



WINCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BLACK HORSE BULLETIN

Volume 32, Number 4

October - December 2007

From the President

by Gail Sjo

The Board of the Society is ready to “kick it up a notch,” to borrow a phrase from Chef Emeril Lagasse. In the last program year (Sept 06 to June 07), we consolidated the numerous ad hoc committees into streamlined standing (permanent) committees, which will strengthen the Board’s ability to contribute and lead. This summer, the chairs of the new committees began to organize teams of volunteers who are positioned to take the Society forward in a more coordinated and cohesive way.

At the same time, we face our next big challenge: to develop a multi-year strategic plan that fully integrates the Society’s core mission of programming and education with the new goals of establishing and managing an Historical and Cultural Center in the Sanborn House. Planning experts

(continued on page 2, President)

The Vinson Farm

by Ellen Knight

The Locke/Hamilton Farm has focused attention on Winchester’s vanishing agricultural roots. Another remnant, in the neighborhood of the Hamilton Farm at 195 High Street, is the Josiah Locke House, also part of Winchester’s agricultural history including the era when it was owned by the Vinson-Owen family.



*Thomas Vinson farming, undated.
Courtesy of the Winchester Archival Center.*

Thomas Vinson is remembered today primarily as the father and grandfather of the champion skaters Maribel Vinson Owen and her daughters Maribel and Laurence Owen. Though a lawyer, Thomas also engaged in farming. In 1911, he and his suffragette bride of one year, Gertrude Cliff, bought the Josiah Locke House, built by the brother of Asa Locke whose farmhouse is now part of Hamilton Farm. The High Street property then also included a barn, shed, and about 9.5 acres of land. Vinson also bought another lot of 40 acres which lay across the street and extended south to the Winchester Country

(continued on page 2, Vinson Farm)

Inside this Issue ...

Thanks for Your Generous Response	2
Sanborn Family History	3
Mark Your Calendar!	4
From the Archives: Exploring the Attic	4
Telling Time	5
Welcome!	5
Winchester Historical Society Publications	6
2007-2008 Winchester Historical Society Officers and Directors	7
Notices and Upcoming Events	8

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Winchester Historical Society
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Officers and Directors 2007 - 2008

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Directors (through May 2010)

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(continued from page 1, Vinson Farm)
 Club. (The parcel is roughly described by Mayflower Road.)

The 1913 assessors' records also note two henneries, suggesting what has been confirmed in records at the Archival Center, that the Vinsons farmed. Preserved in the Center's Vinson-Owen Collection is a ledger in which Thomas Vinson kept records of his receipts and the expenses of running a small farm. The ledger begins with 1911, suggesting that the Boston-born Vinson may have chosen the Winchester property with the express intent of farming it. In that year he purchased grain and fertilizer, 175 hens and chickens, and other farm items. Ledger

entries for egg sales begin in 1911. In 1912, records begin for fruits and vegetables, including corn, carrots, tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, and peas. His eventual fruit crops were also varied, including raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, currants, plums, peaches, wild grapes, and different varieties of apples.

One of Vinson's important crops apparently was asparagus, for which he kept separate records for many years. One of his early customers for asparagus (among other crops) was the Country Club. He also sold his produce during the first several years to the Richardson Market (in Winchester), Boston Market, and Cambridge Market, though most of the lines in the ledger record names of individual customers or indicate produce was

sold "at roadside" or "at door." In 1925 and some later years, there are notations that it was Maribel, future ice-skating queen, who sold the products. For example, in the strawberries account for June 19, 1925, the entry reads "at door (Maribel) 22 boxes." Maribel was then 13 years old.

The figures for 1914 detail the financial benefits of the Vinson farm. Receipts for eggs, fruits, and vegetables totaled \$791.82. Expenses totaled \$598.47. To the difference, Vinson added the "value of food used at home if bought," figured to be \$181.13 for milk, butter, cream, and eggs. He calculated the total profit at \$374.48.



Aerial photo, 1951, of the Vinson-Owen estate, showing the Josiah Locke House (upper right) and Locke/Hamilton farm buildings (left). Courtesy of the Winchester Archival Center.

It is not clear if Vinson down-scaled or quit farming. The ledger ends with a record of currant sales in 1934, though there is a loose sheet of figures (mostly apples) for 1944. He kept the land throughout his life. In 1952, when her father and husband both died, Maribel had busy careers as a skater, skating coach, and writer and did not need a farm. During the 1950s, she contracted with the Robert Stone Company to sell off over two dozen lots. However, the Josiah Locke house, one hennery, and about 2 acres of
 (continued on page 3, Vinson Farm)

(continued from page 1, President)
 encourage organizations to articulate their strategies regularly, but especially when new opportunities arise. The renovation and use of the Sanborn property seems the perfect opportunity for the Board to tackle its first planning process. Look for more information on our progress in the upcoming issues of the Black Horse Bulletin.

To find out more about the committees or volunteer your time, please leave a message for the appropriate chair at 781-721-0135:

- Building Committee: David Stirling
- Development/Fundraising Committee: Gail Sjo, interim head
- Education/ Program Committee: Tom Michalak
- Finance Committee: Nancy Schrock, interim head
- Outreach Committee: Carol Keller



Thanks for Your Generous Response

by Nancy Schrock

Thanks to the generosity of members, the Sanborn House now has 41 comfortable and elegant chairs in the downstairs rooms. We received enough money to purchase four bridge tables as well, which are on order.



Please be seated!

(continued on page 3, Thank You)

(continued from page 2, Thank You)

We also want to thank Jill Anderson of Festive Floral & Design for her generous donation of floral arrangements for the Potluck Dinner and the Open House for town employees.

In addition, we have received contributions in memory of Mary F. Vitka from:

- Jean Twitchell
- Phyllis and Paul Gleason
- The Hakala Family
- Nancy and Richard Schrock

And, we want to thank Carol Watson-Phillips, whom we inadvertently omitted from our list of donors to the annual appeal.

Education and Program Committee Needs Volunteers

by Tom Michalak

The work of the Education and Program Committee provides an opportunity to enhance the Society's presence and contribution to the people of Winchester.

The committee needs help developing program ideas for the coming year.

If you have ideas and an interest in developing membership programs, collaborating with the schools and the public library, working with the town archives and the Society's collections, cataloging and digitizing historical materials, expanding our web presence relating to Winchester's history, or developing historical programs for the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center, please leave a message for Tom Michalak, chair of the Education and Programs Committee, at the Society office (tel: 781-721-0135).

Corporate Sponsors

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(continued from page 2, Vinson Farm)

land remained in the family through the death of Gertrude Vinson (1969).

Aerial photographs of the Vinson estate taken in 1951 show large tracts of undeveloped land up and down both Ridge and High streets. The photos capture the

look of the hill on the eve of massive housing development and document the extensive loss of wooded and agricultural land that came with the second half of the 20th century. [Abridged from an article published in the Winchester edition of the *Daily Times Chronicle*, June 11, 2007.]



Sanborn Genealogy

Sanborn Family History

by Ellen Knight

The Sanborn House restoration project has drawn attention from multiple genealogists researching the Sanborn family name as well as Society members who often ask questions about the family and Sanborns living in Winchester today. The Historical Society would also like to know of any Sanborn descendants. Therefore, some Sanborn family history is being summarized here and will also be posted in more detail on the Society's Web page (www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org). This makes it readily available to new inquiries.

Oren Cheney Sanborn was descended from a long line of Sanborns who settled in Maine, while through his grandmother, Anne Daly Crossman, he also claimed descent from the Pilgrims Myles Standish, John and Priscilla Alden, and Mary Chilton. Much of this ancestry is already available on general genealogical Web sites. The Society has concentrated on the families of James Sanborn, the coffee king, and his son Oren, original owner of the Sanborn House.

The Society does not have any original family materials. The family information was pieced together from the local newspapers, censuses, Internet sources, and donated genealogy materials (thanks especially to Wendell Strout). The Society would welcome more information about or from descendants of the James and Oren Sanborn families, as well as information about the Sanborn House.

Are there James and Oren Sanborn family descendants? We believe there are, descended from Oren and his sister Georgie San-

born Townsend. Oren Cheney Sanborn was one of four children of James Solomon Sanborn (1835-1903) and his wife Harriet N. Small (1834-1901). After the children were born in Maine, the James Sanborn family took up residence in Somerville in the 1870s. Oren Sanborn himself continued to live in Somerville through the births of his first three children. A few years after coming to Winchester in 1901, Oren Sanborn built his new house on High Street following the deaths of his parents and about the time their summer home in Poland Maine, Elmwood Farm, was sold.

James's and Harriet's children were:

- ☐ Helen Josephine (1857-1917), a Wellesley graduate and member of her alma mater's Board of Trustees, who never married and continued to reside in Somerville
- ☐ Charles Edgar (1860-1905), who took his father's place in the business and married but did not have children

(continued on page 4, Sanborn History)

(continued from page 3, Sanborn History)

❑ Oren Cheney (1865-1928), who married Lorena Armstrong, who also hailed from Maine and, on moving to Winchester, became very involved with the hospital and other charitable endeavors

❑ Georgie (1867-1928), who, like Oren, married and had children and grandchildren.

Oren and Lorena Sanborn had four children, three born in Somerville but the last born in Winchester:

❑ James Oren Sanborn (1891-1930), married (1) Florence Myer and (2) Ann Francis Dore

❑ Helen Elizabeth (1897-1963), married (1) Robert Blount Ralls and (2) Edward Merritt Hamlin

❑ Caleb Chase Sanborn (1899-1943), married Edna May Hatch

❑ John Armstrong (1901-1955), married Edith.

Though they all married, only Helen had a child, a son named Sterling Hamlin.

Meanwhile, Oren's sister Georgie married lawyer Edward Sands Townsend (b. 1897). They lived in Newton and Brookline and surely were visitors at the Sanborn house in Winchester. They also had four children:

❑ Charles (b. 1898)

❑ Newell Colby (abt. 1902)

❑ Clara Gary (1905-1992)

❑ Edith Helen (1907-1996), who married Leroy Allen Anderson (1907-1966) and had three children.

We believe that there are Anderson descendants, if not other Townsend descendants.

Do you or your friends have more information? Are you related to the James or Oren Sanborn families? The information here and on the Web, far from complete, may also not be completely accurate. Corrections and additions are welcome. Please remember to visit the Society's Web site for additional information.

From the Archives: Exploring the Attic

by Nancy Schrock

Every home has a place where old things get tucked away. The Sanborn House is no exception. When the Archival Center was relocated from the Carriage House to Town Hall in the 1990s, there was no room for costumes, textiles, or artifacts. These items were boxed and stored on the third floor of the Sanborn House along with hand written and typed inventories and catalog cards. While the House was in use by the Recreation Department, Marcia Wood led an effort to move the costumes into archival storage boxes and provide more detailed records. At the same time, the Archival Center, now managed by volunteers instead of a professional archivist, began processing its collections of manuscripts and photographs using Past Perfect, a database developed by the American Association for State and Local History.

Recently the Society, led by Curator Nancy Schrock, opened the doors to see what can be done to bring the collection into the 21st century. Marcia Wood and Dinah Voorhies, our local experts, reviewed the costume collection and its new acquisitions. Nancy sent out a call for volunteers and was joined by Marcia, Jenn Swope, Sara Brook-Campbell, Lynne Champion, Susie Vrotsos, and Sylvania Emprin-Gilardini on September 15th. Together they crafted a plan to enter the records of the artifacts into a program installed on the Society's computer in the Sanborn Center.

Future plans call for making the collections more widely available through the database, which can be accessed at the Library, Town Hall, and the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center. The Society is interested in document-

(continued on page 5, Attic)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Winchester's Edwin Ginn: Civic Leader, Publisher, World Peace Advocate

Robert Rotberg will present the program, *Celebrating Winchester's History: Edwin Ginn, Civic Leader, Publisher, and Advocate for World Peace* on November 13, 2007, 7:30 pm in the Winchester Room at Town Hall.

The life of Edwin Ginn (1838-1914) was dedicated to good citizenship, philanthropy, world peace, and the highest standards of education. Ginn, a Boston textbook publisher, assisted with civic improvements in Boston and Winchester, where he owned 60 acres when the town was still mostly farmland. In his late fifties, he took up the cause of world peace, advocating alternatives to armed conflict for resolving disputes among nations.

Robert Rotberg, Director of the Program on Intrastate Conflict and Conflict Resolution at Harvard University and president of Ginn's World Peace Foundation, will discuss his book, *A Leadership for Peace: How Edwin Ginn Tried to Change the World*.

(continued from page 4, Attic)

ing the recent past as well the 19th century, especially when there is a direct Winchester association.



Marcia Wood and Dinah Voorhies display sweaters from the Curling Club of the Winchester County Club.

If you wish to join the volunteers, either in the Archival Center or the Sanborn House, contact Nancy Schrock at the Society offices (tel: 781-721-0135; e-mail: treasurer@winchesterhistoricalsociety.org).

The Archival Center is located in Town Hall. Hours of operation are:

- 1st Tuesday of month: 7:00 - 9:00 P.M.
- 2nd Thursday of month: 1:00 - 3:00 P.M.
- 3rd Thursday of month: 3:00 - 5:00 P.M.

All visitors must be supervised by one of the part-time volunteers who staff the Center. Patrons who cannot visit the Archival Center during its open hours may request individual appointments (tel: 781-721-7146; e-mail: archives@ci.winchester.ma.us), which are set by individual volunteers at their discretion.



We welcome the following members who have joined the Winchester Historical Society recently:

Laura Fitzgerald
Elizabeth and Marvin Gould
Vernon and Heidemarie Tirey
Robert and Rebecca Vail

If you need a Winchester Historical Society membership application or have membership questions, please contact the Society (781-721-0135), or see the Society Web site (www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org).

Telling Time

by Tom Michalak

On Tuesday, September 25th, Bob Frishman of Bell-Time Clocks (www.bell-time.com) in Andover, presented an entertaining lecture on the history of mechanical clocks, their styles, makers, values, collecting, repairing and cultural importance.



Bob Frishman speaking to a crowd of more than 60 people. Courtesy of Walt Finneran.

His slides showed familiar and unusual timekeepers from his own collection and from the more than 5,000 clocks he has serviced. Captivated by their marriage of decorative arts and advanced technology, Bob has been collecting, selling and repairing vintage timepieces since 1980.

Following his talk, ala "The Antiques Roadshow," Bob provided an "informal verbal appraisal" of timepieces the attendees brought to the meeting. A dozen clocks and watches, ranging in value from under \$100 to over \$1000, were evaluated and discussed in a lively session peppered with many questions from attendees.

The program was sponsored jointly with the Jenks Senior Center and held in the Pond Room at the Jenks.



Bob Frishman appraising attendees' timepieces. Courtesy of Walt Finneran.

In Memory of Mary

The Winchester Historical Society was saddened by the death of Mary Vitka on September 8th. Mary was a leader of the Society for many years, serving as board member, president, and member of the costume committee.

Perhaps her greatest contribution to the Society is the free Town Day trolley tours that she set up as a collaboration between the Society and the Winchester Savings Bank. Even when she and Joe lived in New Hampshire, she would return to Winchester to give out tickets and greet her many friends.

Mary worked in the Sanborn House when she was coordinator for Winchester Public Schools so we are especially sorry she will not be with us as the Society opens the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center for educational programs.

We extend our sympathy to her family and our thanks to those who have given donations to the Society in Mary's memory.

Winchester Historical Society Publications

Please use this order form to purchase copies of Society publications. For descriptions and non-member pricing, see the Society web site (www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org). Send the completed form, together with a check for the total amount, to the Winchester Historical Society, PO Box 127, Winchester, MA 01890-0127, Attention: Book Sales Department.

	Title	Member Price	No. of Copies	Cost	
BOOKS	<i>A Children's History of Winchester, Massachusetts</i> by Mildred Allison; updated by Ellen Knight	\$9.95	_____	\$ _____	
	<i>Winchester, Massachusetts, The Architectural Heritage of a Victorian Town</i>	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____	
	<i>Artists of Winchester, 1850-1950</i> by Ellen Knight	\$6.00	_____	\$ _____	
MONOGRAPHS	<i>Winchester High School, Winchester Junior High School, McCall Junior High School, Lincoln Elementary School, a Centennial History, 1904-2004</i> by Ellen Knight	Free	_____		
	<i>The Architects of Winchester, Massachusetts</i> (edited by Maureen Meister):				
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Herbert Dudley Hale, French Method, Health Laws, and Progressive Views on Education Contribute to a New Winchester High School</i> by James Owens Ross	Free	_____		
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Alexander Esty, A Romanesque Church Design: Image and Meaning</i> by Nina Harkrader	Free	_____		
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Theodore Voelckers, A Picturesque Public Hall for a New Town</i> by Roger G. Reed	Free	_____		
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Herbert J. Kellaway, Linking Water, Parks and Parkways in the Olmsted Tradition</i> by Julie Khuen	Free	_____		
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Hill & James, Beaux Arts Splendor in a Suburban Setting</i> by Roger G. Reed	Free	_____		
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Frost and Raymond, Suburbia and the Single-Family House of the 1920's</i> by Nancy Gruskin	Free	_____		
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>John Kutts: Rare Drawings and Records for an 1830 House</i> by Roger G. Reed	Free	_____		
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Robert Coit, Houses and Public Buildings in an Age of Suburban Growth</i> by Ellen Spencer	Free	_____			
MAPS / NOTEPADS	<i>1854 Map of Winchester (27" x 20")</i>	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____	
	<i>1875 Map of Winchester (17" x 11")</i>	\$2.00	_____	\$ _____	
	<i>1886 Map of Winchester (28 ½" x 22")</i>	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____	
	<i>1889 Map of Winchester (29" x 19")</i>	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____	
	<i>1941 Ernest Dudley Chase Pictorial Map of Winchester</i>	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____	
	Notepads - small (4 ½" x 5 ¼") (see www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org for notepad designs; please specify): _____	\$2.50 per pad	_____	\$ _____	
	Notepads - large (5" x 7") (see www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org for notepad designs; please specify): _____	\$3.25 per pad	_____	\$ _____	
Shipping and Handling:				\$3.00	
TOTAL:				\$ _____	

Volunteer Needed for Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center

The Historical Society is looking for an energetic person to head its *Building and Grounds Operations Committee*, which has responsibility for recommending and implementing Board policies and procedures for the day-to-day operations of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.

This committee has first-line responsibility for ensuring the Center and Grounds are ready for use by the Society for meetings, on-site committee work, exhibits/displays, events, rentals, and tours, which includes monitoring, and when necessary, initiating corrective action for property care, security, and safety for the building and grounds. This committee works with the Building Committee to ensure that renovation and maintenance projects are coordinated with programs; works with the Education and Program Committee to ensure that Society activities at the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center receive priority; coordinates activities and rentals with the Events Manager, including pre-event preparations and post-event cleaning.

If you would like to help but do not have the time to lead, there are discrete tasks to be done, such as setting up a scheduling system, researching and recommending AV equipment for our programs, participating in clean-up days, arranging signage, or working with the Post Office to select a mailbox. We will also need house monitors who will represent the society at rental events.

If you are interested, please contact the President at president@winchesterhistoricalsociety.org or 781-729-0135. We can use your help!



2007-2008 Winchester Historical Society Officers and Directors

This photograph was taken at the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center, home of the Society, following the September Board Meeting.

Clockwise, from the top: Donna Patalano (Secretary), Laurie Minniti, Thomas Michalak, Paula Swartz, Cynthia Latta, Nancy Schrock (Treasurer), Bob Colt, Gail Sjo (President), Robert Stone, Patrick Hall, Susan Keats, and David Stirling. Missing: Carol Keller (Vice President), Samuel Seidman, and Nancy O'Herron. Courtesy of Ed Davis.

Correction

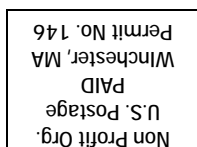
In the July - September issue of the *Black Horse Bulletin*, Dinah Voorhies's article "An Evening With Sister Elizabeth," cites "Forward! God Wills It" as the motto of Sister Elizabeth's order. In fact, that motto was used by an order of medieval knights.

The correct motto of Religious of Christian Education is "Serve the Lord Joyfully and Wholeheartedly."

We apologize for the error.

Notices and Upcoming Events

- Meetings** Board Meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month (October 16, 2007, November 20, 2007, December 18, 2007), 7:30 P.M., in the Music Room, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.
- Programs** October 14, 2007, 4:00 - 6:00 P.M.: Reception – *Architects of Winchester: Robert Coit, Houses and Public Buildings in an Age of Suburban Growth*, Ellen Spencer; First Congregational Church (Tucker Room).
November 13, 2007, 7:30 P.M.: “Winchester’s Edwin Ginn: Civic Leader, Publisher, World Peace Advocate,” Robert Rotberg; Town Hall (Winchester Room).
December: No program.
- Plan ahead** January 6, 2008, 3:00-5:00 P.M.: Annual Holiday Party (members and their guests only); location to be announced.
February: “Volunteer Thank You” Party; location and date to be announced (watch for the meeting notice).
- Help Wanted** The Winchester Historical Society has many volunteer opportunities. For more information, see the Society Web site (www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org) or call the Winchester Historical Society (tel: 781-721-0135). Current opportunities include:
- Managing Editor, *Black Horse Bulletin*
 - Editor(s) and Authors, *Black Horse Bulletin*
 - Manager, Building and Grounds Operations Committee, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center
 - Program Managers, Education and Programs Committee
- The Archival Center needs volunteers to scan and catalog collections, as well as transcribe tapes. For more information, contact the Society volunteers who operate the Center (email: archives@ci.winchester.ma.us; tel: 781-721-7146).
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