

The Thompson Historical Society Newsletter



Spring 2022

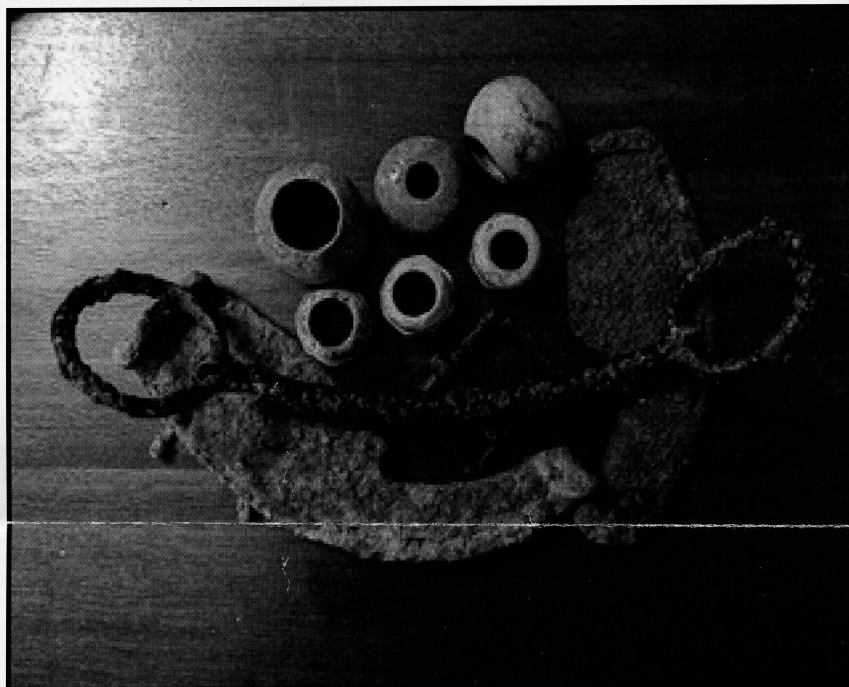
PO Box 47, Thompson CT 06277

www.thompsonhistorical.com

Farm Oxen Power

By Drew Wainacht

Colonial and early US farms were primarily powered by oxen. Many farmers never even owned a horse as they were twice as expensive to keep. Oxen were used in pairs. The pair or "team" would work side by side for life. They have cloven hooves so each leg was shod with two half-moon shaped shoes totaling eight per animal. The ox couldn't hold itself up with three legs so farriers had to place the oxen in a strong wooden support with straps under the animal to hold it while shoeing occurred. Farmers also attached "ox-knobs" to their animals. These were molded brassballs screwed onto the ends of horns, blunting them so they couldn't gore each other or the farmer. Larger, rounder knobs were used when animals were being shown at the Woodstock Fair. These were more expensive and called "show-knobs." Things changed however when in 1831 Cyrus McCormick introduced his reaper which was designed for the faster horse.



Farmers could more than make up for the cost of horses by the increased amount of land that could be tilled. It's interesting that when the reaper came to the farms our beloved stone walls became a hindrance. Before the reaper, our walled fields averaged four acres in size. That was as far as anyone wanted to carry rocks, but these relatively small fields hindered the faster horses attached to the new reapers. Although the horses could move faster than the

oxen they had a wider turning radius. The time it took to make the turns in a small field defeated the purpose of having the horse and reaper. Farmers decided to bury or sell stone to consolidate and enlarge fields.

The use of oxen went into decline and by 1890 all but vanished from the landscape. Pictured are three "show knobs," three everyday knobs, a colonial tack buckle, a large winter (cleated) ox shoe, and a smaller summer shoe. All found in our area.

THS thanks Drew for his well-written stories to accompany his metal detecting discoveries. If readers have interest in Drew searching their historic properties, contact THS.

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Check Facebook for upcoming info on ordering Echoes of Old Thompson Volumn 1. This will be a limited second pressing of just 500 books. Contact Ginny Flood at 860-933-5239 or email her at gffloodster@gmail.com to reserve your copy now. Pricing is \$45 for Vol 1 or \$60 for both Vol 1 & 2 until sold out. Leather covers - Call!

The Connecticut League of History Organizations Presents Awards

CLHO presented the 2022 awards to 10 organizations and one individual at their Annual Business Meeting on April 19 at the Connecticut Historical Society. The Thompson Historical Society was presented with an award for *The Nine Lives of No. 9*. Attending for THS: Blair and Karen Cole, Tom Chase, Bob Belletzkic and Joe Iamartino



Connecticut League of History Organizations

on this the nineteenth day of April of two-thousand twenty-two, presents the

*Ramsdell Transportation Collection, a
Thompson Historical Society Museum*

with an

Award of Merit

for

The Nine Lives of No. 9

Megan Olver
Megan Olver, President



Amrys Williams
Amrys Williams, Executive Director

Old St. Joseph's School



(St. Joseph's Convent is at the rear of the building)

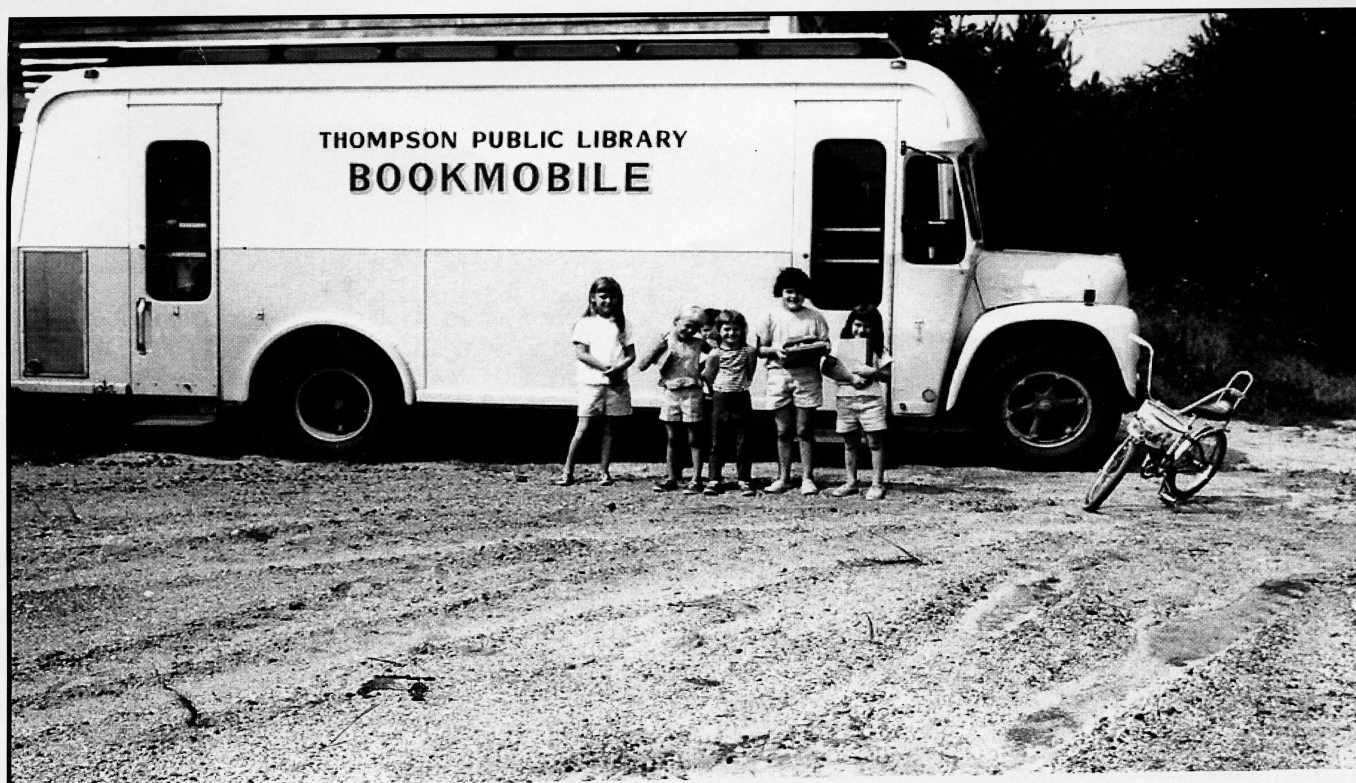
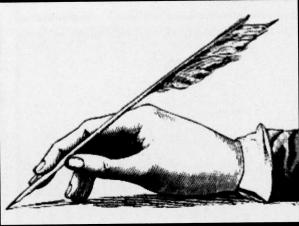


Photo from "Thompson Proud" Facebook page posted 4/20/22. Location and children not identified.

(Help us identify children, date and location)

From The President's Quill - By: Joseph Iamartino



Friends,

With shortages of baby formula, rising fuel prices, the war in the Ukraine, shootings at schools and houses of worship, the global labor shortages and supply chain disruptions, one might be tempted to shut off the news. Closer to home, we have controversies surrounding zoning regulations, town procedures, the lack of treatment for mental illness, law enforcement protocol debates, groups that feel disadvantaged by society and, the scourge of our age, untreated substance abuse. Is this all accelerating on us or has this always been with us?

It is accelerating. Once we had a horse for our top speed. Now, we have cars with the power of hundreds of horses. Mail was once strapped to the side of a pony. Now, an email travels at the speed of light through fiber optic cable. A fool with an idea could reach perhaps a few hundred people by yelling. Now, he can blast it out via Twitter to millions. You get the idea. Today, bad things can be bigger. They can reach us faster and hurt us more.

Civility, kindness and compromise are still out there. My view is that 95 percent of people believe in common courtesy and the social graces. Unfortunately, those other 5 percent are now more easily seen, with their ugly actions glorified. Natural human curiosity and morbid fascination draws us to these human tragedies and 'car wrecks'. It is up to each one of us to counter our interest in the bizarre and fight to regain our interest in building our friendships and community ties back up. Perhaps we could treat others as they want to be treated and this could replace our time spent watching others suffer. Consider a small action to help someone who needs help. History is full of those examples too. A small act of kindness has a ripple effect on both the giver and the receiver. It makes both feel good and we all could use that feeling right now. Please do something to bring us together.

Mystery: The Buildings at St. Stephen's Church - Quinebaug CT



When were these buildings built and how were they used? Are they used today?

Pictures From the Past

Folks, we Need Help with Names for this 1940's Basketball Team



1954 St. Joseph's Senior Class



(Above: Students in alphabetical order. Lorraine Berthiaume, Delores Blain, Robert Blain, Ronald Blain, Janine Blanchard, Vivian Bruneau, Dorothy Dery, Georgette Durand, Raymond Faucher, Alfred Gagnon, Eleanor Gamelin, Joan Girard, Lorraine Heath, Jacqueline Hebert, Barbara Johnson, Lora Labby, Leo LaFlamme, Robert Morin, John Rice, Clarisse Seney, Henriette Seney)

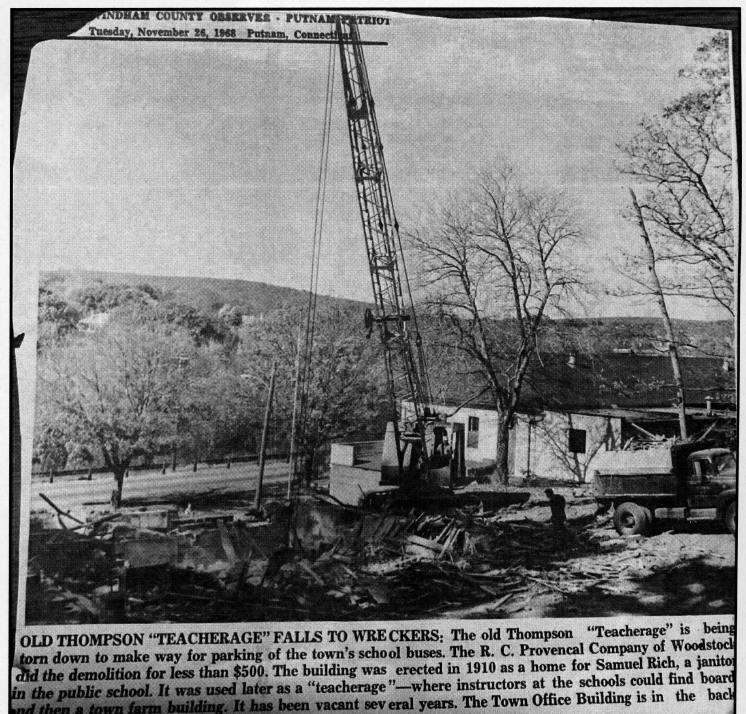
Road Dedication in Memory of Joe Lindley



There will be a road dedicated to Joe Lindley, July 9, 2022 at 11 a.m. at the Thompson Common. Please join us to remember Joe for the event.

Every week when we work at the museum, we look at Joe's bench and the baseballs, and now

the painted rock. We all miss Joe so much.



OLD THOMPSON "TEACHERAGE" FALLS TO WRECKERS: The old Thompson "Teacherage" is being torn down to make way for parking of the town's school buses. The R. C. Provencal Company of Woodstock did the demolition for less than \$500. The building was erected in 1910 as a home for Samuel Rich, a janitor in the public school. It was used later as a "teacherage"—where instructors at the schools could find board and then a town farm building. It has been vacant several years. The Town Office Building is in the back

Planes in Crash At Putnam, Conn.

PUTNAM, Conn., Nov. 29.—A fighter plane from Hillsgrove Airport, R. I., crashed and exploded on Upper School street at 9.30 this morning, scattering debris and parts of the plane over a radius of 100 yards.

The plane was first seen about 500 feet in the air headed for the ground by F. J. Killilea of Providence, R. I., who said the nose of the craft was ablaze. It struck in a small brook ten feet in the rear of the home of Paul Simon.

Army authorities from Bradley Field, Windsor, Conn., are on their way to the scene to make an investigation. A second probe is being carried on by Connecticut State Police under Lt. Victor Clark of the Danielson barracks.

THS receives requests for info on, for example, the fighter jet that crashed near Fabyan” but we have no details. There were 4 more crashes nearby too. Please see this website for more plane crashes in the area.

<https://newenglandaviationhistory.com/tag/putnam-connecticut-plane-crash/>

Thanks to the article above donated by Jane Ellison, we have an article which led us to multiple military aircraft crashes. We believe the article is describing the brook near the Route 12 and Route 44 intersection. If anyone has information, please come forward.

Archivist Corner By: Mark Snay

Of the numerous items that THS has in its collections, some of the most used resources are 19th century maps. The Woodford map of Windham County (1856) shows both the town of Thompson and Thompson center village. The Gray Atlas of Windham and Tolland Counties (1869) shows Thompson as well, but also has a second map showing five of Thompson's ten villages. These two maps show where homes/buildings were located at the time of the map survey and also list the names of the owners. They have been invaluable source for researching people and places for the many inquiries we receive. Both maps, along with several others including a rarely seen one for the cross-border Quinebaug Village, are available for viewing from the THS website, and can be found under Collection>Maps

More Zeal than forethought. Mr. Silas Joslin's dog ran a rabbit into his hole, the other day, and thinking perhaps that by enlarging the hole he could step in and take him out, he went at it and after digging about eight feet and overtaking his rabbit-ship, he concluded to "Back out." But lo! he found the hole too small, as he had not cleared the dirt out after him, and there he was with no courage to go forward, and not much strength to get back. After laying there about seven hours, he was dug out by Mr. Joslin and others, to the great satisfaction of the rabbit, dog and owner, though almost dead, yet we trust a wiser dog.

CITIZEN.

THOMPSON.

Membership Information:

\$100.00 Lifetime Membership
\$10.00 Individual Membership
\$15.00 Family Membership
\$25.00 Contributing Membership
\$5.00 Student or First Year Gift Membership

Memberships are due by July 1 of each calendar year

Make checks payable to:

Thompson Historical Society

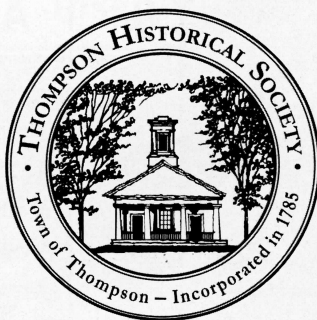
PO Box 47

Thompson, CT 06277

Anyone interested in joining the Thompson Historical Society can contact us at:

Phone Number: 401-208-6051

Web Site: www.thompsonhistorical.org



Museum Hours

Typically Open

Sundays 9:00 a.m.—Noon
Call Joe before you come
(401) 208-6051

*** Volunteers Needed***

We need Sunday morning volunteer help to sleeve and later identify incoming photographs for our archives. If interested, send an email to marksnay@aol.com

Officers and Contact Information:

Joseph Iamartino - President
Ginny Flood - Vice President
Mark Snay - Director & Archivist
Sue Vincent - Treasurer
John Rice - Building Committee Chair
Abe Gustavson - Director
Ginny Flood - Director
Burt Rhodes - Director
Dr. Chris Wagner - Director
Kathy Welch - Director
Kathleen Herbert - Director
Geoff Bolte - Director
Roberta Baublitz - Director
Lisa Berg - Director
Charlie Obert - Director
William Steglitz - Director
David Laabs - Director
Paul Provost - Director
Mark Savolis - Director
Lisa Berg - Director, Newsletter

Ellen Larned Memorial Building THS Museum

339 Thompson Road
Thompson, CT 06277
(Opened Sundays 9:00 am to noon)

Old Thompson Town Hall

1 Chase Road
Thompson, CT 06277
(Open by appointment)

Tourtellotte Memorial Room

785 Riverside Drive
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

Thompson Historical Society

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Thompson, CT 06277

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