



The Thompson Historical Society Newsletter



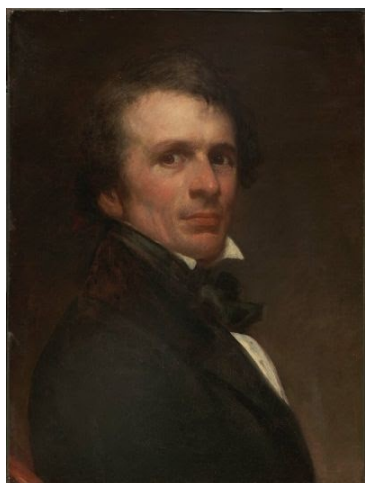
Spring 2021

PO Box 47, Thompson CT 06277

www.thompsonhistorical.com

FRANCIS ALEXANDER

Windham County Transcript, 17 Dec. 1903



In Wm. Dunlap's *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (2 volumes, 1834) is some account of Francis Alexander, the artist, with a communication from him, giving an interesting history of his early life, struggles, successes,

etc. He says he was born in Killingly, Conn., Feb. 3d, 1800--his father a farmer of moderate circumstances, he then (1834) being 77, and mother 76--and his early life was spent upon the farm. "Went hundreds of times to church, in warm weather, barefoot, three miles. From the age of 8 up to 20 I labored almost incessantly the eight warm months of the year, upon my father's farm.

"The other four months of the year I went to a country district school until I was 17. My 18th and 19th winters kept school (in the same district where I had been one of the scholars previously); received \$40 the first winter, \$44 the second. Painted a fish at this time, which received much praise. Went to New York to learn to paint."

Anthony Allround's Column

A Mr. McKay in Warren Street, an elderly gentleman, was kind to him and introduced him to Alexander Robertson, then secretary to the Academy of Fine Arts. Mr. Robertson received him into his school and he stayed five or six weeks, when his money gave out and he returned home. Commenced painting on the walls of one of the rooms in his father's house, etc.; then a portrait, which his mother praised, etc.

Then painted the portrait of a nephew three years old, at one standing. The first was painted upon the lid of an old chest and astonished the neighbors, etc. He next painted the portrait of a nephew six years old, "showing his white rows of teeth," etc. "These two were painted on pieces of board I picked up. Were called excellent likenesses. A Mr. Mason offered \$5 to paint a little miss full length (he was my first patron). Then was offered by the mother \$1 a day to paint the rest of the family--one-half dozen of them; received \$13 for thirteen days! My fame had now traveled seven miles.

"I was invited to Thompson to paint several families; received \$3 a head and my board. As soon as I had earned \$50 or \$60, I returned to New York for instructions in portrait painting. The old gent, Mr. McKay, gave me Mr. Stuart's mode of setting the palette, and Col. Trumbull lent me two heads to copy, and treated me with much kindness. Also, Waldo and Jewett. After copying the above-named portraits and one or two more, I was obliged to go back to Connecticut, my funds being exhausted. On my return I had the boldness to ask \$8 a portrait and received it! Mrs. Gen. Jas. B. Mason of Providence sent for me to paint her family, promising me \$15 a portrait. Labored for her and among her friends with success, etc. Mrs. Mason died while I remained in Providence, when I lost one of my most valuable friends. I have met with many friends since I took up painting, but among them all, I remember no one who was so zealous, active and untiring in my behalf as Mrs. Mason, nor any one to whom I am half so much indebted for my somewhat successful career, as to her.

(See this article in its entirety on the Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society link--[Killingly Historical and Genealogical Society - Francis Alexander](#))

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From The President's Quill - By: Joseph Iamartino



Not every building can be saved. Some should be saved. What is unwritten between these two sentences is the problem for every community. Little village schoolhouses were once a dime a dozen. Now few survive. The Nathan Hale Schoolhouse in East Haddam does two things. It remembers the village schools, the teachers and students who 'roughed it'. It also memorializes the 21 year old Nathan Hale, the patriot, who volunteered to carry secrets during the Revolutionary War and was hanged as a spy by the British when caught. Nathan Hale was named in 1985 as Connecticut's state hero.

Buildings reflect origins of a community. The work of a village. The efforts of an extraordinary person. Or the mundane. The little outhouse that remains behind the Old Town Hall reminds us of progress. If each and every building in Rome had its time, and they were all knocked down to make way for the next soccer field, supermarket or home, would Rome be as magical? If the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris burned to the ground, why didn't they just build a modern church after the recent devastating fire? Because that historic building meant something to Paris! It is being restored as it was. For a Thompson equivalent to Notre Dame, the fire-damaged Thompson Congregational Church may not be your church but it is our history.

Please Thompson. We may not be Paris or Rome but we do have our buildings that represent emotions, great effort, courage, leadership and most important, perseverance. Some of these building should be defended, cared for and preserved. Have a voice and be active in choosing which to save and how we save them.

Tourtellotte Courses of Study 1916

Courses of Study

It is the aim of the Tourtellotte Memorial High School to prepare its students for life, to be of the greatest possible service to every pupil enrolled. Each pupil's course should be planned according to his individual needs, as nearly as they can be determined. For this reason the Principal and teachers will always seek to co-operate with parents in selecting such a course of study for each pupil as will best fit him for his life's work.

College Preparatory Course

First Year

English
Algebra
Latin I or French I
Biology
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Optional Subject—Drawing

Second Year

English
Plane Geometry
Latin II or French II
German I
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Optional Subject—Drawing

Third Year

English
Intermediate Algebra or Solid Geometry
Latin III or French III
German II
Ancient History
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Optional Subject—Drawing

Fourth Year

English
Household Arts (Girls)
Optional Subject—Drawing

Elect Three

Latin IV
German III
Physics, Chemistry or Physical Geography
American History and Civics
Mediaeval and Modern History
French I (if not already completed)

Business Course

First Year

English
Biology
Typewriting
Book-keeping
Penmanship
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Optional Subject—Drawing

Second Year

English
Typewriting
Commercial Arithmetic—first half year
Commercial Geography—second half year
Stenography
Business Correspondence
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Optional Subject—Drawing

Third Year

English
Algebra
German I, French I, Physics or Chemistry
Stenography, Typewriting and Penmanship
Business Practice
Business Law
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Optional Subject—Drawing

Fourth Year

English
History of Commerce—first half year
Economics—second half year
Salesmanship, Business Organization and a special study of textiles and textile industries
Stenography, Typewriting and Penmanship
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Optional Subject—Drawing

Elect One

German II, French II, Physics, Chemistry, or Physical Geography
Advanced Book-keeping
American History and Civics

General Course

Students who do not want the College Preparatory or the Business Courses, may take the General Course. After the first year the studies of this course are in the main elective.

First Year

English I
Algebra
Biology
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Elect one subject

Second Year

English II
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Elect three subjects

Third Year

English III
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Elect three subjects

Fourth Year

English IV
Household Arts (Girls)
Vocal Music
Elect three subjects

To: The People of Thompson

From: Ron and Ruth (were she capable of contributing Now) Barks

Date: February 2021

Subject: Thompson—What a Special Place we have lived in!

When Ruth and I first saw Thompson and the Common when driving up Rt. 193 by the realtor in late August 1968, we were enchanted by it -a beautiful, picturesque New England Town. We signed the rental Contract immediately for the house next to the Iamartino's home on Quadic Rd. The owner of the Vernon Stiles Inn and his wife lived in it then. We would spend the next 20 years of our lives there raising our children, contributing to the Town in a number of ways, and learning a great deal about it and the admirable characteristics of the people who were our friends, neighbors and Towns-people in the process.

We and our children have many fond memories of various traditions in practice then, a number of which continue:

- Easter egg hunts on the Common
- Chicken barbecues and wonderful clambakes at the Thompson Firehouse
- Decorating the Christmas tree on the Common and singing caroles around it at Christmas
- Easter morning Sunrise services with our church, the Thompson Congregational
- Swedish meatball dinners at the Lutheran Church in N. Grosvenordale
- Strawberry suppers at the Congregational Church
- Lending a hand to a neighbor in need often without being asked
- Town meetings and the determination of the people to get to the bottom of the contentious issues, admirable but also intimidating if you were on the wrong side of one of them

And many more!

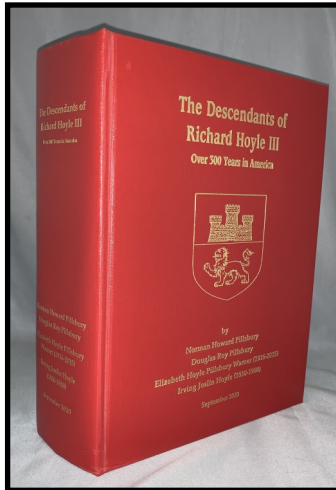
Ruth and I have lived in 8 states (NJ, PA, VA, TX, HI, CT, NM, RI) but consider Thompson as our home during our marriage, now going on 61 years (since 1960). Those were 20 good years and we treasure them. You live in a special place. Enjoy it, value it, contribute to it and don't take it for granted. With fond memories and highest regards.

In many ways, the Thompson Community misses Joe Lindley. "Thanks Coach". Here is an example, look for the ball on the right edge of the bench.



ARP originated in Britain during WWII as Air Raid Precautions. Wardens would ensure homes were blacked out properly & residents trained in the event of an air attack.

Richard Hoyle III Descendants



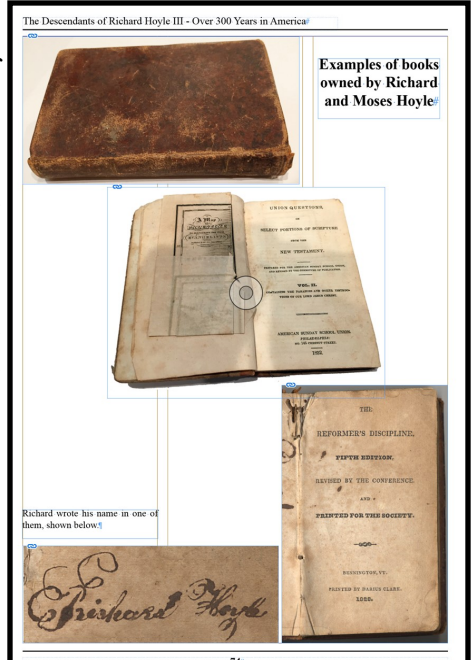
Richard Hoyle III settled in East Thompson in 1812. One of his descendants, Norman Pillsbury of California, has been working along with some of his family members at compiling a massive collection of Hoyle genealogy.

Norman reached out to the Thompson Library a few years ago and with the help of Librarian and THS Director Roberta Baublitz he was able to obtain information needed for his research. This research has been published in a very thick 1300 page book. Norman had a small quantity of the books published and graciously

donated one to THS. The book covers a number of generations of several families that lived in Thompson, to include information about the Hoyle farm, the tomb that still stands today, the Venetian painting still in the possession of the Thompson Library and many bits of information obtained from Hoyle family journals, early genealogy documents and farm/sawmill ledgers.

We have received the book and it is available for research at the ELM. Norman has stated that he and family are considering donating the original ledgers, genealogy work and other books dating from the 19th century which

were originally owned by the Hoyle family and would be a great addition to our collection. Many thanks to Norman and family for the generous donation.



Marianapolis Centers of Excellence (CoE) Recognition Ceremony

“Hi Mr. Iamartino: I wanted to thank you for sponsoring both Philip Heney and Sam Bouchard for their COE internships and invite you to attend our Second Annual COE Recognition Ceremony.”

Please note that Philip’s project was to document the Thompson Speedway and Raceway for our historical location database. Sam worked on a sketch of 1798 Thompson Hill using eye witness accounts to determine building positioning and construction details. We appreciate Dr. Sembor’s efforts to engage students in projects with THS and invite others interested in internships to contact us for available projects.

Edward C. Sembor, Ph.D.

Hannah Thurber Fairfield Nichols 19th Century Artist



(Painting by: Hannah Thurber Fairfield Nichols)

We recently received an inquiry from Dr. Katharyn Bebessa regarding 19th century artist Hannah Thurber Fairfield Nichols (1808-1894), wife of Franklin Nichols (1805-1890). Hannah was born in Pomfret and Franklin in Thompson. They married in 1839 and in May of 1840 they settled in Norwich.

Katharyn is in possession of two portraits painted by Hannah and is interested in learning more about her artwork and studies under artist Francis Alexander. Francis Alexander was a well-known artist of the 19th century. One of his local portraits is that of Prudence Crandall which she sat for in Boston in April of 1834. The painting was commissioned at the suggestion of William Lloyd Garrison and funded with money raised from various antislavery societies.

Dr. Bebessa is searching for more of Hannah's art and believes there may be many paintings in private collections. While THS does not have much information about both artists, our correspondence with Dr. Benessa has given us clues that there may be several early-mid 19th century portraits of Thompson residents painted by one or both artists. We look forward to learning more about these artists from Dr. Bebessa as her research continues.

Mechanicsville School 1945 Grades 1-5



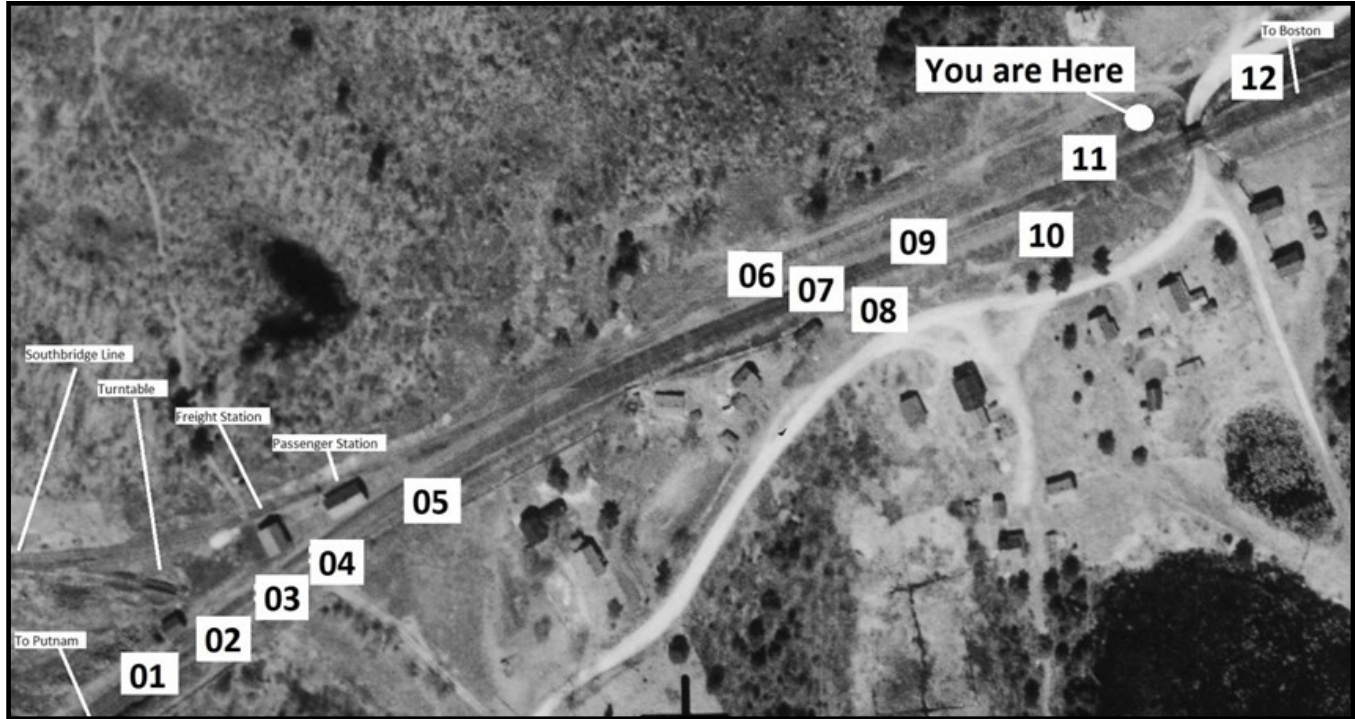
(First Row: Stephen Tripp, Richard Domalesi, John Quinn, Barbara Littlefield, Justine Kenney, Joyce Redwine. Second Row: ???, Geraldine Champagne, ???, ???. Third Row: ???, ???, ???, ???. Miss Lonergan was the teacher.)

Thank you to Jane Ellison for contributing this photo.

Train Wreck Park Project

The Train Wreck Park project is an idea taking shape now with contributors that include the Town of Thompson, the National Park Service, Thompson Trails and the Historical Society.

One concept being explored is the self-guided tour of the 4 Engine Wreck site near the old East Thompson Rail station. Led by Paul Provost and researcher Tom Chase, their web-based documentation of this segment of the Air Line State Park Trail may be utilized in the park plan. The 4-engine wreck site info can be found under Collections on the THS web site.



Look for an upcoming town discussion on the future of this park. It could incorporate a restoration of the old cart bridge on the trail's way to the Tri-State Marker.



(The Cart Bridge also known as the farmers bridge)



(Tri-State Marker)



(The stone arch bridge/culvert, through which Rocky Brook passes under the Airline Trail)

Did a WWII Bomber Crash in Thompson?

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.
(by John B. Beck)

Help needed folks. Any truth to this?

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.

REMINDER

Please send your membership dues by July 1, 2021

Items You May Not Have Known

North Grosvenordale used to be called Fisherville. Our super sleuth Mark Snay recently found paintings of the founder of Fisherville, his wife, a son and a daughter.

There is a sad story connected to this. On shipping to Russia recently, the paintings of William Fisher and his wife Laura Williams Fisher were stolen and never recovered.

Farm Electrification 1956 Awards Go To R. Langer And John DeBerardinis

The Connecticut Farm Electrification Council at its regular meeting recently announced that there were 36 winners of its 4-H Electrical Project awards for 1956.

W. T. Ackerman, secretary-treasurer of the Council and Farm Service Director of the Connecticut Light and Power Company, said that the Council this year made available \$225 to be divided equally among the eight counties in the state. He said that the awards were made to 4-H Club members to encourage interest in practical electrical projects.

The Connecticut Farm Electrification Council award winners from this area for electrical projects were:

John DeBerardinis, Thompson, who won a blue ribbon for his demonstration on "Cleaning an Electric Motor" and Richard Langer, of Thompson, who was awarded a red ribbon for his demonstration on "Making an Electric Motor Portable."

This year's prizes were given to 4-H youth who gave electrical demonstrations on electrical subjects on an individual or team basis and built booth exhibits for the club activity for their county fairs. Five of the booth exhibits were selected to 1956 Eastern States Exposition. Five 4-H members also were selected to give electrical demonstrations at the Exposition.

Archivist Corner By: Mark Snay

What is an Arcade? The present-day definition seems to lean towards a public place of electronic games, pool tables, Skee ball and other such amusements. But what was the meaning of the word when applied to buildings in the 19th century and earlier? That question recently came to light when Sue Vincent found an interesting bit of information in a packet of documents she has since donated. One of the documents is a copy of a land sale from Royal Watson to William H. Mason consisting of two parcels of land with buildings. One piece was referred to as the "Arcade lot and building, so called". The description of the property location and layout of the bounds indicates it may have been located on the Thompson Common approximately across from the Post Office.

Encyclopedia Britannica's architectural definition of an Arcade is a series of arches carried by columns with passage between the columns and a covered walkway, sometimes accessing shops. Over time, the archways gave way to standard modern style structures which evolved in the mid 20th century as a shopping mall. During the 19th century, smaller buildings with a porch or walkway covered by a multi column roof and having multiple shops was referred to as an Arcade. A known Thompson example was the building located one lot south of the ELM, known as the Quinntisset Inn, (see photo below). Prior to its being the Inn, it was also known as the Arcade Building. We believe this Arcade building contained multiple businesses or shops, a precursor to the 20th century shopping mall. Architecturally, it had several columns holding up the pediment shaped roof which covered the front porch/landing, in effect, a covered walkway allowing entrance to multiple shops under one roof.

So, regarding the "Arcade" located on the common, what was the building used for? Was it another building with a column supported porch roof allowing access to different shops? Very likely, given there was already one Arcade in the neighborhood, it would make sense there was another nearby. Research will continue with the hope that we might eventually discover what the building was used for.

amazonsmile

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.

[Go to org.amazon.com](https://org.amazon.com)



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

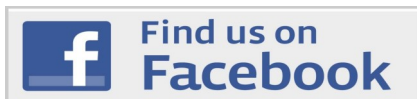
Make checks payable to:

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
 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
 Jon Brynga - 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

Thompson Historical Society

PO Box 47
 Thompson, CT 06277



Preserving Thompson, Connecticut's History Since 1968