



Times Past

Shrewsbury Historical Society
Newsletter

80th Anniversary of 1927 Flood



Main Street, Cuttingsville: Shown (center left) is destroyed bridge over Mill River in Cuttingsville, which is Route 103 today, looking up School Street. At left, from l-r are Merritt H. Ridlon, George Ridlon and Clayton Stewart. At right, Merritt Ridlon's team of horses with Lloyd Stapleton.

On November 3rd and 4th, 1927, the rain never stopped, inundating rivers and streams, sweeping away homes, machinery, bridges and land in its fury. November 2007 marked the 80th anniversary of New England's devastating flood.

In reading through photostats of the *Rutland Herald's* issue dated November 8, 1927, there is an unusual story from Waterbury. Seems the flood survivors along the Winooski Valley were talking about the "house of light" that passed down the river when the flood was at its crest. It was told by Lloyd Squire, a local newspaperman. He said "We had our hands pretty full right at the moment saving our own lives and as many others as we could, but that was a sight to make anyone look. Downstream it came in the darkness, a two-story house, twinkling and bowing in the rush of the water, and every window lighted as if a

family was about its ordinary living inside. It went by very quickly, and though some said they could distinguish figures moving past windows, nobody could tell for sure whether the house was occupied during that wild ride or not. But it very likely was. If it had been a house from which the occupants had gone before the flood came, the lamps would have been turned out. We never heard what happened to it."

When the SHS interviewed Ed Cook, formerly of Cuttingsville, he remembers that when he was a lad of 11, he accompanied his father to Ludlow to attend a livestock auction. He said it was a long day, raining all day, when word came to the auction that the Black River was going to overflow. Ed's father took him to his aunt's nearby where he stayed for two days. He related how the Rutland Railroad cars could not make

Continued on Page Six

President's Note

The SHS is proud of the beautiful new paint job that was done in the museum during the past winter months. It has given the museum an uplift and is a better background for the items displayed. Also, the ceiling tiles in the entryway have been repaired as needed. These improvements have added to the attractiveness of our building. My thanks to the House Committee for overseeing this project.

The SHS held a Spring Plant and Bake Sale and a Fall Food Fest. Both were successful due to the cooperation of members and community persons who were willing to bake, buy, or donate to the society. My thanks to the Fund Raising Committee for their planning of these and also their presentation of the Memories 2008 Calendar which are for sale.

SHS was part of the annual Vt. History Expo held at Tunbridge in June, thanks to the Expo Committee. The display featured Spring Lake Ranch which just celebrated its 75th anniversary.

Thanks to the Program Committee for presenting a program in October given by David Rice on the work in progress in the unofficial cemeteries in Town.

As president, I wish to express my thanks to the officers, committees, members, and friends for all the work that they have done for the Society. Everything you do is greatly appreciated. I am looking forward to another year with all of you.

Marguerite Ponton

Officers and Trustees

2007

President	Marguerite Ponton
Vice President	Fran Patten
Treasurer	John Elwert
Secretary	Ruth Winkler

Trustees

Bud Clark	Ann Ridlon
Betsy Bennett	Al Ridlon, Sr.
Chris Wiedmann	Grace Brigham

Newsletter Editors

Ruth Winkler	Conrad Winkler
--------------	----------------

ruthcon1@vermontel.net

Shrewsbury Historical Society, Inc.

(A non-profit organization)

5419 Route 103

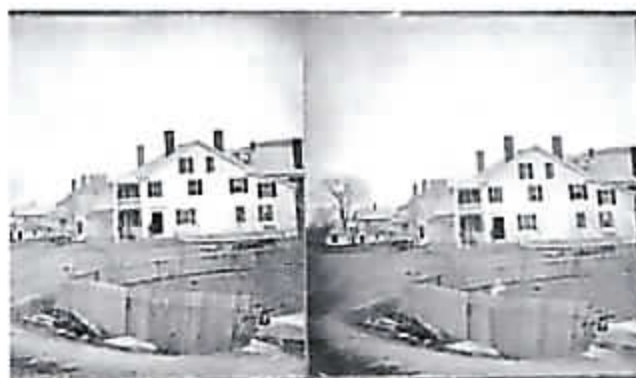
Cuttingsville, Vermont 05738

SOMEWHERE IN TIME



Bertha Egelston and son "Taz" taking a ride in their horse and carriage on the Old Plymouth Road, North Shrewsbury. Photo by Egelston. Print made by Mitch Spencer from a glass negative found at the Rutland Historical Society.

EARLY UNION HOUSE



Early 1800's stereoscopic slide of Union House in Cuttingsville (2007 site of John C. Stewart Ford Agency). Note fenced in area of what was then Mill River, its waters diverted for mills in the village.

In Memoriam

Liz Daley Jeffords, a former member, passed away on April 13th, 2007, after a long, brave battle with illness. Liz was beloved by all who knew her and will be remembered for her spunk, humor and her public service.

On August 20th, 2006, the Town of Shrewsbury gathered together to honor U.S. Senator James Jeffords and wife, Liz, on the forthcoming retirement of Jim from Congress. It was a very special day, and one that many Shrewsbury folks will remember for years to come.

Footbridge over Mill River, 1927



*The enterprising people of Cuttingsville put up this bridge over swollen Mill River to get to the stores.
In the background is School Street.*

Benjamin Philbrick's Lament

In the year 1852, Benjamin Philbrick of Shrewsbury penned a heartrending letter, in verse, to his wife, Lydia (Lord) and their children as he lay dying on board a ship headed for the gold rush in California.

Philbrick owned the property next to the original Northam School and also the Northam blacksmith shop. At the age of 36, he left his family to try his luck in finding gold. The story was told that he worked his way down to the Isthmus of Panama, crossed it by mule, and boarded a ship headed for California. He contracted yellow fever on board ship and wrote the letter in shaky script as he was dying.

The letter was entitled "The Dying Californian," and excerpts as written follows:

*"Tis my wife I'll speak of now.
Tell O tell her how I miss her
When the fever burned my brow
Harken to me closely lisson
Don't forget a single word,
That in death my eyes did glisten
With the tears her memory stirred.
Tell her to kiss my children*

*Like the kiss I last impressed
Hold them as last I held them
folded closely to my brest.
Give them early to their maker
putting all their trust in God
And he never will forsake her
He has said so in his word
Oh my children Heaven bless them.
They were all my life to me
Would I could once more caress them
Ear I sink beneath the sea
Twas for them I crossed the ocean
What my hopes were I'll not tell
But they have gained An orphans portion
yet he doeth all things well."*

Benjamin Philbrick died and was buried in the Pacific Ocean. The complete text of his letter is on file in the museum.

In 1860 Lydia (Lord) Philbrick married for the second time to Alvin Finney Aldrich, son of Nathaniel and Polly Aldrich.

Gifts to SHS, 2007

Vt. Commission on Women, Montpelier: DVD of interviews about women from Expo 2006.

Brian Fogg, CEO, Credit Union of Vt., Rutland: 8' long office sign from Jim Jeffords' former office.

Bert and Arlene Ladd, Ira, VT: Quilt. One side with signatures of Shrewsbury names, the other side a basket pattern.

Donald Oresman, N.Y., N.Y.: Two booklets, "Everything in the world exists to end up in a book" and "A library is a door in time".

Anne F. Spencer, Shrewsbury: Set of 5 VT maps printed by the state, geological survey 2005, Wallingford quadrant including part of Shrewsbury.

Reginald Alexander: Genealogy book, "Our Family," Alexander, Walker, Perkins, Watterlund.

Julanne Sharrow, Shrewsbury: Child's sleigh that belonged to Walter Shangraw, born 1900, her maternal grandfather.

Liz Daly Jeffords, Shrewsbury: Gifts to Liz from Marjorie Pierce: shoes, beads, Glendon's Zippo lighter, and assorted notes and snapshots.

Fran Patten, Shrewsbury: Five items of glassware and china displayed on corner knick-knack shelf in museum.

Anne F. Spencer, Shrewsbury: Four paperback books, Rutland County, VT Probate Extracts, Rutland Division. Volumes 1 - 19, through 1894.

David T. Parsons, Jr., E. Dorset, VT: Booklet, "Inventory of Tn., Village & City Archives of VT., No. 11, Vol. XXII, Town of Shrewsbury, 1940".

Jonathan Wells, Minneapolis, MN: Color photograph of Spring Lake from above, 2007.

Anne F. Spencer, Shrewsbury: Soft cover book, "Freedom & Unity: A History of Vermont" by Sherman, Sessias & Potash. Three books on early Vt. Census, also on RI, MA and CT. Four folders of "Rutland Weekly Herald Extracts" by Dawn Hance. 18 volumes of Cemetery Inscriptions by Margaret P. Jenks. Books, "VT Maps Prior to 1900: An Annotated Cartobibliography; Beers Atlas 1869 Bennington Co.; Beer's Atlas 1869 Addison Co. Also six books and directories on VT Burial Grounds and Repositories.

Anne Sareka, Montpelier, VT: Soft covered book "Giving a Lift in Time". A Finnish Immigrant's story told by Anne Sareka and Michael Wells about Sareka's family and establishment of Spring Lake Ranch.

Christmas Eve, 1957

*The Yule-tide Star bends close – a lantern
burnished bright –*

*Above a sky-born moon in a tender curve of light;
The wheeling sky flings jewels to stud the crown of
night.*

*While hills stretch to their tree-tops a web of
shimmering white.*

*Now hearts of men are kindled to fashion peace on
earth,*

*Hewn out of human longing, and love and need –
a girth*

*To join brave minds in beauty, strong hands in toil
and mirth!*

*While hushed we light our candles at the miracle
of birth.*

Elizabeth M. Sarcka, co-founder of Spring Lake Ranch, wrote the above poem on her Christmas card.

That's Entertainment!

It has been fifty years since Robert Frost came to Shrewsbury, as shown on NBC TV's "Wide, Wide World." The program showed Frost walking along Lottery Road, standing in front of the Community Center and then inside, where he read his work.

And this year, ABC TV's Extreme Makeover House featured a home in Athens, VT. Life Member Alan Ridlon, Sr., and his son Alan, Jr., also a member, together with Emelie and Josh Ridlon, Mark Stewart and Hugo Bailey worked on the installation of the kitchen, and Jon Lees worked on the cement entranceway. The program is scheduled to air in November or December.

The Shrewsbury Historical Society now has its own website at: shrewsburyhistoricalsociety.com.

Michael Wells, Cuttingsville: DVD "75th Anniversary of Spring Lake Ranch" and a CD featuring Olaf Johnson's photographs.

George Lawrence, Seal Brook, CA: Aldrich Genealogy.

Anne F. Spencer, Shrewsbury: Soft cover book, "The Great Vermont Ski Chase" by Karen D. Lorentz.

B. J. Stewart, Cuttingsville: One stereoscopic slide of Union House. Ledger, Union House guests July 1, 1891 through Nov. 27, 1895. Ledger, leather bound, accounting, ca. 1841 - ca. 1844.

In the good ol' summertime



A Northam picnic, ca. 1898. Print made by Mitch Spencer from a glass negative.

SHREWSBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S 2008 Annual Dues Request

Your support helps keep the museum viable, interesting and accessible. Your dues and donations will not only be used for the upkeep and care of the museum building, but will also help in the preservation of our town's history for future generations. Thank you for your support.

2008 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please fill out this form and mail it with your check payable to the Shrewsbury Historical Society, Inc., c/o John Elwert, 499 Shunpike Rd., Cuttingsville, VT 05738.

Name _____

Address _____

Individual \$ 10

Family \$ 15

Contributing \$ 30

Life (Individual/Couple) \$125

Donation \$ _____

Dues and donations are tax deductible.

"Shrewsbury, VT - Our Town As It Was" by Dawn Hance, 322 pp soft cover @ \$25 (\$20 for members) can be purchased at the Town Clerk's office or by mail to the above address, add \$5 for postage.

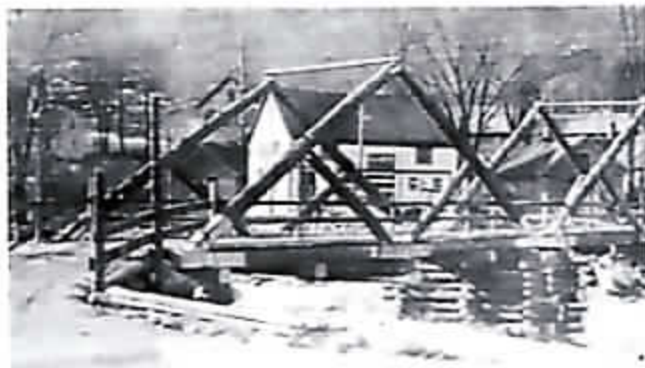
1927 FLOOD from Page One

it up the summit and that his mother took in seven stranded passengers in Mount Holly.

Mr. Cook remembers three bridges in his lifetime in Cuttingsville: the iron bridge before the 1927 flood, the iron bridge of 1928 and the bridge now, built in 1991. He watched the huge logs being brought to the riverside used to build a temporary bridge in Cuttingsville after the flood of 1927.

The SHS also interviewed Edgar Ridlon and sister, Sadie Ridlon Hamilton in 1990 at Edgar's home which was close to the depot in Cuttingsville. They remembered the flood and that two trains were backed up nearby. The word went out for townspeople to help take in some of the stranded passengers. Sadie said that people were brought down by wagon to the different homes. Her mother cooked for some of those stranded, using what food she had. Sadie also remembered walking home from high school on the railroad tracks as the bridges were out and she carried as much bread as she could handle to help her mother feed the passengers.

The Shrewsbury Historical Society Museum has many photographs of the flood's wrath to our town.



Above, log bridge in Cuttingsville. White store owned by Etta Ridlon, Al Ridlon, Sr.'s grandmother. Below, construction of bridge (Rt. 103) near Spring Lake Rd.



Shrewsbury Historical Society, Inc.
5419 Route 103
Cuttingsville, Vermont 05738