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Treasurer: Elizabeth McCollum

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Lee Ha

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1930s Guilford Street Rope Tow

(Volunteer Carol Farrington submitted this detailed description of the first ski rope tow at the current Living Memorial Park hill, written by her father, E. H. Douglas in the 1980s)

The tow was built in the autumn of 1937 by John Dunham, Floyd Messenger, Elliot Barber and Robert Billings. A small power house was constructed on skids so that it could be moved and placed near the street opposite the William Cushman residence on land belonging to Charles Clark. A series of poles were erected to the top of the hill at the edge of the woods. 2200 feet of one-inch marine manila rope was used. About 150 feet down the hill from the last pole was a safety gate constructed of one half inch water pipe fastened to a switch to cut off power and stop the tow if someone got wound up in the rope. It was a real shin barker.

The downhill rope was held up

with Ford wheels mounted at the top of each pole. A horizontal slide was built on the front of the power house for an idler wheel with pulley blocks to adjust it for a manual take-up of the rope. For the automatic take-up, another wheel was mounted at one end of a small telephone pole with a weight at the other end which was pivoted at the center and mounted at the top of another pole set in the ground resembling an old-fashioned well sweep. This was not too satisfactory as there was not enough movement to take care of all the slack rope behind the skier as he loaded.

The second year, three large telephone poles were set up suspending wooden slides between which another wheel, mounted in a yoke with guides to steady it in the slide, was suspended by another set of pulley blocks for manual adjustment. Between the other poles was suspended a free-swinging wheel on a
(see Rope Tow, page 11)



Brattleboro Ski Patrol at Guilford Street Rope Tow, prior to the development of Living Memorial Park. E. Holland Douglas, author of above article, stands 4th from right. (BHS Photo Collection, late 1930s)



Carolyn Frisa, "Works on Paper" (Lee Ha, 2017)

Annual Meeting and Program Draws a Curious Audience

On November 18, 2017 we held our annual meeting to elect new board members. We are happy to welcome Daniel Guadalupe to the board.

This year's annual program was a fascinating look into preserving the old documents and other ephemera we might be storing in our attics or elsewhere in our homes. "Works on Paper" owner, Carolyn Frisa, made the presentation detailing what to do and what not to do with those family letters, photographs and documents.

Audience members were encouraged to ask questions and several brought items to discuss. Carolyn explained the optimal ways of housing them as well as the differences in papers and the various ways she restores items in her establishment in Bellows Falls. Carolyn has 15 years of experience and a master's degree in paper conservation.

Refreshments were served afterward and an educational and enjoyable afternoon was had by all!

BHS Goes to Montpelier

Brattleboro history will reach new audiences next fall when BHS exhibits in the Local History Gallery at the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier. The Vermont Historical Society dedicated this 500-square foot room last year to the presentation and celebration of local history, with exhibits created by local historical societies. VHS hopes this will help showcase collections and stories that cover the width and breadth of Vermont's diverse historic landscape.

Both BHS and the Estey Organ Museum donated to the creation of the gallery and BHS will be one of the first exhibitors.

The BHS board of trustees is currently struggling with the difficult task of selecting a theme for the exhibit. There is so much to tell! Industry, transportation, education, the arts, historic buildings.... We hope that whatever presentation we create for the six-month exhibit will be useful here at home when the exhibit closes.

This will be a major effort for our small all-volunteer organization and we hope the community will help support it. We are already discussing subjects and strategies with potential partners and collaborators.

You'll be hearing more about this project in the months to come. It's a challenge, but we look forward to telling our story to the rest of the state.

-Barbara George

It's Time to Renew Your Membership!

Brattleboro Historical Society is an all volunteer organization that depends on your generosity and membership to continue its mission. We are happy to send members newsletters twice a year, filled with news and interesting historical pieces written by our volunteers or interested community members. Our membership is based on a January - December year, so please use the enclosed envelope to mail us your updated membership information and dues.

Thank you for keeping our local history protected and alive!

Dating a Photograph: One Example

Friend and BHS member, local photographer Bob George made us aware of this photo several months back. He noted that historical information written on the back of the photo over the years was of little help in dating it: "West Brattleboro bandstand, left background" and "3 girls with bicycles." We know that photographs themselves hold other clues which can make dating a photograph like detective work.

In this case, in the 1980s, Bob enlisted the help of historian Richard Wellman and this is Richard's fascinating and enlightening reply:

"All the bikes appear to be brand spanking new! All the bikes seem to be the same; same manufacturer, same saddles, same handlebars, same bell, same tires etcetera. All the ladies seem to be posed, as for an advertising photograph, with their very best Sunday dresses: not the bloomer of the day!"

All the bikes do have large pneumatic tires. It was the pneumatic tire that created the comfortable ride so that young women took to cycling with a passion.

A few bicycles had pneumatic

tires in 1891 - Special order - at extra cost. Many of the 1892 models had pneumatic tires as standard equipment. So likely the photo was taken after 1892.

All the bikes have a lever type brake that operates a spoon shaped brake on the front wheel; very similar to the High Wheel bicycle.

The Columbia NEW DEPARTURE BRAKE was introduced in their 1898 catalog, and thereafter most ladies bikes had coaster brakes.

Therefore, the photograph seems to have been taken after 1892, and likely before 1900."



(BHS Photo Collection, West Brattleboro, 1892-1900)

Hilltop Montessori Middle School Students Explore Brattleboro

"A Sense of Place"

Poet Wendell Berry once said, "If you don't know where you are, you don't know who you are."

This simple yet provocative idea was the center of the Hilltop Montessori Middle School's seven-week-long Sense of Place study that took its students far beyond the classroom to explore, up close and personal, the true meaning of 'community'.

Pouring over the Brattleboro Historical Society's archives, discovering primary source materials at the Brooks Memorial Library's History Room, digging through decades of deeds in the town clerk's office, engaging in surveys, interviews, photo shoots, and conversations in the busy shops and businesses of

downtown Brattleboro and in the quiet rooms of Holton Memorial Home and Pine Heights Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Hilltop's middle school students immersed themselves in a comprehensive study of both the ordinary and the extraordinary people, places, and events of Brattleboro.

Wallace Stegner wrote in his essay, *The Sense of Place*, "...a place is not a place until people have been born in it, have grown up in it, lived in it, known it, died in it..." and "No place is a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments." During the months of October and November of 2017, Hilltop Montessori Middle School Students were regular visitors to the

Brattleboro Historical Society to pursue Brattleboro history topics of their interest. Utilizing the wonderful primary source research materials available at the Brattleboro Historical Society, students created beautiful hand-bound books. Subjects were as varied as Brattleboro's Town Farm, the Hurricane of 1938, the Valley Fair, T.P. James, the history of Island Park, and the totally forgotten but fascinating Mandojokelele Club.

These fanciful and beautifully constructed books combine serious academic research with creative flights of student imagination. The books were on display at the Brooks Memorial Library during the month of January.

-Paul Dedell



Paul Dedell's Hilltop Montessori Middle School class, BHS Research Room. (Lee Ha, 2017)

Sledding Dangers in 1906

Article from the December 28, 1906 Vermont Phoenix

COASTING ON STREETS FORBIDDEN.

Notices Posted This Morning—Sport May Be Enjoyed on Green Street and Maple Street in Esteyville.

Coasting on most of the streets of the town has been forbidden by the selectmen as a result of the serious accident to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Brasor on Canal street last week and of the numerous complaints which have come in since from men and women who feel that they are taking their lives in their hands every time they venture to walk in the street. Placards forbidding coasting were posted on all the streets in town this morning or will be posted as fast as possible. The places left free for coasting are Green street as far as the corner of Church street and Maple street in Esteyville. The selectmen have recognized the claims of the boys that they must have some place for the sport, but they feel that these two streets are enough. Green street is a good street to coast on and is comparatively safe down to the Church street corner. From there the hill is steep and the recent practice of coasters of coming down at full speed into Elliot street has been complained of vigorously. Maple street in Esteyville is a good street to coast on and there is little danger there as the foot traffic is light and the street is so straight and open that the view is unobstructed. The Esteyville boys who have been coming down Estey and Birge streets and across the iron bridge into Flat or Elliot streets will have to transfer their sport to the other side of Esteyville. The Estey and Birge street route is one of the most dangerous places in town both for the coasters and the pedestrians. The sidewalk on both these streets is so steep that in slippery weather every one walks in the road and the turns are so numerous that there is great danger of collisions. Canal street will be well posted, as it is a dangerous street and the people in that neighborhood were greatly disturbed by the Brasor accident. More than 50 signs will be put up in all, covering all the streets except Green and Maple, where there is any coasting done.

Our Annual Appeal – Our Thanks

BHS members have been responding generously to the end-of-year appeal sent in November. In that mailing president Joe Rivers shared some of the accomplishments and challenges of 2017 with a partial list of 20 items that have kept us busy. Included were exhibits, programs, podcasts, collaborations, new equipment, and more.

Your support is what makes all these activities possible. To date more than 40 of you have donated more than \$2,100 and the gifts keep coming.

Thank you for continuing to help us collect, care for, and share Brattleboro's unique and wonderful heritage.

Donations From You

Since our last newsletter the following items have been received by the Society:

Stanley Lynde gave a 1939 photo of Flat Street and Evie Lovett donated 15 large photos and digital scans. Several books were received from Peter Root and Jane Douglas gave a book about Brattleboro. A set of Cabot Annals was given by Anne Twitchell and Ned Phoenix brought in some yardsticks and a ruler from Brattleboro Businesses. Many photos of moving St. Michaels Episcopal Church were sent by Liz Rogers Scott of South Deerfield, Mass. Many church drawings were given from the estate of Mallory Lake and numerous items from photographs to cemetery log books were obtained from the auction of the estate of Randy Wright. Jennifer Pippin donated a cabinet card photo of Centerville School with all pupil's names, class of 1889. Many thanks to all!

1918 Influenza Epidemic – How Brattleboro Coped

On September 28, 1918, an emergency hospital was set up in the parish house of Centre Church on Main Street to house influenza patients. 45 patients were treated in the hospital during the 8 weeks it was open. 5 patients died.

In addition, many homes were quarantined, businesses and schools were closed and many public gatherings were canceled to help stop the spread of the virus.

Our Scann A Look at Beau Homes in



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at 230 Main Street, third floor.



Cold Spring Rejuvenated



Local history lover and BHS supporter Michael Tudda has worked tirelessly to bring Cold Spring on Upper Dummerston Road back to life. With old photos to guide him he removed many years of overgrowth and hauled in stone to help control future erosion. In addition, Michael designed, printed and laminated a large poster which hangs at Cold Spring in the summer.

Cold Spring was a beautiful, restful place for the Retreat and Linden Lodge residents to find peace. Even Wesselhoft Water Cure patients would make the trek to Cold Spring daily. Stop by and treat yourself to a trip back in time!

Cold Spring, Upper Dummerston Road (Lee Ha, 2018)

History Center and Museum Update and We Welcome Donald Davis

The History Center and Museum continues to receive guests from abroad, England, Iraq and France to name a few, and of course both local and out of state residents frequent the Museum as well. We hope to change our exhibits this spring to reflect changes of local business and churches in our historical Brattleboro, time and volunteer-force permitting. One such display will be historic items

and ephemera from long-lived Roots Pharmacy on Main Street. This display will be on loan from the estate of pharmacist Wilfred Griffin who owned Roots Pharmacy for many years.

Also, we welcome Donald Davis, a participant of the Vermont Associates Training Program in Brattleboro. Don was born and raised in Brattleboro and has seen many changes in our town. He will be

training at both the History Center/ Museum and our Research Room greeting our guests at both our sites and assisting our volunteers in the Research Room. We welcome him as he will be a great asset to the society at both locations. Stop in and say hi to Don.

*-Daniel Guadalupe
History Center and Museum Manager*

New Volunteer – Carol Farrington

Let me introduce myself. My name is Carol Douglas Farrington, the daughter of Marguerite King Douglas who was a long-time volunteer with this organization. The fact that I decided to volunteer my time is based on two things – one, both my mother and my father (Holland Douglas) were interested in family history, using some of their spare time to research where our ancestors came from; and two, the boxes of family papers residing in my spare room. Also, I became retired when the company I worked for closed and I no longer had the excuse that ‘I

didn’t have time!’

I was born, raised and went to school in Brattleboro (except for time at Castleton State College) so have more than sixty years of memories of this town and its people. However, when people ask me if I know someone, I often have to answer, no, as they were not part of my circle of acquaintances. After all, how many of the 12,000 inhabitants can I know, when so many have come and gone in those years?

My family has collected stories, documents, and a few

genealogies on the Douglas, Pierce, and Haskell families, written by other people.

Cataloging this treasure trove will probably take me years; and I’m learning that all the methods I’ve used to store these documents is wrong! I learn something everyday.

So my new life of retirement begins. With spare time and a love of history, the decision was inevitable. You can find me at the BHS Research Room on Thursday and Saturday, weather permitting.

-Carol Farrington

Panoramas

In the fall of 2017, BHS acquired assorted framed panorama photographs from an auction house in Massachusetts. Pictured below are 3 of them. Panoramas have evolved over the years since the development of photography. Originally photographers would take multiple images and stitch them together. Later, cameras were developed for the specific purpose of making panoramas. Note the distortion in all the examples below, roads we know as straight today appear curved in these photographs.



Above: Canal Street enters the photo from the left (south) and heads up Main Street in the center of the photo (north). Bridge Street heads out of town behind the Railroad Station to the right (east). Note the Wilder Building in the center of the photo which, today, looks much unchanged. All the buildings to the left of the Wilder building are gone now, replaced by the Co-op building and its entrance. (BHS Photo Collection, , H. Barrenther, 1917)



Above: Vernon Road, Brattleboro's Union Station to the left (north), warehouse (present site of Marlboro College building) to right (south). Note: both autos and horses in this photo. (BHS Photo Collection, 1920s)



Above: Western Avenue in West Brattleboro. West is to left, East Village is to the right. Boyd's Paint and Hardware Store center, (BHS Photo Collection, late 1920s)

Then and Now



A section of the above Western Avenue panorama. Building on right was Boyd's Paint and Hardware store, notice the gas pump in front. (BHS Photo Collection, late 1920s)



Same buildings, the building on the right has gone through many changes and additions. Most recently it was a sandwich shop. Today it is unoccupied. (Lee Ha, 2018)

Lynde Motorsports Building



Left: In July 2017 Stanley Lynde, who passed away only 3 months later, donated this photo to BHS. It was taken from the roof of the Pentland Block on Main Street in 1939, facing west, looking down Flat Street. What would become Stanley's "Lynde Motorsports" many years later is shown in the enlarged section photo below. *(BHS Photo Collection, 1939)*



The two Elm Streets, which together with Flat Street, form the steeply banked triangle with the Belcher Gas building, built 3 years prior to this photo, in 1936. Notice Dunklee's Machine Shop building, center left and of course the Dewitt Beverage building to the right, both of which still stand today. *(BHS Photo Collection, 1939)*



Left: The little building set into the side of the hill on Flat Street has since been the home of various auto repair shops: 1951-1962 Mills Texaco Service, 1962-1965 Don's Auto Service, 1965-1966 Custom Auto Service, and shown here is R&R Motors 1966-1990s. (BHS Photo Collection, 1960s)

Right: Stanley Lynde had found a home for his motorcycle repair shop "Lynde Motorsports" in the 1990s. Gatherings of friends were a frequent sight at his modest garage, but it was not uncommon for Flat Street to be closed to accommodate a "Lynde Motorsports" special event as pictured. Stanley Lynde was unquestionably a well-loved part of the Flat Street community and beyond.

(Robert F. George, 2008)



-Rope Tow

(continued from page 1)

pole with a counter weight made of two large cast iron furnace grates to automatically take up the slack behind the rider. Power for the tow was furnished by a 20-horsepower electric motor with appropriate starter switch. Power was transmitted by a six-inch motor pulley to a flat rubber belt, then to a four-foot pulley mounted in a shaft on which was also mounted two fourteen-inch, double groove rope drive sheaves.

For a while we had troubles with blowing fuses until we put thirty and sixty-amp fuse links in the same holders and installed an ammeter visible to the loader so he could space the riders and not overload the motor.

Originally the rope ran up the

right side of the poles but was shifted to the left side the next year. The return wheel was later moved up under the telephone cable line with a safety gate at the edge of the woods constructed of half inch rope made similar to a cargo net. Even later it was moved back in the woods to the edge of the field and placed on top of poles with an appropriate safety gate. These poles were later moved to Hogback for use as the automatic take-up support. Narrow trails were cut east and west to take advantage of the top of the open slope.

Once when we had some hard crust, Sam Stafford brought down his Ford crawler tractor with an ordinary disc harrow to break up the crust. A horse was also tried but the crust cut the

horses' legs so we had to give that up.

Lighting was provided on the east side of the field for night skiing. Several snow trains were run here during the life of the tow, coming from the metropolitan areas to the south. As many as two hundred would come for three hours of night skiing.

The tow ran until 1947 when the power unit was moved to the Bonnyvale Road tow (ran from 1944-1948) to replace the Auburn automobile which was the power there and had stopped working. When Bonnyvale was given up in 1948 the Guilford power unit was moved to East Jamaica.

-E. Holland Douglas



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*And don't forget to
renew your BHS membership
with the enclosed envelope - if
you want to keep receiving the
newsletter!*



1911/12 Was a booming building period in Brattleboro as seen by this comic printed in the Brattleboro Reformer December 29, 1911. Can you find the old library, Island Park Pavilion, Fort Dummer Mill, Masonic Center and Fort Dummer Heights?