



Pawlett Historical Society  
P.O. Box 113  
Pawlet, Vermont 05761

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and  
Facebook Pawlett Historical Society

### COMING EVENTS

**Saturday, July 22:**  
Pawlett Historical Society 50th Anniversary Celebration  
\*\*Details throughout this issue\*\*

**Saturday, September 23:**  
Cemetery clean-up by PHS and community volunteers

### Membership

Thank you to those who have renewed their membership and/or donated to our annual appeal. We encourage anyone who hasn't renewed this year to do so. Membership rates are: \$10 single membership, \$15 family, \$25 contributing, \$50 sustaining. Donations of any amount are also welcome. Please send checks to Pawlett Historical Society PO Box 113 Pawlet, VT 05761.

Pages from the  
**PAWLET  
SCRAPBOOK**



Pawlett Historical Society

June 2023

### You are Invited! Celebrating 50 Years of the Pawlett Historical Society

Please join the PHS on **Saturday, July 22nd** in the Pawlet Village Center for our event filled 50th Anniversary Celebration. We are organizing displays and a series of activities from **1 PM to 8 PM** for community members of all ages to enjoy. Our theme is honoring Pawlet's agricultural heritages, and our farms and farmers past and present. All events are free and open to the public. Donations to help defray costs are welcome and appreciated.

**1:00 PM –5:30 PM**—An exhibit of the PHS collection of textiles at the Town Hall. We have some beautiful clothing and quilts we have long looked forward to displaying.

**1:00 PM –5:30 PM**—An exhibit of some of Neil Rappaport's photos highlighting our farms, farmers, sugarmakers, and much more. Neil was a self-taught photographer who is remembered in Pawlet for his visual census of the Town, which he created during the 1980s and early 1990s by going house to house, photographing our residents. Neil's many photos are his legacy; it is our honor to have been given access to them, and it is with great pride that we offer this exhibit. (See the article *Making Pawlet's History Books Available Again* for more on Neil's work.)

**1 p.m.**—Children's activities! Blaine Goad will perform his Hocus Pocus Magic Show at the Library. After the show, there will be a brief workshop on how to perform a magic trick. This show is free and guaranteed to please "kids" of all ages. Pawlet's own Gretchen Hammell will be offering face painting throughout the afternoon.

**3 p.m.**—Speaker Michael Lange from the VT Humanities Council will speak about the Many Meanings of Maple. Mr. Lange is a professor at Champlain College who has done years of research among sugarmakers all over the state to learn what sugaring really means to Vermont. This program is free and will be held at the Town Hall (handicap accessible). We hope Pawlet area sugarmakers can join us in conversation following the program. Free desserts following the program.

**6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**—Concert by Vermont Fiddler Patrick Ross, a fifth-generation fiddler, on the Town Green (weather permitting-otherwise, in the Town Hall.) Patrick grew up in Newbury, VT, near the Canadian border. According to his bio, "Patrick Ross plays fiddle, guitars, banjo, and is the lead vocalist." This is Patrick's first concert in Pawlet and we are sure it won't disappoint. Sponsored by PHS Board Members and R. Hulett Trucking. Free desserts following the program.

Maple treats will be available for purchase throughout the celebration, courtesy of the Lewis Family Maple Truck. Concertgoers are invited to bring a picnic to enjoy during the concert. All activities are free and open to the public. Donations to help defray costs are welcome and appreciated.

We hope you are able to join us.  
Please contact Judy Coolidge 802-325-3073 or Rose Smith 802-645-0306 for further information.

#### OFFICERS

Rose Smith  
*President*

Judy Coolidge  
*Treasurer*

John Malcolm  
*Secretary*

Martha Schoenemann  
*Historian*

Sarah Rath  
*Curator*

#### TRUSTEES

Susan Hosley  
Theresa Jones

Ken Major  
Barry Meinerth  
Matthew Proft

Jack Rath  
Rhonda Schlangen  
Stephen Williams  
Suzanne Wright

#### NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

Rhonda Schlangen (editor)  
Susan Hosley  
Judy Coolidge  
Theresa Jones

## A message from the President...

Dorothy Offensend, a historian, and her husband, Clifford, started exploring the idea to start a historical society for the town of Pawlett in 1952. According to Dorothy's account, published in *Pages from My Pawlett Scrapbook, Book 1*, it wasn't until over 20 years later that the interest and resources came together to form what we now know as the Pawlett Historical Society. In May 1973, Dorothy, her husband Clifford, Edward and Mary Clark, Marjorie and Jack Jones, Leon and Dawn Clark, James and Theda Warner, Wilson Clark, and Dr. Stanley Norton gathered in the Offensend living room and decided that starting a historical society was a worthy venture. Soon, their numbers swelled to fifty people, who joined an organizational meeting in the Grange room—the same room in the upstairs Town Hall where we will be hosting some of our PHS 50th Anniversary events. Those present voted to form what is now called the Pawlett Historical Society and elected the first group of officers to govern the society. They were:

President: Dorothy Offensend  
 1st Vice President: James Warner  
 2nd Vice President: Bill Clark  
 Secretary: Mary Clark  
 Treasurer: Shirley Allen Hanley  
 Trustees: Rachel Alexander Waite, Leon R. Clark, Gertrude Hitt South, Dr. Stanley Norton, Clifford Offensend, and Edward Clark

The founding of PHS illustrates what we know to be true of any initiative in a small community such as ours: it takes a few dedicated people with a vision and commitment, who are animated by what then may have seemed to be a far-fetched idea. But their enthusiasm caught on and today, fifty years later, we are a historical society with 52 members and 87 donors (some of whom are both members and donors). Over the decades we have held countless events. We have preserved two historic one-room school houses. We have developed archives of donated and acquired historical objects and records from Pawlett's community, which volunteers are tirelessly working to catalog and conserve. We are constantly striving to preserve and share Pawlett's rich history, so that it is accessible and meaningful to all community members. We deeply appreciate the support of our members to do so.

As we prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary, we invite you to join us to celebrate this momentous milestone and tribute to Pawlett's community spirit.

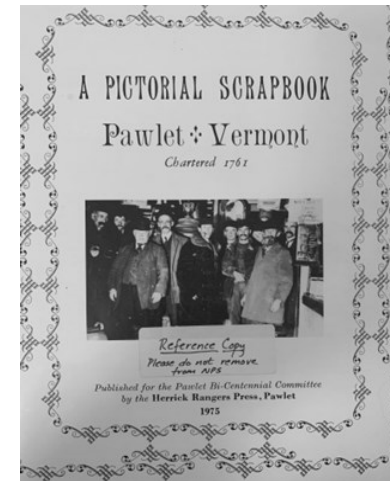
*Rose Smith, President*

### 1973 Charter Member of the Pawlett Historical Society as listed in *My Pawlett Scrapbook* by Dorothy Offensend

Shirley Allen	Mrs. Harold Leach
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Baker	Ruby Leach
Ms. Roseann Baker [Meier]	Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Lewis
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Bostock, Sr.	Rena License
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Bostock, Jr.	Ruth Lowerhouse
Edith Boyce	Mr. and Mrs. Lee McChesney
Zaide Boyce	Mr. and Mrs. Anthony McDonough
Laura Brown	Donald McNeill
Dorothea Clark	Alison Mabry
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Clark	Helen Mach
Ella Clark	John Mach, Sr.
Mr. and Mrs. Leon Clark	John Mach, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Clark, Jr.	Dr. Stanley Norton
Mr. and Mrs. James Culp	Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Offensend
Dr. and Mrs. Carroll Dodge	Ann Evans
Edith Drislane	Else Platt
Mr. and Mrs. Sven Erickson	Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Pleissner
Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Evans	Maud Ripley
Mr. and Mrs. George Folger	Mr. and Mrs. Zane Rodrigues
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Gerard	Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Sawitz
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Graf	Charles Shinn
Fred W. Hauser	Gertrude South
Agnes Henegan	Rachel Waite
Hazel Jones	Mr. and Mrs. James Warner
John J. Jones	Zonzetta Whaley

### A Pictorial Scrapbook: Pawlett, Vermont Produced by the Pawlett Bicentennial Committee

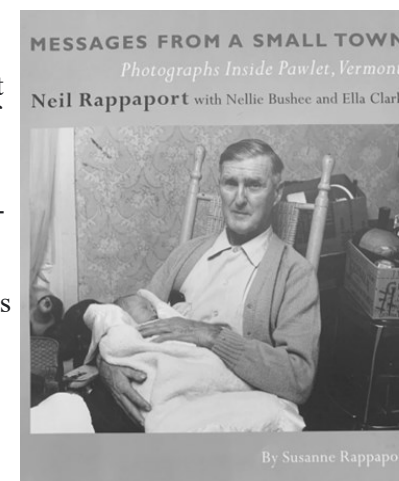
Featuring photographs by Pawlett resident Ella Clark and other community members, this booklet depicts everyday life and special moments in Pawlett and West Pawlett from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some of the buildings and names will be familiar to local readers.



### Messages from a Small Town: Photographs Inside Pawlett, Vermont, with photographs by Neil Rappaport, Nellie Bushee, and Ella Clark and text by Susanne Rappaport

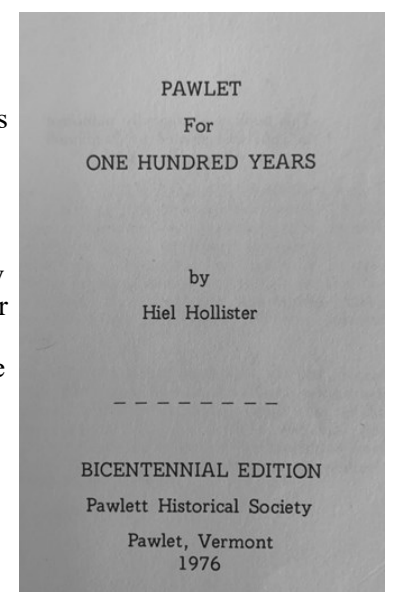
Neil Rappaport was a documentary photographer and teacher who lived in Pawlett, Vermont for 30 years. He was obsessed with recording how life in one small rural town was changing and being changed in the latter decades of the twentieth century. When he died suddenly in 1998, he left behind thousands of images: the town's well-known slate quarries, its farms that were rapidly declining in numbers, and its pastoral landscape. But most of all, he photographed its people - individuals, families, groups - in their own settings.

Susanne Rappaport selected the best of her late husband's work, juxtaposed with historical photographs taken by two Pawlett women from the early years of the century, and elaborated with selections from oral histories shared by community members.



### Pawlett for One Hundred Years by Heil Hollister

Published in 1876 and subsequently reprinted by the Pawlett Historical Society, this book navigates Pawlett's early colonial history. Hollister covers local politics, agriculture, industry, education, and families, and reprints poetry and song lyrics. As Hollister notes in the introduction, "Our aim has been to rescue from the fast thickening mists of forgetfulness, and to release from the domain of tradition such fragments of our early history as are not already shrouded by the dark clouds of oblivion."



## 50th Celebration Events

### Featured Speaker: "The Many Meanings of Maple"

Maple sugaring is a part of Pawlet's identity. Join us to tap into the sweet history of how maple sugaring is a part of Vermont's economy, ecology and culture. As part of the PHS 50th Anniversary Celebration, at **3 p.m. on Saturday, July 22nd**, Champlain College Professor Michael Lange will give a talk titled "The Many Meanings of Maple". In the presentation, Lange will examine the many meanings of maple sugaring.

Maple is enormously important to Vermont's economy, ecology, and heritage, and the presentation will cover sugaring based on over five years of research among sugarmakers all around the state to learn from them what sugaring really means to Vermont. Lange is a professor of anthropology and folklore and has written several academic works about cultural identity. His recent work draws on research with sugarmakers from across Vermont and includes "Foodie Influence on

the Culinary Meanings of Maple Syrup" and "Sweet Bedfellows: Continuity, Change and Terroir in Maple Syrup." His most recent book, "Meanings of Maple," will be published soon.



The event, sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, is free and open to the public. The event will also be accessible to people with disabilities.

### Join us for a concert by Vermont Fiddler Patrick Ross

We will close our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on **Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>** with a concert on the Green from **6:00 – 7:30 p.m.** The PHS is delighted to welcome Patrick Ross, one of Vermont's busiest acoustic roots musicians. A DJ, composer, singer and producer as well as a superb multi-instrumentalist, Ross is the very model of the modern traditional musician! He grew up near the Canadian border, and his grandparents came from Quebec, where there's a strong tradition of fiddling. At age 12, he caught the attention of a Smithsonian Folkway Records team documenting regional folk music, who ended up recording him on the front porch of his family's home. He won the Vermont-State Fiddle Championship at age 14 and has been performing professionally since age 19.

Ross has toured with a variety of music ensembles, worked in Nashville with a Celtic band, performed at the Grand Ole Opry and the Kennedy Center for the Arts in Washington, D.C., and shared stages with Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, and Paul McCartney. He's established himself as one of Vermont's top session musicians. He tours the state regularly, has started an annual music festival and opened his own recording label, Rock Farmer Records, dedicated to "roots" music. Always busy, Ross performs with The Fellers with Rusty DeWees and guitarist Doug Perkins, the bluegrass band Mountain Money, and bands Hot Flannel and Atlas Key. His solo concerts include a worldwide range of fiddle styles as well as songs he has written for guitar, banjo, mandolin, and cello.

### Sponsor a Souvenir Booklet

We are preparing a souvenir booklet to share with community members free of charge, and are asking for sponsors to help offset our costs. **Please send your check by June 10, 2023.** Sponsors who wish to be named will be included in the booklet. Please mail a check for \$15.00 or more to the Pawlett Historical Society, P O Box 113, Pawlet, VT 05761. If you'd like to be listed in the booklet as a sponsor, please send your listing along with your donation. Fifty years from now it will be fun to look back and read the names of people who lived in Pawlet or were members of the PHS in 2023.

## Making Pawlet History Books Available Again

For such a small community, it is remarkable that so many seminal books were written chronicling Pawlet's history. The Pawlett Historical Society is committed to making these books available to our community. Thanks to a \$5,000 gift from the estate of Anna Jones, which the PHS earmarked for publishing and education, we are able to reintroduce these books to a new generation of readers.

The first book was Pawlet for One Hundred Years written in 1867 by Hiel Hollister and republished by the Pawlett Historical Society in 1976. Pages from My Pawlett Scrapbook Books I and II were written by Pawlett Historical Society's founding member Dorothy Offensend and published in 1998. These texts are joined by two books of photographs. A Pictorial Scrapbook: Pawlet Vermont, published in 1975 and featuring the historic photos of Ella Clark, who, starting as a young girl, photographed our community. Messages from Small Town: Photographs Inside Pawlet Vermont, featuring text by late PHS Historian Susanne Rappaport and photographs by local photographers Neil Rappaport, Nellie Bushee, and Ella Clark was published in 2005.

The PHS is continuing its history of ensuring these books remain available. Originally, these books were produced and printed by local publishing companies, like Academy Books in Rutland, Vermont, and by the Herrick Rangers Press in Pawlet. These local businesses have since closed their doors, and the PHS has turned to Amazon as an inexpensive alternative. If you wish to purchase copies, you can now find My Pawlett Scrapbook, Book 1 and My Pawlett Scrapbook, Book 2 on Amazon for only \$15. Pawlet for One Hundred Years will be available soon. The PHS will also offer a limited number of these books for sale at our events, such as the upcoming 50th Anniversary Celebration on July 22nd, 2023.

The Pawlet Community Library also has a rich selection of local history books on loan, including those listed here. Another great resource is the Rutland Historical Society, which is working to democratize access to local histories. You can access a digitized version of the Hollister book and many other local histories via their free online archives. See [www.RutlandHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.RutlandHistoricalSociety.com) and check out the Digital Bookshelf on the Collection

### My Pawlett Scrapbook, Book 1 and My Pawlett Scrapbook, Book 2 by Dorothy Backus Offensend

Dorothy Backus Offensend was born Oct. 15, 1917, in Fair Haven, Vt., the daughter of George Moss Backus and Maude (Smith) Backus. She and her husband, Clifford H. Offensend, moved to Pawlet, Vt., in 1942. According to her obituary, Dorothy often stated that the move to Pawlet greatly impacted her life. In 1959, she discovered her talent as a historical writer by co-writing an article about Pawlet, Vt., for the annual Town Report. That article launched her career as a well-published author of many historical writings, including two volumes of Pawlet history. Despite visual impairment, she spent nearly two decades writing these volumes and published them late in her life.

My Pawlett Scrapbook, Book 1, includes dozens of chapters covering historical Pawlet moments, buildings, and people. The Work House, The Pied Piper of Pawlet, World War II, the West Pawlet Fire of 1895, Welsh

Music and Musicians, and community celebrations are all described in the pages of this book.



My Pawlett Scrapbook, Book 2 covers biographies of notable local figures, such as auctioneer "Bus" Merritt James Mars, and more community moments, like the arrival of the telephone.

