

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Pawlett Historical Society shall be to bring together those interested in the history of Pawlett and its environs; to maintain its property, i.e., the North Pawlett School and the Braintree School; and to use these buildings for educational exhibits.

The Society shall collect, preserve and make available for public exhibit and research archival records, books and artifacts which document the history of Pawlett.

The Society shall also educate the public about the needs and uses of its historical collection and cooperate with other groups having a common mission. ☺

SAVE THE DATE



Thurs, May 26th Town Hall, 7:00 p.m.
*“Pawlett One-Hundred Years Ago:
 As seen through the intimate lens of Nellie Bushee”
 by Eileen Travell.*

Sat, June 18th PVFD 8:30a.m.-12:30p.m.
Yard and Bake Sale *Bring donations to the firehouse on Friday June 17th NO TVs, other electronics, or clothing*

Sun, July 31st Chriss Monroe Chapel
Opening and Exhibition

Thurs, August 18th Town Hall at 7:00 p.m.
*“Local historical finds with a metal detector”
 by Ken Major*

Sun, September 18th Braintree School; 3:00 p.m.
*“One Room School Houses with reference to
 Braintree” by Dale Prouty*

October (Date TBD) Town Hall 7:00 p.m.
“Dorset Marble Quarries” by Shawn Harrington

Pages from the

PAWLETT SCRAPBOOK



PAWLETT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 2016

PAWLETT ONE-HUNDRED YEARS AGO; As seen through the intimate lens of Nellie Bushee a presentation by Eileen Travell

Thursday, May 26th at 7:00 p.m.
at the Pawlett Town Hall, 122 School Street



Eileen Travell

A gem of the Pawlett Historical Society’s photography collection are some 250 glass plate negatives taken by town resident Nellie Bushee between 1895 and 1910. Many are familiar with her name and a few of her images because of Susanne Rappaport’s book *Messages from a Small Town*, published in 2005.

For the Society’s spring program at the Town Hall, 7pm, Thursday, May 26, Eileen Travell will present a slideshow and talk about Nellie Bushee, her glass plates documenting life in Pawlett, and the development of photography during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Nellie’s glass plates, donated to the Society in 1984, were cleaned and organized by Neil Rappaport’s students at Bennington College, among whom was our speaker Eileen Travell. Four years ago, George Bouret created digital images and contact prints from all the glass negatives. The plates were recently catalogued and re-housed in archival materials for the Society by local volunteers.

Nellie Bushee was born in Pawlett in 1862. Her parents, Orlando and Lura Bushee, lived in a large brick house (no longer standing) in the center of town right across the road from the Town Hall. Nellie never married. She assisted her father at his grocery store in the Town Hall and in his office while he was Town Clerk from 1903 to 1911. She succeeded him as Town Clerk, serving in the position from 1911 to 1930.

Nellie photographed friends, family, neighbors, interiors of their homes, gatherings on porches, and picnics on the grass. Details of their private lives - furnishings, wallpaper, rugs, curtains, decorative arts and period clothing - are revealed to us through her images.

Eileen Travell is internationally recognized for her photography. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Sunday London Times*, (continued on pg.2)

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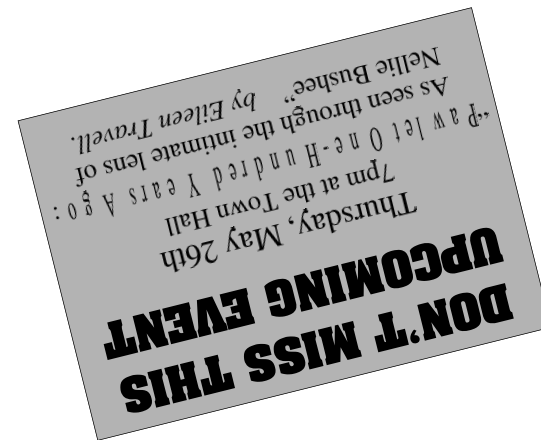
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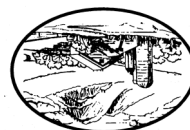
Rose Smith

TRUSTEE EMERITI

Mike Brautigam



Pawlett Historical Society
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President's Message

As indicated by the events calendar we have a full slate of events for 2016, starting on May 26th with Eileen Travell presenting the early twentieth century Pawlet photographs of Nellie Bushee.

A significant "work in progress", described on page 3 of this newsletter, is the modifications to the Chriss Monroe Chapel in Pawlet Cemetery to form the Society's exhibition and archiving center. As previously reported, the Vermont Arts Council awarded a cultural facilities grant for \$8729, to be matched by either an equal, or greater sum from the Society's own funds. In February President Steve Williams and Treasurer Barbara O'Connor attended the award ceremony in the Statehouse in Montpelier. The Society is much indebted to Vice President Bob Morlino for his development, and now management, of the project.

A second major work in progress is development of the Society's own website, which we hope to have operational by mid-year.

A third major ongoing project is handling the backlog of acquisitions in the Society's collection, now under the direction of Martha Schoenemann, with support from Barbara O'Connor, Sarah Rath, Teresa Jones, Dorothy Carey, and from a paid intern, Eden Aiken, a senior at Castleton University who has considerable experience with "Past Perfect", the museum archiving software being used.

We look forward to seeing readers at our various activities and programs. *Steve Williams*

May 26th Program *(continued from page 1)*

The Washington Post Magazine and Town & Country. Eileen's photographs are in the permanent collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Brooklyn Museum.

Eileen received her BA from Bennington College in 1988, majoring in Painting and Photography. Her two primary mentors were Neil Rappaport and Pat Adams. Eileen went on to study in an exclusive Master Class with Richard Avedon through The International Center of Photography. Eileen is a Senior Photographer at The Metropolitan Museum of Art where she has worked for 27 years.

Please join us on this journey back one hundred years. Perhaps you can help the Society identify some of the residents or some of the homes and gardens captured on Nellie's glass plates.

PHS welcomes two new members to the Board

We happily announce the addition of Judy Coolidge and Rose Smith to our Board of Trustees. Judging by the brief biographies below, we feel they will add greatly to our continuing efforts.



Judy Coolidge lives on School Street in Pawlet village. She grew up in Danby and moved to Pawlet in 1968. She's currently the Town Treasurer, a position she has held since 1981. Judy is married to Bud, an electrical contractor, and they have two sons, Greg, who lives in Medford Lakes, NJ and Tobey, who lives in Denver, CO, and one granddaughter, Olivia. Judy is a trustee of the Pawlet Community Church and chairman of the Supper Club. She's long had an interest in history and historical celebrations and in 1976 was involved in Pawlet's 200th celebration of the birth of the United States, co-chair of the State of Vermont's 200th birthday celebration in Pawlet in 1991, and co-chairman of Pawlet's 250th birthday celebration in 2011.

Judy is the "keeper of the family photos and family history" and recently assisted her uncle, Clyde Greene, in getting his memoirs published in a book entitled *My Life on Greene Hill and Beyond*. In her spare time she enjoys doing genealogy, taking photos, sewing, rug hooking, and playing Barbies with her granddaughter.

Judy says, "I'm happy to have been asked to become a Trustee of the PHS and look forward to working with the other dedicated members whose goal is to keep the Town of Pawlet history alive for future generations."



Rose Smith, a native Vermonter, moved to West Pawlet in 1984 from nearby Manchester from where she had grown up.

Rose served the town of Pawlet as member of Union District #47 School Board serving as co-chair of the construction committee overseeing the building of the Mettawee Community School (which was completed under budget) and as delegate to the Bennington Rutland Supervisory Union.

Rose is employed as a bookkeeper and when she is not working she enjoys spending time with family, reading, knitting and her dogs. *(continued on page 3)*

(Rose continued)

Rose is honored to be asked to serve the Pawlet Community as a member of the Pawlett Historical Society board. "Preserving the past for our future generations becomes even more important with each passing day."

PHS Website Development Update *by Steve Williams*

For sometime the Board has been aware that to keep up with the times the Society should have its own website. This is now taking place through an agreement with Chip Gibson of Collaboration 133, a website development company located in Pawlet.

To undertake the development, a committee comprising John Malcolm, Barry Meinerth, Sarah Rath and Steve Williams has been set up to develop the various elements required for subsequent integration by Chip Gibson himself. Soon all will be able to track current PHS activities, read 6th grade projects, view photographs from our collection, read back issues of the newsletter and read about the major events of Pawlet since its founding. Stay tuned to the launch by following us on Facebook by going to Pawlett Historical Society!

"The Vermont Movie" well attended

On six Sundays in the period from November through March, the Society showed the six part independent production "The Vermont Movie". All showings were at 5:00 p.m. on Sundays at the West Pawlet Fire Hall, to whom we are grateful for the use of their space.

Board members and viewers brought and shared popcorn and other refreshments which helped make the gatherings festive and enjoyable.

Each part showed different elements of Vermont life, lifestyle, education, political process, farming, history, topography, and characteristics. Attendance varied from eighteen to twenty-eight.

After the final part, a round table discussion was held to review the movie in its entirety. The general consensus was, that while the movie contained many interesting threads, overall it did not fully represent the strengths of today's Vermont and overemphasized the liberal elements of Vermont's lifestyle while it concentrated on a few pockets of the state, leaving our area without much representation.

Chriss Monroe Chapel Project Update

by Bob Morlino

The Pawlett Historical Society was founded in 1973 with the support of many organizations in town. The Society's first actions were to preserve and make public some of the town's historical photographs by publishing *A Pictorial Scrapbook, Pawlet, Vermont* for the Bicentennial Committee in 1975. The Society also reprinted Hiel Hollister's *Pawlet for One Hundred Years* which was originally published in 1867. In 1973 the Town of Pawlet deeded two one-room school houses to the PHS. The Braintree school has been preserved as a school house and is open to the public a few times a year while the North Pawlet School is used for collection storage.

The Society's collection has grown through the years through the generous donations of artifacts from local residents. Unfortunately the North Pawlet School has run out of space to store and preserve the collection. Also the Society does not have a location to exhibit its collection for the public to view.

Consequently the Pawlett Historical Society embarked on a search for a suitable building that could be used both as additional storage space and exhibition location. It was determined that the Chriss Monroe Chapel building at the Mettawee Valley Cemetery on Cemetery Hill Rd. was very rarely used, and being an historic local building in its own right, could be an ideal structure to fill both needs of the Society.

The Mettawee Valley Cemetery Association supported the idea, and a plan was hatched to convert the two room building into both a collection and exhibit space. With limited funds available to renovate the structure the Society applied for a grant from the Vermont Arts Council Cultural Facilities Grant. A grant for \$8,729 was awarded to the Society. This grant will cover about 50% of the cost, with the Society putting up the remainder. The renovation will include an ADA compliant rest room and a new floor for the collection room. The building will also be supplied with heat and the ceiling will be insulated. The entire interior will be freshly painted and an exhibit system will be installed in the larger of the two rooms. The larger room will also be used for presentations and will continue to be available as a chapel. The Society will lease the space from the Cemetery Association. The renovations are expected to be completed by June 30th and a dedication is currently planned for July 31st.