

Times Past

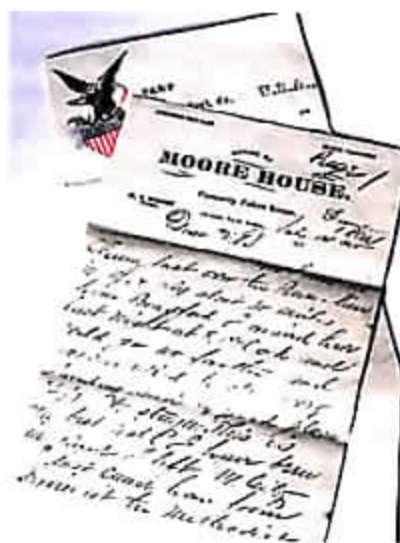
Shrewsbury Historical Society Newsletter

George Wellington Foster's

Civil War Letters to Home

On August 27, 1862, 22-year-old George Wellington Foster volunteered for nine months in the 14th Vermont Infantry, Company B, raised as a result of President Abraham Lincoln's call on August 4, 1862, for additional troops due to the disastrous results of the Peninsula Campaign.

Foster, a resident of Cuttingsville, and future store owner of "G. W. Foster", the Brick Store in the village, was just married to Leona Adams on August 5th, 1862. He mustered on October 21, 1862 and was mustered out on July 30, 1863. Battles fought: Fairfax Courthouse, Va., Repulse of Stuart's Raid Dec. 28, 1862 and Gettysburg, Pa., July 1, 2, 3, 1863.



George W. Foster

The following are excerpts taken from Foster's letters:

Undated, taken from letter to his bride Leona, Foster explained how important it is for soldiers to be remembered by their community at home "... for there is no place on earth thought of and talked about so much as home by the soldiers. I think we have plenty of duty to do and earn our wages. There is not a day but what we have plenty to do and not always the easiest work either. I say we. I speak in behalf of the boys - for I being drummer don't have to be exposed

to so much cold and chilly night air as others. When there is any cleaning of our quarters or policing streets I help do it for it doesn't hurt me to walk. I take long walks every day. It is much better than lying still."

"Woolf Run Shoals, Va., April 1, 1863: March is gone and went out like a lion and April has come in just the same. It snowed all day yesterday and today.

"General Hooker sent word to have us fortify line strongly and the boys have been digging this week for the Battery and Rifle pits. The boys on picket chased 12 Rebel cavalry the other night and drove them towards Bull Run, when out came our cavalry and took seven of them prisoners.

"Orin Cook is on his way home and will get there before this does. Nick Dawson has got his and will start for home Monday ... Will Pratt hasn't done any duty yet. He is having jaundice now, tho not bad ... Ed Gee has got a Rebel sword that he got at the Court House, the issue they took Stoughton. He found it in

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President's Note

The year 2009 was a busy one for the Society. The museum's front steps and porch were removed and replaced with beautiful woodwork. This fall plans are made to raise the leaning bell tower which will require the replacement of the foundation.

In the vestibule a mannequin dressed in the work clothes of the former Shrewsbury farmer and woodsman Ted Hinckley greeted our visitors.

Inside, the acquisition table boasted the handmade miniature Cuttingsville train station crafted by member Tom Tomlinson, articles about Shrewsbury in WW II, a handmade quilt by Life Member Lucille Fiske, and more.

This summer several members joined to greet members of the Crown Point Road Association as they hiked the end to end walk on the road, at the Smith/Sharrow family's Pine Valley Farm, former site of Lemuel White's tavern, first settler of Shrewsbury. The walk was in celebration of the 250th year of the Crown Point Road.

Many thanks to all who participate in the success of our Society. We are proud of our museum and work together for the continuation and preservation of the Society and museum. Thank you for your loyalty to the Shrewsbury Historical Society.

Nancy Spencer and Fran Patten
Co-Presidents

Officers and Trustees 2009

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Shrewsbury Historical Society, Inc.

(An all-volunteer non-profit organization)

5419 Route 103

Cuttingsville, Vermont 05738

Crown Point Road Walk

In celebration of the 250th year of the Crown Point Road, the Crown Point Road Association members hiked the end-to-end walk on the road from Crown Point, N.Y. to Fort #4, Charlestown, N.H.

The road was used during the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars and travels through our town.



When the walkers reached Shrewsbury, they took a respite on the lawn of the Smith/Sharrow Pine Valley Farm, where Shrewsbury's first settler, Lemuel White, erected a tavern on Lot #1.

Life members of the Society, Barry and Barbara Griffith, who are also members of the Crown Point Road Assoc., together with the rest of their group, were met by six members of the Historical Society. Also joining the group for their respite was Chris Fitch, a re-enactor, wearing a full Colonial costume.

In Memoriam

Sally Adams, former member, passed away on January 23, 2009, after her courageous battle with illness. Sally was a loyal baker and helped the Society with her goodies at our annual bake sales. Sally had an infectious smile and is greatly missed.

Marie Tomlinson, former member, passed away on February 14, 2009. Marie donated the special bric-a-brac corner table that stands in the museum.

Hildegard P. Wise, former member and long time summer visitor, who lived in Philadelphia, passed away on April 30, 2009.

Jim Pollock, former member, gentle soul and husband of Rene, passed away on July 30, 2009. Jim and Rene enjoyed the Society's plant and bake sale in May.

George Wallace Foster Cook, age 90, former resident of Shrewsbury, passed away on Sept. 26, 2009. Mr. Cook was one of three great-grandsons of George Wellington Foster, Civil War veteran, featured on page one.

Ted Hinckley Exhibit



Mannequin and exhibit crafted by member Grace Brigham. Clothing donated by Ann Vanneman for the family of Ted Hinckley.

Standing in the museum vestibule this summer was a mannequin dressed in former Shrewsbury farmer Ted Hinckley's work clothes. Mr. Hinckley, who passed away in 1992, was a teacher of math and science for 30 years, and briefly principal of the Salisbury School. He married and had two children, Ted Hinckley Jr. and a daughter, Vivian.

After his parents died, the Hinckley family retired to his family's farm in Shrewsbury, where he was a staunch worker on 140 acres of land. He cut pulp by hand and was said to be one of the very best woodsmen in town.

Mr. Hinckley's clothes pay tribute to his frugality. The mannequin shown is dressed in trousers that are so stained with pitch from pine and balsam that they actually look and feel like leather, and the jacket shows patches on top of patches.

Shrewsbury Population

The first town meeting was held on March 20, 1781 at Lemuel White's, and White was the town's first moderator. Population records given for 1790 showed 383. In 1830, the figure rose to a high peak of 1,289.

In the year 2005, population figure was 1,105. And as of October, 2009, there are approximately 1,099.

Remember when?

1959 Employees of J.C. Stewart & Son

After the SHS interviewed member Steve Martyn of Cuttingsville in 2005, he put together a list of employees who were working with him at John C. Stewart & Son Inc. during the summer of 1959. He remembered the titles given each person, as follows:

Clayton Stewart, Sr., Owner; C.J. Stewart, Jr., Sales & Service; Paul Whalen, Sales; John Stewart, Accounting & Payroll; Leola Martin, Cashier & Bookkeeping; Lloyd Stapleton and Carl Pratt, Auto Mechanics; Ken Waite, Motor Rebuilding; Wayne Jones and Warren Treadwell, Auto Body.

Also, Gordon Pierce, Service Station Manager; Bud Riley, Service Station; S. P. Martyn, Jr., Service Station & General Labor; Fred Czizmesia, was also salesman for Gravely Garden Tractors.

Farm Division: Bernard J. Stewart, Manager; John Barber, Carroll Lincoln and Earl Martin, Service Mechanics. John Barber was also the Service Mechanic for television and home appliances and Earl Martin was in charge of service and maintenance for the Shrewsbury Telephone Company, of which Clayton J. Stewart, Sr. was the General Manager.

Cuttingsville Train Derailment



Thirty years ago, about 5 pm on Friday, Sept. 21, 1979, three runaway freight train cars, traveling about 60 mph were heading towards Rutland from Mt. Holly.

A courageous chase ensued when 23-year-old Green Mt. Railroad conductor Dean Davidson hailed a car and chased the train beating it by a mere 30 seconds at the Cuttingsville crossing. He pulled a rail switch and diverted the two empty cars and a caboose onto a side track and down an embankment which knocked out electricity and telephone service for a day.

The caboose started a minor fire and the Fire Dept. handled it. Luckily no one was injured.

Gifts to SHS, 2009

Ahmet Baycu, Shrewsbury: CD, Uncle John Wilde & the Plymouth, VT Old Time Barn Dance Orchestra.

Anne F. Spencer, Shrewsbury: Book, "Killington - A Story of Mountains & Men," by Karen Lorentz.

Tom Tomlinson, Shrewsbury: Hand-made model of Cuttingsville Railroad Station, plus 12 color photographs of train board.

Alan Blakeman, Montpelier, VT: Four color slides of Shrewsbury.

Donald & Patricia Oresman, N.Y., N.Y.: Catalog, G. H. Grimm Co., maple sugaring equip., printed by Tuttle; booklet, "Stroke a latitude till it purrs like an epigram".

Julian Plumley, Shrewsbury: Two small handmade model airplanes.

Lynn McDermott, Shrewsbury: One old quilt from Russell family; slate used at Russellville School; Russell family clothing ca. 1900; one box of precious materials related to the Russell family, not yet catalogued.

Ann Vanneman for family of Ted Hinckley, Shrewsbury: An unusual coarse sieve, function unknown.

Lucille Fiske and Friend, Shrewsbury: A beautiful show quilt made by Lucille W. Fiske.

Anonymous: Color photograph of the Bailey Road looking south by Fred Michel.

Estate of John Mitchell Spencer, Shrewsbury: A framed collection of photos of WW II airplanes, one showing Gilford Pierce and crew in front of a B-17E named "The Vermont Lady", taken in 1943.

Karen LeDuc, Westmoreland, NH: Six black & white snapshots taken in 1944 at Phil Connolly's home when LeDuc's mother, Ingrid Omland Denholm, visited her friend, Dottie Connolly.

Laurel & Tom Olsen, Los Altos, CA: Photos of families Nims, Wilmouth and Sanders, plus DVD with genealogy information.

Liesbeth Van der Heijden, from the estate of Paul Anthony, Shrewsbury: 1939 Book, "Out of Vermont Kitchens", & a 1975 publication "Council Celebrates 25 Years of Service to Vermonters," by Sen. Jim Jeffords, signed by him, and published in Vt. Humanities magazine.

Edward J. Cook, Jr., George Wallace Foster Cook and Fredrick Nelson Cook, Rutland: a Laurel Glen Mausoleum Perspective book, four photographs of Cuttingsville, and a collection of Civil War letters written by George Wellington Foster.

SHS ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting and Election of Officers for the year 2010 will be held on Tuesday, May 4, 2010 at 7 PM at the museum. All members, future members and friends are invited to attend.

Cuttingsville RR Station



Shown above is the miniature replica of the once-upon-a-time Cuttingsville RR station, hand crafted by member Tom Tomlinson. For many years Tom worked on a huge train board in his basement and often invited classes of schoolchildren to visit. His basement walls are papered with the children's thank you notes.

Tom has since dismantled the train board and the Society is grateful for this treasure.

Museum Ten Years Old

In August of 1999, the Shrewsbury Historical Society museum opened its doors in the historical church building on Route 103. It happened after 15 months of planning and negotiations with the Shrewsbury Community Church, for which we are most grateful. And it also happened with a great deal of help from our members and friends who transported box after box, artifacts, books, vintage clothing and files from its former home on the 2nd floor of the Shrewsbury Library to the church building.

Through the years the Society has maintained the old building by painting the outside and trim, fixing the tiles on the roof, building a new set of stairs and porch in front, and installing a handicap accessible door, earthen berm ramp and parking place in the rear.

On the inside, the building was insulated, new tin tiles replaced rusted ones in the vestibule ceiling, and the walls and ceilings of the museum were painted. Brand new pull up shades to protect the museum's exhibits were installed in all windows. In the basement, the old furnace was removed, a new furnace installed, and a vapor barrier shield was put up in the ceiling.

All of the above could not have been accomplished without the annual monetary help of Shrewsbury townspeople, grants, dues, fund raising, donations, and mostly, with the dedication and hard work of our House Committee and all members who take great pride in the Shrewsbury Historical Society museum.

CIVIL WAR from Page One

the road. They have got it as to play the taking of Stoughton at the Washington theaters. Should like to see it performed."

George Wellington Foster was mustered out in July of 1863 and returned home to his wife, Leona, and baby, Fred.

One of the most poignant letters Foster wrote was dated July 12, 1874, written eleven years after he was mustered out. He took a trip to Gettysburg and revisited the sites he remembered that he was part of in Gettysburg. He called it his visit to the "field of strife". He visited the tree where General Reynolds, his corps commander was killed on the first day of the fight. He broke a branch from the tree to "bring away". Places recalled were Culps Hill, Round Top, Little Round Top, Herr's Tavern, Quinn's house, Spaugn's barn, the Peach Orchard, and Cemetery Hill. Names mentioned besides Gen. Reynolds are General Buford and General Longstreet.

He wrote, "I found the little old house where I was stationed for two days and two nights and what pleased me more, I went into the house and found the old lady who occupied the house at the time of the fight. She is 82 years old and I made her almost know me. She

remembers the soldier who lighted her to bed and tried to comfort her by advice when the shells were tearing her devoted domicile to pieces. She also remembered of my helping her down cellar one afternoon when the bombardment was most furious, and also of the drummer boy that was with me putting the red flag on top of the house so the rebels would know it was a field hospital and not shell it. The children and daughters that were with her at this time are gone, grown up. There is a family living there that takes care of the old lady for the use of the place. This old lady's name is Quinn. She was an old lady eleven years ago, it doesn't seem as if she was any older now. She is well preserved.

"They gave me permission to look the house all over. I saw the rooms and the very spot where I layed one poor fellow to die and I could point the very spot where I assisted such and such a soldier that was mortally wounded. I went into the cellar that was filled at the time. I carried one fellow out of that cellar in my arms that was so badly off he could not walk. Saw the picket fence (very much decayed) where we piled the dead. Saw the place (very near a little stone out-house) where Dick Maskell was trying to boil a cup of coffee

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SHREWSBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

2010 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.

2010 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 _____	Individual	\$ 10
	Family	\$ 15
	Contributing	\$ 30
Address _____	Life (Individual/Couple)	\$125

or Donation \$ _____

Dues and donations are tax deductible.

History book, "Shrewsbury, VT - Our Town As It Was" by Dawn Hance, 320 pp Soft cover @ \$25 (\$20 for members) may be purchased at the Town Clerk's office or by mail with an additional \$6 for postage.

CIVIL WAR from Page Five

when the shelling was most furious. Drank from the spring of water where we got the water all from during our stay at the house. It did seem as if I was on hallowed ground and wished for some of my old soldier companions to enjoy it with me."

When George W. Foster returned home from the war, he was a clerk in his father-in-law's provision store (S. A. Adams) for several years. He then opened his own mercantile business in the Old Brick store and operated it for 25 years, and he was also Acting Postmaster for 20 years.

Foster passed away on April 12, 1888 at age 48. The *Rutland Daily Herald* printed a memoriam written by a friend who said: "Mr. Foster was charitable, well-read, had high intellect, loved beauty in nature and art, and enjoyed painting." Indeed, in some of his letters to home during the war he would embellish some of the pages with sketches of what he saw and made diagrams of his camp.

The Shrewsbury Historical Society is indebted to Edward J. Cook, Jr., George Wallace Foster Cook and

Frederick Nelson Cook, all great-grandsons of George Wellington Foster, and all three U.S. Army Veterans themselves. They have preserved for history the 64 letters written by George Wellington Foster to his wife Leona as he served in the Civil War and 20 other letters from Foster's friends and relatives which were received by him, and will be archivally preserved by the Shrewsbury Historical Society in the Town Clerk's fire safe vault.

It is proposed and on the agenda of the Museum Committee to prepare an exhibit showing photo copies of some of the original Civil War letters, plus a typewritten transcription accompanying them in the museum, summer of 2010.

Information from: Civil War letters to home by G.W. Foster; "Shrewsbury, Vt. - Our Town as it Was" by Dawn D. Hance; 1899 "Book of Biographies of Leading Citizens of Rutland Co., Vt."; and In Memoriam in *Rutland Herald*, April, 1888.

"If thou art worn and hard beset/with sorrows, that thou would'st forget,/Go to the woods and hills! No tears/Dim the sweet look that Nature wears."

... Longfellow