

JANUARY 2019

# HALIFAX NEWS

## DEER PARK

The [following was] written by Bernice Barnett for *The Cracker Barrel* [Fall/Winter Issue, late 1970s]. Bernice died on January 18, 2018

It is dusk. The road down which we are traveling runs along a lush green meadow that lies shimmering in the soft gentle breeze. Suddenly there is an excited cry. “Oh, see the deer!” Immediately a strong neck and antlered head appears out of the grass. A long curious look is leveled at the intruders. Then with a quick leap, the deer turns and gracefully lopes into a nearby forest. The onlookers are left viewing only the white flag — the white tail on the east end of a deer going west.

Today, this is a typical Vermont scene, but this was not always so. In fact, while it is true that the early settlers found deer upon arriving in southern Vermont, and used them for food and clothing, natives now living in southern Vermont remember that in the early 1900s, there were virtually no deer.

Apparently, the former natives' memories were accurate. According to a report from the Vermont Fish and Game Department entitled “The Effect of Historical Land Use Practices Upon the Abundance and Distribution of Deer in Vermont” (p. 10),

In southern and western Vermont, deer were practically exterminated by the early parts of the nineteenth century, and even in the central part of the state, they were few. At Fayston, the early settlers killed them in winter when the snow was deep, but the last one taken was a doe as late as 1826.

This same report explains the effect land use has on deer.

Man had made a massive and rapid assault on the woodlands of Vermont. The combined effects of widespread agriculture and intensive cutting of the residual wood lots destroyed the habitat for deer (both summer and winter range) over nearly the entire state.

It is little wonder then, that the late Archie Burnett, a native of Halifax, remembered a time when the sighting of a deer made headlines in the local *Vermont Phoenix*. In view of the foregoing material it seems appropriate to ask this question: Who brought the deer back to southern Vermont?

The memories of the natives supply us with an intriguing idea. In 1914, while working for a farmer by the name of Emory Evans who also lived in Halifax, Archie Burnett remembered Mr. Evans telling him there were no deer in the area until Lawson Houghton founded the Deer Park near the geographical center of Halifax. Located on what is now known as Deer Park Road, it is about three miles from the village of Halifax Center.

Archie, his late wife Mary, and the late Joe Wheeler, the oldest living Halifax residents in the 1970s, enjoyed reminiscing about the days when the Deer Park was in its heyday.

In the late 1890s, Houghton, a wealthy businessman from Illinois, began stocking the property with imported deer. It is believed that he imported his deer from Virginia. This was a business venture. “You see,” said Archie, “venison was a delicacy in larger cities, bringing a high price per pound.” In fact, Archie's father, Willie Burnett, an accomplished rifleman, was hired to shoot the deer, because he could invariably kill them with one shot, thus preserving the precious meat.

In a *Vermont Phoenix* newspaper clipping dated, October 17, 1900, it is interesting to note the following:

L. C. Houghton of Sheffield, Ill., the owner of the Halifax Deer Park is now at the park for the first time the present season. He came last week, accompanied by his friend, F. E. Battay of Sheffield, and will probably remain through next week. He says to the *Vermont Phoenix* his park venture is still prospering and estimates the present number of deer to be at least 200. Twenty bucks were killed last year for the market, and from the look of the herd as many more can be marketed this year. The elk, at first were only three in number, have now increased to nineteen.

Mary Burnett was born in 1896. Around 1902 was the first time she saw a deer outside of Deer Park. The deer appeared in a small field on the Learnard farm above the yard in which she and her sister were at play. “It

scared us to death!” exclaimed Mary. She remembered as a small child going to the Deer Park with her family to watch the deer and elk. She said, “Usually a picnic lunch was enjoyed at the park. It was a treat most people in Halifax enjoyed.”

Joe Wheeler's memories shed additional light on how the Deer Park could have repopulated southern Vermont with deer.

Caretakers at the Deer Park found they were losing deer from poachers cutting the fences. The situation became so serious it was necessary to hire men to walk the fences daily and report any suspicious activity.

Joe could even tell you the men who walked the fences. They were Fred Stanley and Nelson Wilson, both now deceased. Is it not possible there were deer that escaped through the holes and lived on the outside?

While chatting further with the old timers, we learned more about their story about Deer Park. The Deer Park was a haven for the wealthy friends of its owners, and it provided some employment for some Halifax residents who worked as housekeepers and caretakers. Hal Bowen was employed as a caretaker and built the house in 1904 after the original house was destroyed by fire. This house was also destroyed by fire in 1952.

The ownership of the Deer Park passed from Lawson Houghton to H. M. Ward, who was associated with a steamship business in New York City. At this time, it is interesting to note that there were three structures on the property, but Ward's favorite was a hunting lodge which he called The Shack. The caretaker at this time was Fred Miller. The last caretaker at the park was Herb White. His work at the park ended in the early 1940s. Joe Wheeler remembered getting fencing for his pasture from Herb about 1939, near the end of his caretaking duties at the park.

Needless to say, without the careful watchful eye of the caretakers, the Deer Park as a park began its decline. Subsequent owners include: Fordyce Hager, William-Gordon Lumber Company, Celto Realty Corp., William Cadorette, Roger MacBride, and presently Mr. and Mrs. Grandville Burland.

The only remains of the Deer Park of bygone days are two man-made lakes, one with a floating island, a small stretch of the ten-foot-high fence which once encircled its thousand acres, and the beautiful white-tail deer from Virginia. ~ *Bernice Barnett, c. 1978*



## NEWSLETTER NEWS

**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!!!!!! THIS IS THE HALIFAX NEWSLETTER'S *THIRTY-SIX<sup>th</sup>* YEAR.....**thank you to all of our loyal readers. Also thank you to all who have helped to keep the newsletter going -- the writers, editors, printers and people submitting stories, sightings and news. It would not be possible without each one of you. **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) and / or Laurel at [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com).

✕ **COMMUNITY CLUB** ✕ The last major Community Hall project is complete. The Hall is now fully insulated, snug and warm and much easier to heat. One last thing to do is to fix one of the ceiling heat vents that has come loose; Adam Buursma of Halifax will do it. His company did a fine job on the new insulation. - *Joan Courser*

## JOAN'S SIGHTINGS

I received no calls pertaining to sightings this month. What's out there? You tell me!

The wild turkey are still coming every day for a feast of corn at Joan & Wayne's. Joan saw quite a sight while walking home from the Community Hall one morning. All (20+) turkeys were milling around in the road and on the edges of the road. I knew they would leave as I got closer BUT just before that a small (young?) Red Fox

came up over the bank into the road. He was right in the middle of about 8 or 10 turkeys in the road. They did not seem to be one bit afraid of the fox, and the fox did not seem to know what to do with all of those turkey! Finally, the fox selected one turkey to focus on, and then all of them flew up and away. It was quite a sight!!!

We are visited each night by two coon. They clean up the birdseed on the ground and anything else they can find. They are always together and look to be young. I don't really like having them around because of my chickens. I have all of the usual winter birds coming to the feeders. I did see a Red-Winged Blackbird -- he should be south, for sure! Chickadees, Titmice, four male Cardinals, a couple of females, lots of Mourning Doves, Hairy woodpeckers and a Downy, a Red-bellied woodpecker, 8+ Blue jays, White-breasted Nuthatch, a Red-Breasted Nuthatch, Blackbirds, a few Grosbeaks and Sparrows.

Send me your animal sightings: [jwcinvt@gmail.com](mailto:jwcinvt@gmail.com)

- Joan Courser



Dear Joan, I forgot to report my wild cats, woodpeckers, nuthatches, barred owl, deer, and these bugs on my pepper plant which is now indoors. Those bugs are not very pretty (see picture). Maybe I could get the woodpecker to come in and have a 'word' with them. -Laurel



December brought both Christmas Cookie Icing and just plain ice! The power was only out briefly, though, most likely because all the worst overhanging trees had already been trimmed by the power company last month.

## TOWN NEWS

**SENIOR MEAL** – Friday, January 18 will be the next Senior meal in Halifax. THANK YOU for the great turn-out on December 21<sup>st</sup> in spite of the weather! We serve at 12 o'clock noon in the Community Hall at 20 Brook Road, West Halifax. Menu: Beef sauerbraten (marinated and tender), potatoes, veggies, rolls and dessert. All are welcome. Let us know you are coming! It's much appreciated. Please call Joan at **802-368-7733**.

**TAI CHI** at the Community Hall will resume January 9<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM. \$5 to defray heat cost. Tai chi contact: Seth 802-490-4294. Gentle Yoga is on hiatus; contact: [PenfieldChester@gmail.com](mailto:PenfieldChester@gmail.com).

**HALIFAX COMMUNITY CLUB** will not meet in January, February, or March 2019. Contact: [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com) or 368-7097. HCC documents: <http://czresearch.com/halifax/>

## SORROW

It is with much sorrow that we have lost a longtime resident of Halifax and dear friend, Art Copeland. Art passed on December 24 at the age of 92. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to his family.

We lost another dear friend, Pat Farrington, who passed Dec. 19 at the age of 60. Pat & her husband Harry own Honora Winery in Halifax. Our sympathies are extended to Harrington family.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS**

On 12/3, two men assisted Whitingham rescue lifting a man fallen at a residence on Hanson Road.

On 12/11, two men returned to the same residence to assist in lifting the fallen man again.

On 12/15, ten men responded to a mutual aid call in Whitingham to Chapel Hill for fire in a garage. Four men covered Jacksonville station.

On 12/22, two men responded to Hatch School Road to assist the ambulance personnel with loading.

Again on 12/22, seven men and one truck responded to a mutual aid call to a stove fire in Colrain. They were turned back in route.

On 12/24, twelve men and two trucks responded to a house fire in Marlboro at McArthur Road. 91-E-3, Halifax's pumper, pumped water up to the site of the fire. 91-T-1, Halifax's tanker, hauled six loads of water to the pumper. Many other fire companies hauled water to the pumper also. The house was a total loss.

On 12/26, eight men and one truck responded to a mutual aid call in Whitingham for a loader on fire inside of a building. They were turned back in route. Whitingham took care of the fire very promptly.

On 12/28, three men responded to Wheeler Road to assist the ambulance with a man with symptoms of a heart attack. He was transported to the hospital by ambulance.

**Halifax firemen** responded to a total of **76** calls in 2018!!!

### **Halifax Union Society Repainting Is Complete**

**WHEN YOU DRIVE THROUGH HALIFAX CENTER**, you will probably notice a major improvement compared to this time last year: the Halifax Union Society church building is freshly painted, gleaming white, and ready to welcome its members and friends back for next summer's worship season.

**THANKS TO THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS** of church members, neighbors, and friends, the Union Society raised the necessary funds in the first half of 2018 and hired Momaney Painters to do the extensive work of repairing damaged wood, replacing 50 cracked window panes, restoring and waterproofing the steeple, removing all the old paint that could be scraped off, and applying several coats of fresh paint. After a late start due to persistent wet weather, Moe Momaney and his crew completed the work in October, in parallel with their work to repaint the Community Club. They did a great job and treated us well.

**WHEN UNION SOCIETY** was founded in 1891, its primary mission was to maintain the church building for use by any denomination that would serve the local community. The mission evolved and expanded to include organizing inter-denominational summer worship services for full time and seasonal residents and, in recent decades, presenting musical programs and lectures. These days, we have services on summer Sunday evenings from mid-June through Labor Day weekend.

**THE UNION SOCIETY'S** annual operating budget is quite small. The costs of incidental repairs in recent years have been large chunks of annual expense. The trustees knew that the cost of full exterior restoration would be many multiples of our annual budget.

**MARCIA DOREY, THE UNION SOCIETY'S PASTOR**, urged the trustees to take the risk of proceeding with the exterior restoration, having faith that church members and community supporters would come through with the necessary funds. She knew that our small congregation would contribute to the extent of its ability and that we had friends in the community. Many people in town had participated in the church's programs over the years and many others might simply appreciate the building as a component of our visual landscape.

**THE RESPONSE TO OUR FUNDRAISING** appeal was excellent! We raised more than we ever imagined possible – not quite the full cost but enough for us to proceed. On behalf of the Union Society, I would like to express our very deep appreciation to everyone who contributed. You came through for us and we are truly grateful.

**WHEN THE WEATHER WARMS** up in late Spring, we will celebrate the completion of this project with a party on the church lawn. We hope to thank everyone in person at that time. Until then, we send our thanks and best wishes to all.

Photo Caption: Momaney painters complete first coat of church entrance and begin priming of scraped North side.



# The Vermont Phoenix

January 1949

- 70 years ago -

## WEST HALIFAX

### Grange Meets.

Guiding Star Grange held a meeting Wednesday evening, Jan. 12, with 11 members present. A candlelight service was held. New Year's poems were read. On Wednesday, Jan. 20, the third and fourth degrees will be conferred.

The Juvenile Grange also met the same evening.

## HALIFAX

Blanche Cota was taken to Franklin County Hospital, Greenfield, Mass., on Saturday to undergo an emergency operation for appendicitis.

Mr. and Mrs. Leon LaBock attended the funeral of Leo Carpenter in Readsboro last week.

The auditors began auditing the town books Monday. They are working at the home of Sidney Bliss.

## SOUTH HALIFAX

Mr. and Mrs. John D. Blair of Whitingham spent a few days at "Makepeace Farm" with Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Litchfield during the Christmas holidays.

Seven members of the Home Demonstration Group met at the home of the president on Tuesday, Jan. 4. Miss Costello led discussion of the topic, "Why We Have Crooked Bones." During the business meeting it was voted to donate \$5 to the USO and to send \$10 to CARE. The next meeting was planned for Feb. 1, at Mrs. Edith Harris', the subject to await word from the agent.

Heavy rains last week caused some concern for a time but little damage other than badly washed roads. The hill roads are in poor condition. Men worked with sandbags Thursday night and saved the bridge recently built across the Branch Brook for logging purposes.

Mrs. Mary Burnett is spending some time with her son, Clayton Burnett, and family in Albany, N. Y.

Valley School re-opened Monday. The teacher, Mrs. Austin, returned from Connecticut Saturday.

An exhibition of art work by Kyra Markham (in private life Mrs. David Stoner Gaither of Halifax, will be held at Demond's store in Greenfield, Mass., during the month of February. The show will include paintings, prints and ceramics.

## Vt. Not to Have Float in Truman Inaugural Parade

MONTPELIER—Vermont will not have a float in the President's inauguration parade in Washington, Jan. 20. Governor Gibson announced Monday.

The float was authorized, at the discretion of the governor, by a joint resolution passed by both legislative houses last week.

Governor Gibson said he decided against the float because of the expense involved, estimated at about \$3,000, and because of the lack of time to prepare a suitable exhibit.

The governor conferred with the chief executives of several other states and found that only 17 would be represented by floats.

## Aubrey Amidon Honored For High Quality Apple

WORCESTER, Mass.—Aubrey Amidon of Colrain and South Halifax Vt., and William Hamilton of New Salem were awarded Red Apple Club certificates Tuesday night at the annual banquet of the Massachusetts Fruit Growers' Association, in conjunction with the 31st Union Agricultural Meeting.

In order to meet the requirement of the Red Apple Club, an honorar society of fruit growers, it is necessary to produce a crop of apples a least 90 per cent free from insect and disease blemishes and grading at least 60 per cent U. S. Fancy. A high yield proportionate to the age of the trees is also required and the grower must submit a copy of his spray and dust program.

## JACKSONVILLE

### Rising Water Causes Worry.

Although the flood conditions in this town were not at anytime critical, people along the swollen streams spent anxious hours wondering if dams and bridges would hold the rampaging water which rose rapidly for several hours.

Men watched the dam at Jacksonville Pond and several other places. The floor boards were washed off a bridge at the foot of Stetson Hill and cattle owned by Kenneth Bernard had to be moved to higher ground.

In several places cellars were flooded and had to be pumped out. The oil burner in a furnace at W. D. Caneedy's was taken out.

Road conditions are a big headache to patrolmen. The road from Jacksonville to Wilmington from the Neal Faulkner home on was impassable for three days and traffic was re-routed past the James Farrington, Jr., home on a new black top road which was put in last year.

Mail busses with the exception of the Wilmington-Hoosac Tunnel route made regular trips. The latter did not as train service from the tunnel was disrupted.

## MAPLE MEN HEAR GRADE LAW URGED

### Tax Proposed to Pay for Enforcement and Pro- motion

## FLOYD STONE AGAIN COUNTY DIRECTOR

Floyd Stone of Halifax was re-elected Windham County director of the Vermont Sugar Makers' Association for a term of two years at a county maple meeting held in Farm Bureau Hall Wednesday afternoon and sponsored jointly by the association, the Extension Service and the Vermont Forest Service. About 50 maple producers attended the lively session.

An explanation and discussion of proposed laws for the maple industry which will come up for action at the current session of the legislature and which were recommended by an association committee and approved by the directors last month, featured the lengthy session.

### Urges Grading Law and Tax.

Provisions of the proposed legislation were first taken up by Howard A. Dwinell, director of markets of the Vermont Department of Agriculture. Dwinell urged the passage of a grading law to control the quality of sirup and sugar and to protect the state producers. There are too many products on the market now, exploiting the apparently magic name of Vermont, and which misrepresent directly or by intimation that they are "maple," he claimed. Dwinell cited the great improvement in the potato, apple and egg industries by systematic grading of their products. He urged also the passing of a brand registration law which would protect maple producers and would be aimed at products which contain little or no maple. He outlined the proposed industry tax, half of whose proceeds would be used for enforcement of the grading law, a quarter for research on production and packing and marketing and a quarter for advertising and promoting the Vermont maple industry.

~ C. Lancaster, Halifax  
Historical Society

Warm wishes for a healthy & happy 2019!!!!



Newsletter  
P O Box 27  
West Halifax VT 05358

2018 Firemen's Raffle Winners

- Jan: Scott Reed
- Feb: Roy Richardson
- Mar: Alan Ashcraft
- May: Laura Gerdes
- Jun: Barbara Brown
- Jul: Annette Deshane
- Aug: Kathy McLean
- Sep: Merylyn Courser
- Oct: Pam Parris
- Apr, Nov, Dec: no winner

# Halifax News

JANUARY 2019



70 years ago, the weather was in the news (The Phoenix, Jan. 1949) →

←...Not so different from today. Photo: ice encases every branch, Dec. 28, 2018

## ROAD REPAIRS PROCEED IN RAIN

2-Way Traffic Is Restored  
on State Highway  
System

WHITINGHAM DAM  
RAIN SETS RECORD