

# Pittsford Historical Society, Inc.

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May, 2011

## Highlights of 2011 Events

The Museum in Eaton Hall reopened for the season April 12 and will continue on Tuesdays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. until mid-November. In addition it will be open Sundays 1 to 4 p.m. from July 3 to October 10th.

This year will be unusually busy, with two major anniversaries added to our customary calendar of events.

At the Governing Board's first meeting in February, Charla Helton, representing the Pittsford Business Community Group, suggested possible town-wide events to commemorate two important dates in our town's history: laying the cornerstone for the Lothrop School building 100 years ago, and the 250th anniversary of our Town Charter.

The Board agreed to join with Lothrop School officials in celebration of its anniversary on August 28. The School and our Museum will be open to the public, with commemorative exercises on the school grounds followed by an ice cream social.

New Hampshire Royal Governor Benning Wentworth signed Pittsford's charter, granting land of six miles square to Ephraim Doolittle and 63 others on October 10, 1761. The Board voted to feature the event during our Annual Meeting in October.

The full calendar follows:

April 3 - 5:30 p.m. First members' meeting

May 30, 12:30 - Memorial Day ceremony,  
Eaton Hall open house, refreshments

June 25 - Pittsford Day, Recreation Area  
noon-4 p.m. & 6-9 p.m. Vintage photos

July 16, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Tag & Bake Sale,  
Eaton Hall

Aug.28 - Times to be announced: 100th  
anniversary laying Lothrop School  
cornerstone; open house, ice cream social

Sept. 18, 5:30 p.m. Member meeting, Ernie  
Clerihew's old cars

October 16 - 5:30 p.m. Annual Meeting;  
Town Charter's 250th anniversary

The Memorial Day speaker will be retired US Air Force Colonel William Michael Gladski, a Pittsford native and Otter Valley Union High School graduate with a bachelor's degree from St. Michael's College in Colchester, VT. He now divides his time between the McDevitt/Gladski homestead at Pittsford Mills and another home in Beavercreek, Ohio.

## A Fortunate Find on eBay

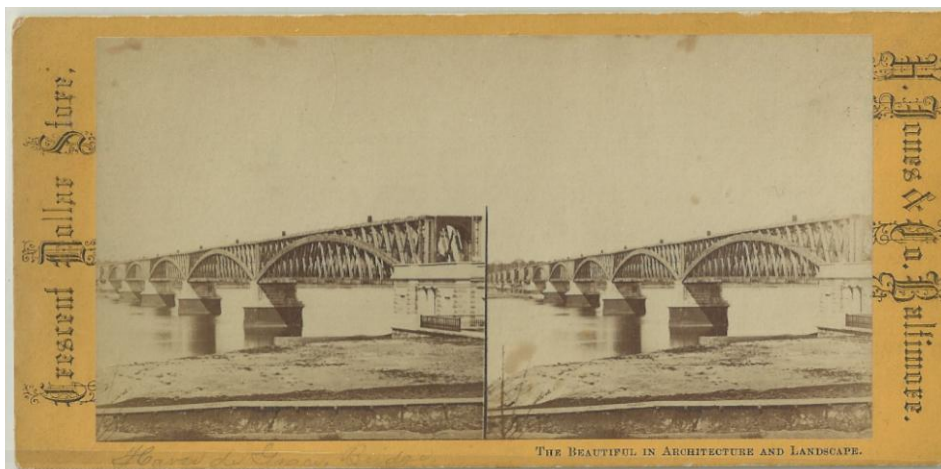
Last summer Peggy Armitage spotted a stereoscopic view labeled “Havre de Grace, Maryland” on eBay, listed at \$35.00. Peg thought it was a wooden bridge, and might be a picture of the wooden railroad bridge Nicholas M. Powers built over the Susquehanna River between March and October of 1866. She asked Bill Powers (no relation to Nicholas M.) to check it out; if Bill agreed that it looked to be wooden, it could be the only photo of the Pittsford bridge builder’s masterpiece.

Bill Powers bid on it and got it. Before giving it to the Society, he showed it to his friend in Brandon, Blaine Cliver, a railroad buff and former resident of Maryland. Here’s what Cliver wrote: “The Havre de Grace Bridge crossing the Susquehanna River, built of wood. I believe it is a railroad bridge. It may be that the photo was taken while under construction since it is not covered, which protects the wood from deterioration. It is a combination Town/Burr truss.

“The bridge was completed in 1866... In 1906, the wooden bridge was replaced by an adjacent steel structure in use today. The piers of the wooden bridge are still to be seen when one travels between Washington and Philadelphia by train.

“The wooden structure was reinforced with steel around 1880. I don’t see any of the reinforcing in the image, so I would assume the photo is pre-1880.”

Nicholas Powers’s great-grandson Alf Strom-Olsen lives on the Powers home farm in Clarendon. Alf donated a photocopy of what is surely a steel bridge to the Society for our N.M. Powers exhibit at a Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge, although we knew it probably wasn’t the bridge his ancestor built. Most of that exhibit is on display at our museum. Nicholas Powers wrote often to his wife from Maryland in 1866 with news of his progress. His letters are in the Vermont Historical Society archives in Barre, copies of which we have in our exhibit. Thanks to Bill Powers, we now have the complete story.



## Recent News from Eaton Hall

We have been given first refusal to purchase a collection of 19th century documents including letters and a business ledger that appear to have belonged to Dr. A.M. Caverly, together with a number of rare postcard views of Pittsford. Curator Anne Pelkey estimates that the items of greatest historical value would cost about \$250. Because time is of the essence, the Trustees voted to authorize Anne to spend no more than that amount, while soliciting one-time donations from our members for that purpose alone. Please make your tax-deductible contribution payable to Pittsford Historical Society and send it to Doris Hoare PO Box 187, Pittsford, VT 05763, and thank you.

Since 2003, Museum all accessions from 2003 to the present have been recorded in a Past Perfect computer program designed specifically for museums. Stephen Belcher is now transferring to the Past Perfect format all of our hand-written records from 2003 back to our founding in 1960. When completed, the location and description of objects and documents in our collections will all be more accessible to researchers, and we will be able to answer e-mailed inquiries in much greater detail.

Vice President Melanie Clerihew is continuing Junior History Club activities for Lothrop School 3rd and 4th graders through the remaining school year. With a few memberships still available, Melanie urges interested third and 4th graders or their parents to call her at 483-6871 for details. Club members will conduct tours of the Museum and the Lothrop School on the August 28th centennial anniversary of laying the school's cornerstone.

Membership chairwoman Doris Hoare is pleased to announce the names of three visitors who became new members this year: Deborah Plimmer, great-granddaughter of Standage Gordon Johndroe, principal of Pittsford High School in 1911, the year the cornerstone for the Lothrop School was laid by storekeeper William B. Shaw. Johndroe and his new bride boarded at Shaw's home (next to his brick store at Pittsford Mills). David and Faith Beckley also found a great deal of information about her ancestors, Colonel Benjamin Cooley and Peter Sutherland.

Soon after January 1 of 2011 Doris Hoare mailed letters to all members reminding them that membership in the Society extends over a calendar year. Your dues support the annual operating expenses of Eaton Hall. If you haven't already done so, we urge you to renew your dues for this year, and thank you.

## Remembering a Faithful Citizen

We note with sorrow the passing of Ruth Wimet on March 18, 2011. For many long years both Ruth and her late sister Alice were two of our most generous and steadfast supporters. Our sincere sympathy goes out to their family.