



Thompson Historical Society Winter Newsletter

President's Quill By Joe lamartino



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Friends,

As I write this, the elections are still 3 days away. May we never see such rancor again in American politics.

I wanted to discuss a specific word 'heirloom' in this column today. Those who know me well understand that one of my hobbies is learning the origins of words. When working in a historical society, one is reminded often of words that have been lost in the mists of time. In ancient times, an heirloom was mostly associated with farm implements such as a plow or shovel that would be passed to the inheritor of farm land. 'Loom' in this early English context meant a tool or a crude machine. The tools came with the land.

Farms in many sections of Britain in olden times would not be split up but might be passed intact to the oldest son in some sections of the country or to the youngest son in other regions, and to a 'chosen' son in still other areas. Rarely, it might even pass to a daughter. The heirlooms would then go with the land inheritance. There would be other items for the remaining heirs but these items were not called heirlooms.

There must have been some-

thing magical about receiving an heirloom plow, perhaps used for many generations in a family line. The idea of that continuity and heritage passed down to the next in line resonates with me and I hope with you as well. Inheritance rules have evolved as many families have left agricultural life but the heirloom intent remains - passing traditions on.

Consider that young child today who dresses up for Halloween. Is the ritual just for a Snickers bar and the red ruby slippers now? Or was there more to this tradition? How did the tradition start and why has it survived so long? Why do we still call Wednesday by its original pagan name 'Wodin's Day' for one of those powerful legendary gods. Someone made a decision to keep tradition alive in that case. History can be more than the old photo or building. Appreciate the words and rituals handed down to us.....and pass the best forward.



The back of this photo is annotated 10/23/96, Randy Johnson, President/CEO, and Ed Hanlon, Executive VP, sitting inside a 1925 Chevrolet open touring car, the Johnson Corrugated's 1st company car, Thompson.

*Donated by Ron Heroux,
Archivist / President of the
Webster-Dudley Historical
Society*

Did These Notables Visit Thompson?

There has been talk over the years that many notable people have visited Thompson. Below are a few, but we have no documentation to prove or disprove. Maybe there is someone out there that can help us.

Mark Snay via Don McGee Winston - Winston Churchill visited Thompson in the early 1930's.

Don McGee's Book: Tales along the Quinebaug - Don McGee's grandfather, Herve "Henry" Berthume, as ambassador or government official and lived in the UK on U.S. government assignment.

Unknown Source - James Joyce, famous poet and author, comes to Howe-Marot School

Unknown Source - President Ulysses S. Grant comes to Thompson Station. He may have departed from Thompson after speaking at Roseland Cottage in Woodstock CT.

Unknown Source - The Marquis de LaFayette, on his tour of the United States in 1824-1825, was supposed to have visited Thompson and stayed for a few days at the Vernon Stiles Tavern.

2015-2016 BOARD OF

DIRECTORS MEETING SCHEDULE

December 14, 2016 at
Thompson Library (Room 3)

March 15, 2017 at
Thompson Library (Room 3)

April 12, 2017 at
Thompson Library (Room 3)

May 17, 2017 at
the ELM

June 6, 2017 at
Greystone Farm

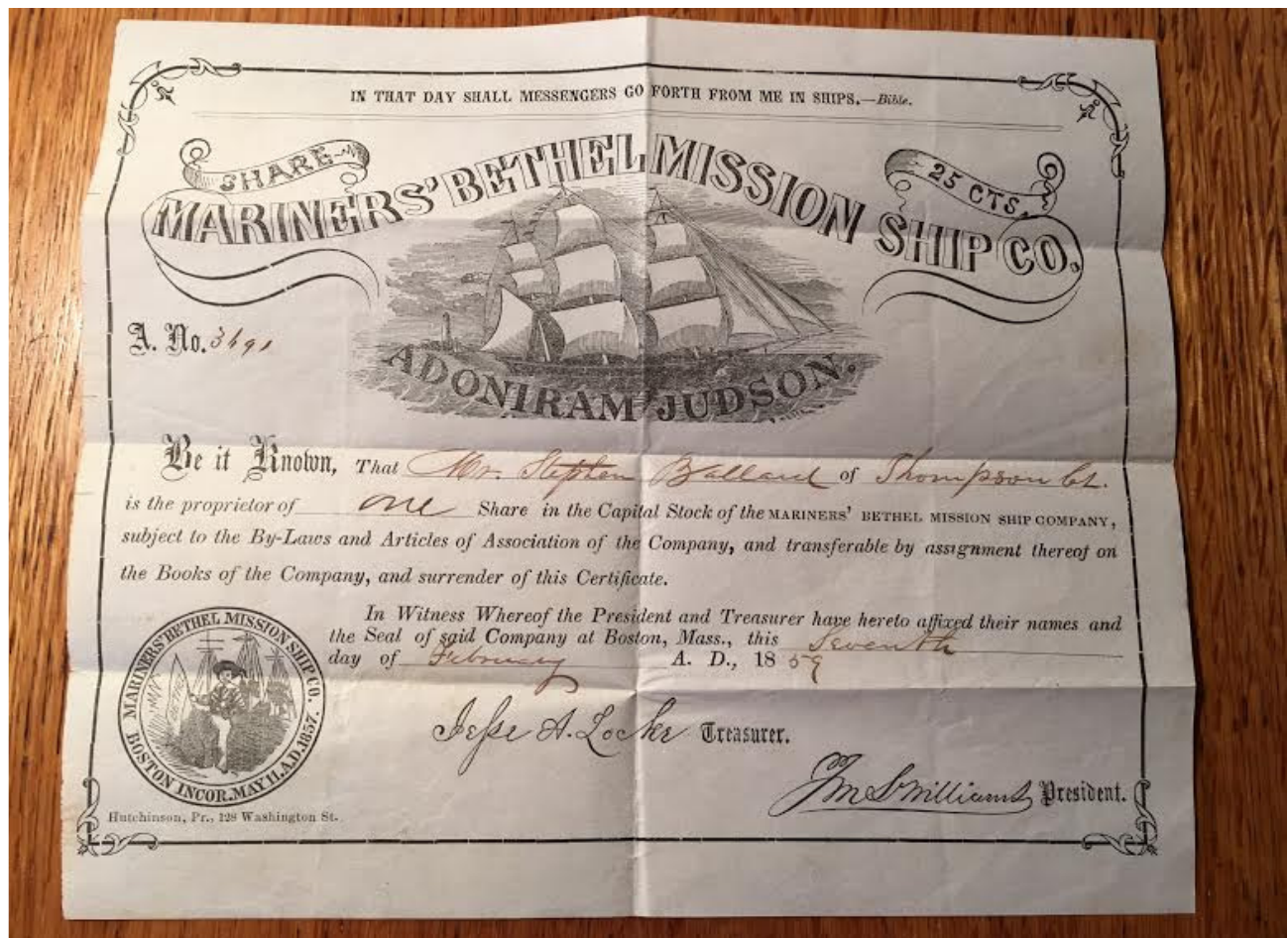
Missionary Stories

Continued



Many years ago, there was Rev. Erastus Benton, who was a minister for the Methodist Episcopal Church serving Thompson for a time in the 1830-1847 period. His grand-daughter Mrs. Mary Scranton was a missionary and founded the first school ever known for girls 'in that far off land Corea'. She founded in 1886 Ewha University, one of the most prestigious women's schools in Seoul, Korea, if not all Asia. Current enrollment is 21,000 students

Thompson's missionaries headed for all corners of the globe supported by loyal volunteers at home. We have numerous reports of lady volunteers sewing clothing and packing them in hogsheads/casks for ocean transport to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and beyond. We would welcome some researchers to come forward to tell the stories of those who left Thompson to 'save others' who followed heathen practices and taboos.



Jacobs Tavern Clock

While researching old newspapers for information about the Jacobs Tavern of East Thompson, an 1892 news article from “The Sun” (New York, N.Y.) was happened upon that told the story of an old clock that had belonged to the Jacobs Family and their Tavern in East Thompson. The clock had been obtained by George W. Carroll, of Norwich Conn., with the agreement that the clock would never leave his family. George brought the clock to Norwich, in pieces, and had it restored back to working order.

Intrigued that a clock from the time of the early settlement of East Thompson might exist, the article was set aside for future research. The fact that the clock was not supposed to leave the Carroll family greatly increased the chances of locating it.

In early 2016 research began with tracing George W. Carroll and his descendents. Using Ancestry.com, George’s descendents were traced as close to present day as was possible. Further internet searches produced a recent (2015) obituary of one of George’s grandson’s, Ira Green Briggs Carroll, of Florida. This obituary named several living relatives of Ira Carroll, including his three sons who also lived in Florida. Because of other THS obligations, the research was set aside in May 2016.

In August of 2016, THS was contacted by Mr. Robert Bell of Tennessee, with an inquiry for information about the Jacobs Tavern. He was trying to learn what he could about the Tavern because he had purchased a clock from an antique mall in Florida that had an old newspaper article glued inside the case. It seems that the clock had found us before we were able to

find it. The article in the clock, although not the same as the one mentioned above, basically told the same story of the clock’s background. Also included were other documents that dated the age of the original parts of the clock to ca. 1725.

Mr. Bell shared what info he had on the clock, including where he had purchased it. We contacted the antique mall and learned that the mall was owned by the family of Ira Carroll’s daughter in law, Mrs. Ashley Carroll. Mrs. Carroll was surprised to learn of the clock’s background and was disappointed that they had unknowingly let it slip out of the family, especially given the promise made by George W. Carroll back in the 1890’s.

At the time Mr. Bell first contacted THS, he stated that it was still in “as found” condition - apart and not working. He has since contacted THS to let us know that he has it back together, properly functioning and it is proudly standing in his home, once again keeping time. Inquiring as to what was in store for its future, Mr. Bell replied that for now it would remain in his possession.

A more detailed version of this article, with additional photos can be found on the THS website.



An Early View of Thompson's Common, its first Meeting House and the Red Tavern



Awhile back, THS received an email from Mary Lycan requesting information regarding Rev. Daniel Dow and his family. As a student at UConn, Mary was doing research on Elizabeth Marsh Dow Seagrave (1798-1881), a daughter of Rev. Dow, a long time minister of Thompson. Mary introduced us to a book she had come upon that was written by Elizabeth Seagrave. The book is titled *"Bessie; or, Reminiscences of a Daughter of a New England clergyman of the Eighteenth Century."* This book tells the story of Elizabeth's life as a child and young woman growing up in Thompson. The specific copy of this book, that Mary had located, included a sketch within the blank leaves of the book. Mary also sent us a link to a digitized version of this book allowing us to easily review what it was about.

After reading the book and reviewing the sketch, we quickly realized what an important find this was. The book itself is invaluable due not only to its giving insight into the life of a

girl/young woman at the turn of the 19th century, but also a specific glimpse of a life of that time in Thompson, Ct. The sketch, while not a part of the original printing of the book, is just as important (if not more so) than the text of the book. Mary stated that the specific copy of the book she reviewed is believed to have belonged to the author. If so, it is possible that the sketch was drawn by Elizabeth based on how she recalled the Thompson Common appeared when she lived there as a child.

In researching the accuracy of the sketch, we realized there is no single written record that described the layout of the Common and surrounding buildings from its beginnings to the early 20th century, at least not one that we could locate. Through review of many documents and history books, we have been able to piece together what we think was part of the original layout of the Common and a few of its surrounding buildings. Documents indicate the first Meeting House was built in

[\(Cont'd on Page 6\)](#)

(An Early View Cont'd)

1729/1730 “*right before the door of Hezekiah Sabin, about twenty rods from said house*” (Red Tavern) on a parcel of land that was donated by Hezekiah Sabin. This location being on the smaller eastern section of the present day common that is bounded by Rt. 193, Rt. 200, Chase Road and Bates Ave. Documents approximate its location was across Rt. 193 from the house just north of the ELM Museum and just south of the war monument. The Red Tavern was located on the west side of Bates Ave. on what is today the larger section of the Common that is bounded by Chase Rd., Bates Ave and Rt. 200.

These documented locations match the layout as shown in the sketch. Based on the details listed above, it is our belief that the sketch is a view of the Red Tavern (left side), first Meeting House (center) and one of the buildings that exists, or existed, near where the ELM currently is located – possibly George Keith’s tavern (which was on the site of present day ELM Museum). The view in the sketch is seen as if one were standing at a point on present day Rt. 193, just a few yards south of Chase Road, and looking north towards the Common.

Also shown in the sketch are two roads. We believe present day Bates Ave. can be seen between the Red Tavern and the Meeting House. Documents indicate that this was the main public road at the time the Meeting house was built. To the right of the Meeting House can be seen a horse block which was used for mounting/dismounting horses and carriages. At the far right of the sketch, evidence of a road can be seen between the horse block and the building. We believe this was originally access to the town pound, not shown in the sketch, which was located about where the present day Congregational Church stands, eventually

being continued straight through by the turn-pike company (ca. 1797-1800), from Chase Road out to the north point of the “Heater Piece”. Because the sketch shows the Meeting house with a steeple and the section of Rt. 193 passing between the Meeting House and building, we estimate the time period in this sketch to be ca. 1798 to about 1805. This time frame also falls right in with the time that Elizabeth was a girl/young woman.

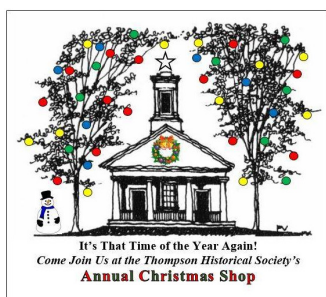
The first meeting house, damaged by the September gale of 1815, was deemed not worth repairing, removed shortly thereafter and the first meeting in the second Meeting house took place on Dec. 1, 1817. The Red Tavern was built shortly after 1716 and removed sometime prior to 1845, possibly in 1821 (source yet to be confirmed).

Further research will continue, with the goal of better confirming some of the above as well as illustrating how the center of our town appeared in its earliest days. Our thanks to Mary Lycan for reaching out to THS with this important piece of our history, without which we may never have found this book and sketch. A digitized copy of “Bessie” can be found at: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=yale.39002005707816;view=2up;seq=6>

December 12, 1894

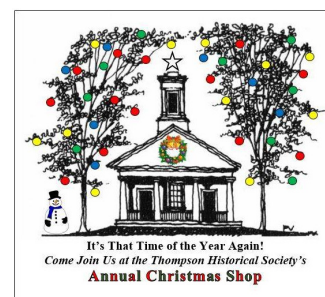
The recent marriage of Mr. Edwin Lloyd Loweree and Miss Inez Harriet Aldrich, although strictly private, was one of the prettiest affairs that has occurred in Thompson for years. The marriage took place at the residence of the bride’s sister, the wife of Hon Randolph Chandler. Another sister acted as bride’s-maid, while the brother gave the bride away. The bride was most becomingly attired in a handsome faille, with tulle veil, and carried a bouquet of white roses.

(Newspaper Clipping From the Windham County Transcript)



It's that time again!

Experience the Thompson Historical Society's
Christmas Shop at the Old Town Hall
on the pristine Thompson Common



December 3&4, 10&11, 17&18 and 24

from 10AM until 4 PM each day

Over 25 years of delighted shoppers know that this is the premier
Christmas Boutique in the area for gorgeously wrapped gifts for everyone
on your list and the most beautiful and unique holiday decor. From rustic to
elegant, you'll find something for every taste.

Christmas Lanterns and Holiday Hurricanes in all sizes

Portmeiron Gift Sets

Galileo Thermometers

Luscious handcrafted blankets from Portugal

Hand-woven afghans from the British Isles

Cozy fleece and woven throws

Fantastic down-filled holiday pillows

Colorful table runners for your home or gift-giving

Assorted wreaths, sleds, whimsical gnomes, deer-themed gifts and decor
and everything in between

Trees laden with hundreds of all new ornaments!

Stunning ornaments by Bethany Lowe

Holiday doormats and rugs

Gifts for the Hostess

Gifts for Men

Gifts for Birds, Bird-lovers and Furry Friends

Toys and games galore for all ages

Cards, bags and vintage tags

and of course

Thompson Historical Society gifts, prints, books and treasures

All proceeds benefit the Thompson Historical Society's Preservation Fund

The Thompson Historical Society
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www.thompsonhistorical.org
Address Correction Requested



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July 2016-June 2017 Membership

Mail to: Thompson Historical Society
Attn: Membership
PO Box 47
Thompson CT 06277

Contributing Membership: \$25.00

Individual Membership: \$10.00

Family Membership: \$15.00

Members are invited to purchase first year
memberships for new members for \$5.00

****Please Check Your Newsletter Label For Our Membership Info. See Website for More Information On Fees. ****

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Visit us on the web at www.thompsonhistorical.com