

AUGUST 2018

# HALIFAX NEWS

## BAGATELLE FOR BLOSSOM THE BENEVOLENT BOVINE



She was usually in the lovely pasture high above the beaver pond on the Fisher farm although first spotted on the Cotter farm on Winchester Road. Her favorite parking place, and she parked most of the time, was under a tree right next to the fence. Mostly she was munching but she spent lots of time just breathing. If she were in a friendly frame of mind she might slowly raise her massive head with its beautiful horns and aim a disdainful glance at the viewer. If she were lower in the pasture she would, if called, slowly amble up to the fence and shed the benison of her attention upon the visitor. Other times she blissfully ignored all demands for acknowledgment from noney humans. Solitary and utterly alone she fascinated nearly everyone and courted no one. Her loss saddens us all. ~Lynda Copeland, July 7, 2018, Halifax, VT



## A LAMPLIGHT INAUGURATION

Ninety-five years ago, in the early hours of August 3, 1923, an event occurred unique in our nation's history. It happened here in Vermont, in the Windsor County village of Plymouth Notch, and brought world-wide attention to that small and then out-of-the-way hamlet. The event was the swearing-in of an American president. The principal players in the drama were Vice President Calvin Coolidge and his father, John C. Coolidge.

Calvin Coolidge, born in 1872 and raised in Plymouth Notch, pursued a career in law and politics in Northampton, MA, where he settled in 1895. Elected to the city council he later became Mayor of Northampton, a state legislator, Lieutenant Governor and then Governor of Massachusetts. In 1920 Calvin Coolidge was elected Vice President of the United States as the running mate of Warren G. Harding.

Calvin's father, John C. Coolidge, was a native and life-long resident of Plymouth, VT. He was named aide-de-camp to a Vermont governor in 1900 and awarded the title "Colonel". In 1923 he was 78 years old, twice-widowed, and had been a farmer, storekeeper, bank director, insurance agent, and local and state officeholder and elected official over his long and productive lifetime.

In June of 1923 President Harding and his wife Florence began a cross-continent speaking tour by train, styled a "Voyage of Understanding." From the Pacific coast, the President sailed to Alaska, becoming the first president to visit this U.S. territory while in office. On his return trip Harding visited Vancouver, BC, the first sitting U.S. president to visit Canada. Back in the U.S., President Harding was taken ill with what was described as food poisoning which turned into pneumonia. Warren Harding died suddenly in San Francisco the evening of August 2nd of what was diagnosed as a stroke. The stage was now set for "a lamplight inauguration."

Vice President Coolidge, his wife Grace, and their teen-aged sons John and Calvin had spent much of July visiting Col. Coolidge at the family homestead in Plymouth Notch. On August 2nd, the boys left for Massachusetts. Reports indicate the weather was hot and muggy with thunderstorms in parts of Vermont. By 9 pm it was dark, and most of the occupants of the house had retired for the night: Calvin and Grace upstairs, live-in help Aurora Pierce and Bessie Pratt also upstairs. Col. John retired downstairs by 11 o'clock.

Picture now this quiet house and peaceful village as darkness fell over the Green Mountains. The Coolidge home had no electricity or modern plumbing. It was lighted by kerosene lamps with glass chimneys and heated in cold weather by the kitchen range and parlor stoves. The only available telephone was hanging on the wall of the general store across the road. There was no telegraph in the village. Roads leading in and out of Plymouth Notch were unpaved, or hilly, or winding, or all three.

A message from San Francisco was forwarded to the telegraph office in White River Junction around 11:30 pm then relayed by telephone to switchboard operator Nellie Perkins in the nearby town of Bridgewater. Nellie's husband Winfred set out for Plymouth Notch by automobile carrying the report that President Harding was dead. About midnight car headlights appeared on the road outside the Coolidge house; knocks on the

front door roused Col. John who took the message and started up the stairs, calling to his son. Calvin Coolidge later described this moment.

"I noticed that his voice trembled. As the only times I had observed that before were when death visited our family, I knew that something of the gravest nature had occurred...."

Within minutes, more cars pulled up outside. The momentous news was spreading, and reporters, the Vice President's stenographer and chauffeur, and various officials appeared. Several of these men entered the house; others gathered on the front porch and lawn.

Inside Calvin Coolidge prepared a message of sympathy for Florence Harding followed by a statement for the press. It read in part:

"...It will be my purpose to carry out the policies [Harding] has begun for the service of the American people and for meeting their responsibilities wherever they may arise....I have faith that God will direct the destinies of our nation...."

Florence Cilley, the general store owner, was awakened and asked to make her wall-mounted telephone available. Soon Calvin Coolidge put in a call to Attorney General Harry Daugherty regarding details of the presidential oath of office. Coolidge was being urged to take the oath as soon as possible.

Who would administer the oath? Under ordinary circumstances it was done by the Chief Justice of the United States, and in a few previous instances by a lower-ranking federal judge. But no federal judges were available in Plymouth Notch. John Coolidge was a Notary Public; could he perform the task? Col. John allowed that, yes, he probably could. Later when asked about this, he said, "Well, I didn't know that I couldn't."

It was decided. Three copies of the presidential oath were typed out. At 2:47 am on August 3, 1923, by the light of a kerosene lamp in the sitting room of the house where he grew up, Calvin Coolidge faced his father, raised his right hand, and repeated the words that officially made him the 30th President of the United States. Never before or since in America has a father administered the presidential oath of office to his son.

A few minutes later several telephone and telegraph men arrived. A telephone line was strung from the nearby main line through a tree and window into the Coolidge kitchen, and a telephone was installed – either fastened to a wall or placed on a chair. The new President was soon on the phone in contact with Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes bringing Hughes up to date.

The remainder of the night was anti-climactic. President and Mrs. Coolidge went back to bed for a few hours. At 7:30 am they left Plymouth Notch by automobile for Rutland where they took a train to Washington to begin five and a half years' experience of the triumphs and tragedies of the American presidency.

A Footnote. After President Coolidge returned to Washington, James M. Beck, Solicitor-General of the United States, offered the President an opinion that the oath of office given by the President's father on August 3rd could be challenged because John Coolidge was not a federal official. To forestall any future questions or problems a second oath was administered in private, two weeks later, by Justice A.A. Hoehling of the Supreme Court (now known as the District Court) of the District of Columbia. The President asked that news of this second oath be withheld, and it is believed that Col. John Coolidge, who died in 1926, never knew of it.

The Coolidge Homestead is now part of the Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site in Plymouth Notch, VT, and is open to the public. Plymouth Notch is on Route 100A and can be reached from either Route 100 in Plymouth or Route 4 between Rutland and Woodstock. Look at [www.historicsites.vermont.gov](http://www.historicsites.vermont.gov) for dates, times, and details.

*~Douglas Parkhurst, Trustee, Halifax Historical Society*

# Community News

## TOWN EVENTS REPORT

On Saturday, June 30, 2018, a fabulous **Benefit Breakfast in West Halifax** was enjoyed at the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road. The event was put on by the Breakfast & Suppers Clan (affectionately known as 'the BS clan') and proceeds will support this series of meals for our community.

## HALIFAX 2018 CELEBRATION DAY - SEPTEMBER 29

**Volunteers are needed.** Call Patti Dow at the town office 368-7390 for more information or to volunteer.

## HALIFAX HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Halifax Historical Society (HHS) Annual Meeting took place on July 13th at the Halifax Community Hall (20 Brook Road, West Halifax VT). About 30 attendees enjoyed varied and delicious dishes at the potluck supper. A brief business meeting followed, and then a wonderful program featuring folks who grew up in Halifax during the 1940's and 50's: Lillian Brigham, Lewis Sumner, Charlotte Miner, Wayne Courser, Linnwood Warriner, and Lucille Rice shared their memories. We heard tales from Lucille about nearly losing her dad's lunchbox down an icy hill toward Hager Brook (and Colrain!?) and being nice to the littler kids because you'd need them on your team, and playing with the mice in the outhouse by the Valley School on Route 112. Lillian talked about the old school building in West Halifax which now houses the Historical Society. Wayne recalled being sent home with a note from the teacher for some infraction. When his dad read the note, it was out to the woodshed for Wayne –ouch! -- then to bed with no supper! When the snows closed the roads, sometimes for 6 weeks, someone might need the vet, Charlie Streeter. He'd drive as



close as he could then get out on his snowshoes with his satchel on his back to trek the rest of the way to the ailing animal. And he didn't charge that much, either. Charlotte described moving from a logging cabin to a 3-room cabin, with gravity-fed spring water running into a barrel in the kitchen. Then electricity came to Halifax in 1942. She was elected to crawl around on the ceiling joists pulling the wires through. Her mother was careful not to use more than \$3 worth of electricity each month, the minimum payment. That was 30 kwh. Charlotte lived in the house on Route 112 at Branch Road (see pictures c. 1938).



## COMMUNITY CLUB

The community club has a great deal on its plate this summer and coming into fall. We are having the building painted (thanks to a generous donation towards it) the club is paying \$ 6000 of a bill of \$ 19,000 plus. We have engaged Adam Buursma, Green Insolutions on Rte. 112, Halifax, to insulate under the floor of the building. This work has been needed for many years. The floor of the hall is always very cold. This will help with heat costs, also. We hope in the not-too-distant future to be able to insulate the walls. Slowly but surely, we continue to upgrade the building as we have available funds. Right now, we are trying to get some much-needed electrical work done. The five ceiling lights have old wiring that needs to be fixed ASAP. We are waiting for an electrician to look upstairs to see just how old that work is; it may be quite costly but must be fixed. We also need very much to upgrade the wiring in the kitchen and serving areas. During our benefit dinners and breakfasts, we are quite often "popping" the circuit breakers.

We thank everyone for their donations towards the upkeep of the historic building which is such a beautiful focal point in town. We will "keep on keeping on" as best we can.

Next meeting of the Halifax Community Club: Monday, August 13, at 6:45 pm, 1581 Hanson. Contact: [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com) or 368-7097. HCC documents: <http://czresearch.com/halifax/>

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:** Paint the LP gas tank Email/call Joan [jwcinvt@gmail.com](mailto:jwcinvt@gmail.com), 802.368.7733.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!** Snake Mountain Bluegrass band will be playing on **Sunday, October 21** at the Halifax Community hall. Look for future updates on this great event. This is a fundraising event to help with costs of upgrading electric in the hall.

**SENIOR MEAL** - There is NO August Senior Meal in Halifax. See ya in September!

## FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

On June 26 four men and one truck responded to a mutual aid call to a structure fire on Hamilton Road in Marlboro.

On June 26 five men responded to a medical call on Branch Road. Whitingham rescue also responded. Deerfield Valley ambulance transported to Brattleboro hospital.

On June 27 two men and one truck responded to an alarm sounding on Collins Road.

On June 28 two men responded to a fire alarm on Collins Road.

## SIGHTINGS

I am enjoying the many colorful birds at the feeders. The Orioles have nearly stopped coming to the feeders, but I read that they do that when feeding their young. I look forward to seeing them again soon. I have enjoyed seeing a few different birds feeding their young at the feeders. The young squawk and flop their wings so. It is comical to watch. I also had the very enjoyable privilege of watching a young Blue Heron hunt for fish and frogs down behind her barn at the former beaver pond. It was awesome to watch! It moved so very slow and easy thru the water and was beautiful. I can't say I ever saw it catch anything after watching for 15 or 20 minutes but it sure pleased me to be a part of its hunting. I hope it returns!

Parkhursts saw a bear, a grey fox and a red fox. Bill Dame had a blue bunting at his house. The Copelands had a very strange-looking animal cross their yard. We can't really say for sure what it is.

I have had a bear come much too often. He/she has ruined a couple of feeders, so I have resorted to bringing in the feeders at night. Usually the bear haven't come in summer, but they sure are coming this year!



Bobbie reported their own personal "Strolling of the Heifers" in mid-July! She sent pictures of the curious visitors. Laurel photographed what looked like a very large (36"-42" body) brindled cat at the woods' edge, 200 feet away. Some think it's a young coyote – but such a small, snub-nosed head and long thin tail! In the video you can see that it moves like a cat: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5156aL2RYP8>.

Please share your bird and other animal sightings with us: e-mail [jwcinvt@gmail.com](mailto:jwcinvt@gmail.com).



**NEWSLETTER NEWS.** Got a great Halifax story? Write it up and send it over! Send your story to Joan at [JWCinVt@gmail.com](mailto:JWCinVt@gmail.com) (802.368.7733) or Laurel at [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com). Keep our newsletter going!

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– Joan Courser

Editor / Additional Photos: [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com)

## WEST HALIFAX

### Vacation Church School Under Way.

A Vacation Church School is being sponsored at the West Halifax Church by the Vermont Church Council, with Josephine Dillback of Brattleboro and Mary Elizabeth Mason of Lexington, Ky., as teachers. Mrs. Warren Dalrymple and Mabel Dalrymple are assisting. The school started on Aug. 2 and will continue until Aug. 20. There is at present an enrollment of 32. All children between the ages of 3 and 16 are invited to attend.

Sunday Aug. 15 there will be a joint church service at the Halifax Center Church. A children's choir from the Vacation School will sing and Josephine Dalrymple of Brattleboro will be the speaker of the morning. Rev. Charles Sanford will preside at the meeting.

There will be a dance in the Community Hall Saturday evening Aug. 14. The Merry Makers of Northampton, Mass., will furnish music.

Steward Peterson of Skohegan, Me., who has been spending a few weeks with his grandmother, Mrs. Marion Wheeler left for Maine Sunday.

Bernard LaRock received a cut on his hand Tuesday while working on the road which required eight stitches to close.

Lester Mandigo accidentally hit himself in the head Sunday with a matchet. He had four stitches taken to close the wound.

Guiding Star Grange held its regular meeting Wednesday evening with 10 members present. Next meeting will be neighbors' night with Colrain and Stanford Granges as guests.

## Events of the Past

Recalled from Files of Reformer and Phoenix 75, 50, 25 and 10 Years Ago.

West Halifax: Repairs have begun on the schoolhouse. The stairs leading to the grammar room will be changed. Pupils will enter from the library instead of passing into a small hall with the primary children and then up two flights of poorly lighted stairs with a landing between.

## HAYNES BROS. GET STATE BRIDGE JOB

### Bid Low at \$20,794 on 99-Foot Span in Halifax

MONTPELIER—A contract for the construction of a state aid bridge in the town of Halifax was awarded to Haynes Brothers Inc., of Wilmington who submitted a low bid of \$20,793.82 on the project, the State Highway Department announced Friday.

Three bids were submitted and were opened Wednesday in the District Highway Commissioner's office in Brattleboro.

The project is located on a state aid road leading from West Brattleboro to West Halifax over the Green River 2.25 miles from the Halifax-Guilford town line. Plans call for the construction of a wide flange steel beam bridge 99 feet long with a 22-foot roadway. Overall length of the project is 550 feet.

## HALIFAX

Norris Johnson of White Plains, N. Y., spent the week end with his family at "Windham Woods."

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Ahearns of New York City are visiting his sister, Mrs. George W. Mount, and family.

Dr. and Mrs. David R. Evans and son, Malcolm Evans, spent the first of the week at their home in Somerville, N. J.

Mrs. Francis Barnard and daughter, Sylvia, of Shelburne, Mass., are spending 10 days with Mrs. Barnard's mother, Mrs. Lilla Crosier.

Mr. and Mrs. F. R. Noble spent a day in Hancock, N. H., recently.

Arthur Luther of Sandwich, N. H., who had been a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Davis at "Mountain Crest," returned to his home Sunday. He was accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Davis, who are spending this week with him.

Fred A. Hubbard of Fort Myers, Fla., who was visiting his daughter, Mrs. Merlin Bishop of "Forest Brook Farm," was taken Saturday night to Putnam Memorial Hospital in Bennington. Mrs. Hubbard has been called here by her husband's illness.

## SOUTH HALIFAX

A telephone has been installed at the Floyd Harris place.

Mrs. Archie Burnett was hostess at a birthday party for her daughter, Bernice, Tuesday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Archie Burnett returned Friday from a vacation trip to the White Mountains.

Mr. and Mrs. Dickinson of Bridgeport, Conn., are vacationing at the Risberg place on Grove Mountain. Mrs. Dickinson is an aunt of Mrs. Risberg.

Mr. and Mrs. Pugh and niece called on Mr. and Mrs. Merrick Harris and Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Harris Saturday. The Pughs were former boarders at the Harris Farm.

Leslie Harris, Charlotte Miner, Catherine and Carrie Burnett, Bernice Burnett, Joyce Fairbanks and Dinah Johnson are among the children attending Bible school at West Halifax.

## WEST HALIFAX

### Old Home Service Attracts 200.

About 200 persons attended observance of Old Home Sunday at the West Halifax Community Church Sunday. Rev. Lester White of Mt. Hermon, Mass., delivered a sermon on the topic, "The Old Well." Members of the Kurn Hattin Band provided music during the service.

A concert by the band followed a basket lunch and a baseball game between Guilford and Halifax teams concluded the day's program. The local nine was the victor.

Collections taken during the day totaled \$69.61. Many persons attended from distant points.

Holy Communion will be celebrated at the worship service at the West

Halifax Community Baptist Church Sunday morning. The right hand of fellowship will be extended to new members.

~ C. Lancaster, Halifax Historical Society



Bee balm & hummer-Halifax VT



NEWSLETTER  
P.O. Box 27  
West Halifax, VT 05358

# Halifax News

AUGUST 2018

## Rain Welcome but Aids Blight, Pestle Warns

The recent cool foggy mornings and the present rain, however welcome in other respects, have helped to spread the fungus blight on both potato and tomato plants, County Agent Ray I. Pestle warned yesterday morning.

Application of a copper fungicide, such as a Bordeaux mixture spray or neutral copper dust, was recommended by Pestle with the spray preferable because it covers the leaves more thoroughly. The spray or dust should be applied frequently enough so that a residue of the fungicide is on the plant foliage at all times, Pestle added.

The blight spreads rapidly during rain, Pestle said, and therefore it is important that the plants be treated before a wet spell.

News from the Vermont Phoenix,  
August 1948



Kids play in the impromptu pond in front of the church after heavy rains, July 21, 2018 –W. Halifax VT