



TOWNSHEND HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

N E W S L E T T E R

WINTER 2012

PO BOX 202, TOWNSHEND, VT 05353

VOLUME 12 no.1

2012 SELF-GUIDED MAPLE TOUR

Townshend, Vermont Saturday March 24, 2012 11 - 5 p.m.

#1 Robert DuGrenier Taft Hill Farm
1657 Back Windham Rd
Rt 30 - 4.5 miles nw of Townshend Common
1.5 miles on Back Windham Rd

#2 Charlie Marchant
961 RTE 35 (Grafton Rd)
RTE 35 - 1 mile north of Townshend common

#3 Norm Flynn
1880 Deer Valley Road
RTE 35 - 2 miles north of Townshend Common
.5 mile north on East Hill Road
1 mile north on Deer Valley Road

#4 Mitchell Putnam
555 RTE 35 (Athens Rd)
RTE 35 - 4 miles north of Townshend Common

Come out and taste this years great syrup!

SUGARING TIME

“New England Year-A Journal of Vermont
Farm Life” by Muriel Follett.....
Life in 1938 in Townshend, VT

(Reprint permission from Yankee Publishing Co)

March 9, 1938

“When I awoke this morning to a brightly shining day, I thought, ‘this feels like sugar weather.’”

“There is a certain bright spiciness in the air.”

“There are cold frosty nights and warm, shining days when the eves drip and the snow melts and winter begins to break away.”

“The air has a different smell....it may be the scent of the sap rising in the trees...”

March 11, 1938

“The weather looks like a good sugar day today—
but it wasn’t.



Buckets left in the woods before sugaring began are picked up and carried farther in to be hung. Sometimes Rob carries seventy-five pounds of buckets on his shoulder through snow thigh-high. Before we finish we will have set 1600 buckets.

MEMORIES OF TOWNSHEND by Charles Gray Atwood

Part II: Move to Townshend in 1833 & to Fayetteville about 1837



The family moved to Townshend about 1833. I was born in a nice little white cottage in the village. Then, after a year or two we moved into rooms over Father's store. Shortly after that Father sold his store and took us to Fayetteville, [Newfane] where he kept the hotel, and had charge of the jail! He was also Justice of the Peace. I thought him the greatest man in the U.S.A. He certainly was the best: fine, upright, educated - a gentleman in the best sense of the word.

Sister Eliza was born in Townshend just before we went to Fayetteville. We three children had very happy times together. We had all the things that go to make kids glad. I had two tame squirrels, an educated crow, and a fine brindle bull-dog. He certainly was smart. When I was playing ball, he'd put his paws on my coat and none of the other boys dared touch it. He went everywhere I did, except to school. But, I often took the squirrel to school, tucked inside my blouse. The teacher never knew it till one day I put my hand in to see if he was all right and he bit me. When I yelled, I got a licking and had to take the little fellow home.

Nellie and I had wonderful times riding horse-back. No saddles - just blankets, tied on with rope; and oftener bare-back. We'd ride a mile or so up the Wardsboro road, and race back; and Nellie generally beat me. She was a better boy than I was!

Fayetteville was the County Town. So, when court week came, our hotel was chock full. Father would send his men around to all the farms, and borrow beds or rather hire them. (Your Vermont farmer generally got something for what he did for you!) These were feather-beds of course. The men went for them in big hay-carts; and didn't Nellie and I (we always went on these expeditions) have fun, riding home on that great pile of feathers!

All our shoes were made by the village shoemaker (when we had any shoes); and we loved to go to his shop and hear him tell stories; such wonderful stories! He seemed very fond of us, perhaps because our father was the Squire. He was quite a poet, and made a rhyme for each man in town. About the blacksmith, he said: "Says Uncle Tom, 'a little rum is good for all old men, and for women too when they go through their hard work now and then'. But, Tom oft' takes too much himself; to learn to stop he soon should ken."

This old shoemaker and his wife got into a fight one night and their noise roused the whole village. When Father, as Justice, went to stop them, they both turned on him, and gave him a terrible beating. An hour later both came over to our house to ask his pardon.

My mother [Aurilla Gray] married my father, Esek Atwood, in Townshend, on September 21st, 1831. My father was born in Chester, Vermont, June 22nd, 1807. My sister Nellie was born in Chester, on December 6th, 1832. The above selection was excerpted from "A Bit of Family History: Memories by Charles Gray Atwood" by Joyce Coil.

Look for the next excerpt in FALL 2012 newsletter.

NEW CD AVAILABLE *Townshend, VT: Collections Relating to the History and Inhabitants* by James H. Phelps

This rare book is now made available for the first time in CD form to the general public. James Phelps was born in West Townshend in 1817, the son of a prominent abolitionist lawyer and judge. In the early 1870's Phelps began assembling historical materials on Townshend's early years, and in 1877 he published the first volume of his Collections which concerned the area of town named Acton. A second volume on West Townshend was published in 1884.

**TO ORDER: contact ths@dugrenier.com
\$18 per copy (plus S&H)**

There was a strong southwest wind blowing and sap wouldn't run"

"No one in the cities would dream how important the weather is to the farmer, unless he had some first hand knowledge. Slight changes in atmospheric conditions, hardly noticed in the city, can make all the difference between success and failure to the farmer."

"Sap runs best when the west wind blows. Why? I don't know, unless it has something to do with the barometric pressure-which may aid or hinder the sap being drawn from the roots of the trees into the branches."

"The sugar season is apt to develop any day now, and the loss of one good run of sap means the loss of many dollars."

March 12, 1938

"John and Bobby washed and stacked buckets all day in the back kitchen. We usually wash the buckets each spring after sugaring, before they are put away, but last year we did the sugaring all alone, we four, and spring planting came before the eleven hundred buckets were all washed"

March 13, 1938

"The sun was hidden under the clouds most of the day, but the west wind blew gently and sap ran almost a stream."

March 14, 1938

"We set 525 buckets today, a good days work with the trees so scattered.

March 15, 1938

"Ten above zero in the morning. Clear and cold. We now have 1275 buckets set and about 425 more to set. Another good day ought to finish

them."

March 21, 1938

"Rob and the men gathered all the sap in the woods today. Rob finished boiling at 10 o'clock tonight. Every hour that sap stands makes the maple syrup a little bit darker, so he likes to boil it in as fast as it come from the woods.....it takes from one to two barrels of sap to make one gallon of syrup."

March 22, 1938

"Rob decided to take what syrup we have to Connecticut, for our customers there, and he wants to start early tomorrow morning.

He had to deliver some syrup in Bellows Falls and get some glass bottles for syrup before he could go....after he got back I labeled the syrup, and got it ready to take as he filled the containers.

I wish I could go with him(to Connecticut) but one of us has to stay and look after things.....he is much better at selling syrup than I am....for Connecticut customers his dry Vermont twang is the best possible proof that they are getting a genuine Vermont product."



Margorie & Stan Holt
PO Box 305
Townshend, VT 05353



PO BOX 202, TOWNSHEND, VT 05353



RECENT ACQUISITIONS

In the last few months the collection of the Townshend Historical Society has been enlarged by several important donations. In December, THS received from John Follett a large framed lithograph of the Military Register of Company D 16th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers. This Civil War register lists the names of many Townshend men who served in this regiment famous for their heroism at the Battle of Gettysburg. Among the names is that of Corporal James O. Follett who returned home to become widely known as a master builder of stone arch bridges. Many of his bridges in town are still in use.

Smaller, but no less appreciated, is the donation of a pocket volume of "George's Vermont Gazetteer 1823". This gift was made by Carrie Lee Henderson from the estate of her father, Dr. John Jacobs of West Townshend. This small gazetteer tells us that in 1822 Townshend had a population of 1406, 4 stores, 3 taverns, 4 schools, 11 mills, 2 physicians and 2 lawyers. Quite a town!

Donations of photographs and historically important objects are too numerous to acknowledge in this limited space. THS appreciates the generosity of those who help preserve the history of our town.

James Follett

