in Huntington (members only)
- June 12, 6 p.m. - Annual Meeting and Barbecue and celebration of Colchester's 260th anniversary.

Recent Programs

After the long COVID-19 pandemic, it is wonderful to be able to meet again in person. Here's what we've been doing lately:

◆50th Anniversary Celebration of St. Michael's College Fire & Rescue

We gathered at [St. Michael's College Fire & Rescue's](#) Robert E. Sutton Firehouse on October 15 for a wonderful presentation by this team of dedicated students to learn how the organization came about and how it functions today. Even founder Don “Pappy” Sutton made a personal appearance and shared a few stories.



We were treated to a tour of the firehouse and enjoyed checking out their rescue and fire emergency vehicles, especially the newly restored original 1957 Ward LaFrance fire truck, pictured here. It's a beauty!

◆ History of Mazza's General Store



Mazza's General Store, 1954
(photo courtesy of Dick Mazza)

In addition to serving for decades in the Vermont Legislature and volunteering for many community causes, Dick Mazza has owned and operated this popular store in Malletts Bay since the 1950s. His presentation on November 14 about the store's history was casual, informative, and entertaining. In case you missed it, click [here](#) to view the video. Thanks to Pam Heinrich MacPherson for recording and sharing it.

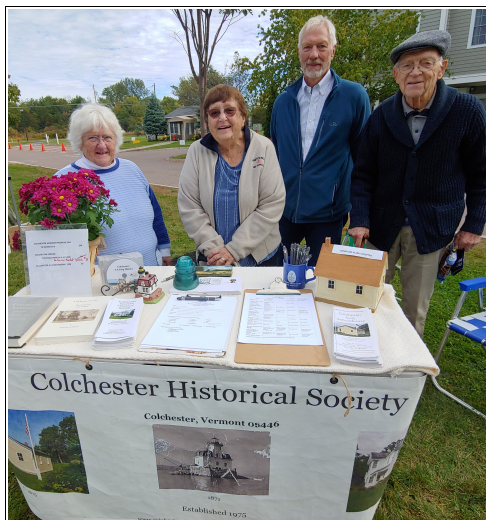
Many thanks to the volunteers who hosted our information table at Colchester's first Fall Festival, held at Severance Green on October 1. In addition to those pictured, volunteers that day were Bob and Suzanne Furst, Inge Schaefer, and Tom and Georgene Raub. We sold a few books and gained a few new members. The event was a big success and featured music, games, and local artisans – something for everyone.

◆ Choral Concert and Holiday Party



We welcomed the holiday season with a wonderfully festive concert held in the historic [United Church of Colchester](#) on December 13. The concert featured the beautiful voices of Colchester High School choral groups. Afterwards, the goodies provided by members of the church and Historical Society were amazing.

Colchester Fall Festival



Left to right: Carol Reichard, Nancy Burke, Curt Taylor, and Clinton Reichard

Award of Merit Received

The Vermont Historical Society has honored the Colchester Historical Society with an Award of Merit for our [Self-Guided Historical Driving Tour](#). The tour was created during the COVID-19 pandemic when we were unable to hold in-person programs and meetings for more than a year. The tour includes 40 local historical sites.



The news release issued by the Vermont Historical Society stated: "The Self-Guided Historical Driving Tour provides people with an opportunity to get out and about in a fun and safe way to explore and learn about many of Colchester's wonderful historical sites. The great advantage for participants is that the tour can be done on their own time, at their own pace, and without any fees. It offers an example for local historical societies who may be geographically expansive and cannot create a more traditional walking tour, as well as a commendable example of how a small organization responded creatively to pandemic limitations."

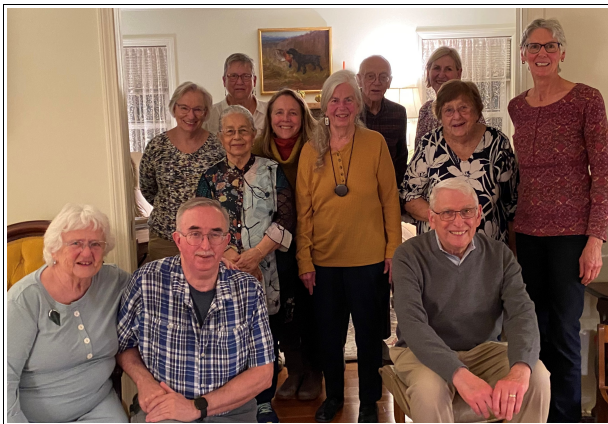
Wanted: 1918 Flu Epidemic Information

The [Chittenden County Historical Society](#) is gathering information and documents that record the flu-related experiences of local residents during the 1918-20 flu epidemic. Examples might be diaries, letters, news items, doctors' notes, memoirs, handwritten accounts, advertisements for cures and nurses, etc.

If you have information to share, please email sarah.morganhouse@comcast.net or cgouldcchsresident@gmail.com.

Log Schoolhouse Completes Another Successful Summer

Every summer on weekends, Colchester Historical Society members share their time and historical knowledge hosting hundreds of visitors at the [Log Schoolhouse](#) located at Airport Park. Now in its 15th year, the restored schoolhouse serves as a visitor information center, interpretive venue for schools, and a museum displaying some of Colchester's history. Every autumn, volunteer coordinator Carol Reichard and her husband honor these helpers with Carol's popular "soup supper." In addition to the volunteers in the photo below, other summer volunteers included Tom and Annette Mulcahy, Pat and Bob Carman, Inge Schaefer, Susan Hartman, Tom and Georgene Raub, and Suzanne and Bob Furst. Thank you, everyone!



Seated, left to right: Carol Reichard, Craig Graham, and Jack Penca. Middle row: Maureen Dakin, Carmen Brunelle, Wendy Simpser, Emily Gennari, Nancy Burke, and Jeanette Berry. Back row: Pat Brace Reed, Clinton Reichard, and Michelle Penca. Behind the camera was John Gennari.

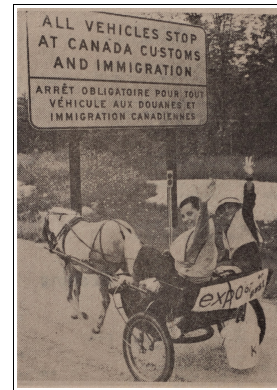
It's Not Too Late

Annual membership dues for the Colchester Historical Society are now due. Please download and fill out the [membership form](#) and mail your payment to Treasurer Bob Furst at the address provided. Note that at our recent Annual Meeting, members voted to raise the dues to \$15 per person and \$25 per family.



We have no paid staff; all services are performed by dedicated volunteers. Your support is very much appreciated and will help ensure that the work we do to discover, learn about, and share Colchester's significant local history will continue.

Update on the "Pony Boys" Project



(Source: Boston Globe, July 29, 1967)

You may recall that in a previous newsletter, the Colchester Historical Society sought help in finding information about the "Pony Boys" who traveled the length of Vermont by pony cart – from Needham, Massachusetts to the 1967 World's Fair held in Montreal – a total of over 300 miles.

Heather Merrill, Archival and Coordinating Producer of the project, recently announced that the award-winning film, *Pony Boys*, is now available at no cost in a prestigious New York Times Op-Doc series. View the twenty-minute film [here](#) for this interesting, adventurous story.

February is Black History Month



The 10th U.S. Cavalry on horseback at Fort Ethan Allen, 1909-1913. (Photo courtesy of William Parkinson, Fort Ethan Allen Museum)

Nicknamed the "[Buffalo Soldiers](#)," the 10th U.S. Cavalry served a four-year assignment and were stationed at [Fort Ethan Allen](#) here in Colchester. It was one of the first peacetime all-black regiments

established in the regular U.S. Army after the Civil War. There were 750 black enlisted men; however, the actual number of black Americans arriving was higher – around 1,500 – because the regiment had a large camp that included wives, children, and other relatives and followers.

Many of these new families became involved in their local communities and some settled here. The [Winooski United Methodist Church](#), built in 1860, became the home church for many. According to a *Burlington Free Press* article by April Barton (July 26, 2022), at least four soldiers retired from the Army and decided to stay in Winooski and remained members of the church.

Sadly, in 1917, the church burned to the ground; however, the Buffalo Soldiers were instrumental in its rebuilding. In 2001, the church was placed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places for its depiction of the Carpenter Gothic architectural style. More recently, the church was placed on the [Vermont African American Heritage Trail](#) which explores the lives and stories of African Americans in Vermont and those dedicated to issues of freedom and equality.

March is Women's History Month



*Minna Aust Coates (03/11/1908 – 09/04/1976)
(photo courtesy of her son David Coates)*

March is [Women's History Month](#), a national recognition of the vital roles women have played throughout history. Locally for 2023, the Colchester Historical Society honors Minna Aust Coates. In addition to love for her family, Minna loved her community of Colchester. She strove to

help make our town a better place to live for all residents.

“Mother would probably be considered an activist in today's terms,” said her son David. “She took a very active role in town affairs, whether anyone liked it or not!” he added with a smile. Minna served as a member of the School Board, the Recreation Board, the Board of Civil Authority, and as a town auditor. She was a Justice of the Peace, a member of the Colchester Senior Citizens and volunteered for many other special committees and projects related to Colchester activities.

Minna loved music of all kinds and was an accomplished organist. She especially enjoyed patriotic songs and proudly participated in Colchester's Fourth of July parade. She was chair of the committee that established the bandstand – now used as the pavilion at [Bayside Park](#) – and in 1985, the facility was dedicated in her memory.



The plaque honoring Minna is located to the left above the entrance to the pavilion at Bayside Park.

News and Updates at Your Fingertips

On Facebook, be sure to “Like” [Colchester Vermont Historical Society](#). It's a popular spot; we have achieved a milestone of over 1,000 followers.

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 2022-2023

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