



Historical Society of Clarendon, VT

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PHIL'S FINDS! FOLLOW YOUR HEART

Our local treasure hunter and Historical Society member Philip Mandolare roams the hills and dales of Clarendon searching for history that has been lost, quite literally, in the sands of time! You may be able to spot Phil with his metal detector, waiting patiently for the signal to dig for something shiny. Phil has found a plethora of artifacts, which he has graciously shared with the Society, and few are as provocative and interesting as the heart heel plates. A metal covering for the heel of a 19th century shoe, what is interesting about these heel plates is the heart cut out in the middle. A few explanations have been offered for the hearts, one being that they belonged to civil war soldiers, particularly of the cavalry, perhaps as a way to remember their "sweethearts" waiting for them at home. Or that the heart was just one of a set of four fashionable plates



containing the suits of cards. But, the most interesting story, is that the heel plates adorned the shoe bottoms of the world's oldest...professionals. Ladies of the night. A working woman. Prostitution did have its place a few centuries ago, but it was lacking in advertisement. As the

story goes, a lady who was working her corner could lead an interested client back to her place of business by leaving her calling card in the mud and dirt of the road in the form of a heart imprint left by her heel. The lusty fellow could just follow the trail of hearts to his, well, heart's desire. Convenient! Now there is no proof that this lovely little story has any truth to it, but then again, there isn't any proof that it doesn't! To see more of Phil's Finds, go to the artifacts section of the website. Something for everyone!

CLARENDON HAT DANCE



While many of you know one of our town's most distinguished and devoted members, Representative Dave Potter, some might not know that Mr. Potter's ancestor Noel Potter also served as Clarendon's representative in the Vermont legislature, and that his election was anything but typical! Years ago, the elections of our representatives

to the state were held at the same time as Town Meeting, and not in November. One can never claim that Town Meeting is dull, and the one that Noel Potter was first elected at was anything but. There were several candidates for the position that year, and each had their backers wishing to see them elected. The hours wore on, late into the evening, as debate raged hotly. Voters began to leave, mostly out of necessity. Cows needed to be milked, children needed to be fed, and, well, everyone needed some sleep! Eventually, only a handful of voters remained, with no end in sight, and at that point, Clarendon's own "sorting hat" was born. An old hat was passed, around, names were placed in it, and Noel Potter was elected...by a hat.

FORT HILL, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND

For the past several months the topic of the "fortified house" that may have existed in Clarendon has been fascinating to several members of the Society. Many of us that have grown up in town have heard the legends of the possible "fort", and it was usually mentioned along with Colonel Joseph Waite. So how does the illustrious Mr. Waite feature in the tale? Did he live at the fort? Did he command there? Did his family have some connection? No, nope, and nah. Quite simply, poor Joseph had the luck of gracing our fair town by dying here. He was severely injured, and while passing through (read, being carried through), sought refuge at a place named only as "Fort Hill". Unfortunately, things didn't work out well for Mr. Waite, which is why we can find his grave in the Pinkowski field. But what of this Fort Hill? A grand palisade? A military outpost? Possible, but not probable. Most likely, it was the exact same fortified house that has captured the Society's interest. Finding out the exact location of Fort Hill has been difficult, but two hypotheses have risen, and both take the fort's very name as the first clue. A possible location is near Colonel Waite's grave, on the Pinkowski land, atop a small mound, the "hill" in Fort Hill. This location was even looked at using a LiDAR image at the January meeting of the Society. This technology can pick up variations in the topography of a location that are not readily visible otherwise. A possible stone wall was spotted, but one that looked more agricultural in nature than defensive. The other theory of where the fort may have been located stems from a family in town prior to the Revolution with the surname of Hill. If it was in fact their house that was the areas fortified structure, it would make sense that history would refer to

it as Fort Hill. This location would have been closer to where Alfrecha and Creek Road intersect. So, the hunt continues! If anyone has any information, folk lore, a story that they remember grandma telling about Fort Hill, we would invite you to share it with us!



COMING SOON

Our next meeting is Wednesday, February 21st at 6pm at the Clarendon Town Hall. We would love to see you there!

Town Meeting, March 6th: We will have a presence at Town Meeting this year, as well as a report in the Town Report.

Map of Clarendon used with the gracious permission of Middlebury College.

Oral Histories! Share your story with us! For more information, call 282-6431.