



# Newsletter

Colchester Vermont Historical Society

Winter 2024

## Upcoming Events!

Here are our winter/spring upcoming programs. All offer free parking, admission, and refreshments. Unless otherwise indicated, these events will be held at the Parsonage at 828 Main Street. Here's a quick preview:

- **January 8, 7 p.m.** – Colchester History Trivia Game via Zoom with Bonnie Potter and Michelle Penca (for members only). The Trivia Game will be available soon on our website, and paper copies will be available while supplies last at Burnham Memorial Library and the Colchester Town Offices.
- **February 10, 10 a.m.** – Clark Sweeney will tell the history of the Colchester Fire Department.
- **March 9, 10 a.m.** – Women's History Month: Treatment of American Women by the Legal System presented by Jack Penca.
- **April TBD** – The Past and Present of the Rutland Railway's Island Line through historic photos presented by James "Jim" Jones.
- **May 13, 7 p.m.** – Learn how to incorporate the lore and history of historic gardens into your own garden, presented by Michelle Penca.
- **June 10, 6 p.m.** – Annual Barbecue and Annual Meeting for members and special guests. Visit the [activity calendar](#) on our website for more details and updates as plans develop.

## Recent Programs:



*The singers gleefully rocked this fun, rhythmic tune.*

◆ The Colchester Historical Society and the [United Church of Colchester](#) partnered again to present the Colchester High School Chamber Singers and Chorale on December 12 at the historically beautiful brick church in the village. The musical program included "Grow, Little Tree," "O Magnum Mysterium," "All on a Cold Winter's Night," and others. The concert was lovely with an appreciative audience; it was followed by fellowship and a wonderful variety of delicious food.

Just before the concert began, Carol Reichard introduced Treasurer Bob Furst and church member Jerry Allyn. It was a wonderful surprise when the Historical Society presented a \$500 check in support of the church's [Save the Steeple Campaign](#). Better yet, the donation will be matched by another donor, bringing this gift to \$1,000.

The brick church is one of our town's oldest and most recognized buildings and certainly an important historical landmark worthy of financial support. The fundraising committee hopes to have the steeple preserved and finished later this year.



*Treasurer Bob Furst (left) presented Jerry Allyn of the Steeple Preservation Committee with a \$500 check.*

◆ In November, Michelle Penca brought a harvest-time celebration to the Parsonage. She presented thoughtful information about symbols and celebrations of the harvest season throughout history, and particularly of old-time New England. The event featured an array of harvest decorations and snacks, and attendees enjoyed the opportunity to express thankfulness in a meaningful way. Michelle compiled and distributed a lovely booklet of harvest season memories, songs, and poetry.



*Presenter Michelle Penca spoke about symbols of harvest time, including sheaves of wheat and corn dollies.*

◆ For our October program, and with a nod to Indigenous Peoples Heritage Month, Jack Penca presented an intriguing overview about the history of immigration. The topic included changes in entry restrictions, quotas, countries of origin, women, men, and current conditions.



*Jack Penca explained a pie chart showing immigration percentages by country.*

## Thank You to Schoolhouse Volunteers

Carol and Clinton Reichard hosted 21 Log Schoolhouse volunteers for the always-popular “soup supper” at their home in October. All enjoyed sharing their experiences and stories.

A total of 1,284 visitors passed through the door of the Log Schoolhouse over the course of the



*Back row (left to right): Tom Mulcahy, Jeanette Berry, Clinton Reichard, Jerry Allyn, John Gennari, Bob Furst, Bob Carman, and Patricia Brace Reed. Middle row: Inge Schaefer, Betsy Lawrence, Emily Gennari, Susan Hartman, Suzanne Furst, Pat Carman, and Joel Najman. Front row: Nancy Burke, Carmen Brunelle, Wendy Simpers, and Carol Reichard. Behind the camera was Tom Berry. Volunteers unavailable for the photo include Maureen Dakin, Jack and Michelle Penca, Tom and Georgene Raub, and Craig Graham.*

summer of 2023. They signed our guest book and left beautiful comments about their visit. Carol reported that four new countries – Hong Kong, New Zealand, Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines – have joined the list of 51 countries accumulated so far over the 16 years the Log Schoolhouse has been open to visitors. Two more Vermont towns have also been added to the list of 166 to date. To complete our list of visitors from all 50 states, we need visitors from North Dakota and Alaska.

In addition to serving as volunteer hosts on some weekends at the Log Schoolhouse, Michelle and Jack Penca offered fun and educational “Make and Take” classes for children ages 5-10. Topics were Codes and Ciphers, Old-Time Toys, and Math Games.

The [Log Schoolhouse](#) is located at Airport Park and is open throughout the summer, Fridays – Mondays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. It showcases our town's history and takes visitors back in time to an early one-room school, before computers, cell phones, and even indoor plumbing. Volunteer hosts are always needed on the summer weekends, and hours are very flexible.

## Two Local Historians Featured in the *Colchester Sun*

In October, local historian Inge Schaefer was featured in a wonderful article in the [Colchester Sun](#) written by Ella Ruehsen. The story highlights Inge's initiatives in establishing, creating, and reporting in



several local Colchester publications throughout the years. Inge is a long-time member of the Colchester Historical Society and is the author of two books about Colchester's local history.

In December, the history of the Colchester Community Chorus was featured in another article in the [Colchester Sun](#) by Ella Ruehsen. The story highlights Carol Reichard's commitment to the chorus throughout its 38 years as founder and as its current conductor. Carol also is one of the original founders of the Colchester Historical Society and continues to serve a very active and vibrant role on its leadership team.

### Certificate of Appreciation Received



(photo courtesy of David Eaton)

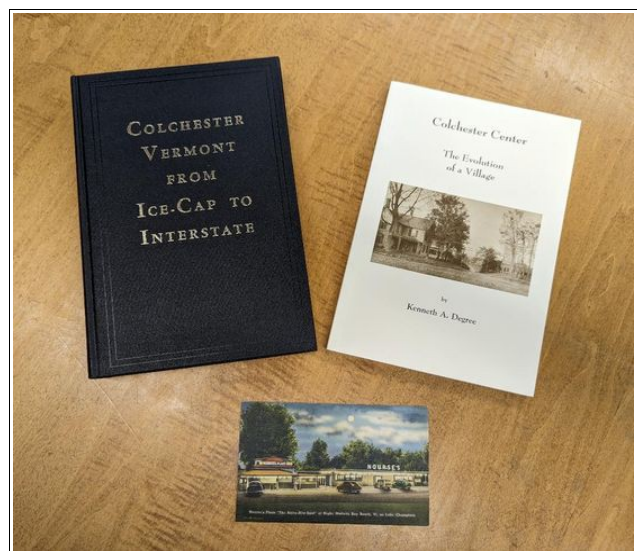
Colchester Historical Society President Bonnie Potter was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation on October 4 by Jeff Fontaine, president of the Colchester Lions Club, for outstanding community service. Bonnie was invited to the meeting to present information about the Colchester Historical Society and all it offers to our community. The Colchester Lions Club celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2023.

### Congratulations!

◆ **The Spanked Puppy Restaurant and Pub** celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2023. In addition to “made from scratch comfort food,” the business, located at 116 Main Street, features online ordering, take-out, live music, and off-site catering. “What are you waiting for? Come say hello and take a load off,” reads its [website](#) ad.

◆ **Colchester's Winter Carnival** is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. It will be held February 2, 3, and 4. “Attendees can experience all the fun under one roof featuring bouncy castles, arts and crafts, caricatures, face painting, performances, laser tag, and even sugar-on-snow,” said Recreation Director Glen Cuttitta. Most activities will take place at Colchester High School. Details are available through the [Parks and Recreation Department](#).

### Local History Items For Sale



(Photo courtesy of Burnham Memorial Library)

These items may be purchased at the Burnham Memorial Library or the Town Clerk's Office to benefit the Colchester Historical Society:

- *Colchester Vermont From Ice-Cap to Interstate, 1763-1963* by Ruth Wright. This is a rare hard-covered book that details our town's history including people and places. \$50.
- *Colchester Center – The Evolution of a Village* by Kenneth A. Degree. This soft-covered booklet has lots of great information about the early days of our town, 1790-1982. \$15.
- Postcard of Nourse's Restaurant. Many local folks and visitors from back in the day remember Nourse's with great fondness. This postcard advertises it as “The Alrite Nite Spot.” This snack bar/restaurant once stood on the sharp bend in Malletts Bay where Bay Road and East Lakeshore Drive meet. That bend in the road is often still referred to as “Nourse's Corner.” \$1.

## In Memoriam

**Donald R. Sutton (a.k.a “Pappy”)**  
**December 26, 1927 – October 13, 2023**



*(Photos courtesy of SMC Fire and Rescue)*

Don “Pappy” Sutton was a beloved founder of [Saint Michael's College Fire and Rescue](#), which is proudly staffed and managed by members of the Saint Michael's College community. Colchester Historical Society members enjoyed learning about its history at a 50th anniversary event in October of 2022. Pappy told some great stories.

## Updates at the Parsonage



Thanks to Dick Mazza, a long-time generous supporter of the Colchester Historical Society, a new accessible ramp was installed at the back porch entrance to the Parsonage. This spring, the current brick walkways will be replaced with concrete. These upgrades will provide better accessibility and improved safety for our members, volunteers, and visitors.

## Help Us Solve This History Mystery



When former Colchester resident Jamie Navarro moved last summer, he found this historic photo in the back of the garage at his new Milton residence. Thankfully, he contacted the Colchester Historical Society before his find went into the trash. Its frame and the photograph are in rough condition, but certainly worth rescuing, and there must be an interesting story behind it that we have yet to learn. The photograph is marked “Hackmen's Outing” and is dated June 9, 1918 or 1919 at Curtis Camp, Malletts Bay. The image shows an all-male gathering with vintage cars in the background. In the center front of the photograph, members of the group are holding baseball equipment. If you have any information about this photograph or the event, the Colchester Historical Society would love to learn the details. Please contact us.



*Close-up of the baseball team in center front of photo*

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## News and Updates at Your Fingertips

On Facebook, be sure to follow [Colchester Vermont Historical Society](#). It's a popular spot; we have achieved a milestone of over 1,275 followers. Also, visit our [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: Jack Penca  
Treasurer/Director/Webmaster: Bob Furst  
Secretary: Pat Carman  
Director: Carol Reichard  
Newsletter and Facebook page by Bonnie Potter