

## Winter Presentation Celebrates Maple in Vermont

Anthropologist documents local stories about  
“the greatest food in the world”

By Cheryl Casey

Why study maple? The attendees for January’s program had plenty of responses to that question. “It’s fun doing it the old-fashioned way!” insisted one audience member. “Maple syrup is a harbinger of spring!” piped up another. “It’s the greatest food in the world!” proclaimed a third.

Dr. Mike Lange, anthropologist and folklorist at Champlain College, explained that all of these reasons and more were why he was compelled to explore the powerful meanings of maple and how multiple, often contradictory meanings co-exist. Dr. Lange based his presentation on his recently-published book, *The Meanings of Maple, and the extensive interviews he conducted with those doing maple sugaring all around Vermont.*

As part of his presentation, Dr. Lange passed around different

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## WHS to Oversee Community Room Update

By Cheryl Casey

Earlier this year, Revitalizing Waterbury awarded the Train Station Community Room refresh to the proposal submitted by the Waterbury Historical Society Curator and Board of Directors. Revitalizing Waterbury and WHS are partnering to fund the room’s redesign, currently underway.

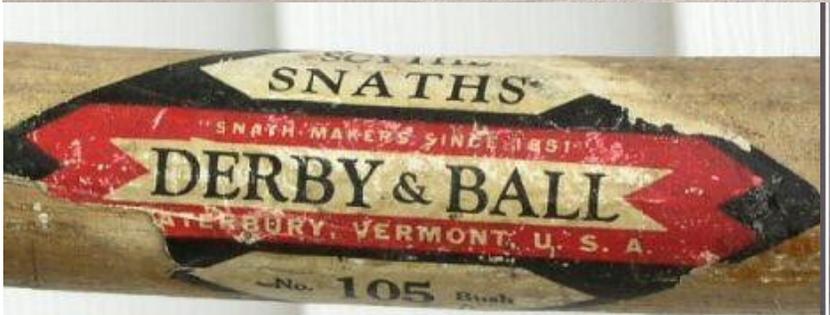
WHS Curator Jack Carter is overseeing the project. The room’s new look will incorporate the mural by local artist Sarah-Lee Terrat that once hung in Arvad’s Pub & Grill, a fixture on the Village’s Main Street for 28 years.



**Dr. Mike Lange of Champlain College speaks to WHS about maple symbolism and the meanings of maple held by Vermonters.**

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**Clockwise from top left: The Derby, Ball, & Edwards logo on a baseball bat; A 1930s advertisement for Derby, Ball & Edwards bats; An antique wood snath made by Derby & Ball.**

**DERBYMADE BATS**

*"I Choose Jack!"*



Funny thing about Jack. Last week he was the last boy to be chosen and now he's always first. His Dad bought him a Derbymade Bat and Jack says, "It feels so good and the ball goes farther."

His Dad tells him that it is because the Derbymade Bats have Montan Wax around the cells. He says its a new process which makes the Derbymade Bat the best.

Some Derbymade Bat models are EYE FOCUSED which helps the eye.

*The Massachusetts Institute of Technology in testing MONTAN treated ash reported it stronger and snappier than untreated ash.*



**Derby, Ball, Edwards Corp.**

Sales Office, 75 Federal St., Boston, Mass. Factory, Waterbury, Vt.

Derby, Ball, Edwards Corp., 75 Federal St., Boston, Mass. BLS  
 Please send me your booklet on "How to Add Points to The Batting Average" and also Wally Berger's story, "How I Broke In"  
 My Name is \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Derby & Ball Artifacts Added to WHS Collection

**By Jack Carter**

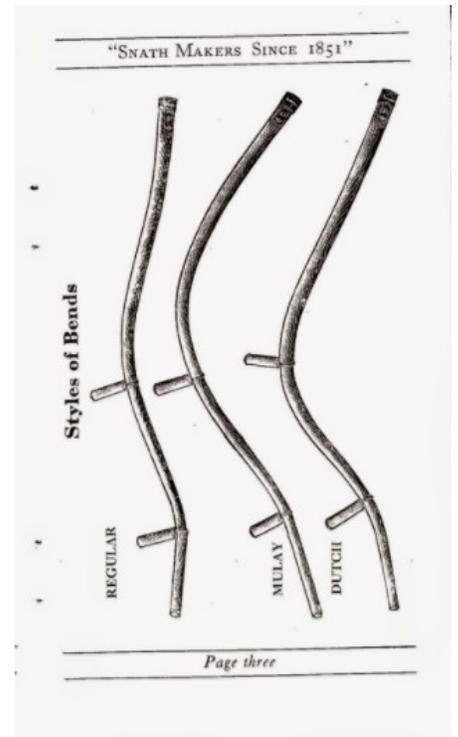
Last summer, the Waterbury Historical Society received a donation of several Derby & Ball artifacts and posters from an anonymous donor. Derby & Ball is an example of a manufacturing company that changed with the times and adapted to new markets when their original product was no longer in demand.

The company was founded by Albert Derby and they started manufacturing scythe snaths in 1857. In 1882 Franklin P. Ball who manufactured scythe snaths in Springfield, Vermont since 1851, joined the firm, which was renamed Derby & Ball. The company had two locations – one in Bellows Falls and the other in Waterbury. The Waterbury facility specialized in manufacturing the wooden (primarily willow) handles for the various scythes.

In 1920, the Edward and Edwards Co. merged with Derby & Ball, forming Derby, Ball & Edwards Corp. In 1933 the company was reorganized as Derby & Ball, Inc. That year they started manufacturing baseball bats in addition to scythes. The baseball bats were made in Waterbury for two or three years until the bat business was sold to the makers of the Louisville Slugger.

The company would last into the early 1960s but not as a manufacturer of scythes or even baseball bats. Recreational skiing started becoming popular in the years before World War II, and purely by accident the company started to make skis in 1934. In the 1950s they started to produce water skis in various sizes and models.

Today, the factory's location off of South Main Street on Chef Express Lane/Way is now home to the former Vermont Snowboard Company and the former Vermont Liberty Tea Company.



**A page from a Derby, Ball, & Edwards catalog showing the various styles of scythes offered by the company.**

## Donations

In memory of Ed Steele—\$300

Judith Gale (Raleigh, NC), in memory of Dr. Don DeForest Grout & Angie Moody Wilkins Grout—\$100

Gordon & Theresa Wood (Waterbury) —\$50

R. Allyn & Sandy Lewis (Waterbury)—\$10

Herschell Murray (Waterbury)—\$10

## WHS thanks the following business and individuals for their support in our annual appeal:

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# Meeting Minutes, January 24, 2018

Steele Community Room, 7pm—  
Respectfully Submitted by Jack Carter,  
Secretary

Present – 28 members and members of the public

Because of illness of various officers and board members it was decided to forego the business meeting and proceed to the program.

Betty Jones – Program Committee Chair spoke that the April meeting program has not been decided as the committee has not had a chance to meet.

Betty introduced Cheryl Casey who then introduced Dr. Michael Lange who is a professor of anthropology and folklore at Champlain College, specializing in cultural identity. Dr. Lange's interesting presentation drew from his many interviews with Vermont sugar makers as published in his most recent book, *Meanings of Maple*. Maple sugaring has changed over the years from the days of wooden/metal sap buckets collected by hand using teams of horses or oxen to line collecting and industrial boiling of the sap. There were sugar makers present and Dr. Lange took questions and experiences from the audience. The program was well received.

Refreshments were served by the Program Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM

Next meeting will be April 25<sup>th</sup> and will be our Annual Meeting – location, time and program to be determined.

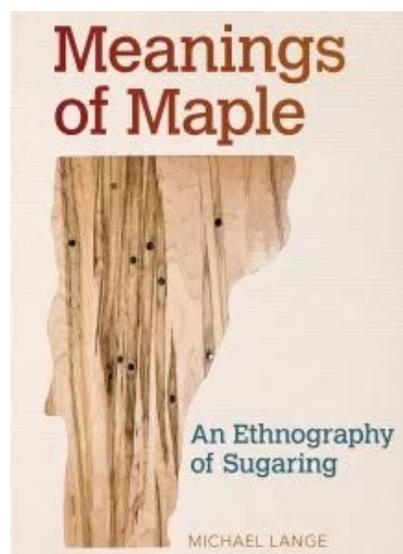
## The Meanings of Maple

*Continued from page 1*

maple syrup bottles to compare how the images printed on those bottles conveyed different stories about the meaning of maple. Images of sugaring in Vermont commonly relied on wooden buckets and no tubing - emphasizing the intense human process involved in the endeavor. Other images displayed galvanized pails and tubing, moving the meanings closer to a sense of the role of technology in the sugaring process.

The presentation was lively and interactive. Many in the audience chimed in with their own memories of, and experiences with, maple sugaring.

The Waterbury Historical Society has added Dr. Lange's book to its library collection in order to preserve the many stories from area sugar makers.



### **NEXT MEETING AND PROGRAM—April 25, 2018**

## **Celebration Meal, Annual Business Meeting, and Commemorative Program: A Look Back at 60 Years of WHS American Legion, Stowe Street, Waterbury**

5:30 P.M. **Roast Beef Dinner BY RESERVATION ONLY** - \$15/person

6:30 P.M. Annual Business Meeting and Elections

7:00 P.M. Commemorative program

Dinner reservations are *not* required for those wishing only to attend the business meeting/program.

Reservations can be made by contacting Betty Jones at [bbtravelers@aol.com](mailto:bbtravelers@aol.com) or 802-244-8089. The deadline for reservations is April 20, 2018. Dinner payments can be made onsite.

# Waterbury Voices From the Past: Recollections of WWII and the China-Burma-India Theater

## Close Calls

By Elizabeth (Graves) Woodmansee

There were at least three from Waterbury Center in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater in WWII, one of whom was my brother, Herbert Graves.

One story from before he was drafted: Herby was in the VT Guard and part of his training was to patrol behind the State Hospital. While he was patrolling, he heard screaming. Herby looked up and an inmate was in the window, shouting, "I'll kill him! Let me out! I'll kill him!" My brother said he kept up his patrol, but every time he went by that window, he was double-timing.

Herby went into the service, and part of his training was in LA learning electrical work. He and another from that training, John Stiles, were sent to the CBI. They were based with the British. They were flown over the Hump (the eastern end of the Himalayan mountains) in a glider to help set up communication lines for the British.

I recall one story in particular: The British were having their tea when a Japanese plane attacked. Herby and John jumped into a jeep and began shooting at the plane.

There are more stories, but those who could tell them are no more.

## From India to China, 1942

By Calvin Dow

Nobody is perfect -- not even the super genius who created the planet Earth. He or she had a bad day when they programmed the brain of the Emperor Hirohito of Japan and Adolf Hitler of Germany.

In the year 1941, they decided to conquer our planet. Hirohito would rule the eastern hemisphere and the Pacific Ocean. Hitler would take the Western Hemisphere and the Atlantic Ocean. World War Two was declared.

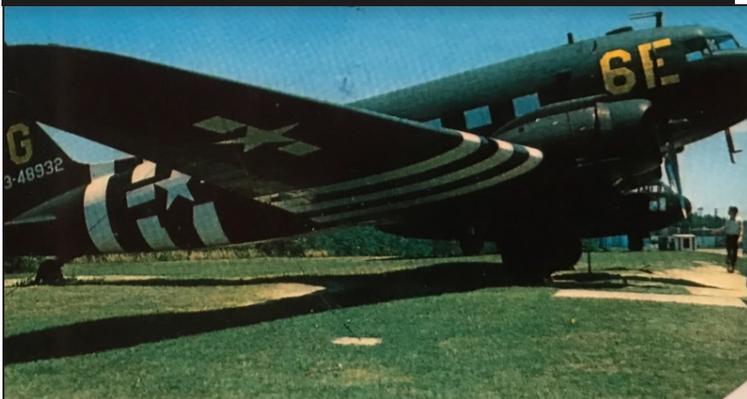
That is why we now find our Vermont Hero, non-commissioned officer Sgt. Calvin Coolidge Rodney Dow, about to help win the war in China in 1942, after one year winning the war in India. The land route from India to China, through Burma, called the Burma Road, was now occupied by the Japanese Army in addition to most of China.

The only way we could send war supplies and fighter planes was to fly them over the Himalayan Mountains. That strategy was restrictive and dangerous. So at the same time we were building a new road, called the Ledo Road.

This new road was a monumental engineering challenge through steep mountains, monsoon rains, and the bombs that were dropped by Japanese airplanes. It was finished just before the war ended. So the generous Americans, who give money to the poor countries of the world, gave the Ledo Road to China, Burma, and India, and went home to celebrate the end of the five year WWII.

As Mr. Shakespeare said, "What fools these mortals be!"

**Below left: A C-47 troop carrier aircraft that would have flown servicemen like Herby and Sgt. Dow over the Himalayan Mountains in the CBI Theater of WWII. Below right: A view of the Himalayan's on one of those flights. Photos courtesy of Calvin Dow.**



# Featured Figure: Florilla Perkins Ames

## Vermont's Longest-Living Citizen

By Cheryl Casey

This spring marks the 107th birthday of Mrs. Florilla Perkins Ames, one of Vermont's longest-living citizens. Florilla was born on March 17, 1911, to Arthur and Ida Perkins. Growing up on the family farm on Barnes Hill in Waterbury Center, Florilla learned to sew from her mother, joined other children on sleigh rides to school in winter, paid a dime to ride the electric trolley between Waterbury and Stowe, and ate a healthy diet of vegetables, milk, and poultry from the farm.

After elementary school at the Seminary Building on Hollow Road, Florilla attended Waterbury High School and graduated in 1928. She received her teaching certificate from Lyndon Institute and spent the next 10 years teaching in Waterbury and Derby Line. For two of those years, Florilla taught in a one-room schoolhouse on Loomis Hill in Waterbury Center.

While teaching in Derby Line in 1928, Florilla Perkins met Darrell Ames, and they were married later that year. Darrell's work took them to Massachusetts for the next couple of decades, but they returned in 1960 to care for Florilla's ailing mother, in the very same shingled farmhouse in which Florilla grew up. Florilla never left. Her mother lived another 25 years, and Darrell passed away in 2008 after 70 years of marriage.

Florilla has lived through enough history for two lifetimes, including 19 U.S. presidents, the invention of arguably three of the most significant communication media in human history (radio, television, and the Internet), the Great Depression, floods, epidemics, a couple of world wars, and the monumental changes that time has wrought

upon her beloved Waterbury community.

Florilla's mind is still sharp - and a treasure trove of Waterbury memories. In newspaper interviews, Florilla has recounted her memories of the Spanish flu in 1918, when everyone in her family was sick at the same time. "There was a man at the foot of the hill who wasn't sick," Florilla told the Waterbury Record in 2011. "He milked our cows and kept the fires going at our house. If it hadn't been for him, I don't know what would have happened to us. Back then, there was more of a sense of community."

The 1927 Flood is also indelibly etched into Florilla's memories. She was a senior at Waterbury High School and living with friends on Randall Street in the Village - on account of Barnes Hill being so far away for the limited transportation methods at the time. Folks were knocking on doors to warn others in the community that the Winooski waters were rising, Florilla recalled to writer David Goodman in 2007. A gentleman carried her on his back to the High School, where she stayed with hundreds of other townfolk until the waters receded and the road home was passable again.

Florilla celebrated her 107th birthday from the very same farmhouse she has been living in for most of her life. Except for a touch of macular degeneration, she is still able to live by herself. Someone comes to clean the house, but she mostly does her

own cooking. Neighbors might drop off a dinner once or twice a week, and she is rarely at a loss for company. Her secret to living so long? Florilla claims she hasn't a clue.



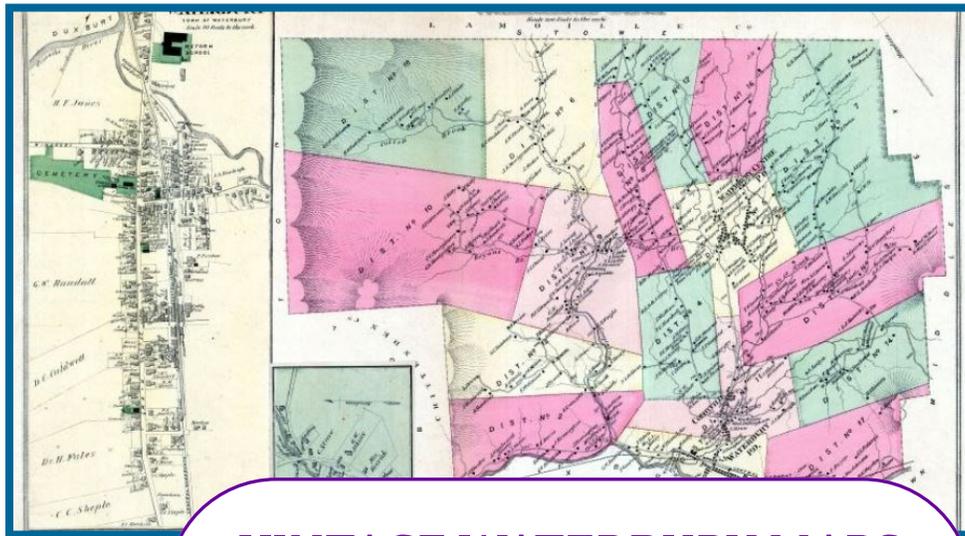
**Florilla Ames, at home in Waterbury Center**

### SUBMIT CONTENT

Your stories, notes, and pictures are always welcome!

To submit content for an upcoming issue, email the editor at [dulcinea28@gmail.com](mailto:dulcinea28@gmail.com) or send by post to: Dr. Cheryl Casey, 1389 Kneeland Flats Rd., Waterbury Center, VT 05677.

Quarterly submission deadlines: February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15



## VINTAGE WATERBURY MAPS FOR SALE

Due to a generous donation from a member, the Historical Society is offering for sale reproductions of vintage maps of Waterbury:

- ◇ **1873 Beers Atlas, Town map** with colored with school districts and side bar Village Street and Mill Village map, 24 1/2"W x 15 3/4"H, **\$25.00**.
- ◇ **1884 Beck and Pauli Litho**, black and white Waterbury Village map. 23"W x 17 1/2"H, **\$20.00**.

Both maps are available at the History Center Museum, 28 North Main Street, Waterbury.

## AARP presents FRAUDWATCH: COMPUTER FRAUD April 30 at 6:00 p.m.—Waterbury Public Library

Local AARP volunteer Bill April, in coordination with Judi Byron, will present key information about scams related to your computer that are perpetrated through emails, pop-up messages, and phone calls. The program will demonstrate with examples from folks who have unknowingly given away thousands of dollars and distribute correct information from state and federal agencies about the latest scams in Vermont.



**For more information, contact: Bill April, [hiker@gmavt.net](mailto:hiker@gmavt.net)**



**Donations Welcome** - We are a community organization that deeply appreciates the support and interest of our community. You can donate online at our website below.

### **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

\$10 per person

\$15 per family (couple and children under 18)

*(Check the mailing label on your newsletter to see when your membership expires.)*

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