



TOWNSHEND HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

N E W S L E T T E R

SPRING 2001

PO Box 202 Townshend, VT 05353

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Vermont History Expo 2001- June 23rd and 24th at Tunbridge Fairgrounds

The program for this notable event is fabulous. If you went last year and had a great time, you will be even more delighted with events planned for this year. Here are just a few highlights: Ninety eight Vermont historical societies will mount exhibits on subjects as diverse as textile-making, railroads, clocks, the Confederate Raid of St. Albans in 1864, early tools, a "talking" outhouse, and much more.

Lectures on preservation of photographs, care and storage of a wedding dress, interior restoration projects and Vermont history through archaeology are scheduled. For children there are hands-on workshops each day, including making butter, spinning wool, an interactive play on Time Travel, painting a post card. Entertainment for kids is varied and includes a puppet show, marble carving, a spelling bee and more.

The Genealogy Resource Center has expanded to include volunteers from the Vermont Historical Society, the Church of Latter Day Saints, and the Genealogical Society of Vermont – on hand to answer your questions. Computer access and help will be available.

In the presentation tent, eleven different speakers will address subjects ranging from Calvin Coolidge, the Civil War, country medicine in Vermont, Hetty Green, and even the late 19th century town band.

A variety of foods are on sale. Hours are from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. both Saturday and Sunday. Admission is \$5.00 for adults, children/students 6-18 \$3.00, children 5 and under free. There is no charge for parking.

LOOK FOR THE EXPO 2001 SUPPLEMENT IN BRATTLEBORO REFORMER THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2001

Townshend Historical Society's booth at Expo 2001 celebrates the remarkable lives of Alphonso Taft and Clarina Howard Nichols, descendants of two pioneer families. Their life stories will make you proud of Townshend and the Vermont upbringing that so greatly influenced their lives.

HELP WANTED! We need volunteers to oversee our booth for shifts of two hours or more. If you can help us, please tell Marge Holt or Virginia Chamberlin when you plan to be at the Expo and what hours you could help us. The grounds are open for seven hours each day and there is takedown on Sunday as well. **THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING.**

☞ N • E • W • S ☞

FUND RAISING DRIVE

Celebration of the 250th anniversary of Townshend's charter from King George II falls in the year 2003. For this special occasion, we expect to publish an updated history of Townshend, a book with text and photographs. From small Vermont towns, like Townshend, historically important people have set forth to further the causes of universal freedom, suffrage, and public education. These rugged, hardworking, freedom-loving people who settled and populated this area are worth knowing. We hope to bring their stories to life for you and for the generations to come.

We want the whole community to become involved in some way contributing to this book entitled Townshend Vermont, A Stitch in Time (1753-2003). Marge Holt chairs the Book Committee and her report is separately printed in this newsletter. Layout and design is important for the finished product, and we are fortunate to have Robert DuGrenier Associates' offer of pro bono design work.

With their help, we will have a history book that everyone is proud to own.

An important part of the project is cooperation with teachers and students at Leland and Gray Union High School. The faculty has enthusiastically endorsed a plan for students to research and write papers on local history. Other students will create and maintain a web site for local history where photographs, documents and articles will be available to a worldwide audience. This will be an on-going project in the years ahead.

The Windham Foundation has honored us with a \$5,000 grant to fund a portion of the educational component. This is a matching grant to be given only after we raise \$5,000. We need to do this in the next few weeks in order to hold a curriculum-planning workshop this summer and proceed in the 2001-02 school year. Two other foundations have shown interest in the history book and web site, but each have indicated Townshend Historical Society must raise funds locally in order to meet the criteria for their support.

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Funding participation is urgently needed now. If you would like to help the project go forward and help us secure grants from foundations, please send your contribution now to Townshend Historical Society, PO Box 202, Townshend, VT 05353. We are a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization under the IRS Code. For more information, please talk with Tom Lyman or any Trustee

Please pass along this newsletter to anyone who may be interested in the Townshend Historical Society's work

WORDS FROM THE BOOK COMMITTEE

Did you know that in the year 1882 the Brattleboro and Whitehall railroad station in West Townshend received 41,500 pounds of palm leaf and shipped out 33,900 pounds of handwoven palm leaf hats? According to an article published by the Vermont Historical Society, John Fullerton and Levi Howard,

hat dealers in West Townshend, employed local people to weave the hats in their spare time. The income from weaving was a welcome addition, and the hats also served as barter for livestock and merchandise at local stores. Mention was made of "braiding bees" held in different homes to make the work more enjoyable.

Our dedicated group of researchers continues to find unexpected aspects of life in Townshend as we work to compile our town history from 1753 to 2002. We have received donations and the loan of photographs, scrapbooks, posters, town reports and especially memories from many in our community. If you are interested in a special town topic or would like to be part of this project but cannot attend monthly committee meetings, please contact Marge Holt at 365-4455. Your help is needed and will be greatly appreciated



**Townshend
Historical
Society**

PO Box 202
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SECOND ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR

We are pleased to announce that the Townshend Historical Society will be hosting the 2nd annual garden tour in Townshend, on Saturday, June 30 (rain date on Sunday, July 1) from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. for the benefit of the historical society. The tour tickets are \$10 each and may be purchased at Taft Hill Studios, Harmonyville Store, Newfane Green House and the Townshend Library, which are all located on Route 30.

Several of the gardens were on the tour last year, and there are new gardens which will be open to the public that have unique, interesting and varying focal points for all gardeners and friends. A total of eight gardens will be shown this year. The show was wonderfully received last year by all. We hope to have continued success for the society and pleasure for our visitors this year.

The garden tour is to help raise funds for the book on Townshend, for the 250 anniversary celebration, in 2003, of Townshend's charter from King George II. Watch for the posters on the garden tour and please purchase your tickets early from the local merchants! See you on Saturday, June 30.

**ANNUAL MEETING THURSDAY, JULY 26TH
TOWNSHEND TOWN HALL,
Meeting at 7:00 PM Speaker at 7:30 PM**

For our third Annual Meeting, we are privileged to have Glenn Annis as guest speaker. The program will be a slide show and photographs of the journey on the West River Railroad, from Brattleboro to Londonderry. Please mark your calendars. This is a fascinating program. Also, bring your photos or other memorabilia on the West River RR to the meeting to share with all.