

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 e-mail jturnerii@yahoo.com.

Consider becoming a member of the Winooski Historical Society and receive the quarterly newsletter with articles on the rich history of Winooski. Please see application on reverse.



The Winooski Historical Society Museum will be moving in a few weeks to the third level across from the Mill Museum. Until then the museum will be closed but if you need information please call Al Blondin at 878.3861 or Rita at 655.1846.



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



Winooski Historical Society

Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2013

FRANCIS LECLAIR HOUSE



Francis LeClair Jr. came to Winooski with his father's family in 1828 at the age of ten. He embarked upon a mercantile career in 1843, establishing a general store at the corner of Canal and Barlow Streets. LeClair prospered in business and by 1850 was one of the leading merchants at the Falls. He foresaw the future expansion of Winooski and by judicious investments became one of the largest real estate holders in the village.

It was in 1849 that he began his extensive real estate dealings. Much of his future energy was aimed at

providing homes for the families of French-Canadian mill operatives. In connection with this activity he began, in 1873, the operation of a brick yard on Malletts Bay Avenue at the site now occupied by the O'Brien Community Center, 32 Malletts Bay Avenue.

By the year 1875 LeClair had erected and sold or rented 75 brick houses in Winooski. They were designed for low and moderate income families and he marketed them on easy terms thus giving many mill workers a chance to own their own home and avoiding at the same time the architectural evils of the huge tenements still to be seen in Massachusetts mill towns. Many of LeClair's small brick houses are still standing in Winooski, rendering good service after more than a century.

By mid-1860 LeClair had accumulated a comfortable fortune. In 1866 he sold his house on the east side of Weaver Street, just above the railroad. On the opposite side of the road, he owned a fine large lot with a good view over the village and down to the river. On this he built himself a handsome new house in the Italianate "villas" had been out of fashion for nearly ten years in more stylish areas.

The house is large and formally oriented with two stories and cupola on top of a hipped roof. Other Italianate features include the overhanging eaves supported by coupled brackets, tall windows and doors capped with headings that stand out in bold relief against the brick wall. The cupola, with its eight round-arched windows and dentil molding trim is topped by a scrolled finial. Chimneys on either side of the cupola are tall, built up for safety and to prevent smoke from interfering with the view. A long veranda paralleling the south side of the house takes advantage of the sun and river view. This porch employs the bracketed slender square columns so typical of Italianate houses.

Following LeClair's death in 1889, the house was occupied by his son-in-law, Augustus A. Graves. At present it is the property of (RVA) Regular Veterans Association.

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

Please see
 back page
 of newsletter

CONTACT US

E-mail:
winooskihistory@yahoo.com

Website:
www.onioncity.com



Mystery Photo Revealed!

I think we stumped a lot of people in our last mystery photo, but one person out there responded with the following story

We heard from Jacqueline (Mercure) Jones from Charlotte, VT who writes the following. The mystery photo is that of my grandfather Albert Millers Tydol Filling Station locate on the corner of Steven and Main St in Winooski.

Albert and Josephine Miller opened this small gas filling station in Winooski in 1925. Albert Miller was born in Lyon Mountain, NY and Josephine Gauthier was born in Winooski, VT. They were married at St. Francis Xavier Church in Winooski on June 3, 1916. They had four children: Jeanette (Miller) Mercure, Arthur Miller, Rita (Miller) Pecor, and Dorothy (Miller) LeClair.

Albert Miller was the Tydol dealer in the area for 24 years, according to the National Publication of the "Flying A News." His name was synonymous with the quality products, quick and efficient service, shrewd promotion, and friendliness. Albert and his father Joseph Miller operated the Gas/Service Station and Convenience Store where bread, milk, soda, ice cream cones, cigarettes, candy and snacks were sold. In addition to selling gas, the A&M Tydol station was a full-service station.

The first expansion of the gas filling station was in 1937 and a second expansion in 1946. Upon Albert Miller's retirement in 1950, the Station was leased to his son-in-law, John Mercure until Miller's death in 1957. At that time the property was sold to run by Mr. John Blair.

The Station was a frequent gathering place for many of the local where serious discussion among young and old took place. Politics, world affairs and the merits of the Yankees, Red Sox, New York Giants and Montreal Canadians were topics of the day.

The Station in later years was sold to and operated by Mr. Blair's son Michael who in 2005 sold it to Sisters and Brothers Corp. Mark Snider then obtained a lease on the building.



Al Blondin recently won an Individual Award of Merit from the Vermont Historical Society for his contributions to the Winooski Historical Society. Mark Hudson, the Vermont Historical Society Executive Director, presents the merit award to Al.

This year, Al produced a 90-minute video with 92 photos of Winooski and narrated history of Winooski from 1770-2010. Copies are available at the Winooski City Clerk's Office or from Al Blondin at 878-3861 or via e-mail at alalfie@comcast.net.



Blast from the Past...

Vintage article from The Burlington Free Press, 1910:

Monday, August 22, 1910

PARK FOR WINOOSKI

Streets and Building Lots Also on the Recently Opened Franklin Heights
Franklin Heights is the name of a plot of ground to be divided into streets and building lots. This plot consists of 25 acres of level ground just north of the Winooski Heights, and gets its name from Franklin Street which leads direct to this land from the Porter Screen Manufacturing Company office. The hill at the upper end of Franklin Street will be cut down. E. Gamelin has purchased a piece of land bordering on Franklin Street and has already started building. The cement walls are completed. Mr. Gamelin getting the water by digging only six feet and attaching a pump. Hood Street is another street which runs direct from Hood's Crossing up to a little grove. H.G. Hawthorne, the proprietor of Franklin Heights, intends to furnish with benches and otherwise improve as a picnic ground and public park, which will be opened to the general public.

(Note: The Gamelin property mentioned above is pictured on our newsletter masthead, second, from the left).

WANTED

OLD PHOTOS

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





UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, January 20, 2013

Winooski Historical Society Annual Meeting

Winooski Senior Center - 12:00 p.m.

The meeting will start at 12:00 p.m. following the monthly breakfast sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and Daughters of Isabella. Robert Picher will be interviewed discussing his career in Winooski and in Montpelier. Bob practiced law in Winooski and was Clerk of the House in Montpelier for many years.



Sunday, March 24, 2013

Video - 2008 Arlington National Cemetery narrated by Al Blondin

Winooski Senior Center - 12:00 p.m.

REMINDER:
 Annual membership dues are due for 2013. You may want to consider updating them.
 Call Rita (655.1846) for any membership questions.

Winooski Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Amount _____

E-mail _____ Date _____

2013 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) or Rita Martel (802.655.1846)