

SEPTEMBER 2018

HALIFAX NEWS

THE 1918 INFLUENZA STORY: 100 YEARS AGO

One summer day in the 1960s a man knocked on our door to ask if he might eat his lunch by our pond. He went on to explain that his name was Colby and he used to live in our house on Hanson Road. Naturally we invited him to join us at our table. In the course of this visit we gave him the usual tour of the house. As we went along, he told how the various rooms had been in his time. Our kitchen-dining room had been the dairy room. At this point he walked over and pulled open a trap door in the floor, one we had never noticed, explaining that his mother stored butter and a milk jug in the stream that ran through there years before, and kept doughnuts in a box on a stone ledge by the side of the stream.

In the main part of the house, our present living room had been three rooms: a formal parlor in front, an entry hall in the middle, and the family room in back next to the dairy. The formal entrance to the house was on the south side. I doubt there was a porch. Our bedroom on the northeast corner of the ground floor was a bedroom even then. The northwest corner room was the kitchen with a massive fireplace for cooking. Tucked between these two, and snuggled up to the fireplace chimney was the “borning” room. Its location next to the chimney made it the warmest room in the house, ideal for births and for tending the sick. Our visitor remarked that his father had died in that room. He also said the 1918 influenza epidemic had wiped out his family. At some point he said he had been a teacher also, like us. The kids must have slept in the big room on the second floor of the main house. My daughter notes a wider space between the ceiling beams where she conjectures a ladder led upstairs. The kids probably cozied up to the chimney in winter.

After we retired I got curious about this story. I perused records in the Town Office and reconstructed a plausible story of the Colby family in Halifax. Keeping in mind Lewis Carrol’s *Alice In Wonderland* where the mouse asked if they wanted to hear the explanation first or the story, and that Alice exclaimed, “Oh, the story first! Explanations take such a dreadful time,” I will give my explanations later.

The Story



Mildred Kalie (Cornell) and John Alfred Colby bought the Luther Adams place in April of 1912 where they ran a successful truck farm and dairy, doubtless taking their produce to the Hoosic Tunnel and Wilmington Railroad station in Jacksonville in their horse-drawn cart. The dairy products probably sold locally. Their property was the south half of the Original Right 58, granted by George II, courtesy of Governor Benning Wentworth ([see related story, https://czresearch.com/halifax/HHSTalk2017ArtCopelandonHalifaxHouseHx.pdf](https://czresearch.com/halifax/HHSTalk2017ArtCopelandonHalifaxHouseHx.pdf)). It was about 150 acres with what is now Hanson Road running across it. The north boundary was Hatch School Road. A stream ran through it near its eastern edge, making a big strip that was impossible to plow. The rest had been cleared years before and would have been typical

stone-filled Vermont farmland. The Colbys had a girl and three boys: Goldendine, Vernon, Lyndon Lionel, and Earle. Vernon and his first wife, Madge Taylor, were part of the household for a few years. Madge had a baby boy who died the day he was born, March 13, 1914, and the couple divorced in 1917.

Kalie and John had bought the property with a loan of \$100, a big hunk of cash at the time. This loan was soon paid off, so we know they were hard-working and fairly prosperous. In early 1918, Kalie died. The elderly John died two months later. It would be lovely to assume of a broken heart but more likely he was an early victim of the flu which hit Vermont just then, killing over 2,000 Vermonters (a Burlington children’s infirmary is pictured) and more than half a million souls nationwide. Kalie died in July, likely in her bed in the coolest room in the house. John was the father who died in the warmer borning room in September, likely suffering the classic fever and chills of influenza (listed as “dysentery” on his death certificate). The rest of the family



must have gotten sick in November along with 1,000 other residents of Windham County but survived. Usually only 2.5% of those who got sick died. Goldendine (age 30) was living in Bow, NH, in 1918, Vernon (age 26) in Brattleboro, Lionel (age 23) possibly still attending Amherst College, and Earle (age 21) probably living on the farm on Hanson Road. Lionel went on to be a teacher in New Jersey. From this we know he was our visitor in the 1960's.

And Now the Dreaded Explanation

The Town Property records list the purchase of the property in 1912, a transaction that takes up not 1 but 4 or 5 pages, describes the probate court decision making Vernon C. Colby the executor for the estate of Kalie, and then records the transfer of property to the Westerlunds. The Records of Deaths include an infant boy in 1914, then Kalie and John in 1918.

	INFLUENZA, 1918-1919 - CLASSIFICATION AND DEATHS BY COUNTRIES AND MONTHS													
	Orange	Orleans	Rutland	Washington	Windham	Wether	Totals							
	1918	1919	1918	1919	1918	1919	1918	1919	1918	1919	1918	1919	1918	1919
January		272		636		517		135		238		414		1365
February		190		132		227		82		34		32		1324
March		66		224		86		21		137		162		1279
April		35		1		6		6				6		179
May														
June														
July														
August														
September	220		127	1	720		2241	2	42	1	200	4	2451	72
October	1814	8	3207	1	2847	1	2197	3	1000	1	2400	2	12724	21
November	2		114	1	222	1	9		174	1	50		1407	8
December	159		49		245	1	81		281	1	221		1242	6
Total cases	1365	800	1476	1222	2272	617	3725	241	1705	564	1181	729	10854	2791
Deaths	64	12	72	21	109	28	257	28	109	21	185	84	1272	274

The VermontHistory.org site describes the flu epidemic in considerable detail. It shows a chart (pictured) from which one can figure out the impact on Windham County, the number who got sick, by month (September 1918 to March 1919) and the totals: 1,725 sick, 89 died in 1918, and 584



sick, 21 died in 1919. One can imagine the problem of recording all these casualties, and that many never even got to the ears of the Town Clerk.

~Art Copeland, President, Halifax Historical Society

Community News

TOWN EVENTS REPORT

CELEBRATE LIFE IN SMALL TOWN HALIFAX

Saturday September 29.

- Start the day with PANCAKE BREAKFAST at 8 AM at the Community Hall.
- LAWN TRACTOR PULL starts at 10 AM in front of Halifax Elementary School.
- BINGO starts at 11:30 at the Halifax Fire House with cash prizes.
- TASTE OF HALIFAX Market Place throughout the village, with hot lunch food items
- FIREMAN'S WATER POLO in front of school, starts when lawn tractor pull is finished.
- PIG ROAST at the firehouse at 6 PM
- PLUS MUCH MUCH MORE going on throughout the village! Ice cream for sale, free popcorn and more fun.
- EVENING ENTERTAINMENT: dancing in the street to GROOVE PROPHET in front of the firehouse.
- Hope to see you there celebrating life in small-town Halifax with neighbors and making new friends.

Volunteers are needed....call Patti Dow 802-368-7093 at the Town Clerk if you would like to help in any way.

BLUEGRASS CONCERT

On Sunday, October 21, from 2 to 4 PM SNAKE MOUNTAIN BLUEGRASS BAND will be performing at the Halifax Community Hall. This is a really great band that many came to hear a few years ago. This is their third time playing here in Halifax. This concert is a fundraiser for the Community Club to offset the expense of upgrading the electric in the hall.

Adults \$ 10.00 -- Twelve & under \$ 5.00

Food will be available to purchase. Probably assorted pies by the slice or whole pie, coffee, tea, iced tea and water.

****Any Halifax pie bakers.....???...we need your help!!!! Call Joan @ 368-7733 (email: JWCinVT@gmail.com) if you can help us out by baking a pie or two!!! ****

Tai Chi weekly sessions begin at the Community Hall on Sept. 5 at 10 AM followed by Gentle Yoga. Tai chi contact: Seth 802-490-4294. Gentle Yoga: PenfieldChester@gmail.com.

SENIOR MEAL – Friday, September 21 is the next Senior Meal in Halifax. We serve at Noon, and all seniors are welcome! **MENU:** Fruit and Cottage Cheese, Roasted Pork Loin, Potatoes, Vegetable and Dessert. A call to Joan is much appreciated 802-368-7733.

COMMUNITY CLUB

The community club is having a busy summer with much work on and for the hall being done. The foam insulation job has been completed underneath the Hall. We are hoping this will make the floor warmer and the building easier to heat. We are right now waiting for our fourth quote from electric contractors to update old wiring in the Hall and put in newer, more numerous, and upgraded places to plug things in when we have breakfasts, suppers or anything else since we now have trouble with popping circuits. As soon as we get this last quote (soon) then the Community Club trustees will meet to discuss them and present their ideas to the members. This is a large expensive job.

Our next big project coming up is the painting of the outside of the building. Hopefully the rain will stop, and it can be done soon.

We have put off the window washing until next summer. That is another big job, as the five big windows have complicated – and very large – storm windows on them. We got a quote of \$100 per window, and the hall has five large windows. Need to see a little more in the bank account before another big job. Perhaps we should get newer storm windows someday in the future. There is ALWAYS something to upgrade on an old historic building!!!! Waiting on having the windows cleaned until next summer will let the windows be a little cleaner for the town 2020 Old Home Days weekend (date to be announced).

We keep on keeping on as best we can thanks to all who donate to our upkeep efforts. Our annual fundraising letter will be going out in September.

Next meeting of the Halifax Community Club: Monday, September 10, at 6:45 pm, 1581 Hanson. Contact: LaurelACopeland@gmail.com or 368-7097. HCC documents: <http://czresearch.com/halifax/>

FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

-On July 27 at 5:01 PM one truck and five firefighters responded to Deer Park Road for a tree blocking the road.

-While at this call another call came in and they responded to Deer Park House for a fire alarm sounding. No fire found. Returned to tree down in road.

-On August 1 at 4:56 PM nine firefighters responded to a rescue call on Branch Road for a very low sugar count. Deerfield Valley ambulance responded and transported to Brattleboro hospital.

-On August 4 at 10:30 AM four trucks and eight men responded to Rte. 112 for smoke in the cellar. No fire found. This was Clambake Day, and all were at the Cody Farm preparing for the day. Clambake Day was a challenge this year, with several hard showers during the day. But all that attended seemed to have a great time, and as always the food was awesome. Just a lot of very wet firemen and helpers!

-On August 16 at 11:30 AM one truck and five men responded to a tree and wires down on Collins Road. This was a very serious call. The wire was live and landed on the town excavator trapping the operator inside. There was nothing the firemen could do with a live wire (ya can't put water on a live wire or anywhere around it).

There were a lot of hearts beating hard and fast until Green Mountain Power company arrived ONE HOUR later!!!! The operator eventually stepped out onto the large rubber tires of the machine and jumped clear of the danger. Chief was not happy with the long response time with the potential danger and with the firemen being unable to do much.

-On August 17 at 1:56 PM three firefighters responded to Collins Road to help Deerfield Valley ambulance with a transport.

-On August 17 at 9:40 PM one truck and five men responded to a mutual aid call in Whitingham. They were turned back en route.

-On August 19 at 6:32 PM seven firefighters responded to a call of multiple bee stings on Larrabee Road. The ambulance transported to Greenfield.

SIGHTINGS

I received no calls or emails of sightings by others for this month.

I am still enjoying lots of beautiful birds at my feeders. The bear has not appeared for quite some time, but I still bring the feeders in at night. The Orioles and Red Breasted Grosbeaks are gone; I miss seeing them. Still have the Hummers coming. Some young Blue Jays, lots of Goldfinch, Sparrows of many kinds, once in a while a few Evening Grosbeaks, Mourning Doves...my sister-in-law and brother in NJ had lots and lots of Purple Finch (are they coming North???). Still have the White-breasted Nuthatch, Cardinals, and once in a while a Rose-breasted



Trees & turkeys in the fog. Halifax, Vermont, August 2018

Nuthatch. I haven't seen my Jenny Wren lately but did see a few Swallows although not anymore, have just a couple of Chickadee -- boy do I miss the flocks of them of years ago! Have a Hairy woodpecker but not seeing the Downy. Saw a Red Tailed Hawk over our place; not sure I like that...okay if he leaves my chickens alone!!! Have two to three Red Squirrels that eat more than their share! Did see a grey squirrel once, kind of like them better than the Reds, the reds are kind of nasty. Enjoyed feeding a mamma duck and six babies at the Jersey Shore off of the deck behind the house we stayed in. Learned to feed them Cheerios rather than bread, better for them, and they gobbled them up faster than I could throw them out. They came every day; they were so cute!!

Love hearing from you with your sightings: 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 (802.368.7733) and/or Laurel at LaurelACopeland@gmail.com – Joan Courser

HALIFAX ORGANIZES FIRE DEPARTMENT

David Gaither Acting as Chief; 2 Benefits Planned

WEST HALIFAX—Another rural fire fighting force was in the making Thursday, Sept. 9, when about 25 men gathered at Community Hall to organize the Halifax Fire Department. Temporary officers were elected and plans were formulated for building up an active group to fight fires in the community.

Leon M. Burrows, Brattleboro fire chief, spoke at the meeting, giving suggestions as to the type of equipment which should be acquired by the new department. He endorsed the election of officers to serve until the department could be organized on a permanent basis and gave information concerning the use of the equipment now available.

David S. Gaither was elected acting chief and Leon C. LaRock, town fire warden, was chosen as his assistant. James Stone and Francis King were elected secretary and treasurer, respectively. The town selectmen, Wesley Stone, Aubrey Amidon, Jr., and Scott Courser, will act as trustees. It was decided to hold the first drill Monday at 7 p.m. at Community Hall.

After the meeting a demonstration of the portable pump and 500 feet of 1½-inch hose was held. Another 500 feet of 1½-inch hose is expected to arrive this week. The equipment will be carried in a trailer which can be attached to a truck.

The department also hopes to build a fire station in the future. The alarm system will be operated in cooperation with the Jacksonville telephone operator who will call the chief and men when notified of a fire.

A benefit supper for the project is scheduled for Sept. 18 at Grange Hall and will be followed by a sale at 8 p.m. at Community Hall of goods donated by persons in the community.

The Vermont Phoenix

September 1948 - 70 years

~ C. Lancaster, Halifax Historical Society

WEST HALIFAX

Schools re-opened Tuesday. Mrs. Euphemia Austin of Connecticut and Mrs. Kathleen Wheeler of Jacksonville are teaching again this year. Miss Dorothy Laughlin of Manchester, N. H., has been hired as teacher of the grammar room at West School.

Mrs. Ethel Dupee attended the home demonstration meeting at Josephine Costello's Tuesday. It was voted to have a public supper and auction sale Sept. 18, for the benefit of the fire department.

There will be a dance in Community Hall Saturday evening at 8 o'clock.

Guiding Star Grange held its regular meeting Wednesday evening with 13 members present. It was voted to install running water in the hall if possible.

A number of residents attended Gullford Fair Monday.

WEST HALIFAX

There will be another dance in the Community Hall for the benefit of the fire equipment fund. Music will be furnished by the Merry Makers.

Ronald Hudson of Brattleboro and Carl Peterson of Skowhegan, Me., who worked for their uncle, Floyd Rafus, during the summer, returned to their homes recently.

SOUTH HALIFAX

Several from here attended Greenfield Fair Wednesday.

Valley School's enrollment is the largest in several years. The pupils now number 18.

Elaine Fairbanks entered high school in Shelburne Falls Mass., last week and stayed with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Mervin Fairbanks. She became homesick and returned home over the week end, entering Jacksonville High School Monday.

Miss Bernice Burnett is ill and absent from Valley School.

There still are a few tickets available for the supper on Saturday night, Sept. 18, for the benefit of the new fire fighting equipment. Donations for an auction which will follow will be appreciated. Articles may be left at the Community Hall any time Saturday.

SOUTH HALIFAX

Power Off During Benefit Supper.

In spite of the thunder shower and heavy windstorm Saturday afternoon, which left the town without electricity for several hours and the "Panel Hill" section without telephone service, the supper sponsored by the Home Demonstration Group was put on as planned. Kerosene lamps and candles were used and the wood stove worked over time to fill the needs of serving about 100 suppers. Electricity was restored just in time to make the auction which followed an enjoyable and profitable evening.

The Home Demonstration Group reported a total of \$162.14 cleared and turned over to the Firemen's treasury toward paying for new fire equipment.

A telephone crew is setting new poles all along the Colrain to Jacksonville Road.

Mrs. Jane Grant began work at the Amidon Fruit Farm last week. Mrs. Henry Miner began working there this week.

Grace and Kathryn Stone were hostesses to several friends and neighbors at a lawn party at Mrs. Kathryn Stone's home last week Thursday.

Mrs. Mary Burnett was to enter Franklin County Hospital, Greenfield, Mass., today for treatment.

SOUTH HALIFAX

Firemen Have Practice Drill.

The volunteer firemen held a practice drill at the Merrick Harris farm Monday evening. A record of 18 minutes was set from the time the chief sent in a practice alarm until the new pump was throwing water over the Harris horse barn from a spot near the bridge.

Several families from here entered exhibits at the Wilmington Fair Saturday and many attended the fair from this section.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Grant and family entertained friends from Connecticut over the week end.

The home demonstration group will meet with Mrs. Emory Hebard next week Tuesday, Oct. 5, at 11 o'clock. Dinner will be served at noon. Miss Muriel McKee, the county agent, will lead the meeting on "Short Cuts in Sewing." The meeting is open to all women in town.

Mrs. Mary Burnett underwent an operation at Franklin County Hospital, Greenfield, Mass., last Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Harris and son visited his daughter, Mrs. Linwood Warriner, and family in West Brattleboro Sunday and found her improved.

Oliver Dean is having an artesian well driven at the place he purchased from David Jones some time ago. They plan to move there in the near future.

Joseph Darrow has returned from Connecticut where he has been staying with his grandmother and has entered Valley School, where the enrollment now totals 19 pupils.

The Vermont Phoenix

September 1948 - 70 years ago

Plan Fire Company Benefit.

Eight members of the Home Demonstration Group enjoyed dinner and a meeting on "Refreshments and Hospitality" at the home of Miss Josephine Costello Tuesday.

Plans were made for a supper and community auction to be held Sept. 18th, for the benefit of the new fire equipment. The group will sponsor a public supper at the Grange Hall in West Halifax that evening from 6 to 8.

All proceeds will be donated toward the new fire fighting equipment. Anyone wishing to donate any articles for this auction should leave them at the hall anytime during the day Saturday, Sept. 18.

Valley School reopened Tuesday with an enrollment of 14 with more expected.

Miss Alice Stone returned to her work in Conway, Mass., Tuesday evening after spending a few days at her home here. Mrs. Susie Stone also was home for the week end.

Mrs. Lila Miner returned to Charlemont, Mass., Monday afternoon after spending nearly a week with her son, Henry Miner, and family.

Miss Claire Hebard of Springfield, Mass., and Miss Janet Hebard of Greenfield, Mass., are spending this week with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Emory Hebard.

Mrs. Nellie Barry is assisting in the Linwood Warriner home in West Brattleboro while Mrs. Warriner is in the hospital.

A Road in Halifax Vermont



NEWSLETTER
P.O. Box 27
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Halifax News



Village of West Halifax, Vermont, on a foggy August morning 2018