



## TOWNSHEND HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

### N E W S L E T T E R

SPRING/SUMMER 2013

PO BOX 202, TOWNSHEND, VT 05353

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

#### WINDHAM COUNTY HISTORY FAIR

**Saturday, August 17, 2013**

10 am - 4 pm; Newfane Common

Come help us display Townshend history.

Take a turn in the THS booth.

Call Marge 365-4455 to volunteer.

The fair is free and will include exhibits by Windham County Historical Societies, demonstrations, crafter, and history presentations. Tours of the Courthouse (by Hon. Judge Wesley), tours of historic Newfane, raffles, food, and much more will be happening. Bring your antiques for professional appraisal at the antique booth in the afternoon.



#### Townshend Landmark Needs Restoration

The First Congregational Church and Meetinghouse located on the village common in Townshend has received a State Historic Preservation Matching Grant for rehabilitation work. Close to \$15,000 is needed in order to match the grant. Constructed in 1790, the structure is one of the oldest combination meetinghouse/churches in Vermont. It has always served as a church and was also the location of town meetings and town hall until 1910. This beautiful local landmark serves as an anchor of the Common, and is a constant reminder of the history of Townshend. History of this building will be featured at the Windham County History Fair in August. Efforts to raise the necessary funds are ongoing. Call Tom Lyman at 365-9308 for further information.

*Interior rafters of church*



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## The Move to West Townshend from Newfane

Memories from Charles Gray Atwood, Part IV

### Rosa Atwood Was Born in 1840

In 1840, my sister Rosa was born. She was named Elosia, but changed it herself to Rosa because the other kids made fun of it. We children thought it grand to have a baby in the crowd. She was a sweet one, fat, rosy, and good-natured.

These years were great in the politics of “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too.” On July 4th, when Daniel Webster made his famous speech on the top of the Green Mountains [at the town of Stratton], the state went wild. Everyone who could went to hear him. Our village all went, bringing huge wagons carrying log-cabins, barrels of cider, and food. A great sight! Fires burned on the mountains all night; and men got into hot arguments.

### Betsey Wilkinson Gray Comes to Visit

We all loved Grandmother Gray\* a great big woman with a great big smile. Grandfather [James] Gray was short and stocky, lots shorter than Grandmother, but he was the boss of his household and of all his six-foot sons.

Such a hurrah when Grandmother came to our house. We all rushed for the little red box in which she always brought a lot of things –doughnuts, cookies, great red apples, home-knit stockings and mittens. Always she brought something especially nice for Mother, plus lots of good advice for the whole family.

### Brookline Spring

There was a curious spring at a place called Brookline. I’ve often wondered about it since. One time I had sore ears, which nobody could cure. So, Mother and our hired girl, Emmeline Whitney, decided to take me over to the spring. A big brook ran from it; and all the twigs and leaves that fell into this brook were petrified. The first thing we did that day was to spread out our lunch on a flat rock. Even now I remember how good it tasted. Then came the bathing of my poor ears. After that we filled jugs



with the water, and took it home. In a few days my ears were well! Honest truth! I should very much like to find that spring again. That was more than sixty years ago.

About this time we moved into the Jones house. It was a big new house; and we children no longer had to sleep in a trundle-bed. This being something quite wonderful!

### Our Move to West Townshend in 1843

In about 1843, we moved to West Townshend. This is the way we did it. Father and Mother went in the carriage with baby Rosa and Eliza (who never could play like the rest of us which we never quite understood). Nellie and I rode on top of the big ox-cart full of furniture. It took us all day to go ten miles. It was sunset when we arrived. We children walked or ran the last half-mile, as we were in such a hurry to see the new home. It was a nice two-story brick house –the best house in the village.

\*sister-in-law to the Deacon Samuel Gray who saved the Leland Seminary from bankruptcy.

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

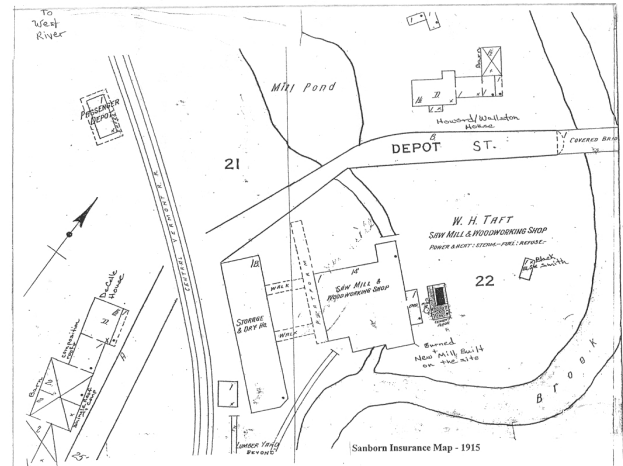
## Storytelling of Days Gone by: County Wide Gathering

Come and share memories, reflections, tales from the distant past when fresh peas were brought to your home, ice harvested on nearby lakes, and the whippoorwill song ended the day. The informal gathering will begin with several Windham County voices followed by those in the audience wishing to share their remembrances. **Ray Ballantine, formerly of West Townshend**, the Druke Family of Williamsville, Linda Hellus from Brattleboro, Bea MacFarland from Wardsboro, and Eli Prouty, former Curator of the Grafton Museum, will spin stories from their times in these towns. This will truly be an unforgettable program from you, and for you.

Sponsored by Historical Society of Windham County, the program is preceded by the WCHS Annual Meeting at 5:30, then a Pot Luck dinner at 6:00, followed by storytelling at 7:00 pm. August 23rd, at Newbrook Firehouse in Newfane. All are welcome. For further information, call Nissa at 348-6301.



DeCelle House, RR Station and Shed.



Layout of TAFT MILL Sanborn Insurance Map - 1915

## Island History Hike

A history hike in the floodplain area of West Townshend took place on May 5th before the black flies started swarming. Ray Ballantine, guide and interpreter of the sites, grew up on the island from age five, and later lived in the renovated Depot Building with his wife and family for several years before their home was taken for the dam project in the 1960's. Ray commented that this hike may be our last opportunity for identifying landmarks before they are completely obliterated by underbrush and modern-day floods. Finding and recording the actual site of the old RR Depot, the Charles DeCelle House, the Howard/ Wallston House, and Taft Mill helped to bring our local history into focus. About fifteen people joined the hike which provided much fellowship and sharing between visitors and former residents of the island.



Painting done by Winky Wall of Brattleboro  
in January 1944. On loan to the Townshend  
Historical Society by the Herrick Family of  
Newfane and Brattleboro

Carl Herrick of West Townshend was killed  
by a bear weighing between 300 to 400  
pounds. He had stunned the bear with his  
first shot, and leaving his gun against a tree,  
went to investigate. The hunter was then  
attacked and killed by the wounded animal.

### TOWNSHEND HUNTER'S BODY FOUND TODAY IN SWAMP

Brattleboro Reformer, Nov, 26, 1943



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