

CAMBRIDGE HARKENER

CELEBRATING THE HERITAGE OF CAMBRIDGE, VERMONT

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Cambridge Village Receives Certified Local Government (CLG) Status

Jeffersonville has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1986. Last year a small group of Cambridge Village residents began the slow process of getting Cambridge Village, the older of the two Villages, on the Register as well. The first step was to form a Historic Preservation Commission. The CVHPC was established in September, 2018. Georgeana Little, Kathy Johnson, and Tim Lawlor were the original members. In March, 2019 Julia Grey joined the Commission. Julia has a Master's in Historic Preservation and has proved an invaluable asset, giving structure to the research and directing us in the proper direction.



The next step in the process was to apply for CLG, Certified Local Government, status. On May 16, 2019 the National Park Service formally approved the application, making Cambridge Village only the 16th municipality in the state with CLG status, and the smallest.

Now begins the hard work of researching the history of the Village. We have decided to concentrate on the economic and architectural history of the Village. Cambridge Village grew up to service the many farms in the area. There were mills, stores, churches, an Inn, blacksmith shop, undertaker, and everything else necessary to life, available in Cambridge Village. When

the railroad came to town in 1876, the Village became a hub for the shipment of wood and dairy products from Cambridge.

We will be looking for information on the economic activity in the Village and any pictures or stories you may have that would be of interest. A lot went on in Cambridge Village in the 19th century and we need to find out as much as possible about Village history. If you have any information you would like to share, please contact Georgeana Little at rgtle@stoweaccess.com or (802) 335-2002.

The CVHPC is planning a History Walk in the Village. We hope to have historic personages from the Village stationed at various locations, to give people an overview of the history of the Village. If you are interested in participating, or of ideas of who should be represented please contact Georgeana Little.

The Cambridge Historical Society—A Brief Unofficial History

by Joel Page

The Cambridge Historical Society (CHS) was incorporated in 1987, but I think its roots lie in two community ventures that commanded a lot of attention and organizing during the early 1980s—the Old Town Hall preservation effort and the National Register of Historic Places Nomination, that led to the creation of the Jeffersonville Historic District.

The Old Town Hall (which now houses the Town Clerk's office and Post Office) had fallen into disuse and was in very rough shape by the 1970s. A group of concerned citizens started a preservation campaign which began with a fundraiser (a Thomas Curtin art show) in 1980, and which continued until 1989. Most of those involved became members of the CHS.



Warner Lodge

The National Register process was mostly the work of Jane Shaw. I think Jane recognized that having the Old Town Hall placed in the National Register of Historic Places would improve its chances of preservation. The Jeffersonville Historic District designation occurred in 1986. *Vintage Village Days*, also orchestrated by Jane, was prompted by the Historic District designation. This event occurred for a couple of years in the late 80s and included exhibits and tours of some of the homes in the Historic District. The documentation and publicity surrounding the National Register designation and *Vintage Village Days* heightened community awareness and interest in the Town's history and led to interest in the Historical Society.

For several years after its incorporation, CHS held monthly meetings with interesting slide shows and talks. Stubb Wells' presentations were especially popular, and his show on the history of skiing in Cambridge was repeated several times over the years by popular demand.

In 1989, the efforts of the Old Town Hall preservation group, and CHS, which had become involved, came to fruition when the Town voted to restore the structure. However, those efforts were dashed when a petition led to reversal of that decision the next year. In hindsight, I think this caused many who had worked hard on the project to become

disillusioned and lose some of the energy that they had been putting into the CHS. Also, the interest that naturally occurs early in an organization began to wane as the novelty wore off. Some, like myself (President at the time), had competing work and family commitments that took priority. There was also a problem of not having a good meeting space. Participation in the CHS waned, and by the early 90s the organization had become inactive. That remained the case until about 1998, when some new blood and a new building intervened. In the meantime, the Old Town Hall restoration was back on track with the Post Office as a paying tenant.

Around 1998 new interest in the CHS developed, particularly when the Masonic Lodge (Warner Lodge) on School Street in Jeffersonville was offered for sale to the Historical Society. The decision to purchase the building was a pivotal event for the CHS. In little more than a year, the CHS raised \$45,000, enabling the purchase of the property in 1999. The CHS now had a home! Grants were obtained which allowed for significant restoration of the building. The entire purchase and restoration process generated much interest and participation by the community.

Since 1999 the CHS activities have been more or less steady and well attended, based out of the Warner Lodge. We have monthly meetings, usually with an interesting presentation, and in August we host a BBQ Chicken dinner in Cambridge Village.

In 2008 we received a gift of the use (and responsibility for) the Sweet property on Main Street in Jeffersonville. For several years, the CHS has rented the property to the Mary Elizabeth Preschool.

The Cambridge Historical Society looks forward to many more years investigating the history of our town and sharing the results with everyone.



Sweet House

June 12th 7:00 pm
Warner Lodge

The Hills of Home: Mountains and Identity in Vermont History
Jill Mudgett

Vermonters have strong ideas about the importance of their mountain topography. Where did our pride in Vermont's landscape come from, and why is it that we see our shared identity as rooted in the land? Evolving human ideas about the Vermont mountains form the base of this lecture. The story begins with the state's founders and moves forward through Vermont history to explain how environmental understandings changed over time. This lecture by historian Jill Mudgett is timely and relevant in its relationship to current interdisciplinary scholarship, and offers us tools to understand the origins and meaning of our own strongly-held attachments to the Vermont landscape. *A Vermont Humanities Council event.*



August 14th 7:00 pm
Cambridge Community Church

John Quincy Adams: A Spirit Unconquerable!

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that John Quincy Adams "took his tea with sulfuric acid." Perhaps he did, but he also wrote poetry, loved theater, opera, and good wine and company; he held informed views on a myriad of subjects.

Actor Jim Cooke portrays him in the last decade of a remarkable life as he sits for his final portrait. Learn of his part in the creation of the Smithsonian Institute, his defense of the Amistad Africans before the Supreme Court, his dedication of America's first astronomical observatory, and his long fight against the slave-master's Gag Rule in Congress.



This program follows our yearly Chicken BBQ. Tickets for that can be purchased from any CHS Board Member.

July 10th 7:00 pm
Warner Lodge

A Tribute to Roberta Marsh

Roberta Marsh was a charter member of the CHS and one of the driving forces behind it. She contributed her time, expertise, pies, and beans to the CHS for 20 years. Her voluminous knowledge of the history of our Town cannot be replaced and is already being sorely missed. Please come to this Tribute and tell us of your experience with Roberta. Did she tell you something about your family that you didn't know? Was she instrumental in getting you interested in history? Any and all are welcome - bring your stories, your pictures, and your memories about this remarkable woman.



September 11th 7:00 pm
Warner Lodge

What is it Like to be a New Legislator
Richard Westman & Lucy Rogers

Many years ago a young Richie Westman went to Montpelier as our Representative. This year a young Lucy Rogers did the same. What is different? What is the same? How does it feel to work in the historic Vermont State House? Come hear Senator Westman and Representative Rogers discuss their impressions of serving the citizens of Cambridge (and other places).



Cambridge Historical Society
PO Box 16
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We're starting a new way to get the news out to our members. We hope to have copies of the Harkener out three to four times a year to keep you up to date on what's going on with the Historical Society.

The Historical Society meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month from March through December at the Warner Lodge on School Street in Jeffersonville . A business meeting with the Board of Directors starts at 6:00 pm and the program starts at 7:00 pm.

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings.