



The Thompson Historical Society Newsletter

www.thompsonhistorical.org

Spring 2003

Calendar of Events

Membership meetings or events for the Society.

Thursday, April 3, 2003

- *Membership Meeting – Program (Samuel Slater & the Early Mill History of Putnam & Thompson, CT) , at 7 PM, Old Town Hall. Bob Miller and Joe Iamartino, co-presenters*

Thursday, May 1, 2003

- *Membership Meeting – Program: May Day Celebrations; Excerpts from the Thompson movie "The Man in the Net" at 7 PM Thompson Library & Community Ctr, No. Grosvenordale. See the May Basket Exhibit too.*

Saturday, May 3, 2003 (new date)

- *Huge Society Tag Sale – on Thompson Common, 9 am – 3 PM*

Monday, June 9, 2003

- *The Thompson Historical Society Annual Meeting & Dinner at Greystone Farm on Rt. 21, the home of Rob & Sue Vincent. 6 PM dinner – 7 PM meeting – The Vincent's have volunteered again to host this event and it should not be missed. Must RSVP – 860 923 5728. Over 80 people attended last year's event!*

The following date is for a Board of Directors meeting, to be held at the Thompson Library & Community Center at 7 PM

Thursday, April 17, 2003

This meeting is for directors only unless prior arrangements are made.

Museum Shop

- *Come see the new items for sale in our museum shop at the Old Town Hall. We will be open from 10 am – 2 pm on the following dates:*

- Saturday April 5, 2003
- Saturday May 3, 2003
- Saturday June 7, 2003
- Saturday July 5, 2003
- Saturday August 2, 2003

FYI: 2003 Thompson calendars are still available.

To contact the newsletter editor, send an email to jiamartino@earthlink.net or call 860 923 3776

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Officers / Contact Info:

President: Dave Babbitt
 Vice President: Joe Iamartino
 Treasurer: Barbara Weaver
 Secretary: John Lengel
 Curator: Mark Savolis
 Collections: Hattie Greene
 Photos: Alice Biesiadecki
 Museum Shop: Lucille Barrette, Helen Flood, Val Iamartino, Henrietta Panu, June Schoppe, Sue Vincent, Sandra Warner,
 Website: Barbara Loy
 Museum Committee: Barbara Weaver; Beth Greene
 Concert Chair: Jane Vercelli
Visit our website at:
www.thompsonhistorical.org
 or call us at 860-923-3200

Membership Information

The May 3rd tag sale on the Common is coming quickly. We need your junk!!!! Please call Sue at 923-5728 now to arrange for drop-off or a pickup of those special items.

Special thanks to the Museum Shop Committee and all museum-shop volunteers. Your combined effort has really helped the THS cause.

Membership dues are:

- \$10.00 Individual Membership
- \$15.00 Family Membership
- \$25.00 Contributing Membership
- \$5.00 Student Membership

• Dues to be paid by July 1, 2003 for July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004 year

- 1st reminder: Summer newsletter
- 2nd reminder: Fall newsletter

The President's Quill by A. David Babbitt

Holy Cow! What a winter! It was all we could do to stay warm. The boilers at the two Society buildings ran constantly, using twice as much fuel as normal. With the cost of fuel continuing to escalate, we're looking for ways to cut costs to compensate.

The Ellen Larned Memorial Building is in the final stages of becoming a museum. The Museum Committee, authorized by the Board last Spring, has worked with consultants and advisors to create a plan for our museum. The planning is done and work is underway. We'll see the results this summer!

On April 30, the Thompson Library will hold a program on May baskets and the next evening the Society will present our May-Day remembrances program. We'll incorporate the basket program in with ours as well. We look for many of our members to provide their memories of May Days past.

We have a need for a person to act as a facilities & maintenance caretaker for the two Society buildings. The position would entail coordination of scheduled maintenance and operational details (heat, plowing, house-cleaning, event schedules etc...). Ideally, the person would be a volunteer but a small stipend could be offered. If interested, call Dave Babbitt 860 923 9841 or Joe Iamartino 860 923 3776.

The Society's membership includes 233 people from 11 different states. We are grateful for the support. However, we need members to step forward and participate in regular activities of the Society.

Jane Vercelli, a past president of the Society, will host this winter holiday season her 15th and final Society Christmas Concert. She has asked for a successor to carry the concert tradition onward. This past year's Christmas Concert was another smashing success, filled with surprise guests, new songs and good spirit.

Lucille Barrette has volunteered to head our nomination committee. We need new faces to help with our presentations, programs and fundraising projects and write papers, newsletters, booklets and grant requests. Please step forward! If you have a desire to serve on our Board, please contact Lucille at 860-928-5331.

Lastly, I want to let you know that this year is my last as the Society's President. I've enjoyed this role immensely but I look forward to my retirement. I'll still be actively involved in the Society but I need to slow down a little. This past year has been the busiest of my life and, I have to remind myself that I did retire. Peg reminds me all the time too, you can be sure, with her house 'to do' list. Thanks for all of the support.

Museum Update

Work continues on the museum which will be housed in the old Thompson Library, now called the Ellen Larned Memorial Building. The Society has allocated funds to re-do the electrical service, lighting, alarm, floors, walls and ceiling. Barbara Weaver, Beth Greene, Hattie Greene, Mark Savolis and others on the Museum Committee are readying the building for a Summer 2003 opening. A grand opening date will be announced soon.

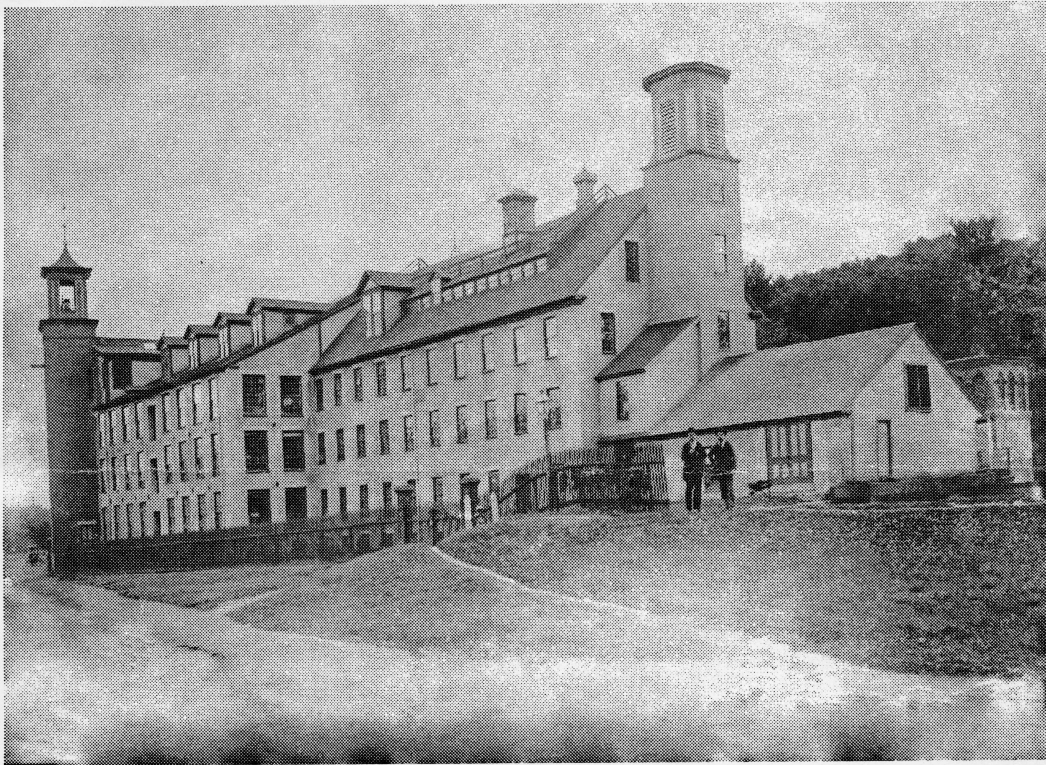
Planned hours are 10 am – 4 pm on the first Saturday of every month, and the Museum Shop, located in the Old Town Hall nearby, will be open too. A request has been made to open the Tourtellotte Memorial Room "Museum" at the high school from 2 – 4 pm that day as well. We thank all involved for their effort.

Book Update

The book's manuscript and photo selections have been sent to Donning Publishing in Virginia Beach, VA for layout. Based on the large number of photos submitted, the book page count has jumped from 192 pages to at least 256 pages. The books will be delivered this fall. Get your orders in NOW for a soft cover or leather-bound hardcover version. Only 370 books remain to be sold in this limited pressing. Call Val at 923 3776 to reserve your copy.

1855 Woodford Map Available

Sue Vincent has received permission from UCONN to reprint the Woodford map which shows home sites & many residents' names in Thompson and includes a close-up of the Thompson Hill business district. The Museum Shop will be offering the reprinted 1855 and 1869 maps and 1887 engraving of the Grosvenordales as a supplement for the Pictorial History book.



Masonville Mills

This rare photo shows the 1827 and 1831 Masonville Mills, on the land across from Johnny's Package Store in Grosvenordale. The entire village was then known as Masonville because of these 2 mills. Only a small section of one mill remains today. The bell tower shown on the left stood in front of the mill that ran towards the river. This is one of the photos in our upcoming book.

Society News

Many thanks to Jeff Barske for his service as Treasurer. He's passed the position on to Barbara Weaver.

Sue Vincent is offering a low cost photo retouching service. Lines, creases and cracks can be digitally removed from your old photos. The photo of the mill above was covered with cracks and lines until Sue restored it. All proceeds to benefit the Society. Call her at 923 5728.

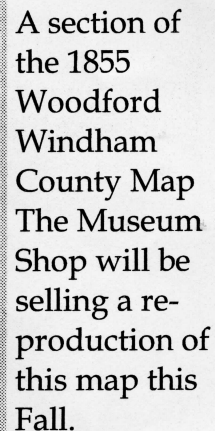
Thanks to Charlie Trudeau, Paul Duquette and the Tanson Family, water service has been restored at the Old Town Hall.

Allen & Barbara Bennett wrote to tell us that Hallie Bennett from Quaddic Road, Thompson Hill has turned 106 years old!!

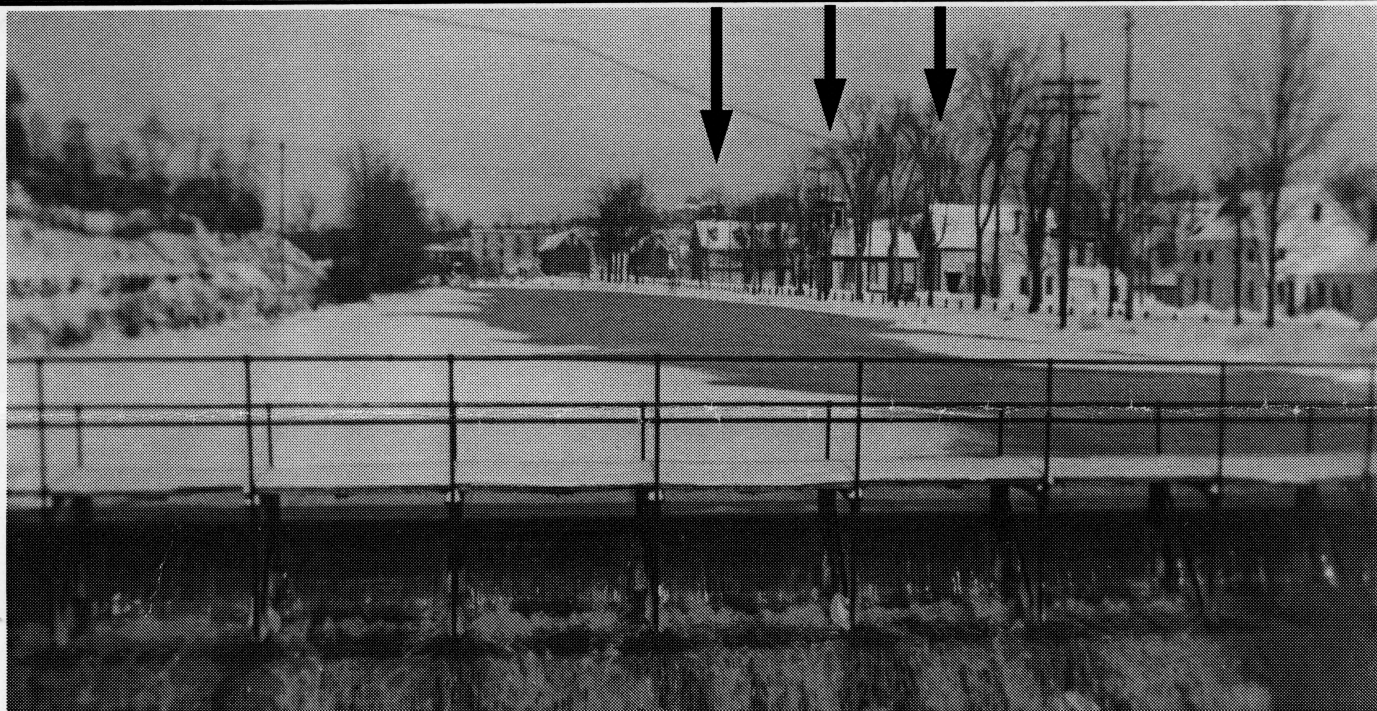


Mystery Photo: This photo is believed to be an old road in Thompson. Can anyone identify its location? In the distance, there is a man walking with 2 animals. No other landmarks visible except the house on the right. Call 923-3776 with your answer.

Previous Mystery Photo: No one identified the mill location or name but one person thought it was a picker stick factory.



Notice the commercial nature of Thompson Hill at that time.



View of mill pond off Rt. 12 in Grosvenordale— The 1862/63 mill now being demolished was served by this mill pond. This view is looking towards North Grosvenordale with Rt. 12 running north towards the Masonville Mill section of town, visible at the top of the photo. A photo of the Masonville Mills in the early days is on page 3 of this newsletter. Three interesting buildings can be seen in the photo above. The left arrow points to the old Grosvenordale General Store (Dery's, Kristek's, Hutchinson's). The store burned about 1950. The middle arrow shows the old church (with bell tower intact), now a home. It was a Girl's Club for years. The right arrow shows the Fire House, now the Grosvenordale Post Office.



Valley Springs Sportsman's Club—For half a century, the club has been a part of Thompson life. On the left, Tootsie Duquette keeps an eye on the camera and misses the 'catch'. BBQs, skeet shooting, "The Great Fishing Derby", baseball, ice skating parties and more have kept the club alive. These grainy shots are some of the earliest of Valley Springs in the THS collection.



This is an greatly enlarged section of a 1940 photo at the Marot School. The school had a tradition of selecting a May Day Queen who presided at the annual May Day Ball. Though blurry, the 'Queen' can be seen here flanked by her two 'maids'. Please participate in our May-Day program. We want your memories!!!!

Free Classifieds for Members

Wanted: Early photographs of the mill area opposite Johnny's Package store in Grosvenordale; Information / photos re: Schyler Nichols & Charles Searls; both lived at 24 Quaddick Rd., Thompson Hill, will copy & return— Val 923 3776

Wanted: Old 'Jeweler Shaw' Postcards of Thompson buildings. John 928-1166

Wanted: pictures earlier than 1940 of the Quinebaug area; especially Condos Store & Lyceum Hall— Betty 935 5180

Looking for maps, engravings and artwork specifically on Thompson earlier than the 1850s; Will copy & return; Sue 923 5728

To place your free ad, call Joe 923-0151 (will print as space permits—FCFS)



Ask The Society

Q. What was the Andem baseball team named after? (see attached photo)

A. The Andem team was one of the baseball teams sponsored by the Grosvenordale Company. This photo, taken about 1910, shows the team, named after the Grosvenordale Company Mill Agent C. S. Andem. Bottom row: Mederic Seney, 2nd – batboy?, Armand Blanchette; Middle row: man in center with bow tie C.S. Andem (or it could be manager?), 4th from left Arsene Frappier; Top row: 4th from left Neri Coderre, 5th George Carlson, 6th Joe Marcustry

County Home



Q. How did County Home Road get its name?

A. County Home Road, also known as Route 21, used to have the Windham County Children's Home located near the Rt.44 intersection. This area was once Thompson.

Q. Where was the Mechanics Inn?

A. This was another name for the French River Inn on Rt. 12 in Mechanicsville. See photo at left.

