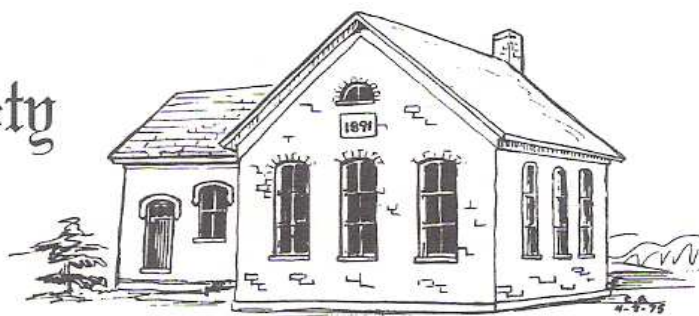


Georgia Historical Society

P.O. Box 2072
Georgia, VT 05468

Founded March 14, 1975

- Spring -



Brick School Museum

Vol. 5, No. 1

- 2011 -

Georgia Historical Society Directors

Kim Asch	David Juaire
Micheline Bovat	Dee McGrath
Ed Brehaut	Cindy Ploof
Laurie Broe	Sara Vester
Colin Conger	Don Vickers
Olive Gilmond	Edmund Wilcox

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FEATURE STORY—

NEW DIGS for the GEORGIA FIRE & RESCUE!

STORY on
Page 3...



The President's Message

We have some exciting programs planned for this year. You will see them outlined in the newsletter. Each presentation lasts an hour followed by refreshments. I encourage you to try to attend one of the upcoming programs – “the Vermont Music Sampler” on June 15, “Our Collections Obsessions” on July 20, or “the Cemetery Tour” on August 20 – lots of history and some great fun! Please visit the museum, too.

We need volunteers badly to join the Georgia Historical Society as board members, docents at the museum, and workers to help with the collections. If you are interested, contact Dee McGrath at 893-4853 or me at 527-9704.

Looking forward to seeing you at this year's events.

Don Vickers, President

**GEORGIA FIRE & RESCUE
BUILDING
CONSTRUCTION -
AUGUST 2010 to Opening
FEBRUARY, 2011**

≈

**BIG CELEBRATION WAS -
MAY 7, 2011-**

**GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2011 PROGRAM LINE UP**

► **WED., JUNE 15th, 7:00 p.m.**
VERMONT MUSIC SAMPLER

Location - Georgia Public Library –
Vermont Humanities Council Speaker, Dr.
William Turtolano, professor,
conductor, organist. Slide
presentation and music samples of
Vermont's rich musical history.
Free and open to ALL. Handicap accessible.

► **WED., JULY 20th, 7:00 p.m.**
"OUR COLLECTIONS OBSESSIONS"

Location - Georgia Public Library –
Georgia Historical Society will host an
interesting program on collections of
Vermont origin or with a Vermont
theme. All are invited to bring in their
own "collection" and tell about it.
OR... just sit back and view the
wonders of these favorites.
Free and open to ALL. Handicap accessible.

► **SAT., AUG. 20th, 10 a.m. (rain or shine)**
**"OLD CEMETERY TOUR" (Guided
Tour—Part II)**

Location – All who wish to participate will
meet at the Georgia Town Hall.
Follow our guide from site to site to
some of Georgia's oldest cemeteries
and learn, close up, the wonderful
history lesson behind them.
Free and open to ALL.

► **WED., SEPT. 21st, 7:00 p.m.**
"THE MINERAL SPRINGS of GEORGIA"

with Peter Mallett, Vermont Historian and
local celebrity, and Duane Chase
Location – Georgia Public Library
Peter's expertise as researcher and
entertaining speaker will enlighten all to
the location of five of Georgia's mineral
springs. He will also provide a map to
these locations. Come and see if one of
them is on your property!
Free and open to ALL. Handicap accessible.

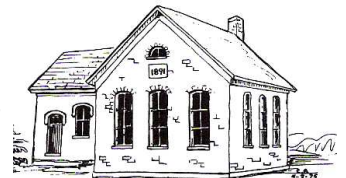
► **OCT. - TBD**
**"THE GHOSTS of the
OLD CLINE HOMESTEAD" on
CLINE ROAD**

Location – Georgia Public Library
Present homeowners will talk about
their experiences with strange
happenings since moving into
this historic house. Come and
listen and believe it or not.

***Date and time to be determined
closer to October.***

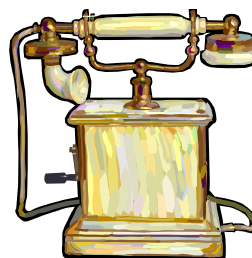
**For more information, call Sara
Vester, Program Director,
at 524-3996**

***VISIT THE BRICK
SCHOOL MUSEUM***

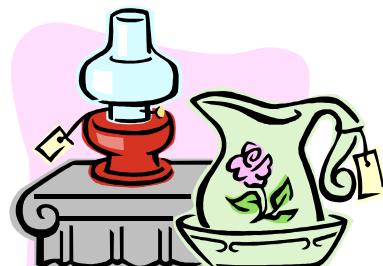


Brick School Museum

Would you like to see some of those treasured
artifacts that Georgia has been holding? Visit
the **Brick School Museum** located on Ethan Allen
Highway—just across from the new Georgia Fire
Station.



An exhibition of these
treasures will be shown
for the entire summer
season from July 2nd
through September 26th,
Mondays and Saturdays,
from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.



FEATURE STORY—

NEW DIGS for the GEORGIA FIRE & RESCUE!

A raging fire consumed the Old White Meeting House back in the year 1952, on October 4th. One month before, this beautiful building had just celebrated its 150th year in a re-dedication ceremony. Two individuals, passing by at 12:30 in the morning, noticed the fire, but at that time there was no Georgia Fire Department. St. Albans Fire was notified and responded as soon as they could. But, because of the distance the building was fully engulfed by the time they arrived. St. Albans provided 500 gallons of water and trucks loaded with milk cans were quickly organized. However, all were futile in the desperate attempt to put the fire out. The wind fanned the flames in the building speeding up the strength and volume of the fire. The people stood by helplessly as the building burned to the ground in only two and a half hours!

The wake-up call for an organized fire department in Georgia was made. But its start was from humble beginnings. In 1951, a year before the tragic fire, Selectman Elijah Palmer had approached John Kieselmann following the loss of several homes and barns. However, the total destruction of the old white meeting house was the real turning point for a formal volunteer fire department. Fred Bliss was elected the first fire chief in November of 1952.

In 1953, at the Town Meeting, voters approved purchases of a pump and hoses. These were kept at the Town Garage. The first person arriving at the garage upon notification of a fire, was to gather all of the equipment and heave it into the pickup truck there and head on to the fire. Later, the Town Selectmen offered the fire department a used town truck that they learned was about to be traded in. John Kieselmann bought a used stainless steel, 1,500 gallon tank to mount on the body of the truck, which he kept at his store's garage located at Deadman's Curve.

At the Georgia Town Meeting held on March 2, 1954, Mr. F. O. Pattee made a motion that the Selectmen organize a volunteer fire department with an amendment offered by Peter Mallett to limit the time in organizing it to 30 days. The motion with the amendment was passed. Also, the purchase of one auxiliary pump with the necessary equipment to fight fires was voted on and passed.

On May 20, 1956, the new fire station was officially opened. The station was a cement block stall next to the town garage. The land was donated by Carl and Lorraine Benham.

Through the years more trucks and equipment were added. Even a phone system for mutual aid was developed. But in 1973 there was a dire need for a new fire station to house all of the additional equipment and trucks. The Ladies Auxiliary of the Georgia Fire Department was doing all it could to raise funds for a new building with dances and bingos and even a cookbook compiled for sales. Construction did not take place, however, until 1978. In June 11, 1979 an open house was held to celebrate the new fire house which consisted of six bays – three for the fire department and three for the town garage,

Continued on Page 4...

GEORGIA HISTORY QUIZ

By Kim Asch



1. The 170-year-old Evarts/Cline house will be the site of GHS's October program because:

- a) It was once a schoolhouse
- b) Gold was once found on the property
- c) It's haunted

2. In 1877, the East Georgia Railroad Station was built along the direct line from Boston to Montreal. Where was the depot located?

- a) Where Georgia Market is now
- b) Halfway between Georgia and Fairfax
- c) Near the East Georgia High Bridge

3. How much did teachers earn per term at Georgia's Skunk Hill School in 1920?

- a) \$57 b) \$2 c) \$15

4. What item was placed on each of the four cornerstones when the Stone School on Polly Hubbard Road was built in 1843?

- a) A four-leaf clover b) A time capsule c) A dime

5. How many years was the majestic town hall building Georgia's distinguishing feature before it burned down in 1952?

- a) 50 b) 150 c) 75

6. The topography of Georgia changed dramatically when a dam was built on the Lamoille River in Milton, in what year?

- a) 1936 b) 1963 c) 1912

7. In what year did Georgia's reputation end as last stop for Canadian liquor smugglers plying the waters of Lake Champlain?

- a) 1893 b) 1933 c) 1947

8. In the early 1930s, Georgia secondary school students traveled to BFA St. Albans in "the barge." What kind of vehicle was it?

- a) A boat b) A railcar c) A Dodge truck

9. When was the Georgia Fire Department established?

- a) 1799 b) 1878 c) 1952

10. How many Georgia births were recorded in 2010?

- a) 37 b) 68 c) 15

(Answers in this Newsletter on Page 9)

Continued from Page 3...

a lavatory, and a small meeting room, at a cost of \$231,373. The money raised came from a grant, local taxes, and town development funds. The Georgia Fire Department experienced a feeling of strength by having a real home for its trucks and gear!

More equipment, newer trucks, but also, a muster team, training, and safety taught outside the fire department were required and developed as the need to fight fires better with newer equipment evolved. As the department progressed, Art Carroll saw the need for an organized first response rescue team, calling it the Georgia First Response. The Vermont Department of Health issued the license for it, August 28, 1992 and Georgia now had an official rescue division.

In 2003 an informal gathering took place at the fire station because, as happened in the past, the current location for the fire and rescue departments had expanded way beyond the safety and space requirements for the equipment and vehicles needed, to say nothing of the lack of room for meetings and training. The building was even too small when looking at most towns of similar size to Georgia.

In 2005 a Municipal Exploration Committee, led by Selectman Colin Conger, was appointed by the Selectboard to formally look into the requirements for this most essential undertaking. Representatives of town organizations from all of Georgia were included in the group. Considerable research and feasibility studies took place, with the aid of professional help, to determine the most cost-effective and practical solutions to the fire and rescue's need, including all of the town's sectors as well. The conclusion was to re-locate the existing fire department to town-owned property and build a whole new structure. The fire department building would be comprised of four truck bays, a training center, showers, offices, a community room, and lockers. The Municipal Building would be reconfigured, a new salt shed built in a new location, and the Town Highway Department expanded and revamped into the vacated fire department half of the building. But - at what cost?

In October of 2007 the result of the feasibility study was presented. The Selectboard contracted with a research company to examine all aspects of the environmental needs and affordability. The study was completed by 2008. The whole town was talking about the possibility of the new fire station and the tight quarters at the town garage. All believed it would probably be costly but the need was so great and had been, to many, something that should have been addressed for some time. In June and August 2009, the Selectboard held an informational meeting and comments were taken from the public. It was stated that the projected cost would be \$2.5 million. Through a show of hands from the residents in attendance, the plan looked likely to be approved by the Georgia community.

In January 2010 a local businessman and developer, Jim Bryce of Bryce Realty, came forward and offered to donate the actual fire station building. The value of the extremely generous offer was colossal – an estimated \$1 million savings to the taxpayers. So, the Town decided that it would be practical to continue with a



Bond Vote to the residents of Georgia with a pledge to the taxpayers to bring about every possible effort in finding ways to reduce the actual amount needed to borrow. The voters of the Town approved the Bond Vote article on January 26, 2010. In February of the same year a fire station subcommittee, under the direction of the Selectboard, was put together. This subcommittee consisted of the Selectboard, Fire Department, a representative for Mr. Bryce, an architect, an engineer, and the Town Administrator. Later, in June, a construction project engineer was added. All joined together to make the process and paperwork, regulations, and of course, the actual construction itself, as expediently as possible.

The first week of April 2010, the Georgia firefighters took part in a ground-breaking ceremony on the old Bragg property owned by the town and located north of the Municipal Building on the Ethan Allen Highway (Route 7). Bids went out on parts of the building that would not be covered by Bryce's contribution. Harrison Concrete donated a great deal of the cement work. Town officials were hoping that construction would be completed by the end of the year.

In May 2010, after considerable discussion and commitment to restrain expenditures, the Selectboard made the decision to apply for a \$1.4 million loan from the Municipal Bond Bank. Now the Town's potential bonded debt would be reduced by approximately \$1 million – with the help of cost controls, donations, and grants. The Town was awarded a 20-year bond set in place in July 2010 with repayment to begin in 2011.

And so, we come to this year – 2011. This is a long time since the building of a shared structure by the Town and fire department and the open house celebrating the occasion in 1979!

After construction finally began in the summer of 2010, on Saturday, February 12, 2011 the public was informally invited to a preliminary open house for the Georgia Fire and Rescue station. It was felt that a low-keyed opening of the station would give folks a chance to see what had been going on since construction began in August of last year as all who passed by had seen it grow and develop through the summer, fall, and winter months.

Even though it was not yet "dressed up", the station was viewed to be wonderfully planned and thought out. The *Continued on Page 6...*



- IN MEMORIAM -

MONIQUE MARTIN

1939—2010



The Georgia Historical Society wishes to offer its sincere condolences in sympathy to the family and friends who lost this very special person. Monique was a very active individual who placed her entire being into any projects she held dear.

Monique was a Georgia Historical Society director for several years as well as a life member. We valued the time we had with her as have the many other organizations to whom she gave of herself and her devotion.



The Georgia Historical Society would like to give special thanks to **COLIN CONGER**, a director on the Board, for all his efforts to coordinate and lead this extremely demanding and complex project—the new Georgia Fire Station, the Municipal Building, and still other parts still being completed as of this publication. He oversaw every aspect of the work, from its inception to the final inspection, and he had to wear several hats to do it! All was done thoroughly and professionally—with an insight into all the needs of the Town, economically, to be met with concern regarding the community's future. ***Congratulations on a job well done, Colin!***



**GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (GHS)
VOLUNTEER AWARD**

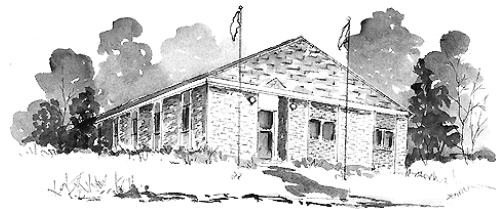
On May 21, 2011, the GHS presented its 4th Annual Community Award, the "**GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY VOLUNTEER**" AWARD.

This honor is given at the annual Memorial Day Parade and Military Ceremony located at the Georgia Municipal Building, each year.

The award recipient this year is:

- GEORGE BILODEAU -

The Georgia Historical Society recognizes the significance of the extreme devotion to community shown by George, the recipient of this award, and is very proud to be the sponsor.



GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Located at 1697 Ethan Allen Highway, the Library is open Monday and Wednesday from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm, Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Saturday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

For information call: (802) 524-4643 or e-mail:

www.georgia.lib.vt.us

Continued from Page 4...

building was huge in size – so much larger than imagined by most, but was soon filled up with years of accumulated equipment (some even housed at the homes of the fire and rescue volunteers themselves) and seven large trucks. Offices were provided - one for communications, one for the fire chief, one for the rescue officer - storage rooms, showers, a decontamination room (so necessary to save the life of the volunteer rescue and fire personnel in a chemical situation), a community room and kitchen, and a room for training. It was like a dream to many of the citizens who took the tour of the building and it spoke volumes in how greatly needed the new “digs” for the department were.

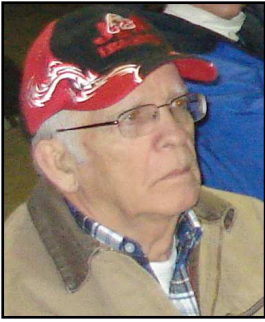
In the Municipal Building, a new lift was constructed for handicap accessibility, with restructuring to the current Town edifice for efficiency, storage, and added staff space. Renovations still ahead will be to the Town Garage. This will expand its use of the building for better and safer housing of Town trucks and equipment. A new salt shed will be constructed this summer of 2011 to make containment more environmentally safe.

On Saturday, May 7, 2011, the Georgia Volunteer Fire and Rescue celebrated its “official” opening of the new fire station. Officials from the surrounding communities joined Georgia residents and other visitors with souvenirs, memorabilia, free lunch and snacks, tours, photos, and a “christening” of the fire station, itself, as the order of the day. Surrounding community fire departments from Milton, Fairfax, St. Albans Town and St. Albans City performed the “wet down.” As this happened the crowd applauded with shouts of gladness and praise. As people entered and exited the station, their faces exuded pride and joy in this most successful undertaking.

Now, 58 years later, the town of Georgia’s volunteer fire and rescue can respond to the Town’s emergencies with even more confidence that it will *get there* with the efficiency and effectiveness it expects and is essential to get the job done. Thus, a structure like the Old White Meeting House and surely many more lives, can have a greater chance of being saved.

It was all due to a great community effort – collaborating with each other. The town, the Selectboard, the Georgia Fire and Rescue volunteers and Auxiliary, the many surrounding generous businesses, the Georgia residents themselves, are all to be congratulated for joining together to make this wonderful facility possible. The Georgia Historical Society is please to mark this addition to Georgia’s history as one to treasure for generations to come. ■





A look into the past with Dick Palmer, Georgia Fire Department.

Saturday, March 12, 2011, the editor of this newsletter had the honor of interviewing one of Georgia's true icons in the

Georgia Volunteer Fire Department. He shared with me a personal look back on a long history with experience and dedicated service to the Department – more than 53 years.

Dick Palmer started out with knowledge of firefighting because his father, Glenn Palmer, was one of the original firefighters in Georgia, a volunteer fire department, which started back in 1952.

The meetings for the department were held at the Conger School and the firefighters were mostly farmers who would go there after the milking chores were done.

The call number for a fire was 242 on the local phone system. This number would ring the dispatcher in St. Albans City, who would then relay the call to one of three red phones. The locations were – one at the old ABC Store, one at the fire chief's house, and one at a designated fireman's residence. The wife of the designated fireman would then call all the firemen she could reach with the information on where the fire was located.

John Kieselmann was the founder of the Georgia Volunteer Fire Department. When a terrible and devastating fire took the entire Old White Town Hall building in 1952, the result of a lightning strike, it was believed, the need for an organized force was the only way to head off such disasters in the future. Kieselmann organized a force by making his property with an old garage, the central location. The one fire truck they had when they started out was housed there. The men would proceed with their own vehicles loaded with buckets of water to put out a fire. St. Albans City would provide mutual aid just as they depended on other departments to help them.

When Dick was 16yrs. old, John Kieselmann approached him and asked him to join the fire crew. At 16 Dick was now old enough to drive. The year was 1958 and Dick has been a member ever since. During his first year, he experienced, in his opinion, the most devastating fire where two people died and were burned to death in a vehicle that was on fire and two others were killed as a result of the same accident.

Dick also recalled another incident, still in his first year, where his father was digging a hole on Skunk Hill Road, and an older brother pushed his younger one into the hole. Fortunately, the child fell down the hole, feet first. His father had to use a frying pan to pry or carve the child loose so he could be extracted

from it.

Dick also remembers an arsonist who set multiple fires in many locations in Georgia – all in one year. The fire department was constantly running to these involved structures to put them out. They finally did catch the arsonist.

The first Fire School held in Franklin County was held here in Georgia. John Kieselmann was again the motivator.

Dick has served in every office of the department, except secretary and treasurer. He was the fire chief for three years – 1969, 1970, and 1971. His time with the department, as stated before, are for better than 53 years! Dick's philosophy now is to stand back and allow the "younger ones" to make decisions, providing them with only wisdom and guidance, and to allow them the freedom to make choices and bring new ideas and creative thinking - *innovation* - to the department for continuous improvement. Also, according to Dick's belief and experience, this freedom to make decisions allows the new recruit to feel that he/she



1979 Georgia Volunteer Fire Department

Front Row (L-R): Butch Blackmore, Tom Sargent, Richard Palmer, Malcom Baker, Gary Palmer, Keith Stafford, Tom Bronson

Second Row (L-R): Bill Matthews, Eric Nye I, Robert Pierce, John Kieselmann, Lucien Lapierre, Clifton Preston, Eric Nye II, Brent Palmer, Stanley Webster, Robin Pierce

Back Row (L-R): John Preston, Norm Preston, Steve Lapierre, Doug Viens, Roger DuHamel, Bobby Bates, Eugene Bates, Gilles Rainville, Joe Merchant, Bruce Montgomery

has a stake in the success of the fire department and a sense of inclusiveness.

When a visitor comes into the new fire and rescue building, that visitor will see many awards, trophies, plaques, etc., recognizing the many contributions the past and present members have made. Over the years, Dick has made himself the record keeper and documenter of all those who have gone the extra mile to provide a better department with selfless giving of oneself and time in the bargain. As does the secretary of the Association, he tracks and records who joined and when and has since the beginning of his time as a firefighter and member.

Did you know...?

What is a dry hydrant?

A dry hydrant is a permanent PVC piping system installed in a pond, lake or stream that allows for easy water withdrawal for fire suppression in areas that lack pressurized fire hydrants. A fire pumper truck can siphon water through the dry hydrant device to fight a fire on-site or to fill fire tanker trucks, which can transport water to fight a nearby fire.



Continued from Page 7...

These plaques and awards that you see as you come into the front entrance and into the hallway, were provided in large part by Dick, himself. Dick took meticulous pains to be sure each and every deserving volunteer was recognized with the goal to preserve that history of selfless dedication. We, at the Georgia Historical

Society, believe, also that Dick has gone far beyond *his* duty as a firefighter because of the many years *he*, along with his fellow fire members, has served as a leader and is still serving as such. There is ample evidence of his abiding commitment and mission to preserve the history of the Georgia Fire and Rescue. ■



Georgia Fire Department
Honor Guard
L-R: Russ Hardy, Dick
McGrath, Dick Palmer, Jay
Paquette

ANSWERS – GEORGIA HISTORY QUIZ

1-c, 2-c, 3-c, 4-c, 5-b, 6-a,
7-b, 8-c, 9-c, 10-a

HOW DID YOU DO?

7 Right—You read the paper.

8 Right—You know your town

9 Right—You know your town very well

10 Right- You own the Town!

Georgia Memories

Are you interested in preserving our local history? We're looking for folks interested in recording oral history with our town elders. We're also looking for folks interested in working on a Georgia Memories video program.

If you're interested in working on the project contact Neil Hilt at neil-hilt@comcast.net or nhilt@vpt.org. We hope to schedule a meeting in mid June to kick off the project.

GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Georgia Municipal Building, Ethan Allen Highway—

First Wednesday of each month from May to October (included) at 7:00 pm

Dee McGrath—Editor, Writer and Designer

Flora Hurteau—Contributor

MEMBERSHIP FORM Date _____ ☐ Renewal ☐ New Member

Membership is \$15.00 ANNUALLY or \$100.00 LIFETIME. Please fill out the information below along with your donation and mail to: **Georgia Historical Society**, Treasurer: Laurie Broe, P.O. Box 2072, Georgia, VT, 05468. If you have any questions, please call Colin Conger - 524-6311, Dee McGrath-893-4853, or Cindy Ploof-813-634-2828

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ E-Mail: _____

I am interested in (please check all that apply):

☐ Publicity ☐ Parades ☐ Paper Memorabilia ☐ Assisting with Genealogical Research

☐ Board of Directors ☐ Other: _____

☐ I'm able to (i.e., type, write, help in research, etc.)

☐ I'm unable to participate, but I support the Society's efforts and programs.

***JOIN THE GEORGIA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
See inside for more
information***

Georgia Historical Society

*P.O. Box 2072
Georgia, VT 05468*

Founded March 14, 1975



Brick School Museum