

## ANNUAL MEETING

# Historic Photos of Townshend



Photo by Porter Thayer

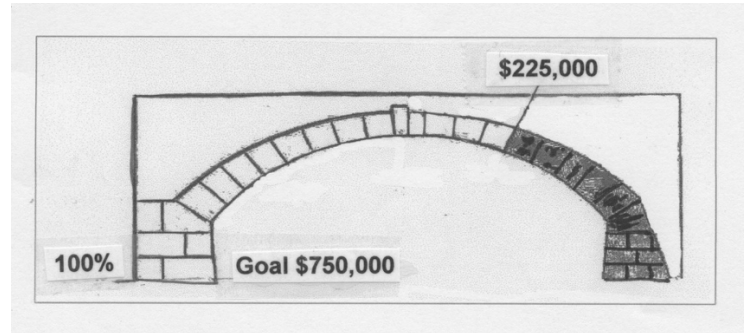
**Sunday, November 21, 2021  
4:00 pm  
at Town Hall**

**Masks & Social Distancing are Required**  
(as per the Governor's request)

All are invited to attend our Annual Meeting, including a brief business meeting with a vote for Board Members and Officers. Next, Charlie Marchant will present newly acquired historic photos.

### **Townshend Historical Society Board**

President: Charles Marchant  
Vice President: Robert DuGrenier  
Secretary: Judith Tietz  
Treasurer: Lee Petty  
Trustees: Heidi Clawson, Eileen Fahey



**West Townshend Stone Arch Bridge  
needs to be restored.**

**Project Goal:           \$750,000**  
**Raised to Date:       \$225,000**  
**Needed to Begin Restoration: \$525,000**

## **Cost Increases for West Townshend Bridge Restoration;**

The West Townshend Bridge bid was revised by a 250% increase due to rising costs of machinery, supplies, and labor.

Three years after the original estimate of almost \$300,000 to restore the West Townshend Stone Arch Bridge, the budget estimate is now \$750,000. The Historical Society and the Townshend Select Board are working together to refine the proposed budget and secure necessary funding which will include an article at Town Meeting. \$ 225,000 has been raised to date through Town Meeting votes and donations. \$525,000 is still needed.

An application to Senator Sanders' office for an infrastructure grant of \$250,000 is pending.

We welcome your ideas regarding potential new funding sources Please contact Lee Petty at [info@townshendvt.org](mailto:info@townshendvt.org) with your ideas.



**West Townshend Stone Arch Bridge by Andrew Snelling**

## **Please Help Promote Our Stone Arch Bridges**

Visitors are being drawn to the bridges through our new signage at Townshend's Historic Bridges (funded by a 2020 USDA Rural Business Development Grant), by website clicks, and by a growing presence on **Trip Advisor** and **Google Maps**. If you haven't visited Townshend's bridges in person or virtually, we urge you to do so. Go to [www.townshendvt.org](http://www.townshendvt.org) for a map and information.

You can help increase interest (and funding possibilities) by adding your comments and photos of the bridges to Trip Advisor or send them to THS at [info@townshendvt.org](mailto:info@townshendvt.org).

*Lee Petty, Treasurer*

## **Maple Grove Cemetery**

(On Route 30 going north from Townshend)

The earliest carved gravestone is dated 1812, but other sources indicate the cemetery was established in 1804, therefore the date when this cemetery was established is a matter of debate. Town records indicate that Timothy Burton transferred the land to the Town in 1814. It is unclear whether the town paid him, or it was a gift.

From 1864-1883 the cemeteries in town were run by a Cemetery Committee. On December 11, 1883, five commissioners were elected and then on March 4, 1884, five commissioners were elected just for Maple Grove. This system lasted until the 1970's when the system changed back to one commission for all thirteen of the town cemeteries.



**The Tomb at Maple Grove Cemetery**

The current wall and tomb at Maple Grove were constructed during 1885-86. The tomb cost \$494.53 and is still used when winter burials can't be done. Fred White, the former town funeral director, once said that there were as many as 18 bodies in the tomb one winter.

It would appear that part of the cemetery was filled land to raise it up even with the wall. On the short road parallel to Route 30, you can see tie rings for horses attached to the wall.

Just east of the cemetery on property owned by the Wright family is another tomb which is referred to in the 1885-86 Town Report as being the "old tomb."

The last burial with a carved stone in the Maple Grove Cemetery was in 1925. Over the years there have been some small perpetual care funds established for this cemetery and these funds are listed in the "Old Cemetery Fund."

In addition to these funds, the townspeople are asked each year to vote for funds in a special article for all of the "old cemeteries" in town.

*Charles Marchant*



**Maple Grove Cemetery**





**The William B. & Matilda Lawrence Farm**

## **Lawrence Farm Fire in 1906 Extinguished by Hand**

Last Sunday morning about 1 o'clock the people of our village were awakened by the cry of fire. It was soon learned that the house of the late Mrs. M. P. Lawrence, about a mile north of the village was on fire. About 11 o'clock Saturday night Miss May Lawrence was awakened by the light from a fire and she at once called Walter Rumrill and Clarke Howe, the hired men, who with herself were the only ones in the house at the time.

The three fought the fire nearly two hours. When they saw the flames were gaining on them, they sent Clarke Howe for assistance. He had to go half a mile, but as soon as possible he had George Lawrence there, who placed ladders on the roof and in a measure checked the fire. Others soon arrived, and with the added assistance the blaze was controlled.

It is almost beyond comprehension how Walter Rumrill could stay so long a time in the dense smoke and not be overcome. He remained inside the house, throwing water and fighting the flames during the whole time. Several feather beds were burned, adding to the smoke. Mr. Rumrill was in a critical condition some time and Miss Lawrence who worked in her night clothes and barefooted, was overcome by the exertion and exposure.

The fire was caused by the burning out of the chimney. The damage was confined largely in the upper story, caused mostly by water.

*VT Phoenix. 1/26/1906*



**Matriarch Matilda P. Lawrence (seated) died in Nov, 1905, 5 months before the fire.**  
**May Lawrence (4th from left in middle row –behind Matilda, and to the right);**  
**Walter Rumrill (4th from left in back row);**  
**George Lawrence at far right**

## **Fire at Lawrence Farm in 2021 Extinguished by 13 Fire Departments**

A fire in May 26, 2021 at the Windham Hill Inn (the former Lawrence Farm), was apparently caused by a lightning strike on a nearby tree. No one was inside the historic 1825 structure when the fire alarm went off around 5:30pm. Fire trucks at the scene for this four-alarm fire included Townshend, Grafton, Dummerston, Wardsboro, Newfane/Brookline, East & West Dover, Londonderry, Westminster, Putney, Guilford, Jamaica, Brattleboro, Manchester and others.

The Brattleboro Fire Department played an important role with their ladder truck that had the capacity to spray water directly into the third floor.

Peggy Russell, Manager of the inn, says that the fire “ripped through the whole interior of the inn with the exception of the south wing that includes 3 king suites, the kitchen and the front desk. As result the owners have had to strip the rest of interior down to the studs.” Untouched by the fire are a small guest house on the property and the eight rooms in the historic barn.

*Heidi Clawson*

## Time to Join and Renew THS Membership for 2022 !

(Membership year runs January to December.)



Please mail your dues and updated info  
in the enclosed envelope or on-line at  
[www.townshendvt.org](http://www.townshendvt.org) using PayPal.



P.O. Box 202, Townshend, VT 05353

The Historical Society is 98 members strong and hopes to grow to well over 100 in the coming year. Membership dues and gifts underwrite the cost of our annual operations.

Due to rising costs of the newsletter, we are offering the option of a digital newsletter. Please include your email address for future reference. If you prefer the digital edition, please write in the words: "Digital edition only." You can be assured that money saved in this way will be put to good use.

*Lee Petty, Treasurer*



Board member Eileen Fahey bringing joy to the day with her smile at the THS Booth at the History Fair.

### Windham County History Fair

New research on the Scott Bridge was exhibited at the fair. Sales of cards, puzzles and memberships were good. Thanks to all who served at the booth.

### Items Donated to THS:

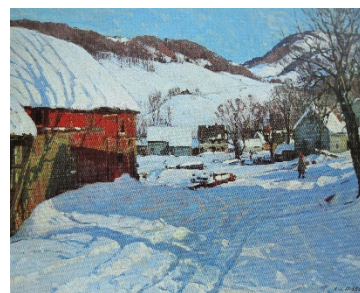
Recent gifts to the society include Townshend photos by Porter Thayer which were donated by his grandson, Bill. In addition, a group of Leland and Gray alumni materials has been donated by Rose Lyman; and by Joyce and Ray Ballantine. Some of this material will be on our website soon. Many thanks to the donors.

*Charles Marchant, President*

### Hibbard Holiday Cards Available



West Townshend Stone Arch Bridge



Frosty Morning

10 Blank Cards by Arlo T. Hibbard for \$15;  
add \$3 per set for shipping