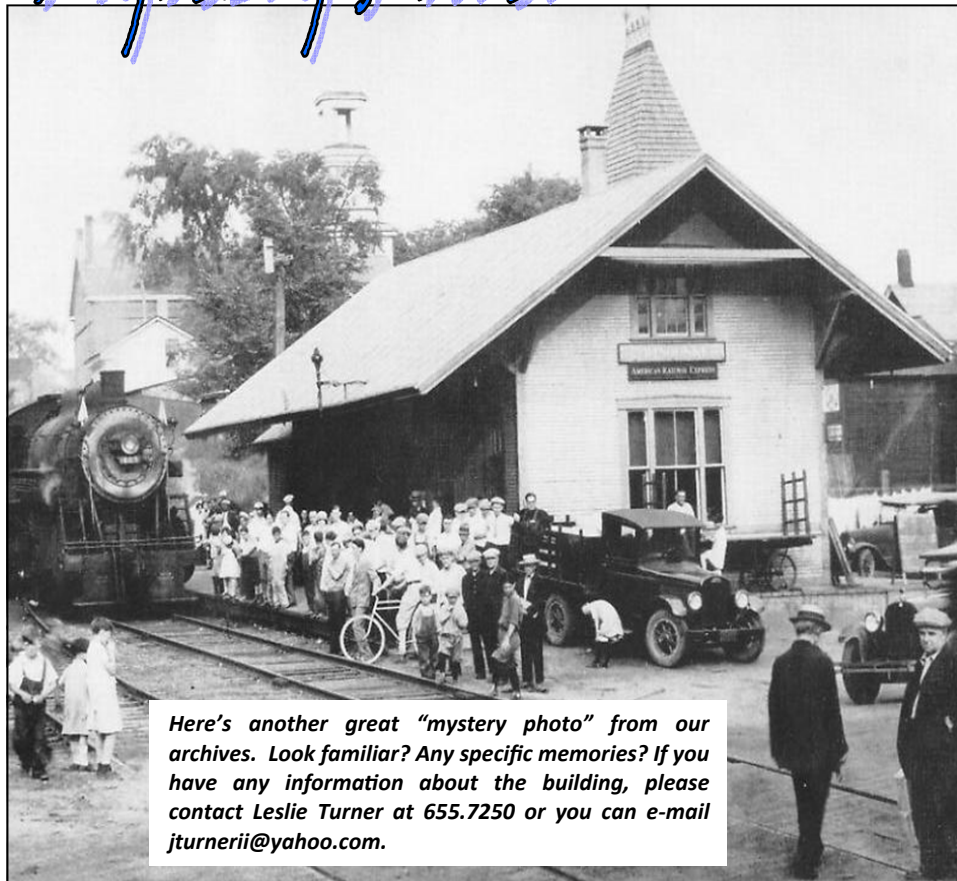


# Mystery Photo



Here's another great "mystery photo" from our archives. Look familiar? Any specific memories? If you have any information about the building, please contact Leslie Turner at 655.7250 or you can e-mail [jturnerii@yahoo.com](mailto:jturnerii@yahoo.com).



Winooski Historical Society  
Champlain Mill  
20 Winooski Falls Way  
Suite 42  
Winooski, VT 05404

## WANTED: OLD PHOTOS



Do you have any old Winooski photos (buildings, street scenes, portraits, class photos) that you'd like to donate or share (we can scan a copy) with the Winooski Historical Society? Contact: Leslie Turner at 802.655.7250 or [jturnerii@yahoo.com](mailto:jturnerii@yahoo.com)



### OFFICERS

Rita Martel  
President

Mary Ellen Fitzgerald  
Vice President

Jean DeVarney  
Secretary

Leslie Turner  
Treasurer

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to the public.

Annual Dues are:  
\$7 (Individual)  
\$10 (Family)  
\$5 (student or 65+)

See reverse for application

### MUSEUM HOURS

Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Saturday  
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Closed Sunday  
& major holidays

### CONTACT US

Phone:  
802.655.6424

E-mail:  
[winooskihistory@yahoo.com](mailto:winooskihistory@yahoo.com)

Website:  
[www.onioncity.com](http://www.onioncity.com)

# Winooski Historical Society

Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2011

## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ~ by Al Blondin



The Methodists of Winooski had their beginning about 1830-1835 with services first held in room over the Duncan's Blacksmith Shop and later in a hall upstairs in the Baxter Block on the corner of Main and East Allen Streets. The second Methodist Church of Winooski was organized about 1846 and H. H. Smith was the first pastor.

In the spring of 1859 the congregation raised subscription to build its own meeting house. Charles S. and William G. Harding, then owners of the Burlington Mills, for the sum of \$1.00 and the rights to three pews in the new church did offer quick claim deed to the Second Methodist Episcopal Church of Winooski Village and its stewards, dated October 15, 1860, a lot of land measuring 44 feet wide on the West Allen Side of the street corner and 60 feet long going south on Follett Street. The lot of land was to be used for the purpose of building a church. The Harding were given procession slips for pews #24 #35 and #39.

The first house of worship was dedicated in March of 1861; it was built of wood at a cost of \$3,500, and seated 400 people.

The society had 114 members and probationers, and the Sabbath-School 190 members. The first wedding held by the church was on June 3, 1866 and the first church wedding was held on August 16, 1881 between Dr. Charles Drury and Addie Morrison.

On December 16, 1917 a raging fire destroyed the church. The decision to rebuild was made almost before the ashes cooled. The cost of rebuilding the church was \$10,000 and on December 22, 1918 the new church was dedicated by Bishop Joseph F. Berry. In 1922 the Methodist Church acquired the bell from the defunct Congregational Church. The bell was later discovered to be the oldest such bell in Winooski and bore the inscription "Cast by Hallbrock 1849."

In the winter of 1948 the services were transferred to the basement of the church in an effort to conserve fuel and make the services more comfortable. Services were again held upstairs starting with the Easter Week Services.

By 1950 the Fireside Club at the church was organized to sponsor many of the dinners and social events in bonding with its members. Monies raised during these events was used to cover expenses as the purchase of coal for heating the church and the installing of running water into the kitchen at the church.

In 1957, the church committee made the decision to sell the property it owned on the corners of Main and West Allen Streets known as the Newell Block.

History was made in 1968 when the Methodist, Episcopal, and Evangelical United Brethren Churches all came together and were to be hereafter known as the United Methodist Episcopal Church.



(Continued from previous page)

The duties as pastor were taken over in June of 1970 by Rev, Charlene Saunders the first female pastor of the United Methodist Church of Winooski. Rev. Saunders admitted that as a female pastor, she did meet with some prejudice, and accepted these as a challenge. Through her strong faith and ability to prove herself, she was able to overcome these prejudices. In 1975, the United Methodist Church would see its second female pastor in the hiring of the Rev, Pamela Pearson, now one of only 500 women ordained as Methodist Ministers at the time. Rev. Pearson also served as assistant pastor to the United Methodist Church of Burlington. With declining membership and unable to support itself the United Methodist Church of Winooski weighed the possibility of closing or turning over control to United Methodist Church of Burlington.



Finding itself unable to support a full time pastor, Rev. James D, Clark took over as part time pastor. Over the next few years under Rev. Clark the membership began to rise again. In January of 1978 the much loved and respected Rev. Chester Simmons, who had served as pastor from 1954-1959 passed away at the age of 80 years.

Pastor Clark, in 1997, after serving the church for 22 years retired and Rev. Robert Purvee was chosen to succeed him. Pastor Purvee gave his first sermon in the United Methodist Church of Winooski on September 28, 1997. The spirit of giving and doing for your fellow Christian is very much alive and well in this church, even with its fallen membership. The strength of its members make it a very active church in the community.

\*\*\* A complete copy of the churches history may be obtained by contacting Al Blondin at the Winooski Historical Society or direct by email to ALalfie@comcast.net.



## Mystery Photo Revealed!

The Mystery Picture in the Spring Newsletter was that of the Old Mill Boarding House. Built in 1840 by the Burlington Woolen Company, housed immigrant workers and young people off the farms, that worked in the Mill. Most of the occupants were young girls: single and between the ages of 13 through 18. These girls worked as spinner's weavers and doffers. They lived under the supervision of a House-Master. They were awakened by 5 AM, fed breakfast, and would arrive at the Mills an hour later. They often worked an 10 to 15 hour day in the Mill. They were under strict rules with lights out by 10 PM. These workers would have their bed and board deducted from the

monthly pay check, and was paid the balance in cash. The room was reported to be very large and spacious and clean; although there would sometimes be a complaint of the smelly outhouses.

The harsh conditions and the lack of Housing in the area made these boarding house necessary for the young workers in the Mill. By the turn of the Century with more workers available and the housing situation under control, the need no longer existed for these Boarding Houses. They were sold, and later, turned into apartments.

In 1947 Julie and Phil Melanson purchased the Building and turned the East end of it into a Cafe known as The Mill Cafe. Along with the local trade, the Cafe was quite frequently patronized by legions of St. Michael's College and University of Vermont Students. The Mill Cafe was soon the place to go in the area for local College Students.

Al Blondin recalls one time, while vacationing in Maracibo, Venezuela, running into a tour guide who asked where he was from. When Al told him Colchester, he related how he attended St, Michael's College in Colchester, and asked if the Mill Cafe was still in operation in Winooski. So I guess you could add that the Mill Cafe was well publicized. The Melansons continued to operate the Mill Cafe until their retirement in 1982, and the building was sold to Stephen L. Hard and Dr. E. Douglas McSweeney, Jr. The building then saw an extensive renovation and remodeling effort requiring two years. Much of the lovely Oak and Mahogany woodwork extracted from the old Bishop's Home in Burlington was used in the remodeling of the Mill. The building was then listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Mill was again sold, in 1987, to John and Linda Chan, and was turned into the family establishment known as The Peking Duck. The Peking Duck has received many Reader Choice Awards from the Burlington Free Press over the years. Today, the Peking Duck, with its marvelous atmosphere is often chosen as the best informal dining area, and offers Banquet Service for up to 100 for meetings, wedding receptions, rehearsal dinners and private parties.

~ by Al Blondin



## WALK AROUND WINOOSKI WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

~ by Chris Magistrale, Winooski School District



Students at the Winooski Middle School recently finished reading the novel Counting on Grace by Elizabeth Winthrop. The novel takes place in a small town in Southern Vermont, the year is 1910, and the protagonist of the story is 14 year-old Grace Forcier, who because of financial constraints is forced to give up school in order to work in the textile mill. Teachers at Winooski Middle School sought to connect the factory life illustrated in Counting on Grace with Winooski's historic past; the narrative provided the students with a first-hand look at what life was like in the early 20th century for child laborers. In light of their experience with this novel, middle school teachers made arrangements with the Historical Society of Winooski, and approximately 50 middle school students (grades 6, 7 and 8), embarked on a "Historical Walking Tour of Winooski" on May 26, 2011.

The tour began in the Champlain Mill where students observed factory equipment, topographic maps of Winooski, and pictures from the working Mill era. Leaving the museum, students split into 2 groups embarking on a walk around Winooski's 1.2 sq miles. Highlights of the tour included: St. Francis Xavier Church, St. Stephens, the Methodist Church, the Winooski Block, and, of course the infamous Champlain and Woolen Mills.

Upon conclusion of the tour, the Historical Society generously offered a \$150 to finance a contest (50\$ per grade) for students to write reflective essays on the experience. We spent a couple class periods in June to produce these essays. To help encourage written expression, students were asked to reflect on Winooski's history in the hypothetical persona of historical reporter. Many of the students focused their thesis on the injustices of child labor during the late 19th - early 20th century. Essays were due on the last day of school (June 15th), which allowed students a little over two weeks to complete final drafts.

After collecting and reviewing all essays, three winners were selected and awarded \$50 prizes. The winners were: Rainbow Chen (6th grade), Hannah Little (7th grade), and Arnold Vainqueur (8th grade). All three of the selected essays will be on display in the Champlain Mill starting early next month (7/2011). Special thanks need to be acknowledged to the Winooski Historical Society for their recognizing the value of student experience and expression, and the importance of uniting as a means for community. Specific thanks to Rita Martel for her kindness and willingness to work with students and teachers from the Winooski Middle School. Also special thanks to Linda Howe, opening the Methodist Church and gave a brief history of the church. Linda treated students to energy bars and a drink of water on a brutally hot summer day. Please stop by the Champlain Mill where all the student essays will be on display, to observe the quality work of our students from the Winooski Community.



## Winooski Historical Society

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues \$7 (individual), \$10 (family), or \$5 (student and 65+) are payable to:

**Winooski Historical Society**  
c/o Leslie Turner  
119 Bellevue St.  
Winooski, VT 05404

Please note: Any question regarding your membership call Leslie (802.655.7250)