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MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to the public.
 Annual Dues are:
 \$4 (Individual)
 \$5 (Family)
 \$3 (student or 65+)
 See reverse for application

MUSEUM HOURS

Monday - Friday
 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 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
 Website:
www.onioncity.com



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

Winooski Historical Society

Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2010

RICHARD MANUFACTURING COMPANY ~ by Al Blondin

The Richard Manufacturing Company had its beginning in 1911 when Eugene Richard, along with his brother Omer opened up a woodworking shop in a garage behind their family home on Main Street (current location of the Winooski Fire Department). The brothers manufactured screen doors, medicine and sanitary cabinets and school desks. Their woodworking talents were quickly recognized and the business grew very fast and by 1913 they had a regular working force of 15 men and officially became the Richard Manufacturing Company. The Sanitary Towel cabinet they were making at the time was their most sought-after product.

By 1919 the demand for their products made expansion necessary. They purchased a piece of land on Malletts Bay Avenue next door to the freight depot and built a three-story 40 x 100 wooden building to house their office and shop area and added another 10 people to their work force.



In September of 1922 the Richard Manufacturing Company lost one of its founders in the death of Omer Richard at the young age of 41 but the business was carried on by Eugene. In 1923 the company extended its line of products to include caskets and a few wooden hearses. In 1927 a large addition was built surrounding the original building and the work force neared 200. The product line grew with the expansion and the addition of one Mr. Albert Whittekind, master carver and now included bedroom and dining room furniture and cabinets for the Philco Radio Corporation to house their line of radios.

In 1934 the Richard Manufacturing Company changed its name to Vermont Furniture Company and registered its trademark maple leaf inscribed with the words "Solid Rock Maple made in Vermont for generations". The product line was expanded to now include furniture to fit every room in the house and with the employment of the service of Mr. Mario Clavarino another master carver. A penthouse studio was built on the top of the Vermont Furniture Company building to be the office and work area exclusively for Mr. Clavarino to create and to provide a place to rest. Mr. Clavarino was dedicated to his job and seldom left the premises.

As the work force reached up to 300 people, Vermont Furniture Company became one of the largest employers in the city. It was at this time that shop superintendent Arthur Alarie and machinist Leonard Dubuc fabricated a multiple-spindle carving machine, powered by a bicycle, capable of producing eight copies at a time from a single original. One of the master carvers would create an original that would be mounted on a machine bed and a stylus would trace the pattern's every outline and contour and guide the eight cutters to follow the same motion over the surface of the eight blanks. The duplicates were then removed from the machine and finished with additional hand carvings and sanded smooth.

In 1946 Mr. Richard leased the space, machinery, and company to a group of investors out of New Jersey. Mr. Richard remained as president and maintained an office at the Malletts Bay location till his death in 1966. Upon his death Mr. Richard's daughters, Priscilla and Bertha, took a more active role in the everyday

~ Continued on back page



Mystery Photo

Here's another great "mystery photo" from our archives. Look familiar? Ring any bells? If you have any information about the building, please contact Leslie Turner at 655.7250 or you can e-mail jturnerii@yahoo.com.

Winooski Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____ Amount _____
 E-mail _____ Date _____

Annual dues \$4 (individual), \$5 (family), or \$3 (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)

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, November 7th, 2010



When World War II broke out, Hilda Danaher was a young farm girl from Malletts Bay Avenue, who had just completed Nurse's Training. Please join us as she recounts her story of being a World War II Army Nurse and what that meant to a young girl from Vermont.

2:00 p.m. at the Senior Center.

Saturday, December 4th, 2010

Winooski Historical Society Meeting

**11:00 a.m. at the Winooski Historical Society Museum,
Champlain Mill**

WINOOSKI WINKS **...a blast from the past**

The following excerpts were gleaned from the monthly Winooski paper originally published in the early to mid-1970s.

Dennis Scanlon reminds you that if you think political promises are bad now, you should have heard them before the invention of the tape recorder. (October 1972)

Bob Lavigne states that he would love to go deer hunting but doesn't drink or play cards. (November 1973)

Pete Maynard points out that the Winooskiite who was the first to mow his lawn for the last time in the fall will be the last to mow is his lawn for the first time next spring. (November 1973)

~ Continued from front

business of the company. The company continued to manufacture its fine line of furniture and gain world-wide recognition and with the railroad siding was able to expedite their products worldwide.

On July 25, 1973, the Vermont Furniture Company burned to the ground, in a devastating blaze. The fire started in the lacquer room and quickly consumed the entire plant. Firemen from as far away as Plainfield and Swanton were on hand as part of the 300 firemen there to assist in fighting the blaze. Many firemen who fought the blaze said they were hampered in their efforts by the lack of water pressure to fight the fire. With the lack of water pressure and the knowledge that saving the business was no longer possible, the firemen turned their efforts into saving the houses that surrounded the business. The fire could not have come at a worst time, as Winooski was in the middle its Model City rebuilding program and employment was already very high. The fire at Vermont Furniture Company put 250 – 300 people out of a job. Through the years since this fire, many different businesses have occupied this space and the current tenant of the space is the Winooski Community Center.



FANNY ALLEN HOSPITAL ~ by Al Blondin

Congratulations! My hat is off to those of you who said "Why that's the old Fanny Allen Hospital". If you were able to figure this out, then I hope you are already a member of the Winooski Historical Society, but if you're not, then you should be.

The property, where this building is located, once belonged to General Ethan Allen. In 1829, this property was the property of one Arad Merrill and family; along with 60 plus acres of land adjoining. Mr. Arad Merrill built a hotel on the property in 1830, Merrill's Hotel. In 1849, Mr. Merrill's son, A.P. Merrill, bought the property and continued to run the Hotel and Merrill's Tavern. Upon the death of Mr. A.P. Merrill in December 1877, the property was sold Frank J. Dunbar who changed the name to

the Dunbar Hotel. The Dunbars owned and operated a horse race track across the street. They added a large barn to house horses and other farm animals. This was also the time of building Fort Ethan Allen. Thirty-four of the workers were guests of the Dunbar Hotel as they worked at the building of Fort Ethan Allen. A regular boarder was offered breakfast and a filled lunch pail with the room. A large hall, at the Hotel served as a ballroom for many major events. Many of these events would end up with a meal served at midnight. To accomplish this, the Hotel Staff would retire after clean-up of the evening meal and rise again, a few hours later, to serve this midnight meal.

In 1892, ownership of the Dunbar Hotel became the pride of Michael and Ann Kelly. For years, Bishop Michaud had sought property to have a hospital in the area and he contacted the Kelly's with the idea. The Kellys were in favor of the idea, and on March 22, 1894, gave the title to the Dunbar Hotel over to Bishop Michaud. The deed read that the Hotel was to be used as a hospital and ready for use in May of 1895. Construction and renovations were rapid. The hospital was officially opened on October 15, 1894. The Kellys, also, added a clause that they should both be given living quarters free of charge, in the newly renovated Hospital till such time of their passing.

Bishop Michaud contacted the Sisters at Hotel-Dieu in Montreal about the proposed Hospital. He asked them if they would be willing to manage it. The Sisters decided to accept the Bishop's offer. The decision was made to name the Hospital after one of their Sisters, Fanny Allen, daughter of Ethan Allen. Her personal devotion to St. Joseph had led her first to join the Sisters, and spend the last years of her life as a member of their Order.

Much more has been written on the history of the Fanny Allen Hospital. A more complete history of the Fanny Allen hospital is available at the Winooski Historical Society or by contacting Al Blondin (878-3861) or by email Alafie@comcast.net



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