



## TOWNSHEND HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

# N E W S L E T T E R

SPRING/SUMMER 2014

PO BOX 202, TOWNSHEND, VT 05353

[www.townshendvt.org](http://www.townshendvt.org)

### The Changing Life of a Townshend Hill Farm

At the junction of East Hill and Peaked Mountain Roads stands Big Picture Farm of over 100 acres consisting of a ca.1840s farmhouse, cottage, and 1874 post and beam barn. It is interesting to note how this farm has been used throughout its history.

The Grand List of 1850 denotes William M. Ware the owner of the house and land as far back as the records show. In 1884 Hamilton Child's Gazetteer names Civil War veteran Henry F. Franklin of the 16th Regiment Vermont Volunteers the owner of this farm from 1878 to 1923.

On January 10, 1928, Brenton H. Dickson bought the Bardwell-Franklin farms on East Hill Rd. Here he raised oats, corn and hay for horse feed and started to breed pure-blood Morgan horses. This Vermont-developed breed, noted for its stamina and intelligence, was named the Vermont State Animal by the Legislature in 1961. The Dickson family eventually expanded their farm by adding heifers, sheep and maple sugaring. During these years it was a common practice to share labor and equipment from neighboring farms. Members of the Cutts, Martin, and Follett families helped out when needed. Mr. Dickson's daughter, Anna, rode extensively during her childhood and in time managed the Morgan Horse Farm (as it was known) with her husband, Roger Ela. In 1965 Anna was named Morgan (Horse) Woman of the Year by the American Horse Association. She was instrumental in the formation of the Townshend Fair and the Townshend Volunteer Fire Department.



After a few changes in ownership in the 60s and 70s, former New Yorkers Howard Graff and Dick Haas bought the property, founding GH Farm. In addition to establishing Colt Barn Antiques, the new owners bred horses with the intent of establishing bloodlines having the traits of early Morgans. Until 1992 they produced fourteen horses at the GH Farm.

The farmhouse went through major renovation during the tenure of Mike and Elaine Shabazian, owners from 1993-1997.

At this point Ann and Robert Works from Stamford CT bought this farmstead and transformed it into a sheep dairy farm with sixty East Friesian sheep to produce milk for cheese production. Under the Peaked Mountain label they made the award winning Vermont Shepherd sheep cheese, as well as camembert, brie and feta cheeses from raw sheep's milk. A space at the bottom of the barn provided a cheese cave in which to age their cheese on site. The Workses also produced maple syrup and gourmet foods. (Continued on 2)

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(Townshend Hill Farm Cont.)

In 2012 Bob and Ann Works sold most of the farmland to Lucas Farrell and Louisa Conrad. After graduating from Middlebury College, this couple assisted with cheese making at a farm in Leicester, VT and learned that they loved farming with goats. They mentored with the Workses for a few years before finally establishing their own goat milk candy business. Today Louisa and Lucas produce highly acclaimed goat milk caramels from a herd of 34 goats. In February of this year they started the production of goat cheese at Big Picture Farm.

This Townshend farm has supported many uses throughout its history: sheep farming for wool, dairy, and sheep cheese, maple sugaring, lumbering, hay production, the selling of antiques and the breeding of Morgan horses. The fields are now the grazing pastures of the goats who produce milk for the delicious goat milk caramels and cheese.

### **Dear Members,**

**Please send in your dues (\$5 single; \$10 family; \$100 patron) for the year ending December 31, 2014.**

**Extra donations are also greatly appreciated because they help us in our mission of preserving history for our community. Please mail to Townshend Historical Society, Box 202, Townshend, VT 05353.**

**Many thanks,**

**Walter Corcoran, Treasurer**

## **I Was Old Enough to Work in 1848**

### **Memories from Charles Gray Atwood, Part VI**

This fun was cut short now. I was big enough to work. I was fourteen. So now I went to school when I had nothing else to do which wasn't very often. It was a great sorrow to Mother. She wanted me to be educated to the ministry, like her brother. But Father had other ideas. I worked and earned money so that my two sisters could be sent to Brooklyn to school.

That fall, my father put me into the village store. This I liked, even though I still wanted to go to school. The first thing I did as a merchant was to unload fifty barrels of wood-ashes, a dirty job if there ever was one. We bought this ash from the farmers at nine-pence (12 ½ cents) a bushel. Farmers took it in trade. Then we sold the ashes to men who made them into potash, lye, etc.

I received the fabulous salary of forty-five dollars a year; and boarded at home. I also did errands for neighbors after hours. I earned maybe twenty-five dollars doing other work. Got up a five; milked our two cows and built the kitchen fire. I got to the store at six-thirty to meet the mail coach. As the Post Office was in the store, I was also the mail-clerk. Then I built a fire in the store stove and swept out the store. By that time, the boss came in; and I went to breakfast.

I slept in a little room over the store; and I made my own bed - every Sunday morning only. The rest of the time I just tumbled into it. I often wondered if Mother knew it.

We did a thriving business in the store, but very little actual cash passed hands. It was often like this: Mrs. Howe drives up and asks how much we paid for dried apples and paper-rags. Were we giving good trade for fine butter? Then, on being told, she'd say, "Well, I'll just step across to the Sawyer's, and see what they give." Pretty soon back she comes back and begins to unload her stuff. "Those people over there are skin-flints," she says.

We weigh out her goods, finding she has five-dollars and thirty cents worth. Then the bargaining begins. She wants a half pound of tea, quarter pound of snuff, a lb. of tobacco for "Him", and-so-on through molasses, sugar, salt etc. "How much left?" she asks. "Two dollars and 17 cents," I answer. "How much is calico?" she asks. I say, "Twelve and a half cents a yard." She comes back with: "Sawyer only asks eleven." "But", I reply, "They don't throw in the hooks and eyes. Besides this is real Merrimack, and fast color." So, she decides to take eight yards; "It's time I had a new dress," says she, "This one is three years old." She trades out the few remaining cents and says, "You really ought to throw in a clay pipe with that tobacco,"





General Store/Post Office (Boyden Block West Townshend)

which I do. And notwithstanding that the tobacco was for "Him", she sits down by the stove and has a good smoke.

I packed butter, dried apples, eggs, paper, rags, and all the other things we took in as trade. Every two weeks we sent them to Boston, and in our turn received for them merchandise for our store. An eternal circle of trading!

We also bought great quantities of lumber and shingles. I'd take a big sled; load it up with provisions from the store, and take it up into the mountains to trade it at the lumber camps for the lumber and shingles. When I say a sled, I mean one hauled by four horses. When the snow was deep, it was often hard going. Many is the time I've spent hours digging myself out. I often wound a heavy chain about the wheels to keep the whole load from sliding down the mountain side. I usually left home before sunrise, and got back about dark. Was I ready for supper - only as ready as a boy between fifteen and sixteen can be!

Then I went back to the store; fixed up the mail bag. Sometimes when the mail-coach came in, I would ride with the driver to Jamaica, the end of his route. I loved this, because he let me drive his four-horse team. I'd sleep with the driver at his house, and come back to the store with him at four o'clock the next morning.

On rainy days, all the farmers came to the store to sit, and smoke, and settle the affairs of the world. They generally stayed all day, till the nine o'clock mail came in. Sometimes their discussions resulted in a hearty fist-fight, which livened things up. They always came to the mail-window and asked for mail. But I guess if one of them had ever got a letter, he'd dropped dead with fright. We had no envelopes in those days. The paper was folded, tucked in, and stuck with a wafer. We had no stamps. If you wanted to send a letter to New York, you paid in ten cents to the Post Office. It was marked paid on the letter. It then took a week to reach New York.

The above selection was excerpted from "A Bit of Family History: Memories by Charles Gray Atwood," from Joyce Coil.

## History Tour Cemeteries & Stone Arch Bridges Monday, May 11th

Meet at 1:30 at W. Townshend General Store to car-pool (Parking along the tour is limited.) Cafe will be open for sandwiches and drinks.

Part I: Visit WT Stone Arch Bridge, Taft Cemetery, Fisher Cemetery, Howe Cemetery, Sanderson Cemetery, Fletcher Cemetery.

Part II: Fair Brook Stone Arch Bridge, Stone Arch Way, Negro Brook Bridge, Brigham/Bixby/Holland Cemetery, Simpsonville Stone Arch Bridge, Bailey Cemetery. End at the Common.

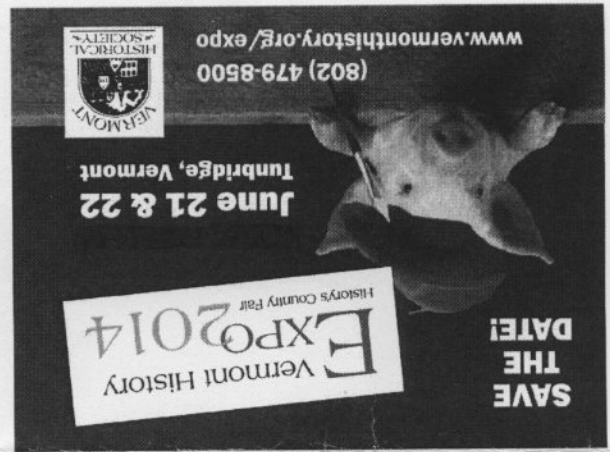
Bring appropriate footwear. Call Charlie Marchant before 12:00 at 365-7937 if in doubt about the weather.



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### Townshend Historical Society Goes to Expo!

Townshend will be featuring two artists who painted and lived in Townshend in the late 1800's: Theodore Robinson (1852-1896) and Lucy Harriot Booth (1869-1952).

More help is needed. Contributions to support this work, which are tax deductible, can be sent to:

Townshend Church  
P.O. Box 273  
Townshend, VT 05353

Checks should be payable to:  
"Townshend Church  
Restoration Fund."

> New beams to be installed



Since September 3, 2013, The Townshend Church Restoration Fund has received \$18,500 from generous supporters of this historic building, the beautiful focal point of the Townshend Common. However, this represents only 37% of the approximately \$50,000 of funds desperately needed to complete the necessary repairs to the building.

Peter Newton has begun work to support the post and beam structure of the clear span ceiling of the sanctuary.

### The Townshend Church Restoration Project Update: