



Pawlett Historical Society  
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**PAWLET  
SCRAPBOOK**



Pawlett Historical Society

July 2022

*A message from the President...*

Summertime greetings,

The Pawlett Historical Society has kicked off the season with gusto. It began in May with our first speaker event at the Pawlet Town Hall featuring William Hosley presenting "Reading Places: Art, Architecture & Gravestones in Early Vermont." Thank you to all those who braved the hot weather to listen to Mr. Hosley's recount of his exploration of the unique and extraordinary artists that called Vermont home during its first hundred years, from the late 1700s to 1900.

In June, we welcomed the return of the very popular PHS Tag and Bake Sale at the Pawlet Fire Department. Many community members had been saving up household goods to donate to this event, and we were delighted to offer something for almost everyone. I would like to thank past board members Barbara O'Conner and Sue DiChiara for all their help, we couldn't have done it without them!

We hope you will join us for our mid-summer speaker/ice cream social at the Chriss Monroe Chapel on Cemetery Hill in Pawlet on July 24<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. We will feature delicious Stewart's ice cream and Gene Higgins of Rupert speaking about Rupert/Pawlet neighbors over the years. This event is free and open to the public.

Don't forget to save the date of September 17<sup>th</sup> to join us for our second cemetery clean-up day, once again in coordination with the Vermont Old Cemeteries Association.

We hope you find this newsletter enjoyable and informative.

*Rose Smith*

**6th Grade Essays**

From 1982 until 2015, the 6th grade students of the Mettawee Community School conducted research projects about our community history, in collaboration with the Pawlett Historical Society. The essays generations of students produced are pure magic. They capture the remarkable stories of everyday life in our community as seen through young eyes. PHS Trustee Judy Coolidge has spent months organizing and cataloging the essays. In addition to sharing select essays in the PHS newsletter, we are exploring other ways to make these essays more accessible to interested community members. This month, we're featuring Dan Mach's essay about Pawlet's baseball team in the 1920s-40s. Dan's original essay was handwritten, as were many of the early essays. For more information about the Brenda Smith 6th Grade Memorial Project, please see [www.pawlethistoricalsociety.org](http://www.pawlethistoricalsociety.org)

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**NEWSLETTER**

Rhonda Schlangen, Editor

Susan Hosley

**COMING EVENTS**

**Sunday, July 24th, 2 p.m.:**  
**Ice Cream Social**

Featured speaker: Gene Higgins from Rupert Historical Society  
Location: Chriss Monroe Chapel, Cemetery Hill, Pawlet, VT

**Saturday, September 17th:**  
Cemetery clean-up. Stay tuned for details!

## The Old Pawlet Baseball Team

By Dan Mach  
May 19, 1985  
Mrs. Hunt

It was a pleasure to interview some of the 1932 ballplayers and my Uncle Earl Wilson who played in the 1940s.

The first interview I'd like to speak about is with George Clark. George played for four years between 1929-1933. George enjoyed playing and also said "It was good exercise." He said that they wore regular ball hats and uniforms and their sweatshirts said "Pawlet" on the front. They purchased uniforms by raising money and "passing the hat" on Sunday games. He mentions the fields they played on were Cemetery Hill, Chub Moore field, Buxton field, and whatever field they were allowed on. He said there were seven teams on the league. They were Granville Quakers, Hebron team, Dorset team, Wells team, Middle Granville, Pawlet, and Rupert. George said they played a pretty serious game. He mentions one funny story when Cecil Dudley played shortstop and brother Luther played second base. Pawlet was beating the deuce out of the other team when a grounder went to Cecil and he muffed it and Luther said that's alright Dudley you'll get the next one the next grounder Luther muffed also.

George also said they practiced twice a week and their performance was good. George mostly pitched but sometimes played right field. Other people that played were Ralph Culver, brother Luther, Vernon Young, Roy Smith, "Red" Jones, Ken Mason, "Chub" Moore, Bus Mars, Abe Toote and Cecil Dudley from Middletown. The umps were Art Durkin, and Paul Baker. George said they put on a play called "Danger at the Crossroads" to help with expenses.

My next interview was with Bus Mars. Bus said he loved baseball and that's why he played. Like George, Bus played between 1929-1933. Bus played third and pitched. He said they played on the Tri State League which included the surrounding towns. Bus' only comment was "I don't know why the young people today don't play ball."

The next interview was with Ken Mason. Ken started playing in 1928 and played until he was 60 years old. He was first asked by Brigg Young to play. He also said he liked playing and there was almost always an opening. He played along with Bus and George on the Green Mountain League. That was at another time.

Ken said they played against Rutland for awhile until they became too high class. One day they played the Danby team on Chub Moores' field and the pitcher threw one close. Ken bent down and it hit him on the back of the head. Ken said he only had one other injury which was on the back of the wrist that required stitches. The uniforms they bought were gray with blue stripes. Ken said the only time they had uniforms, they wore them for about three or four years. Ken played center and right field. Ken felt his best pitched game



Baseball Team of Pawlet in 1932

was at the Lackey field in Wells. Ken also said he likes baseball but softball was harder because of all the running around. During the conversation the question was asked, what did they use for bases and he said they used whatever they could find. He said they played on Buxton Field, now Leach's cornfield. Ken said "that was only a rockpile". Ken remembers one time when Bud Haskins was spiked in the head and had to have several stitches. He said that was the last time he wore spikes in a game. I asked Ken how long the field by his house has been there? He said about 20 years, when he and Margaret were married.

Last but not least is the interview with my Uncle Earl Wilson. My uncle played between 1939 to 1942 during his sophomore, junior, and senior year in high school. My uncle mentioned there was no TV, and baseball was the only form of recreation. My uncle played catcher. He said their uniforms were mostly street clothes. Other equipment was purchased by "passing the hat" such as the catchers mitt which was \$5. My uncle said they got paid \$10 to play on the 4th of July. He said they often won quite a few games. During those years these players also played, Howard Hayes, Allen Lowerhouse, Francis Monroe, "Brigg" Young, John Moore, Bus Mars, "Chet" Moore, Cecil Dudley, George Clark, Ken Mason, Lute Clark, and Junior and Pete Mason. The last thing he said was that the umps were wore no chest protection and no face masks and would run from base to base to decide who is safe or out.

George Clark is now owner of Clark Store at Butternut Bend. Bus Mars is now an auctioneer and insurance agent. Ken Mason is now retired and resides in West Pawlet. Uncle Earl Wilson is now a high school math teacher in Granville.

### Bibliography

Interviews – George Clark, Bus Mars, Ken Mason, and Uncle Earl Wilson

## Ice Cream Social Featuring Rupert Historian Gene Higgins "Neighbors: The Pawlet – Rupert Connection"

Rupert, Vermont historian Gene Higgins will be the featured speaker at our Ice Cream Social on Sunday, July 24th, 2022, at the Criss Monroe Chapel on Cemetery Hill Road in Pawlet. We will serve ice cream starting at 2 p.m., and Gene will begin his comments at 2:30 p.m. For those who don't know Gene or his reputation as a generous keeper of our local histories, Gene is a Rupert fixture with a passion for family and community history. In his discussion "Neighbors: what we know about each other and sharing our memories," Gene will focus on the Rupert-Pawlet connection. He has many stories to share and perhaps some secrets about the relationship and rivalries between these two rural communities.

After growing up in Rupert, Gene taught history in Woodstock, Vermont for many years. He returned to his hometown after retiring. In addition to his deep Rupert roots, Gene has many Pawlet relatives. He is currently the President of the Rupert Historical Society.

Please join us for great storytelling with ice cream! Invite your Rupert friends too. This program is free and open to the public.



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## Welcome Suzanne Wright



Suzanne Wright of West Pawlet has joined the Pawlett Historical Society as our newest Trustee. She now lives in West Pawlet full time after spending summers here for twenty-five years. You might recognize her blue barn as the one with large fish swimming on it. Suzanne retired from teaching in the Philadelphia area and now hopes to apply her knowledge of art history and sculpture to the PHS, contributing to its displays and exhibitions. Suzanne is captivated by photos and fashions of the olden days in Vermont. In addition to her collaboration with the PHS, Suzanne has a solo art show at the Southern Vermont Art Center later this summer. Also, she hopes to display additional sculptures on and around her property.

### Luck, cont. from pg 4

language: newspapers used by the homeless as insulation in colder urban areas were called "Hoover blankets," empty, turned out pockets were referred to as "Hoover flags," cardboard used as inserts in worn shoes was called "Hoover leather," and cars pulled by horses when gasoline became unaffordable were dubbed "Hoover wagons."<sup>16</sup> When in 1932 Hoover ordered what became a tragically violent removal of approximately 5,000 WWI veterans from a Hooverville in Washington DC, where they had encamped to appeal for early release of benefits they were due in the 1940s, his reputation and fate as a politician were cemented. In his loss to FDR in 1932, Hoover won just six states and 11% of all electoral votes, his original guarantee of prosperity experienced as one of the most bitter and deeply personal betrayals of a voting public in history.

<sup>16</sup>Jacksonville, Florida State College at. "U.S. History II: 1877 to Present." *Lumen*, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-fscj-ushistory2/chapter/brother-can-you-spare-a-dime-the-great-depression/>.

## If That's Luck, You Can Keep It

By Kenneth Major

Few political artifacts can compete with this "Lucky Pocket Piece" token from Herbert Hoover's 1928 US Presidential bid in terms of sheer tragic irony, or at least terrible timing. Found metal detecting in the front yard of a friend's home in Pawlet, this campaign coin "good for 4 years of prosperity" was distributed at the crest of nearly a decade of economic growth and advances in technology and manufacturing that had greatly improved the daily life of most Americans. These tokens were made of brass and are slightly larger than a modern quarter; when new, they shone like a freshly-minted penny. At the time they were given out, the incumbent President, Vermont's own Calvin Coolidge, had chosen not to seek re-election, and Hoover claimed the contest against Democratic candidate Al Smith by a wide margin, capturing 43 states electorally and receiving almost 58% of the popular vote. Exactly 6 months after his March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1929 inauguration, the stock market began a catastrophic decline that would herald the Great Depression. The political promise (and common hope) of never-ending American prosperity was shattered, and in the years that followed survival became a fact of life for millions.

History is full of examples of wise or successful people making terribly inaccurate predictions. Thomas Edison believed everything in the 21<sup>st</sup> century household would be made of steel<sup>1</sup> and Bell's telephone patent was "idiotic" to the president of Western Union telegram.<sup>2</sup> While worldviews wedded to the present can give even the brightest folks tunnel vision, our biases are rarely more evident than when it comes to the words of a potential leader. Campaign promises tap into collective wishes, and as groups we are often far more interested in hearing about the future we *want* than the one that is *likely*. In Hoover's case, as America had gained distance from the twin nightmares of the Great War and Spanish Flu, car ownership went from a rarity to commonplace, commercial air travel began, and the majority of the country experienced electrification, who wouldn't want to believe that the good times had just begun? Who wouldn't have elected for mayor of Pompeii in AD 79 a person whose platform had been "Higher Wages and Absolutely No Volcanic Eruptions?" In spite of some serious warnings by economists and even the Federal Reserve, Herbert Hoover and the American public which elected him rushed headlong and with great optimism into calamity.

<sup>1</sup>"Thomas Edison's Predictions: Spot On." *CBS News*, CBS Interactive, 5 Jan. 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/thomas-edisons-predictions-spot-on/>.

<sup>2</sup>McKinley, Joe. "13 Predictions about the Future That Were Dead Wrong." *Reader's Digest*, Reader's Digest, 3 Aug. 2021, <https://www.rd.com/list/predictions-that-were-wrong/>.



Hoover "prosperity coin" found in Pawlet

Despite Hoover's high level of competence in governance and leadership up to his assumption of the presidency, he inherited an economy that was primed for failure. President Coolidge, a man of "quiet but iron-willed devotion to limited government"<sup>3</sup> had been ideologically opposed to interfering with free markets and a rapid growth in consumer debt even before being emotionally crippled by the tragic death of his beloved 16 year old son in 1924 (historians have argued that Coolidge simply never recovered from this loss, and during the four years of his elected presidency was a shadow of his former self, working fewer than 4 hours a day while sleeping for 12-14<sup>4</sup>). On Coolidge's watch mortgage debt had grown eightfold,<sup>5</sup> alongside significant increases in installment and other forms of consumer debt from people purchasing cars and electric appliances, the technological wonders that had begun to make life so much easier for so many. These expansions in credit were enabled by a lack of central regulation, leading to deteriorating lending requirements and higher risk as banks increasingly competed to sell mortgage, consumer, and business loans.<sup>6</sup> Millions of ordinary Americans were also investing directly in the New York Stock Exchange for the first time, and by the mid 1920s individuals were able to put just 10-30% down to secure loans they used to purchase stocks. Even more extraordinary, people were able to use existing stocks as collateral for future borrowing, an economic arrangement that only works as long as prices continue to rise (as a sidebar, this pattern of deregulation, increasingly creative financing, and overuse of leverage has arisen in most

<sup>3</sup>Staff, TNI. "America's Presidents: The Best, Worst, Most Mediocre, and 5 Most Underrated of All Time." *The National Interest*, The Center for the National Interest, 8 Nov. 2016, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/americas-presidents-the-best-worst-most-mediocre-5-most-18332?page=0%2C3>.

<sup>4</sup>Gilbert, Robert E. *The Tormented President: Calvin Coolidge, Death, and Clinical Depression*. Praeger, 2003.

<sup>5</sup>Persons, Charles E. "Credit Expansion, 1920 to 1929, and Its Lessons." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 45, no. 1, Oxford University Press, 1930, pp. 94-130, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1882528>.

<sup>6</sup>Rötheli, Tobias. "Innovations in US Banking Practices and the Credit Boom of the 1920s." *The Business History Review*, vol. 87, no. 2, [The President and Fellows of Harvard College, Cambridge University Press], 2013, pp. 309-27.

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economic manias over the last 400 years<sup>7</sup>...one of the most shocking examples of this is the 100 year/3-generation mortgage developed during the real estate bubble in Japan in the late 1980s,<sup>8</sup> when prices were driven so high through speculation that a single square foot of housing in Tokyo was worth 350 times one in Manhattan). In short, households were borrowing to live better while also *borrowing to gamble* so as not to miss out on the rising tide of prosperity. By "August 1929...more than 8.5 billion dollars was out on loan"<sup>9</sup> an amount that exceeded all circulating physical money in the United States at that time. And while only 10% of households were invested in the stock market, 90% of banks were.<sup>10</sup> Fewer than a third of banks were insured federally though, and kept only a tiny fraction of their deposits in reserve.<sup>11</sup> What could possibly go wrong?

The Depression began in the United States and spread through the world, and is regarded as the most significant *worldwide* economic downturn in history.<sup>12</sup> But the Great Depression began with the Great Crash, when in October 1929 stock prices continued to decline after their initial September drop, and lenders finally began calling in those aforementioned loans only to find that far too many people could not repay. Other investors rushed to cash in their stocks, leading to the reverse of the speculative bubble that had sent the market soaring up to that point. Panic the week of October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1929 created a self-fulfilling pattern of falling prices and increased selling as terror replaced euphoria and greed, leading to a 23% decline in just two days. By late November the Dow Jones Industrial Average had lost half its value, and by July 1932 it was down almost 90% from its peak in 1929. In the months and years to come, the crash sent shock waves through society, as similar patterns of emotionally-fueled group behavior exposed the fragility of the larger financial system in a widening gyre of consequences: loan defaults, runs on uninsured banks (leading to 7000 bank closures and the losses of countless life savings), dramatically reduced personal and business spending, reduction in the supply of money, the near total suspension of residential construction, and a 50% reduction in national industrial production all snowballed to create an economically blighted landscape with global ramifications and widespread human suffering.

<sup>7</sup>Aliber, Robert Z, Charles P. Kindleberger, and Charles P. Kindleberger. *Manias, Panics, and Crashes: A History of Financial Crises*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.

<sup>8</sup>Chang, C., Dandapani, K., & Auster, R. (1995). The 100-Year Japanese Residential Mortgage: A Critical Examination. *Journal of International Accounting, Auditing, and Taxation*, 4(1).

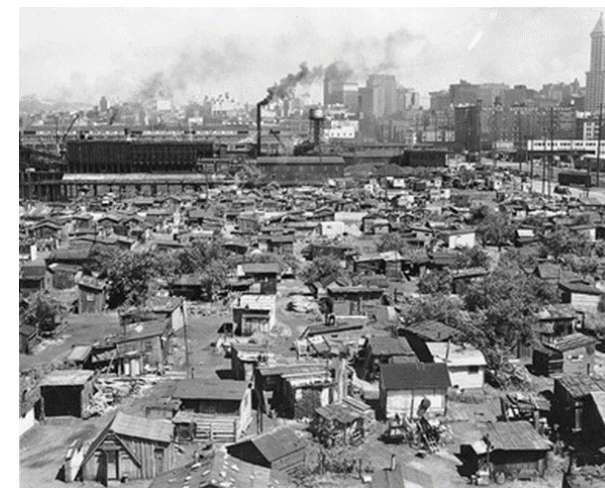
<sup>9</sup>Lambert R. (2008). Crashes, Bangs, and Wallops. *Financial Times*

<sup>10</sup>P. Scott Corbett, Volker Janssen, John M. Lund, Todd Pfannestiel, Paul Vickery, and Sylvie Waskiewicz. Provided by: OpenStax College. Located at: <http://openstaxcollege.org/textbooks/us-history>.

<sup>11</sup>Rötheli, Tobias. *ibid*

<sup>12</sup>Romer, Christina D. and Pells, Richard H.. "Great Depression". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11 Oct. 2021,

By 1933, the lowest point in the Depression, almost 25% of the workforce was unemployed,<sup>13</sup> the highest proportion in US history. In Vermont, "the marble, stone, and machine tool industries...came to a crashing halt,"<sup>14</sup> and all forms of industrial production and employment were reduced almost by half, heavily impacting the more populated cities of Rutland, Burlington, and Barre. The employment crisis was tied to a housing crisis as well, with more than 250 thousand Americans losing their homes in 1932 alone.<sup>15</sup> In Vermont, more than 1,500 farms went out of business as commodity prices fell far below sustainable levels. Homelessness became a visible phenomenon for the first time in American society, and encampments sprang up in and around cities across the country, some with so many thousands of inhabitants that they created their own governing bodies. The name for these shantytowns at the time? "Hooverilles."



Hooverville outside Seattle, WA circa 1934

While President Hoover had a history of humanitarian values and practical experience before his election (he had led the American Relief Administration, organizing shipments that fed millions in central Europe as they recovered from WWI) through his presidency his policies remained firmly on the side of limited government, believing that the economy would right itself with little federal involvement, and that private, local charity was the only tenable response to the unemployment, homelessness, food insecurity, and other facts of life for a large minority of Americans during the Depression. And so Hoover's public image gradually became one of ridicule, as visible signs of economic doom and individual suffering became tied to the President through

<sup>13</sup>"Great Depression Facts." *FDR Presidential Library & Museum*, <https://www.fdrlibrary.org/great-depression-facts>.

<sup>14</sup>Woodsmoke Productions and Vermont Historical Society, "Vermont in the Great Depression, 1929," *The Green Mountain Chronicles* radio broadcast and background information, original broadcast 1988-89. <https://vermonthistory.org/vermont-in-great-depression-1929>

<sup>15</sup>"Housing 1929-1941 ." *Historic Events for Students: The Great Depression*. *Encyclopedia.com*. 28 Feb. 2022 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

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