



The Thompson Historical Society Newsletter



Winter 2019

PO Box 47, Thompson CT 06277

www.thompsonhistorical.com

Volunteer of the Year-Mark Snay



Thompson's Community Day on October 5th saw several historical events take place. The Society's archivist, Mark Snay, received a well-deserved Volunteer of the Year award from both the town and the state. Joe Lindley, in one of his last society acts, presented the town award and state representative Mae Flexer presented for the state. Some THS members conspired to keep the award a secret from Mark, while concocting an elaborate plan to ensure Mark attended the event. The plan HE was told was the announcement of the new Kenney store and post office display opening that day for the first time. Joe Iamartino does not have to do any penance as this was true but not the whole truth of course.

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THOMPSON Thompson News Clip October 4, 1891

At an annual meeting of the Thompson National bank the following Board of Directors was elected: Jeremiah Olney, Thomas D. Sayles, Hiram Arnold, L.K. Blackmar, Geo. H. Nichols, George S. Crosby, David Chase, James N. Kingsbury, F.M. Messenger. At a meeting of the Board held the same day Jeremiah Olney was re-elected President, George H. Nichols vice-president, and Chas. Arnold cashier.

The barn used by Peter Miller was entered Tuesday night and a valuable horse taken. A sleigh was also taken from Luther Robbins who lives near by. It is hoped the thieves will be overtaken and receive the extreme penalty of the law.

From The President's Quill - By: Joseph Iamartino



Sometimes, things come together so well that it is hard to believe that some higher power isn't pulling strings behind the curtain. Any one thing could have caused the Kenney post office and general store project to wither on the vine. The room might not have been available at TMHS. The right project leader in Mr. Rice could have been working on another major construction project in his busy schedule, while in retirement mind you. The supporters at the school might not have seen the vision of encouraging the youth to know their town better. Glennyce Kenney might have wanted to sell the contents of the store instead of wanting to remember her family's presence in town. The volunteers, Ginny, Sue, Burt, Charlie, school custodians, Jonathan and others mentioned on page 5, who gave their time might have stayed home to saw fine wood, paint their homes yellow or work on their vintage cars. Some might have been distracted by medical concerns instead of focusing on the display or props for the education of the children.

One lady with a sharp eye for aesthetics might not have suggested a radical change in the design of the room had she been too busy decorating elsewhere. The project could have stalled for so many reasons. But it didn't!!

I believe it is more than good luck that brings certain people together to accomplish great things. To all who worked on this project, well done! Now back to your regularly scheduled lives...

Sisters of Marianapolis

The article that follows was written by the Sisters of Marianapolis for a small booklet celebrating a history of their order in America

Our Community, the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was founded in 1918 in Lithuania by Archbishop George Matulaitis. He was a holy man who patiently endured a great deal of suffering while constantly caring for the needs of others. An incurable illness, constant political and social unrest, persecutions and humiliations did not prevent him from performing his priestly and episcopal duties with love and diligence.

His way to peace was complete trust in the loving Providence of God. Hindsight now shows us how the hand of God shaped his life and work to bear abundant fruit.

The story of our community is also a story of God's Providence. In newly independent Lithuania it grew in numbers and developed a wide-ranging apostolate. A mis-

sion was founded in the United States in 1936. Within three years war broke out and soon after, the Iron Curtain descended upon our country.

This tiny mission became our province in the free world. Surely its existence is the work of God's providential love. As we celebrate the moments in time which have brought us to our golden anniversary, the words written by our Founder come to mind.

*Is not a person more peaceful,
Does he not look to the future with greater courage
When, with a living faith,
he surrenders himself completely To God's Providence?
After all, not a hair of our heads falls,
Unless the Lord wills it,
Not even the tiniest bird dies,
But the Lord knows it.
Let us, then, be unassuming, wise and enterprising
As we try to do whatever we can,
But also courageous as we seek to attain our goal
Confidently believing
that the hand of Providence is leading and carrying us.
As a child sleeps peacefully in its mothers arms,
so let us undertake each task with even greater peace,
Knowing that we are always in the arms of God.*



The old mansion which once housed Marianapolis College was an imposing building (it burned down in 1964). The sisters' work was hard and the hours long. Luckily their numbers had increased when three candidates from the States returned after making their vows overseas. Seated on the lawn are: Sr. Joseph, Sr. Scholastica, Sr. Consolata, Sr. Apollinara, Sr. Vincenta, Sr. Augustine, Sr. Palmira, Sr. Apolonia, Sr. Tarcizia, Sr. Lawrence.

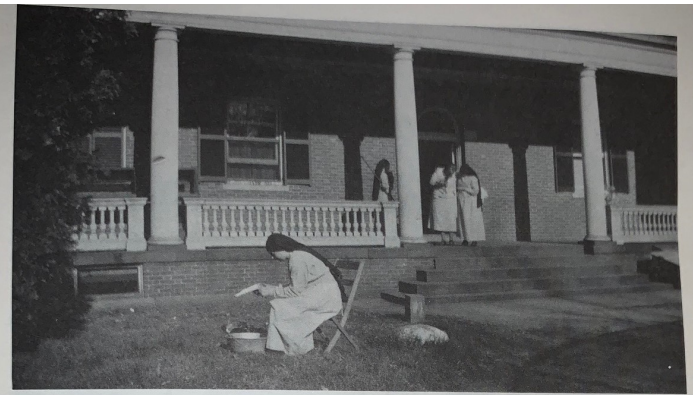
In 1926 Archbishop Matulaitis came to the United States to attend the Eucharistic Congress in Chicago. On that occasion he visited many Lithuanian parishes. This was his second and last trip to America; he died the year after his return to

(Cont'd on page 3)

(Cont'd from Page 2)

Lithuania.

Ten years later, in 1936 our sisters were on their way to the United States to found a new mission. The Superior General of the Community accompanied the five sisters chosen for this work. Little did they know what was in store for them in the near future! Within four years the tiny mission would be completely cut off from the mother Community for a long period of time, and yet it would survive the flourish despite tremendous odds.



The sisters came to live at Marianapolis College in Connecticut. This school was conducted by the Marian Fathers and its rector, Rev. J. Navickas, had invited them to work here. They were put in charge of the kitchen and laundry and held this job for 17 years.

In America, as a Lithuanian, our sisters tried to meet the real needs of the people among whom they lived and to pursue an apostolate that reflected the spirit of their Founder. They tried to respond to the problems of the times and, without any particular planning on their part, divine Providence directed them into the same fields of work that the Community had undertaken in Lithuania.



East Thompson School Story

(This article, as told by Paul Hoenig to Archivist Mark Snay)

Paul Hoenig recently told me that back when he was in his early teens he would sit on the porch of his neighbor Robert (Poppa) Joslin and listen to old time stories. One story Poppa told was on each school day, around 1900, he would hitch his horse to either a carriage or sleigh and drive out to the East Thompson Depot to pick up the school teacher coming in on the Southbridge train and bring her to the Little Pond School. Poppa lived next door to the school house and was paid a small sum by the town for his services. During the colder days, he would first go to the schoolhouse and start a fire in the stove and by the time he returned with the teacher, the room was beginning to warm up. The round trip was a little over six miles. This gives me a whole new perspective to driving to work on a cold winter morning!

(Article by Mark Snay)

Bottom Left: Image of Aaron “Squire” White of Quinebaug in 1880 from the Webster Times, Vol. 28, #40, dated December 3, 1886. It is believed the article accompanying it was written by Ira D. Bates of New Boston who apparently knew the Squire personally.

Below: Aaron White token. Apparently Squire White preferred coinage as there were several tons of coins found buried on his property after he passed away. The term “Squire” is short for the honorific Esquire as Aaron was a noted lawyer and a former RI political activist in the Dorr Rebellion. THS seeks more information about White’s collection and life.



(Photos courtesy of Michael & Linda Branniff)

Thompson had an exciting Civil War Re-enactment in Fabyan on Sept 28-29 at the Salkowicz Farm. Rumor is that it may return in two years!



Thompson Community Day—October 5, 2019



Glennyce Kenney kindly donated the post office and store interior of her family's Mechanicsville property. Under the watchful eye of project leader John Rice, volunteers Mark Snay, Paul Provost, David Eddy and Joe Lindley and others moved the contents into its new location at the Tourtellotte Memorial High School on the museum floor. Bill Birch's technical wisdom and insight kept the project on schedule. The display, opened for the first time on Oct. 5th, celebrates the history of the 10 villages of Thompson with sign-age boards for each village along with the post office and general store flagship display. Look for upcoming events and a presentation on the history of the Kenney post office and store later this fall.

Looking for Photos

We continue to search for photos which continue to elude us. The two at the top of the list are the Jacobs Tavern, which was located on the Raceway Golf Course at approximately the 3rd green. The second, Camp Arrow Boy Scout camp house located on Pond Lily next to the French river just north of the old K of C and perhaps burned prior to 1975. Today only the chimney and foundation remain. The tavern burned in 1918 and was known as the home of Hail M. Jacobs, then daughter Ann (Jacobs) Joslin, wife of Welcome Joslin, and at the last Josephine and Matthew Kroll. Please send in photos of these two buildings so we can remove them from our missing photo list plus any of the William Mason House.

(Right: Mark Snay standing beside the Camp Arrow building remains)



Pictures from the Past

Connecticut Granger Women's Drill Team, Quinnatissett Grange 1966

Top: Marjorie Chapman, Caroline Messier, Barbara Spahl, Mercedes Robbins, Peggy Fallon, Evelyn Robbins, Elizabeth Joslin. Seated: Helen Chandler, Juliette Eddy, Carol Smith, Sally Newcombe, Mary Tourtellotte, and Norma O'Leary.

(Courtesy of Karen Flanders Eddy)



Law Suit Dropped Against New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company

Recently, a Norwich Bulletin article dated [12/21/1909](#), titled "Suit of Local Interest concerns consolidation of electric lines in Eastern Connecticut and Southern Massachusetts", was sent to THS by Marilyn Labbe. The article referred to a suit commenced against the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company by President Theodore Roosevelt and Attorney General Charles Bonaparte - the editor questioning why the suit was stopped. During his Presidency, Theodore Roosevelt used the Sherman Anti-trust Act of 1890 as a means to break up the trust titans of that period. This particular suit was in reference to the consolidation of electric lines in eastern Connecticut and southern Massachusetts by NY,NH & H, the combination being regarded as a monopoly of Trolley Interests. The article continued to explain that a special committee of the NY,NH & H Board of Directors had been appointed to investigate the feasibility of forming a through line from Norwich, CT to Worcester, MA. The consolidation became the Worcester and Eastern Connecticut

Railway Company (W&EC). The company had lines from Worcester to Moosup as well as Elmville to the R.I. line. The W&EC was incorporated in 1901 as the Thompson Railway Company, changing its name in 1902 and merging rights and properties of The People's Tramway Co. (Danielson to N. Grosvenordale) and the Danielson and Norwich Street Railway Co. In 1903, Connecticut legislature gave rights to the W&EC to purchase, hold, enjoy stocks, bonds, properties leases and franchise of all the corporations. W&EC President Charles S. Mellen explained the company had owned property which cost more than it was worth and saw opportunity to balance this loss through purchasing several companies in Connecticut and Massachusetts and consolidating all. While the news editor never gives a reason as to why the suit stopped, it is likely the reasons given by Mr. Mellen were acceptable enough to the court to outweigh Teddy Roosevelt's government trust-buster suit.

(JI note: The trolley line in town was closed by 1925)



(Trolley headed to Wilsonville as it passed through North Grosvenordale Village)

Items You May Not Have Known

Q. When was the current Thompson Hill post office put in use?

A. The current Thompson Hill post office, built on the site of the old Elliott house on Thompson Hill, was in operation by 1960. Georgia Ballard, later post master, was working there in 1960.

All of the individual post office boxes were new in the building. There was no reuse of the old boxes. Many of the old post office boxes are now at the Old Town Hall, donated to THS by John DeBerardinis, have been carted to his parents home c1961 when the old post office at the Vernon Stiles was shut down. We can see the old post office in operation in 1958 by looking at the movie "The Man in the Net" which was filmed in Thompson.

Do You Have a Question?

Contact us on Facebook or send us an Email

We recently received this question request from John B. Beck:

Q. I had heard from a friend that a WWII Bomber had crashed in a field on North Road or Chestnut Hill Road in East Killingly in the 1940's. Then when I asked about it at the Putnam Library they told me that they thought a bomber crashed in Thompson sometime in the 1940's. I have also asked the Killingly Historical Society, New England Air Museum (NEAM), and the Killingly Villager Newspaper. I have also searched on Google about it. Maybe this is just an unfounded rumor or myth.

Members who love to shop on line could help us raise money for maintenance of our two historical buildings by using **AMAZON SMILE**. It is the same as your Amazon account but donates .05% of your purchases to the Thompson Historical Society when you designate us as your choice. There is no cost. If you have questions about joining call Sue Vincent 508-847-9092. Thank you.

Archivist Corner By: Mark Snay

The Thompson Historical Society archives collection consists of many items in the form of artifacts, books, ephemera and more. Also included is digital media of both photographs and documents, of which we have thousands that are stored on computers and back up devices. We do this to both preserve the history of Thompson and to make it available for research. We are excited to have finally launched a new method of archiving information through connection with buildings and places in Thompson and will eventually include other entities such as roads, structures, etc. The information will be accessible from both the THS website under Collections and the Thompson Parcel Map on the Assessors web page. This project has begun with the posting of the 1986 Historic House Survey. As time allows and new information is learned, we will continue to update the property pages by adding notes, photos, documents and web links, all to help researchers to more easily access the information we have.

We celebrated in 2019 the lives of three great men noted for their Historical Society efforts: Joe Lindley, Paul Hughes and Peter Vercelli. Let's never forget their contributions to make our Society better.

The Independent Observer Newspaper
Published by Henry Webb 2d, Brooklyn, CT
24, Dec. 1821

New Store at Thompson and New Goods. Scott & Almy. They had dry goods (all kinds of material), shoes, tobacco, hardware, crockery & glass ware. 20 Nov. 1821 Thompson.

Windham County Transcript 4 Aug. 1910

Thompson column

The town has voted to improve the highway from Brandy Hill to the Massachusetts state line, and the gateway at the East Thompson Cemetery has been accepted by the town. It is the gift of the I. J. Hoyle estate.

Membership Information:

- \$10.00 Individual Membership
- \$15.00 Family Membership
- \$25.00 Contributing Membership
- \$5.00 Student 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: 860-928-5527

Web Site: www.thompsonhistorical.org



Museum Hours

Typically Open
 Sundays 9:00 a.m.—Noon
 Call Joe before you come
 (603) 657-6205

Officers and Contact Information:

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

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

Thompson Historical Society

PO Box 47
 Thompson, CT 06277



Preserving Thompson, Connecticut's History Since 1968