



# The Hardwick Historical Society Journal

*Encouraging a Sense of Community*

Vol. 5 Issue 2



## HARDWICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

The Publication Committee has chosen sports as the theme for this quarter's issue. We featured boys basketball in Volume 3 Number 4 (Fall 2013), so in this one we feature Hardwick Academy football, Hardwick Academy and Hazen Union softball, and community golfing. Mike Rice's article got us started in this direction; if you have an idea for an article you'd like to write – any topic, not just sports – let us know. We'd be happy to work with you on developing the idea.

Mary Brochu put together a nice article on the championship softball teams of the late 1970s. As she started to work on the story, she was stunned to realize that, locally, it exists only as people's memories; the *Gazette* did not have a sports section at that time, and the yearbook ran a few pictures, but, in the case of the 1975 team, not even a team picture. She found information in resources at the Vermont Historical Society, but we have nothing here.

You will notice that we do not have as many pictures in this issue as we usually do. That's because the HHS does not have many pictures for these topics; we're especially weak on pictures taken since about 1960. If you have pictures that you don't want to take care of any longer, please consider donating them to the HHS; an organization like ours can't have too many pictures.

Our major fund-raiser is on the horizon – the St. Patrick's Day corned beef and cabbage dinner at the Legion. It's scheduled for March 14. The doors will open at 5:00, and we'll be serving from 6-7:30. After the meal, we'll have live music for dancing. HHS Board members will have tickets so you can reserve your place, or you can get tickets at the door for a \$10.00 donation.

### The Hardwick Historical Society



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The HHS has had a busy and productive year. We submitted a summary of our activities for publication in the Town Report, and have included it here for the benefit of our out-of-town members. We hope you find it good reading. Thanks for your support.

*The Publications Committee*

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## HARDWICK ACADEMY FOOTBALL 1946-1949



1949 football team:

*First row: Clifton Houghton, Allen Davis, Robert Lacours, Paul Philbrook, Paul Ainsworth, Rodney Storey, Jimmy Ducker, Ivan Renaud, Bill Robb, Wendall Powers, Buster Stevens*

*Second Row: Albert Renaud, Bruce Clark, Bradley Potter, Delton Davison, Donald Sessamen, Francis Turcott, Robert Smith*

*Third Row: Bobby Riach, Neil Wakefield, James Rowell, Kenneth Emery, Jack Thompson, Bradley Clark*

As far as I know, Hardwick academy (HA) was only involved in football for one 4-year period— fall 1946 thru fall 1949. Coach Howard (Ky) Beardsley started the program with mostly second hand equipment and a bunch of boys that probably thought a football was a defective soccer ball. I was in the 8th grade in Wolcott the first year that HA fielded a team, so I couldn't go out for the team. I watched a couple of games that year but really knew very little about the game. There was no TV in Hardwick then (or for any of the years that HA had a team) so most of the junior high and high school boys didn't know much about the game either.

I'm sure others can add to the list of names that were on that 1946 team but among the ones I can recall were Buster Stevens, Billy Robb, Alan Davis, Wendell Shepard, Ivan Renaud, Jim Ducker and John Hall. By the time I was a freshman, Fred Ducker, Francis Turcotte, Albert Renaud, Jr. (Pea Soup) and I were trying on pads and helmets and cleats to get ready to do battle.



### The **Village Restaurant**

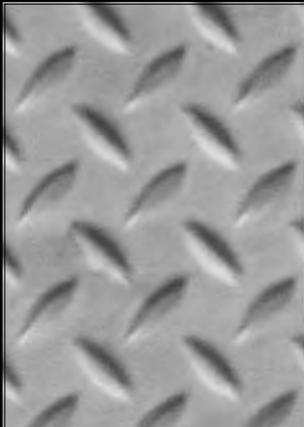
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I think all of our equipment was secondhand, but we did have new, really cool purple and gold jerseys. All of the helmets (yellow) were of a rigid leather construction except one. It also was leather but only semi-rigid. It looked a little pointy and was called the "Needle Noodle". Jimmy Rowell (HA 50) was the only one I ever knew that wore it. Because it was pliable, it really wasn't very safe, but that was in an era when safety wasn't a high priority.

Coach Beardsley had designated many plays with two digits. The first digit indicated who would carry the ball. The quarterback was 1, the left halfback 2, the full back 3 and the right halfback 4. The second digit indicated the place on the line the ball carrier was going to run. Around the outside of the right end was 1, between the right end and the right tackle was 2, between the right tackle and the right guard was 3, etc. We had a fullback (#3) who was pretty good at running between the right guard and right tackle (3 position) so the play was 33 but he sometimes got confused. Coach Beardsley thought it would help if he had the number 33 jersey so our quarterback, Chan Mosher could say something like "This is your play number 33" and slap him on the jersey number for emphasis. The problem was that number 33 jersey was "mine" but for the good of the team, I gave it up. No, I won't say who the fullback was.

As previously mentioned, most of the Hardwick boys had very little idea what football was all about. But in 1948, two brothers, Phil and Gene Packette moved to Hardwick from Las Cruces, New Mexico where they had actually

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played the game. The girls all thought they were cute, the boys were glad to have somebody that had played football before, and everyone was awed by their cowboy jeans and boots. Everyone wears jeans now but back in the 1940s in Hardwick, we wore dungarees. After I went in the Navy in 1950, I ran into Gene in Great Lakes, IL. He had to wear dungarees as part of his working uniform so I got the last laugh for a while.

In 1946 and 1947, games were played at the old fairgrounds where the industrial park is now. It was a pretty uneven, hard surface but it did have grass on it. Later, when the ball field in back of the old Hardwick Academy building was finished, we played on it but, at least in the first year (1948). It was almost all loose, dry, fine dirt. Everyone was getting dusty dirt out of their noses for hours after a practice or game. When we played away games, we were somewhat envious of their good football fields, particularly Littleton, NH, where we played our only game under lights.

Of course any football team learns a lot by scrimmaging against themselves in practice but we didn't always have 22 guys to do it. So the coach would contact former players or guys who had been discharged from the service to make up two full teams. There were several guys that helped, but the only ones I can recall were Larry Beauclair and Howard Jerome.

In '48 and '49, Chan Mosher was our Quarterback. Chan was diabetic, and apparently his doctor had recommended he not play for a full game, but there was no stopping him. One time he had played most of a game on a warm day when he had some sort of diabetic episode and passed out. He was taken to Doc Densmore's office (or maybe Hardwick Hospital), but was back in school the next day and back on the football field soon after.

As quarterback, Chan would get pretty frustrated when the offensive guards and tackles (I was a right tackle) would let the opposing players to tackle him behind the line of scrimmage. One time in a huddle he said to Fred Ducker, "\*\* it, Freddy, those guys are coming through the line like \* through a tin horn." We got the message and tried to hold them back a little better, but I have always remembered Chan's colorful complaint. I still use it myself occasionally some 65 years later.

Our team, and most of the teams we played, didn't have anyone who

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weighed over 200 pounds. I was one of the heavier people on the team at 145 pounds in my freshman year. I think Ivan Renaud might have been the heaviest HA player at maybe 185 pounds. St. Johnsbury Trade School had a lineman who seemed huge; he must have weighed 250 pounds. He couldn't move very fast but, as big as he was, he didn't have to, because nobody could move him out of the way to run through his position.

In 1948, we played St. Mary's of St. Albans on their field. They scored a 2 point safety, but only a couple of players on either team had ever heard of such a thing, and we didn't know what to do. When the safety was scored in the opening seconds of the 2014 Super Bowl, that memory came back very clearly. Even with safety scored against us, we beat St. Mary's 12 to 8. It was the only win we ever had over any school other than St. J. Trade, a school we beat every time we played them. It is also the only score I remember over the years. Who wants to remember losing scores?

Occasionally we would play big school teams like Cathedral (now Rice) or Burlington High School. They always creamed us with their high scores to our zeros.

We had a JV team that I played on in 1947. One afternoon we were at Lyndon Institute playing their JV team, Delton Davidson fell stomach first on the ball and it completely knocked the wind out of him. He was making a noise like a mule as he tried to catch his breath, and some HA players laughed at him until Coach Beardsley gave them "the eye". Later I had the same thing happen to me and realized it wasn't that funny after all.

After I left school in June of 1950 and Al Renaud shortly after, the football program was abandoned. Not long after I graduated from UVM, their program was disbanded as well. Maybe I'm a jinx on football teams.

*Mike Case, HA 1951*

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## LET'S TALK SOFTBALL



1965 softball team:

*First Row: Louise Molleur, Hazel Strong, Jackie Shattuck, Linda Ferland,  
Mary O'Brien, Lynn Hall, Susan Zullo*

*Second Row: Kathy Palmer, Helen Ferland, Hugette Clouthier, Diane  
Strong, Louise Picard, Jane Lemay, and Sandy Williams*

The other night at a girls basketball game my former classmate, Paula Hodgdon Pecor, and I were talking sports. We were looking across the gym at the championship banners above the bleachers and were reminiscing of games and seasons some 40 years ago, especially softball.

Softball arrived in Hardwick in the spring of 1965. The 1966 *Hardwickian* explains: "Girls softball is a new and rewarding experience for the female enrollment of Hardwick Academy. Last year, with Mr. Milne as their coach, the girls began their softball venture. They played four games, including one with the eighth grade boys. Despite setbacks, the girls gained valuable experience and have many memories of the season."<sup>1</sup>

League play did not come until 1966, as the 1967 *Hardwickian* comments: "This softball season was the first year that the team was in a league. Although we did not win very many games we had an enjoyable season under the leadership of Mr. John Milne."<sup>2</sup>



1974 Softball Team

*First Row: Cindy Rathburn, Karen Bessette, Pauline LaCasse, Dixie De-  
venger, Dawn Lane, Joanne Fassette*

*Second Row: Marcia Potter, Pam Willey, Lydia Brochu, Debbie Meghan, El-  
len Smith, Cathy Corrow, Ass't Coach Jean Hackett*

*Third Row: Coach Jan Rowden, Paula Hodgdon, Judy Dimick, Lyndy  
Hayden, Penny Libercent, Lori Brochu, Holly Michaud, Denise Bellavance,  
Sherry Trusdell*

Softball made the transition from Hardwick Academy to Hazen Union in 1971. For the next few years the team trudged along. Then in 1974 something happened... a winning season which went on to become Class I<sup>3</sup> state champions!

The Hazen Union Softball team holds a special place in the history of the school. Not only were they state champions in 1974, losing only one game, but they repeated the feat the following year, becoming state champions with an undefeated season. Paula remembered the players wearing jeans and shirts they have bought themselves because the school didn't provide uniforms for the girls.

The *Hardwick Gazette* did not have a sports writer in those years and reported nothing about the softball teams, and we have no listing of the

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games the girls played. However, the statistics give us a flavor of the season through the playoffs.

The 1974 Lady Cats ranked #1 in their class at the end of regular play. During the 1974 tournament, the Lady Cats demonstrated their dominance when they scored 48 runs, allowing opponents only 16 in the course of 3 games. During the quarterfinals, Hazen eliminated Burr & Burton, 17-5; in the semifinals, Hazen eliminated Lake Region, 11 – 5; and in the final game, Hazen eliminated Windsor 20 – 6.

The following year, 1975, Hazen ranked #3 in their class after the regular season's play.

During the 1975 tournament, however, the girls scored 42 runs in 4 games, giving up only 13. They did it like this: in the final play down, Hazen eliminated U-32, 4 – 1. In the quarter finals, Hazen eliminated Windsor 7 – 0. In the semifinals, Hazen eliminated Burr & Burton, 10 – 7. In the finals, Hazen eliminated Vergennes with a stunning 21 – 5 victory.<sup>4</sup>

No other sports team in Hazen Union's history has brought



*Left to right: Paula Hodgdon,  
Penny Libercent, Cathy Corrow*

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home titles like these – except the girls basketball team of 1975-1976 and 1976-1977. A story for another time.

The movie “A League of Her Own”<sup>5</sup> has one of the best exchanges regarding the game when Dottie, a player, confronts Jimmy, the manager, about what he’s expecting of them:



*Paula Hodgdon, at bat, Penny Libercent, #40, Coach Jan Rowden, crouching*

Dottie: It is only a game, Jimmy. It’s only a game, and, and, I don’t need this.

Jimmy: Baseball [softball] is what gets inside you. It’s what lights you up, you can’t deny that.

Dottie: It just got too hard.

Jimmy: It’s supposed to be hard. If it wasn’t hard, everyone would do it. The hard...is what makes it great.

Will Hazen see history repeat itself? Who knows? Between the pop-ups and strikes, the broken bats and stolen bases there is one thing – no two things – we do know: “Despite setbacks, the girls gained valuable experience and have many memories of the season.” And “It’s supposed to be hard. If it wasn’t hard, everyone would do it. The hard...is what makes it great.”

Batter up!

*Mary Brochu*

1. Hardwick Academy. *Hardwickian*, 1966: p. 29
2. Hardwick Academy. *Hardwickian*, 1967: p. 32
3. Roughly equivalent to today’s Division II
4. Vermont Principals Association. <http://vpaonline.org/Page/35: D2Softball.pdf>
5. A 1992 American comedy-drama film that tells a fictionalized account of the real-life All American Girls Professional Baseball League.

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## GOLFING IN HARDWICK



A cartoon by William J. Bell, a member of the Abnaki Golf Club, lampooning an incident on the links.

We don't know where the idea started, but in January, 1916, the *Hardwick Gazette* announced that, at a meeting of the Hardwick Social Club, the topic of golf was discussed and a committee formed to investigate a suitable site for a golf course in Hardwick.<sup>1</sup> The Hardwick Social Club appears to have been a private organization that organized recreation for its members; it was just finishing up a pool and billiard tournament and was beginning to organize a card tournament.

While golf originated in Scotland, it came to the colonies in the 18th century; the first golf club was established in Charleston, SC, 1787, but the number of clubs grew slowly during the 19th century. Not until the end of that century did delegates from a variety of clubs form the United States Golf Association (USGA). By 1910 there were 267 clubs. During much of his presidency (1913-1921),

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Woodrow Wilson played almost daily to bolster his health.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the men of Hardwick wanted to keep up with the President.

April saw the formation of the Abnaki<sup>3</sup> Golf Club with 55 members. Judge William H. Taylor was elected President, Dr. A.D. Ferris, Vice President, E.G. French, Secretary, L.B. Tims, Treasurer, with A.C. Rublee, Bert E. Cobb, and Charles A. Stanford as members of the Executive Committee. By May the club had hired three men to clear brush and lay out a course at their 'golf grounds' on property along Slapp Hill owned by Dr. A.D. Ferris. They had high hopes – the land was dry and not very hilly – that it would always be in good shape.

In June, a professional golfer from Burlington had come to Hardwick to give lessons. In keeping with the tournament mentality of the Social Club, by September, the new golf club had organized competitions among members, including a match between six men representing the village and six representing the Woodbury Granite Company; the Company men won by 39 points. Later that fall, Hardwick players began to plan a series of matches with members of the Meadow Brook Club in Barre. Membership in the club had grown to 65.<sup>4</sup>

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The *Gazette* doesn't say what initiated the change, but it announced in November that the membership of the Golf Club had voted to abandon its Slapp Hill links in favor of a two-year lease for pastureland on Bridgeman Hill, now part of the Shepard property, for which they paid \$75 a year.<sup>5</sup> Eager to get the new course ready for the next season, they encouraged anyone who had the time to bring his "shovel and rake, muscle and grit," to the new site for a Saturday afternoon 'bee.'<sup>6</sup> John Black, a Barre golfer of note, came to Hardwick to assist in laying out the new 9-hole course.<sup>7</sup> Club members put up split-rail fences to keep cattle out.

The new location seemed to suit the golfers; in 1917 the club moved a small frame building onto the course, added a 'piazza' (patio), and used it as a club house.<sup>8</sup> Competition between Hardwick and Barre clubs became a regular event.<sup>9</sup>

Golfing prospered, and the golfers got better; in 1925, George James sank a hole-in-one and Floyd James followed suit the next week, so both qualified for membership a "club" recognized throughout the golfing world.<sup>10</sup>

In 1979, Doris Bridgman Williams described vivid memories of growing up on the farm with the golf course: how cars filled up in the family driveway, how the vehicle-less diehards trudged up from the village on foot, how her brothers made money by selling golf balls they found in the fields and lanes around the course, and how, once, a group of out-of-town golfer playing in a tournament made the mistake of hanging their sweaters on the split-rail fence and came back to find the sweaters slobbered on, stomped on, sucked on, and chewed on by the young cattle in the adjoining field.

In 1927, members of the Abnaki Golf Club looked at their lease, which was coming up for renewal, and decided to buy enough land for their own 18-hole course.<sup>11</sup> Such a big change required new money and reorganization, so in February, 1928, the Abenaki Golf Club was dissolved and turned over its assets to the Hardwick Country Club with the intention that the Country Club would "bend all its

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efforts toward all the work already started on the new course” which was situated just east of the intersection of what is now Routes 15 and 16. The organizers had dreams of adding tennis courts, a swimming pools, and other amenities to make it a proper Country Club.<sup>12</sup> That never happened; the Hardwick Country Club closed in 1939<sup>13</sup> and today its grounds are covered with pine trees.

*Research by Lorraine Hussey; notes typed by Mary Lou Wood;  
written by Elizabeth H Dow*

1 “Social Club Serves Clams” *Hardwick Gazette*, January 6, 1916

2 Wikipedia. “History of Golf.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_golf#United\\_States\\_of\\_America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_golf#United_States_of_America) viewed 1/27/2015

3 The Gazette spelled the club’s name Abnaki and Abenaki interchangeably; this article uses the spelling used in the source

4 “Local Lumps” *Hardwick Gazette*, April 27, 1916; May 4, 1916; May 11, 1916; June 8, 1916; September 14, 1916; October 19, 1916; April 5, 1917

5 “Golf Club Notice” *Hardwick Gazette*, November 2, 1916; Doris Bridgman Williams. “Cows and Golfers Competed for Favorable Tee Times. *Hardwick Gazette*, July 17, 1979

6 “Golf Club Notice” *Hardwick Gazette*, November 2, 1916

7 “Golf Club Notice” *Hardwick Gazette*, November 2, 1916; “Local Lumps” *Hardwick Gazette*, March 29, 1917

8 “Local Lumps” *Hardwick Gazette*, April 5, 1917 and May 31, 1917; Williams

9 “Barre Golf Players Show Local Players How” *Hardwick Gazette*, September 13, 1917

10 “Abenaki Golf Member Join Hole-in-One” *Hardwick Gazette* August 27, 1925; “Another Hole-in-One” *Hardwick Gazette* September 3, 1925

11 “Golf Club Notes” *Hardwick Gazette*, September 1, 1927

12 Country Club Organizes and Elects Officers, *Hardwick Gazette*, February 16, 1928.

13 Bethany Dunbar. “There Was More to Golfing at the Hardwick Country Club than Sinking the Putt” *Hardwick Gazette*, July, 1988.



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**HARDWICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ACTIVITY REPORT 2014**

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**Building:**

After the big renovation of the old baggage room in 2012 and the addition of the ramp for the handicapped in 2013, we've had only minor maintenance to tend to in 2014. We expended the gutter system over the ramp area, and replaced some steep and dangerous steps inside the building. Our next project will involve raising money to re-do leaky windows.

**Collections:**

In 2013, thanks to a targeted fund-raising campaign, we paid Rick Norcross \$2000 for a nearly complete run of *Hardwick Gazettes* covering 1899-1956. In 2014, using largely our own operating funds augmented by some donations, we moved the papers from the high-acid cardboard boxes where they had been stored and put them into archival-quality boxes which will prolong their usefulness. They are now ready for the public to use them for historical research.

In 2007, again through special fund-raising, we purchased Ken Atkins' collection of records and artifacts from the Woodbury Granite Company, Fletcher Granite Company, Jack Hall Granite Company, and Anair Granite Company. The records came to us in a wide variety of cardboard boxes and with very little useful arrangement. After five years of work, we have re-housed everything into archival-quality folders and cartons which will prolong their usefulness. Further, we have begun the process of arranging the

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20 cubic feet of records to make them available to researchers of many types. We expect to finish processing the entire collection by 2017.

We purchased the journal kept by the first child born in Hardwick, James B. Hardwick Norris, born on September 15th, 1792. At the age of 23, James, spent \$1.00 to purchase a blank, leather-bound book from Benjamin Clark of Craftsbury. It measured 6 ½ by 8 ½ inches and contained approximately 280 pages. He used it between June, 1815, and sometime in 1859; he died in 1861. The journal served many purposes. First and foremost, he used it as a cash book for keeping track of his money, but he also included listings of his ancestors back two generations and of his own children. James became a minister around 1820, and served in various towns in Vermont and Connecticut; he used the book to record where he preached and the marriages he performed in those places.

Using metal shelving, we replaced a lot of wooden filing cabinets in which we had been keeping archival materials. Wood gives off gasses which speed paper's deterioration, and metal doesn't, so moving our collections to metal storage units and shelving will help them last for many generations to come. We did not discard the wooden cabinets, however; we now use them for non-archival materials.

Visitors:

Our guest book shows that we had 214 visitors between the first of June and the end of October. Since many people do not sign the book, we know that number represents only 60-75% of the people who came to visit. Visitors from as near as Hardwick village and as far as Scotland came for a variety of reasons, and all enjoyed what they found there.

Presentations:

At our early June annual meeting, HHS member Paul Wood gave his presentation entitled "Inventive Vermonters: A Sampling of Farm Tools and Implements." Paul brought a sampling of farm tools, implements, and artifacts invented or produced in Vermont, explained their use, uniqueness of design, and the often fascinating stories of the inventors themselves.

In mid-June we entered a display in the Vermont Historical Society's History Fair at the Tunbridge Fair Grounds. The display featured Frederick Purdy, granite sculptor, and Mario Ambrosini's monument for his daughter, Eleanora, located in the Main Street

cemetery. Bobsy Daniels handled the transportation to and from Tunbridge, and Lorraine Hussey, Mary Brochu, Linda Clow, Susan Earle, and Elizabeth Dow took turns greeting visitors.

In late August, Elizabeth Dow spoke to the entire class of 7th graders at Hazen Union. She used HHS maps and photos to give the students an overview of the development of Hardwick village. Her presentation provided context for the significance of what they would see when the students took a walking tour of various historical spots in the village immediately following the presentation.

In September, Elizabeth Dow gave a similar presentation to a group of visitors from Heartbeat, and then led them on a tour of Church Street as a way to show specific examples of things she had talked about in the presentation.

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In early October, Mary Brochu and Lorraine Hussey did a presentation on the Bailey-Hazen Road for the Saint John de Crevecoeur Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

In November, David Book gave his presentation, entitled, “A High Price to Pay, A Heavy Burden to Bear: One Family’s Civil War Story” the story of Abel Morrill, Sr., an early settler of Cabot who became a respected farmer and maple sugar producer. His story reflects the hardship and heartbreak suffered by those who lived at the time of the American Civil War.

Both Wood’s and Book’s presentations were made possible by grants from the Vermont Humanities Council.

#### Other Events:

In March we held our annual St. Patrick’s Day dinner at the American Legion – space which they donated. It was a highly successful dinner this year.

Beginning in June we had a table at the First Friday fair in Hardwick village. We were pleased with the interest people showed in the HHS and at how many joined on the spot.

#### Personnel:

Nobody gets paid for any of the work the HHS does. We logged 878 hours of volunteer labor at the Depot over the year. Since the logged hours do not include work volunteers did at home or in outside venues, the number under-represents the amount of work the volunteers have contributed to make Hardwick’s history accessible to the public. A group called Independent Sector<sup>1</sup> monitors the activities of non-profit organizations all over the country and reports that the value of volunteer time in Vermont in 2013 averaged \$21.65 per hour, meaning that volunteer time at the HHS has a value of just over \$19,000. Not too shabby!

*Elwyn J Daniels, Jr.*

1. Independent Sector’s Value of Volunteer Time [http://independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://independentsector.org/volunteer_time)



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## **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the Society is open to all upon payment of appropriate dues. (See dues schedule below.) With your membership comes a subscription to the quarterly *Hardwick Historical Society Journal*, any newsletters published, entitlement to vote at our semi-annual General Membership Meetings and 1 hour of free research. Please make checks payable to The Hardwick Historical Society.

Annual dues are: \$10.00

*A membership means 4 Journals per year.....a great gift!!*

*Manuscripts are invited: Address correspondence to the  
Hardwick Historical Society, in care of Elizabeth Dow.*