



Newsletter

Colchester Vermont Historical Society

Summer 2023

Recent Programs and Events



Treasurer Bob Furst shares his report. Looking on is President Bonnie Potter. (Photo by Nancy Burke)

◆ The Colchester Historical Society held its **Summer Barbecue and Annual Meeting** on June 12. We enjoyed a lovely meal near the gardens in the backyard of the historic Parsonage in Colchester village. The weather was perfect for such an event. Grilled burgers and hot dogs were complemented by a lovely variety of delicious side dishes from members and special guests. Fresh yellow irises adorned each table. The Annual Meeting included impressive committee reports about accomplishments over the past several months. Everyone pitched in to make this a fun and successful event. Many thanks to all who attended and participated.



Visiting the Birds of Vermont Museum, left to right, are Jerry Allyn, Bonnie Potter, Bob Furst, Suzanne Furst, and Patricia Brace Reed. Behind the camera was our host Allison Gergely, Museum Educator.

◆ In May, a group of members and one guest enjoyed a trip to the [Birds of Vermont Museum](#) in Huntington. Of particular interest are the hundreds

of amazing life-like carvings of birds by Bob Spear, formerly of Colchester. His hobby began years ago when a stray parakeet happened to fly into his Colchester farmhouse, becoming the model for his first carving. Bob carved on a regular basis for the remainder of his 94 years. Read more about this history [here](#). We were hungry afterwards, so made a stop on the way back at Garden of Eatin' Cafe in Williston for an alfresco lunch.



Presenter Rick Heh of Underhill pointed out fine details of coins to members and guests. (Photo by Bob Furst)

◆ **Old Coins** was the topic of our April program. Rick Heh is a specialty retailer in the category of collectible coins. He presented an interesting history of coins from antiquity to the present day, showed us some of his extensive collection, and provided some collecting tips. More photos of the event are available on our [website](#).

History in the 252



At the invitation of the Vermont Historical Society, we participated in a celebration of local history as part of an exhibit in the Card Room at the State House on April 5. The display included nuggets of history from throughout all of

(Image courtesy of Vermont Historical Society)

Vermont's 252 towns (and some of the Gores, too), painting a picture of a robust, diverse, and unique history found and preserved in every corner of Vermont. We couldn't decide on *just one* nugget, so took a more general approach about Colchester's wonderful, varied history. The display is now online and features some wonderful information about not only Colchester, but many other Vermont towns as well. Check it out [here](#).

Vermont History Day Update

[Vermont History Day](#) is an exciting educational program that encourages students to develop research and critical thinking skills through project-based learning and the study of history. Students share their projects at this annual state contest that is affiliated with National History Day. The theme for 2023 was "Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas." The Vermont state contest was held Saturday, April 8, at the University of Vermont Davis Center in Burlington.

Unfortunately, there were no Colchester students who entered the event this year. However, long-time Colchester Historical Society volunteers Bob and Suzanne Furst served as judges for the event. "It was a fun and busy day!" said Suzanne. "The student presentations were impressive. It was obvious they had put much thought, time, and effort into this competitive event. The Colchester Historical Society will be thrilled if local students participate in the 2024 event," she added.

Historic Log Schoolhouse Museum



(photo by Bonnie Potter)

Summer is here, and the historic [Colchester Log Schoolhouse](#) is open again for summer visitors. If

you've never been – or even if you have – be sure to stop by.

Located at Airport Park on Colchester Point Road, it will be open all summer, Fridays – Mondays, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Parking and admission are free.

The Colchester Historical Society is grateful for the very dedicated volunteers who serve as hosts at the Log Schoolhouse during the summer. And, more volunteers are much needed. To learn more and to volunteer, please contact Carol Reichard via email at winchris65@comcast.net or phone 802-497-3036.

Fun, Educational “Make and Take” Classes Held at the Schoolhouse



Stella Eiring concentrates on a Ciphers and Code project. (Photo by Michelle Penca)

Special thanks to volunteers Michelle and Jack Penca for offering fun, educational “Make and Take” classes at the Log Schoolhouse on three Saturdays in June. Topics covered were Codes and Ciphers, Old Time Toys, and Math Games. These classes were designed for children ages 7-10. Participating students were delighted to take home their projects.

More Volunteer Opportunities

In addition to volunteers needed to host visitors at the Log Schoolhouse, there are several other areas where we would appreciate volunteers. Hours are very flexible. If you can help us out

with any of these tasks, please reach out to any member of our Board of Directors.

- **Gardeners.** Each spring, we tidy up and revitalize the gardens around the Parsonage building on Main Street. During the summer, we need folks to water, weed, and deadhead. In the fall, we get the flowerbeds ready for winter.

- **Handy person.** We could use someone around the Parsonage and Log Schoolhouse to help with various fix-it jobs that need doing from time to time. Examples are hanging up a cabinet and some clocks, changing batteries in smoke detectors, re-installing the flag holder, etc.

- **Cleaning helper.** Although our buildings don't get a lot of wear and tear, we surely would appreciate someone willing and able to help in the spring and fall with vacuuming, mopping, dusting, and washing windows.

Recent Acquisitions



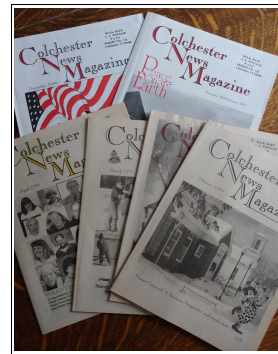
(Photo by Bob Furst)

Thanks to Martie Mazza for the donation of this lovely oak cabinet, pulled from the ashes of the former Clarey's Bayside Pavilion when it burned in 1964. We are pleased to have it on display in the first-floor accessible restroom of the Parsonage in Colchester village. For more information about Clarey's Bayside Pavilion, read [this article](#) written by local historian Inge Schaefer for the *Burlington Free Press*.

These lovely oval portraits (next column) of former Colchester residents were donated by Caroline Racine. They are Herbert Elliott Thompson (1844–1925) and Catherine Maria Stearns Thompson (1845-1916). The couple were married in 1867. These portraits hang on display in the parlor of our Parsonage in Colchester village.



(photo by Bonnie Potter)



(photo by Bonnie Potter)

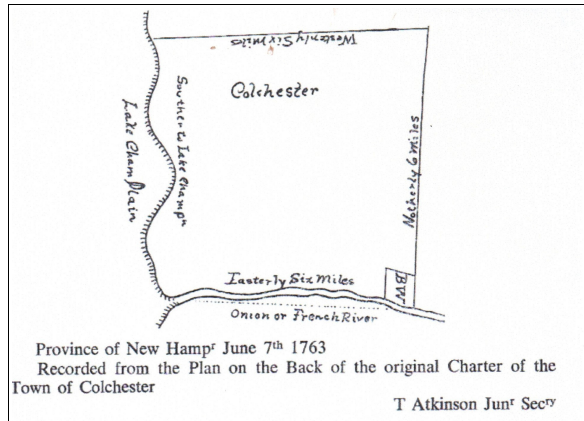
Inge Schaefer, local historian and long-time Historical Society member, recently donated issues of the former *Colchester News Magazine*. For several years, Inge and her husband Hank wrote articles, created business advertisements, and shot photographs that otherwise might be lost to our local history.

Summer Blooms



Members of our gardening committee never fail to boost the lovely appearance of the Parsonage property in Colchester village each spring. Left to right are Suzanne Furst, Pat Carman, Jack Penca, and Bob Furst. Behind the camera was Bonnie Potter. We need volunteers this summer to help water and weed. In the fall, we could use some folks to help prepare the gardens for winter.

Historical Society in the News



◆ June 7 marked the 260th Anniversary of the charter of Colchester. Reporter Ella Ruehsen of the [Colchester Sun](#) published a short series. We posted the same on our Facebook page. For more information about the very early days of Colchester and to view the charter, please visit our [website](#).

◆ Once – and only once – upon a time when the Pony Express came to Vermont, it came to Colchester. Feature reporter Elissa Borden covered [the story](#) for WCAX-TV. Intern reporter Aili Hou delivered [this story](#) for local WVNy ABC 22, and a [follow-up story](#) announcing that the rare envelope sold at auction for \$6,500.

Our History on Display



(photo by Bonnie Potter)

We partnered with the Burnham Memorial Library during the month of June to display some of our favorite items of historical interest in the exhibit case in the library's entryway.

Upcoming Special Event – and You're Invited!



**Saturday, August 12, 10 a.m.
Dalton Drive, Fort Ethan Allen**

Colchester has been selected to receive a new [Vermont Historic Roadside Marker](#), and you are invited to attend the dedication and unveiling.

This historic marker will commemorate the First Special Service Force, activated on July 9, 1942, as a joint Canadian-United States force of three small regiments and a service battalion. The FSSF trained for a period of time at Fort Ethan Allen here in Colchester.

The event sounds like a festive one! Preliminary plans indicate there will be a speaker from the FSSF Association who will talk about the history of the FSSF. A group of singers will perform a musical tribute to Vermont, and the 40th Army Band will play "Frederick's Black Devils" written for the FSSF, followed by a trumpet fanfare. Then, the new historic marker will be unveiled.

Please mark your calendar and join us for this proud and historic event for Colchester.

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 1,200 followers.

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 2023-2024

President: Bonnie Potter

Vice President: (vacancy)

Treasurer/Director/Webmaster: Bob Furst

Secretary: Pat Carman

Director: Carol Reichard

Newsletter and Facebook page by Bonnie Potter