

# HISTORICAL NOTES 2019

*Illustration by Fred Burrington*

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Newsletter of the  
**Colrain Historical Society**

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8 Main Road, P.O. Box 45, Colrain, Massachusetts 01340

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## *2018-19: A Busy Year*

Scotch-Irish music by Ikey's Crossing, live at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center. Kenny Noyes' replica of an 18th Century tavern table, raffled during Moonlight Madness. Colrain On Canvas: A Pictorial Portrait, featuring 60 paintings by 40 artists. All fundraisers and all in the last year. It's been busy.

Ikey's Crossing, James and Martha Hollister Aschmann, provided the music--- vocal, guitar and harmonica---along with cameo appearances by Martha's brothers, Harry and John Hollister, plus banjo virtuoso Stuart Kenny. Stoneman Brewery and West County Winery provided the beverages at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center, and a full house tapped their feet and nodded heads to the lively music.

Kenny Noyes says he works best against a deadline. True to form, he put the finishing touches on his stunning reproduction of the 18th Century tavern table in the Pitt House collection the night before the raffle drawing at Moonlight Madness in November. We had a stranger pull the winning ticket on the street there, and who had the winning ticket? Phil Sherburne. Just goes to show, if you want to win a raffle, buy lots of tickets.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## *Join Us!*

The Colrain Historical Society was founded in the 1950s and over the years has worked to preserve records of the town's history as well as artifacts donated over the years by many of its citizens. These artifacts and records, some 2,000 of them, are stored in the G. William Pitt House and outbuildings. Research into the town's long history is brought to seven monthly meetings, usually in Joan McQuade's barn across the street currently. Our programs are free and open to the public. Membership is open to anyone interested in Colrain history. A lifetime membership is \$50.

## *Give Us a Hand!*

Can you write grants? Got an idea for a program?  
Are you good at financial planning or tending gardens?  
Would you like to do curatorial work, make refreshments for meetings?

Whatever your skills, the Colrain Historical Society can use them. Your participation will grow the CHS, and may change it. To volunteer contact: Belden at belden37@verizon.net; Debby at 624-8800; or Joan at 624-8818.

## *CHS Vision*

Through increased participation by the people of Colrain we will insure the continued use of the Pitt House property as a museum and a repository of the town's material history, at the same time anchoring the historic town center and supporting a sense of community based on a shared sense of pride in the town's history. To that end, over the next five years we aim to restore fully to public use the five buildings on this property.

## *2018-19: A Busy Year* (Continued from page 1)

Debby Wheeler had the idea for an exhibition of paintings of Colrain villages, farms and landscapes by gifted local amateur painters and visiting professional artists. She was astonished to turn up 60 oils and watercolors by Gardner Symons, Lester Stevens (Conway), Stephen Maniatty (Deerfield), our own Hale Johnson, and amateurs you may remember. As the newsletter goes to press, we are preparing to hang the show.

And so, lacking access to the Pitt House property, that's what we've been up to, fundraising. That and arranging to switch out regular meetings and programs from the Stacey Barn to Joan McQuade's barn/garage across the street, where the highlight of the season, perhaps, was a viewing of Ross Purington's red covered meat wagon and a program on Ross, with two of his grandsons, who donated the wagon to CHS, present.

Speaking of the Pitt House, the town awaits a go-ahead from the state's Attorney General's office before moving forward toward selling the property, to CHS hopefully at a nominal fee. But before that can happen, the Probate Court in Greenfield will have to rule on whether Bill Pitt's will allows the town to do this, which could take years. Then the town must vote to approve the sale. Meanwhile, lacking a Certificate of Occupancy on the buildings, resulting from a "change of use," we are prevented from use of the buildings. Discouraging? Yes. So we raise funds for the considerable changes that must be made for a C of O once we own the property. Bear with us.

What's next? A harvest dinner at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center in the fall perhaps, with chef Kevin Hollister in the kitchen, supported by CHS elves.

## **Big Thanks to Our Donors!**

In 2018 you donated \$5,225. Your generosity will help fund work we do and, we hope, to secure the future of Colrain Historical Society.

*Ellen Weeks*

*Diana & James Cusamano*

*Kim Davenport*

*David Greenberg & Elizabeth Erickson*

*Susan Wall*

*Sarah Hollister*

*Sarah & Mark McKusick*

*Donald Purington*

*Mary King*

*Sally Donelson*

*Belden Merins*

*Lawrence Shearer*

*Robert Donelson*

*Patrick Greenburger & Susan Wyant*

*Haynes & Nancy Turkle*

*Lynn Fisher*

*John & Mary Randolph*

*Betsy & Michael Shuipis*

*Paul Vodola*

*Pat & Carol Shippee*

*Prentice Crosier*

*Marion Stafford*

*Woody Lanoue*

*William & Greta Shores*

*Hale Johnson*

*Allan & Kendra Daniel*

*Sue Samoriski*

*Martha Katz*

*Debby & Guy Wheeler*

*Mark Thibodeau*

*Sarah Johnson*

*Janet Umphress*

*Carl Byron*

*Liz Sonnenberg & Erica Wheeler*

*Dexter O'Brien*

*Sally and Alfred Alcorn*

*Barbara Hoffman*

*Tom & Ann Yeomans*

*Herb and Barbara Purington*

Please send contributions to:

*Colrain Historical Society  
8 Main Road, P.O. Box 45  
Colrain, MA, 01340*

## CHS PROGRAMS FOR 2019

As has been the custom recently, we will hold the first and last meeting of 2019, along with a potluck supper, at the home of Joan McQuade, across from the Pitt House. Typically, the meeting is followed by a short program drawn from documents, photos or artifacts in the CHS collection.

Our meetings/programs are held on the second Thursday of each month (with the exception this year of

April), April through October, beginning with a business meeting at 7 p.m., followed by a program at 7:30. Potlucks begin at 6 p.m. Currently, most programs are in the barn/garage beside Joan McQuade's house. They are free and open to the public, followed by refreshments.

Watch the Recorder and the Colrain Blogspot, [colrainhistoricalsociety.blogspot.com](http://colrainhistoricalsociety.blogspot.com), for details.

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**APRIL 18, The Donelsons Drive West, 1939** and potluck at the home of Joan McQuade

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**MAY 9, Native People in the Valley**, George Ashley, Hatfield

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**JUNE 13, Antique Clocks**, Marc Desrosiers, Conway

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**JULY 11, Fishlein's Store in Shattuckville**, Belden Merims and Bob Fishlein

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**AUGUST 8, Hill Town Libraries**, Kathy Heiligman, Rowe

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**SEPTEMBER 12, School Days, Our many one- and two-room schools**

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**OCTOBER 10, A Dustup at the Methodist Parsonage** and potluck at the home of Joan McQuade

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## Revisiting the Arthur A. Smith Covered Bridge

Voters at the annual Town Meeting in May will be asked in a non-binding warrant question whether they think the Arthur A. Smith covered bridge should be opened to vehicular traffic.

The bridge, one of a few remaining in the state and the only one with a laminated wood arch Burr truss, has a long history in the town, which once had as many as 12 covered bridges. It was built, without that truss, in Shattuckville in 1869, damaged in the flood of 1878, and moved to its present spot over the North River in Lyonsville in 1896. The Burr truss was added to strengthen the bridge in 1920.

The bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, thanks to the efforts of Louise O'Brien and the Historical Society. Weakened by years of use, it was taken out of service in 1979, and the Historical Society organized an ambitious fund-raising campaign for the restoration of the bridge. In 1990, with a team of oxen, N.H. covered bridge restorer Arnold Graton pulled the bridge off the river in preparation for restoration.

The state got involved, taking over the restoration, which was completed in 2007, designed for vehicular traffic. Worried about liability, the town chose not to open the bridge to vehicular traffic. Despite a reported cost of nearly \$2,000,000, the bridge remained a pedestrian walkway, 100 feet long with an inside width of 12 feet. The Historical Society erected a bronze plaque listing major donors to the bridge project. Of the money donated by many residents and former residents, \$25,000 remains unspent on the town's books.



So,  
Who Was  
Arthur A. Smith,  
Anyway?

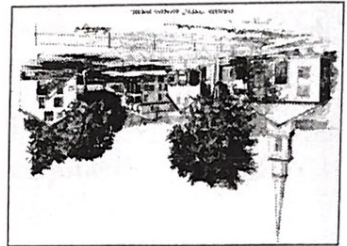
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## So, Who Was Arthur A. Smith, Anyway? (See page 3)

Born in Colrain in 1841, he served in the Civil War, participating in the attack on Port Hudson, LA, in 1863. He returned home and taught school, married in 1865, and ran a reformatory for boys in Westboro. Departing for Alabama in 1868, he raised cotton there, became Superintendent of Education in Greene County, and established a school for freedmen. In 1870 he became Clerk of Courts there, and in 1871, Inspector of the Port of Mobile.

In 1872 Smith returned to Colrain to care for his father and to raise fine horses, cattle and sheep. He was a member of the Colrain School Board, a town assessor and president of the Agricultural Society. Smith lived in the large house near the bridge on the right just off Rt. 112 in Lyonsville, a stretch that became known as "Arthur A. Smith Flats." He died in 1907. And much more. It is the material history of Colrain.

### Officers & Board of Directors

- Phillips Sherburne, *President*
- Joan McQuade, *Vice President*
- Cynthia Herbert, *Treasurer*
- Jennifer Ryan, *Secretary*
- Belden Merims, *BoD Chr.*
- Ken Shearer, *BoD*
- Debby Wheeler, *BoD*
- Ken Noyes, *BoD*
- Janet Umphress, *BoD*

## CHS Purpose

It is the mission of the Colrain Historical Society to preserve for the people of Colrain and posterity the collection of historic artifacts, photos and documents donated by them since 1957, and through programs, outreach and exhibits to promote knowledge of Colrain's unique history.