



**WATERVILLE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
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Dear Fellow Historians,

Happy New Year!

Last year was a year filled with challenges. In 2020 we faced businesses closing, or having to adapt to the new safety requirements. Many people found themselves without jobs and childcare. Schools closed, and educators and students had to rethink how to teach and learn. Healthcare facilities were dealing with a virus, the likes of which they have never known; the virus overwhelmed the entire healthcare system. We could go on and on with the many challenges COVID-19 presented, but we would rather comment on something very positive that came about: We learned the importance of patience, kindness, and respect for others.

To offer some good news after such a difficult year: in many ways, 2020 was a very good year for the Society.

Major accomplishments in 2020:

- Our membership continues to grow. We now have 69 family and individual memberships for a total of 115 members.
- We now have a place to call our own. Our new Headquarters is located on the second level of Town Square. This is where the Town Hall portion of our Collection now resides. The small space is perfect for our present storage needs, and provides us with a much needed working space.
- We engaged the services of Archivist/Consultant Anne Morgan. In the four weeks that Anne worked in residence last summer and, with the assistance of

volunteers, she was able to assess and catalog a major portion of the Town Hall collection.

- We applied for, and were awarded, \$9,560 from the New Hampshire Moose Plate Grant. Anne's experience in grant writing was invaluable to us. The Grant will be used to purchase \$6,000 of preservation materials, and to bring Anne back to the Valley to begin the preservation work. Anne will be training volunteers to carry on with the preservation work, and in cataloging and assessing.
- "The Little Museum at the End of the Road" is now a reality. Our first exhibit focused on fall activities. The theme of our present exhibit is winter. It features old skis, ice skates, photos, snowshoes, along with descriptive information on each item. The "Museum" is located to the right of the Post Office which is located on the second floor of Town Square, adjacent to The Meeting Room. Please stop by and check it out.

Other 2020 Society activities:

- The WV Recreation Department started conducting guided in-Town historical walking tours, with a script provided by the Society's historians, Preston and Brenda Conklin.
- Our Annual Meeting in August was conducted via Zoom. The meeting included a presentation based on *The Waterville Valley Guidebook*, with author Steve Smith and contributors Preston and Brenda Conklin, and WV Recreation Department Director Brooke Wakefield. The Guidebook was published in August of 2020 by the Town of Waterville Recreation Department. The program included a slideshow with narration by Steve and Preston. Our Annual Meeting and election of officers followed.
- Labor Day weekend brought our 2nd Annual Cellar Hole Hike, with guides Preston and Brenda, and our 3rd Annual "Getting to Know the Valley." Both activities were well attended. Masks and physical distancing kept everyone safe while still permitting lively conversations and opportunities to make new friends.
- Another dream of the Society was to offer a historical Trolley Tour. Many thanks to those who made it possible: Preston and Brenda put together the script; Al Tailby, our very patient driver, did many practice runs to work out the kinks; members Margaret Turner and Jane McCaffrey were our Tour Guides (Margaret went above and beyond, walking through Town Square singing old Waterville tunes to drum up business). We conducted three tours before the Trolley went into hibernation for the winter. The Tours were enjoyed by riders, who departed the Trolley with a new appreciation of the Valley's history.

- The Society worked with the Silver Streaks to bring two Red Cross blood drives to the Valley. Many thanks to the Resort for providing the space to host the drive, and to Jamie Cobbett for all of his help. The Valley had never before hosted a drive. Future drives are planned.
- Member Linda Coleman has taken on the task of creating and maintaining our Facebook page. Thank you, Linda, for providing a venue to share some of the fun and interesting materials that are part of our collection. The site is interactive, and Linda challenges followers to answer questions about some of the documents and photos she has “dug up.”

What’s Next?

- We will be talking to members and residents to assist us in creating a Strategic Plan.
- We will continue to host community events.
- We will begin collecting oral histories. We hope to make these histories available to all.
- We will continue to work on preliminary plans for our own museum building.

History Tidbit: The Sunday Evening Hymn Sings

For many years, summer residents in the cottages and visitors to the Waterville Inn would gather Sunday evenings to sing. Someone would play the piano, and people would call out the names of their favorite hymns and the singing would continue enthusiastically. After the Inn burned in 1967, the Hymn Sing moved to Ibbey and Harry Stearns’ cottage at the north end of the Valley. The tradition continued until the Stearns’ cottage was sold after their deaths.

The Hymn Sings brought Valley residents together every summer Sunday, and were greatly enjoyed. The tradition was that the last hymn of the evening was always *Day is Dying in the West*. It begins:

*Day is dying in the west,
Heav’n is touching earth with rest,
Wait and worship while the night
Sets her evening lamps alight
Through all the sky.*

As the singers walked back to their cottages, their way was often brightly lit by stars.

Board of Directors:

President: Reggie Breeckner

Vice President: Susan C Scrimshaw

Treasurer: Lori Horton

Secretary: Reva Gertel

Officers:

Rob Wilson

Beth Goldsmith

Rich Rita

To get up to date news on Society happenings please:

Follow us on Facebook

Check the Resort Insider

Look for Articles by our local historians in the Wig Wag

Notes:

- *The Waterville Valley Guidebook*, published in August of 2020 was commissioned by the town, and is available for \$25. at the Town Hall, the Welcome Center, the Bookmonger, the Rec Department, the Mad River Coffee House and other locations in the area, including the Mountain Wanderer Bookstore in Lincoln. It is a treasury of photos, history and detailed descriptions of trails and hikes.
- The Society is offering Notecards for sale. The Stone Tower design was created by Society member and local artist Deb Hurley. They can be purchased at the Welcome Center, or you can email us at: wvhistorybuffs@gmail.com. The cost is \$10 for 10 cards and envelopes.
- How to join the WV Historical Society: The contribution is \$25. per family. Contact wvhistorybuffs@gmail.com for a membership form and mailing address.

