



# Westminster Historical Society NEWSLETTER

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December 2011

## WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN THE CHARCOAL by Rogers

Several years ago the Historical Society received a lovely charcoal drawing of Wachusett Mountain with a beautiful body of water in the foreground. It was a gift of Marie Arcangeli who was a Robillard before marrying Albert Arcangeli. The Robillard family had lived on Batherick Road and we assume the body of water is Round Meadow Pond since the view appears to be from that angle.

We have always been curious to know who the artist was. The signature lightly written at the bottom right is E.H. Rogers. We googled the name and even went on the AskArt website, hoping to find out more information about the artist, but we found nothing. Was it done by a local or itinerant artist?

How surprised we were to discover in the Fitchburg Historical Society's September newsletter a short article entitled "Help us find information on the life and work of painter Eugene H. Rogers!" It stated, "The Fitchburg Historical Society is currently researching the life and work of a local artist, Eugene H. Rogers (1835-1900). Eugene lived most of his adult life in Fitchburg, as a self-employed sign

painter. During his lifetime, he was also known for fine landscapes and portraits of people and animals. Articles from the *Fitchburg Sentinels* of his time suggest that many of these works were purchased by local families. We are particularly interested in his life as a fine artist."

We were quite excited! We examined Eugene Rogers' obituary in the June 20, 1900 *Fitchburg Sentinel* and found that he was born in Holden, MA, son of Winslow and Cassandra (Harrington) Rogers, and

had a brother Edward, who had been killed in the Civil War. Eugene married Mary Clark of Holden and moved to Fitchburg in 1875, living at 84 Arlington Street.



*Wachusett Mountain charcoal print by E. H. Rogers*

The obituary ended with this observation, "Mr. Rogers was so modest that he was his own severest critic. A member of the Boston Art Club urged him to prepare a painting for exhibition in the club's room, but Mr. Rogers expressed the fear that his work would not stand the criticisms of trained artists like the members of that club. Students of art who sought instruction from him were refused solely on the ground that Mr. Rogers lacked self-confidence. When the craze for pastels was at its height several years ago, a Fitchburg dealer suc-

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**2010-2012  
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OFFICERS & STAFF**

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<i>Housekeeper</i> .....	Christy Lombardo
<i>Newsletter Editor</i> .....	Patricia Gendron

**MEETINGS**

Meetings are held September through June on the 3rd Tuesday at 7 pm at the House, and are free and open to the public.

**HOUSE & GIFT SHOP HOURS**

The Historical Society House is open Mondays 7-9 pm and Fridays 9-12 Noon. and other times by appointment.

**MISSION**

***(This is our new mission statement and logo!)***  
The Westminster Historical Society's mission is to save and share Westminster's past.



**LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear Members:

We now start a new year in the Westminster Historical Society. Looking back on the last year, it has been a time of hard work, major efforts and significant results. Our fund raising projects of the town-wide yard sale, flea market and, new in 2011, the art and ephemera sale and auction were highly successful thanks to the efforts of all involved. Our monthly programs designed to provide exposure to the history of Westminster were successful and well attended. The project to preserve the Upton building is off to a good start.

The upcoming year offers a new set of challenges. The architectural firm we hired has completed the preliminary plans for the renovation work needed on the Upton Building. We now must embark on a program to raise the funds required. We also need to continue with the programs and services that we have been supplying in the past. We are also struggling with cataloging and finding storage space for the continually growing collection of Westminster historical artifacts.

To accomplish all these tasks, we must reach out to you, our members and citizens of Westminster for your support. This support can take three forms: funds, time, and material. All of you who are members have already donated some money in the form of dues. If you are not a member, I would encourage you to become one. There is also the annual appeal which will be coming up shortly.

On the time side, we count on volunteers to help in several areas. We need people to catalog historical items, enter data into computers, serve on committees and help with fund raising programs. Even a few hours a month would be appreciated.

For material, not only items of historical interest, but items for the flea market and sales are needed. We can also use working computer equipment especially laptops and LCD monitors.

In closing, I would like to say we are looking forward to a challenging and, with your help, a rewarding year.

James W. Biglow  
President

## CURATOR'S CORNER

Thank you to the following persons who gave us items to preserve in our collections.

*Paulette Aliskauskas*: child's rolling seat made by her father, Ed Hitchcock, Baptist Church commemorative plate and sewing machine

*Carla Charter*: 2 books, The Passing of Spain and the Boston Journal Pictorial Atlas of the World, both with information about General Nelson Miles

*Forbush Memorial Library*: Biographical Review Volume III containing life sketches of leading citizens of Worcester County

*Don Foster*: commemorative plate of First Congregational Church, and collection of books on antiques, cook-books and misc. history books

*Ann Honkonen*: Photo of Westminster High School Class of 1927

*Phil Jordan*: photos of Congregational Church and the bandstand on the Common

*Richard and Carol Lehtola*: dining room hutch made by Whitney Furniture Company.

*Christina Sargent*: 3 sets of paper coasters with the image of the Summit House on Wachusett Mountain and Westminster Cracker Factory letter head and receipts.

## INSULATION OF CONNECTER



*Herb O'Connor and Ed Hannula insulated the walls of the connector from the house to the barn at the Historical Society house on Main Street this fall. They then installed wallboard, making it much warmer when we work there.*

*Thank you, Herb and Ed!*

## TIME TRAVEL ADVENTURES Living in Westminster in the 1700s

What was life like in the mid 1700s in the colony of Massachusetts – before it declared its independence from Great Britain? Your child can find out during the school vacation in February 2012 at the Westminster Historical Society. The **Time Travel Adventures** is a full week program planned especially for children who want to experience family life in early Westminster. This program is designed to accommodate parents who work, and will provide Extended Care before and after the program, so children can be brought and picked up before and after the program activities.

Without electricity, communication was restricted to talking, cooking was at the hearth, and sitting next to the fireplace was the best place to keep warm. A typical day at this **Time Travel Adventures** will include making breakfast and lunch, making a



craft project and playing games. Eating will be fun: children will churn butter, bake waffles over a fire, make and cook sausage on the hearth and make soup in a kettle.

Projects will include making a book to write in and take home, making and writing with a quill pen, building a wooden toy, sewing a potholder, making sleigh bells, and more. Children will also learn about the first families in Town and draw a map of the first homes in Westminster. Wendy Provencial will be the Cooking teacher and a local teacher will be staffing the program the entire week.

The Project Director, Betsy Hannula, has announced that this **Time Travel Adventures** week is for children in Grades 4, 5, 6, or 7. The fee is \$200 plus \$50 for food and materials; the fee is less for a second child in the same family. If you are interested, please contact the Westminster Historical Society at 978-874-5569 or Betsy at her home at 978-874-0430. The registration form is on the Society's website at [www.WestminsterHistory.org](http://www.WestminsterHistory.org). The program will be able to take the first 20 children to register.

If you haven't been a member, please consider joining today. It's easy. Just fill out the form below and send it along with your check to the Historical Society. We thank you!

Thank you to all who have renewed their membership this past year. If you are unsure of your status, just call Liz at the office (978-874-5569) and she'll let you know. You will want to be a member in order to take advantage of the ten percent discount on all items in the Gift Shop! By the way, membership is free to persons over 75 years of age.

## WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____	Individual	\$25
Address _____	Family	\$40
Phone _____ Fax _____	Senior (over 65)	\$15
e-mail _____	Contributing	\$50
All members receive a 10% discount in the Gift Shop.	Friend	\$100
Please contact me about volunteering. These are some of my interests:	Honorary (over 75)	0

- Sorting, cleaning, and cataloging items.
- Putting data about items into a computer database.
- Helping with newsletters and brochures.

Please send form to Westminster Historical Society, Membership Committee, P.O. Box 177, Westminster, MA 01473.

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ceeded in persuading Mr. Rogers to make them, assuring him that he could sell all he would produce. The sale increased so rapidly that the demand was far ahead of the supply within 10 days. There were 65 in the first order and 150 in the second. Mr. Rogers' work went to the shores of the pacific and throughout the West and South."

The Westminster Historical Society is delighted to own such a beautiful work! And, now we are pleased to announce that high quality copies of this art work are being sold through the Gift Shop beginning this holiday season. They are being produced in the same size as the original and will look impressive on a wall in your home. The cost is \$60 and can be purchased at the Historical Society at the Christmas Open House on Sat. Dec. 3 or during the month of December on Monday evenings from 7-9 pm, on Friday mornings 9 am – Noon, or at other times by appointment. If you wish one mailed to your home, an additional fee for postage and handling will be added. Please see the Gift Shop order form.

## FLEA MARKET

The annual Flea Market on Sept. 24 was a success again this year, thanks to the donations we received throughout the year and to the volunteers who helped man the tables. It's a huge undertaking, and the money raised is very important to help pay our operating expenses. This year we netted almost \$3000. Thank you to everyone!

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## WISH LIST

- Two story ladder
- Snow blower
- Filing cabinet
- Laptop
- LCD Monitor

## ART & EPHEMERA AUCTION & SALE

The first fundraiser for the renovation of the Upton School was held on October 15 at the American Legion Hall. The rain on Friday made it difficult to set up but we persevered. The Lions Club set up their largest tent – it would have been impossible without it. We are grateful to the National Honor Society boys who helped us carry boxes to the Legion Hall and to every person who performed marvelously for the set up and take down. Our volunteers made it all possible. We spent much of the summer cataloging items and then setting up on Friday, manning all the stations on Saturday and taking down on Sunday. What a feat! We made over \$5000! Thank you to all who donated items!

More than 400 items including paintings, prints, board games, books, postcards and posters were on sale in the tent in the rear of the property. At 2 pm Paul Royka, of Antiques Roadshow fame, auctioned the 140 items that had been on display all day. It was fun and quite an experience!! A fellow from Connecticut arrived at 7:30 in the morning just to purchase the vintage *Gone With the Wind* movie poster, and he stayed till it came up in the auction about 3:30 pm! Naturally he wasn't going to go home without it so he won the bid. Several Westminster residents won their bids on works of art by local artists. The artists included Oscar Walkonen, Nancy Sampson, Sharon Koski, Marion Knoll, Len Haug, Kathy Patry, Mary Ellen Grillo Longo, and John Gamache.

We also sold raffle tickets for four pieces of art

throughout the summer and fall. The winning tickets were drawn at the Historical Society Annual Meeting the following weekend at the Old Mill. The winners were



*Auctioneer Paul Royka depended upon the runners to bring all the items for sale in a timely fashion. Here Joyce Lucander held up the popular *Gone with the Wind* poster.*

Linda Manseau for the Peckham painting of Main Street in Westminster in 1831, Juli Bedard for the Westminster Cracker Factory by Dana Vickery, Barry Bedard for the charcoal drawing of Wachusett Mountain overlooking Round Meadow Pond by E.H. Rogers, and Linda (Young) Pellerin for the Maple Heights Farm, an original oil painting by John Gamache.

## WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY GIFT SHOP

When looking for a unique gift for birthdays, anniversaries, and other holidays or special occasions, be sure to browse the WHS Gift Shop. Whether shopping for yourself or someone on your gift list, you are sure to find the perfect gift here. The Gift Shop is open on Mondays from 7-9 pm and Fridays from 9 until noon and other times by appointment. Members receive a 10% discount on all purchases.

### Books

<u>Cemetery Inscriptions</u> . . . . .	25.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , 1832 by Hudson . . . . .	5.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , 1893 by Heywood. . . . .	96.00
<u>History of Westminster 2008</u> by WHS . . . . .	95.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , by Tolman . . . . .	20.00
<u>Homestead Heritage of Westminster</u> , by WHS . . . . .	25.00
<u>Images of America</u> , by WHS . . . . .	19.99
<u>Olin Warner, Sculptor</u> , by Hyson . . . . .	4.50
<u>200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Westminster</u> , . . . . .	5.00
<u>Wajusett Gatherings</u> , by Sinclair (hardcover). . . . .	30.00
<u>Wajusett Gatherings</u> , by Sinclair (softcover) . . . . .	20.00

### Tapestries

Cotton afghan in green, navy, burgundy . . . . .	45.00
Tapestry wall hanging . . . . .	35.00

### Other

<i>New</i> 2012 Calendar . . . . .	15.00
Calligraphy sampler . . . . .	12.00
<i>New</i> Painted tin Christmas ornaments Limited Ed. . . . .	13.00
Cross stitch sampler Kit "Mosman" . . . . .	36.00
Cracker Factory print. . . . .	45.00
<i>New</i> framed pen & ink of WHS house by Santora . . . . .	28.00
Map of Westminster 1855. . . . .	6.00
Notepaper Westminster scenes, pkg.12 . . . . .	3.50
Painting of Westminster 1833 by Peckham . . . . .	30.00
Postcards . . . . .	3/1.00
Children's books . . . . .	7.95
Paper dolls, Assorted . . . . .	5.00
Tobacco Shed pottery . . . . .	priced as marked
Tote Bags . . . . .	priced as marked
Wachusett Mountain charcoal drawing . . . . .	60.00

Westminster Historical Society  
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Westminster, MA 01473

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**HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**  
**December 3, 2011**  
**9 am to 2 pm**

## APPLE PRESSING



*Everybody had a chance to throw apples into an apple press and then squeeze the apple juice at the Apple Pressing program in October at the home of Ed and Betsy Hanula. Here Sophi Landry took a turn at turning the handle of the press.*

## HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Begin your Christmas shopping at the Westminster Historical Society Open House on Saturday December 3. The Gift Shop will be open from 9am to 2pm. Visitors can also take a break with a cup of hot coffee or cider with Christmas cookies while enjoying the fire place and choosing baked goods from the Food Sale to take home. Two new items are offered for sale this year in the Gift Shop. One is copies of a large and impressive charcoal drawing of Wachusett Mountain by Eugene H. Rogers, who was a Fitchburg artist known for painting local scenes. The original of this drawing was given to the Society by the Robillard family and was most likely painted from the Robillard farm overlooking Round Meadow Pond.

Also new to the Gift Shop is the latest line of pottery items, designed and made by Nancy and Bob Sampson at the Tobacco Shed Pottery. A special addition for sale this Christmas is a collection of vintage Christmas decorations and beautiful red tablecloths and napkins which were once used in the dining rooms of the Old Mill restaurant. Persons looking for Westminster-related items will find them in stock in the Gift Shop. See you there!