

WOMEN of MANCHESTER

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women in the United States the right to vote. It was the culmination of over a hundred years of struggle against the legal and societal constraints women faced that had not changed since the founding of the country. In honor of this celebration, we hope you will enjoy a short introduction to some very important women in the history of Manchester, Vermont.



During the spring of 1776, Abigail Adams famously remarked in a letter to her husband “remember the ladies,” as he and his fellow patriots were defining the new government they would establish. Her full comment is much more forceful, and even prescient.

I long to hear that you have declared an independancy—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If perticular care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.



Mary Orvis Marbury

THE DAUGHTER OF CHARLES ORVIS, founder of today’s Orvis Company, Mary Orvis Marbury graduated from Burr and Burton in 1872, and went to work helping her father run his fly-fishing rod and tackle business. By this time the manufacturing of artificial flies had become a specialty of the company. Mary organized a group of women who became expert fly-tiers, further enhancing the reputation of the company. In 1883, Orvis published *Fishing with the Fly* which included 149 color illustrations of salmon, trout and bass flies. Mary’s 1892 book, *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*, a long treatise on flies and fly tying, won acclaim at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago and is today a valuable collector’s item.



Mary Campbell Munson

A GREAT-NIECE OF JOSIAH BURTON, Mary came to Manchester from her home in Illinois because she wanted to attend Burr and Burton Seminary, the school her family had been so instrumental in founding. Following graduation in 1880, she attended Smith College for two years. After her marriage in 1882 to Judge Loveland Munson, a prominent lawyer and Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court, Mary became very active in several community organizations, including the Mark Skinner Library, Burr and Burton and the First Congregational Church, where for over fifty years she taught the Sunday School class for girls and wrote a well-regarded history of the church. She was also a founding member of the Monday Club.

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**Louise
Simonds
Orvis**

LOUISE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF D.K. SIMONDS, the editor of the *Manchester*

Journal for many years. Following graduation from Burr and Burton in 1890, Louise married Franklin Orvis's son George, and quickly became a leading light in Manchester society. She was the first female president of Manchester Village and the first woman to vote in Manchester.

Louise was elected a member of the Republican National Committee in 1924, the first year women were given equal representation on the national committee. She was also the only woman on the first board of trustees of the Southern Vermont Arts Center. Following her husband's death in 1917, Louise took over as president of the company that ran the Equinox House. Her husband had been an avid promoter of golf and was a founder of the Ekwanok Golf Club. Louise shared his interest, and in 1925 she established the Equinox Links Club, hiring Walter J. Travis to design the course. With the help of Peggy Beckwith (the last member of the Lincoln family to live at Hildene), Louise constructed a personal landing strip for the Equinox a half mile due east of the hotel and had "Manchester VT" painted on the roof of the hotel with a large arrow pointing to the airfield.



**Wilhelmina
and
Julia Hawley**

WILHELMINA HAWLEY AND HER SISTER JULIA were responsible for the establishment of the Manchester Historical Society in 1897. Their great-grandparents were early settlers in Manchester and their family



at one time owned much of Equinox Mountain as well as a large farm south of Manchester Village. An 1876 graduate of Burr and Burton, Wilhelmina became a college professor in Ohio, but she spent every summer at her home in Manchester Village. Julia organized the Twentieth Century Club in 1899 and was a charter member of the Monday Club.



**Sarah
Cleghorn**
FOLLOWING HER MOTHER'S DEATH, Sarah came to Manchester to live with her

aunts, Jessie and Fanny Hawley. After graduating from Burr and Burton in 1895, she attended Radcliffe College and taught at progressive schools in New York. From her earliest years, her intense hatred of cruelty and injustice set her apart. Though she never attained a college degree, Sarah published numerous poems, essays

and novels. Her reputation brought her the friendship of distinguished writers of her time, including Robert Frost and Dorothy Canfield Fisher. She eventually became a Quaker and lectured for the Friends Council on Education. The most eloquent expression of her views on human misery and its remedies appears in her novel *The Seamless Robe*, published by Macmillan in 1945. Sarah was recording secretary for MHS and kept a scrapbook of Manchester's history during her years here which is an invaluable record for MHS.



**Esther
Graves Shaw**
FOLLOWING HER GRADUATION FROM BURR AND BURTON SEMINARY, Esther Graves

married prominent local businessman Walter H. Shaw in 1918. Esther and Walter raised their family in the same house on Bonnet Street where he ran his insurance business. When her husband's tragic death in 1934 left her to care for her four children, Esther decided to continue her late husband's insurance business. Her mother, Delia Graves, joined the household to take care of the children while Esther ran the business for 34 years, becoming the first licensed female insurance agent in Vermont. She also found time to volunteer in the community. She was a founder of the Manchester Welfare Association in 1942, the first female vestry person in the Episcopal diocese of Vermont, a trustee of Dellwood Cemetery, and a longtime

board member of Mark Skinner Library. She succeeded in sending all four of her children to college or higher education, and the insurance agency continues today under the guidance of her grandson and great-grandson.



Louise Arkell

LOUISE RYALS DE CRAVIOTO married Bartlett Arkell in 1929 and together they enjoyed many

happy summers at Point O' View, their beautiful Manchester Village home. The Arkells were early supporters of the Southern Vermont Arts Center founded in 1933. During the lean years of World War II, Louise Arkell raised three times the amount of money needed for the 1942 annual art exhibition. When the Southern Vermont Artists purchased the Webster estate on West Road in 1950, she worked tirelessly to bring the plan for Manchester's first arts center to fruition by hosting fundraisers at her Manchester home. When it was decided to add a music shed in 1953, Louise gave the lead gift of \$1,000 with another \$500 for the music program and continued her fundraising efforts for the next three years. The \$40,000 goal was met, and on July 1, 1956, the Music Auditorium, what is today the Arkell Pavilion, was dedicated. Louise continued her support of the Southern Vermont Arts Center throughout the 1960s, where the music, arts, and dance programs, as well as outreach to engage children's participation, continued to grow.



Sarah Given Larson

DURING HER MANY YEARS AS A RESIDENT OF MANCHESTER, Sarah Given

Larson was known

for her quiet and effective generosity to the Manchester community. Mrs. Larson was a dedicated supporter of the Manchester Historical Society and many of her photographs taken in the 1950 and 1960s are now part of the MHS collection. She was responsible for a new classroom wing at Burr and Burton completed in 1965. Manchester's Town Hall today was originally the Mount Laurel School which Mrs. Larson had made possible. The original Mark Skinner Library in Manchester Village was able to expand its facility through a gift she gave in 1963 in honor of her parents. She was an advocate for child care for working mothers, and in 1971, she donated her house on Highland Avenue in Manchester Center to the Northshire Day School, a child care center which had been established in 1968 to answer a growing need. Her gifts to Manchester were important at the time and are still today.

MHS online has a new look!

We invite you to check out our redesigned website. There are still dozens of photos to view but we like the simpler design and navigation. Our thanks to Riley Moore Studio for her excellent work.

manchesterhistoricalsocietyvt.org



A fan from the 1961 Manchester Bicentennial celebrations signed by members of the community.

WESSNER COLLECTION

Curator Shawn Harrington has been busy these past few weeks sorting, organizing, and transferring pieces to the Cook House for further accessioning.

The scope and breadth of history that Herb Wessner collected and saved over his lifetime is immense. It is going to take *years* to fully absorb. Each box can contain hundreds of pieces of ephemera from the 18th, 19th and 20th century—often mixed, buried under issues of the *Manchester Journal* from 1995. Tools, ledgers, advertising, signage, photographs, negatives, film reels, books, utensils, bottles, diaries, clothing, uniforms, badges, yearbooks...everyday pieces of life which he saved from going into the landfill. Some pieces are a mystery; for example, a diner stool, but which diner? Was it local? Herb collected not only from Manchester, but also the surrounding area so you cannot tell a full story without mentioning those communities that have been intertwined over the generations. Spending time with Herb in his last years and listening to his stories has proved invaluable when I come across pieces he spoke of that are otherwise unmarked and unassuming. There is the growing wishlist of questions I would ask, but most important—if I could say anything to Herb—it would be to say Thank You. For everything.

Covid-19: What Will We Remember?

MHS has been gathering evidence over the past several months on how the current pandemic is affecting life in Manchester. Cases have been low here, but vigilance remains high. How the virus impacts private and civic life amid all the continuing uncertainties is an ongoing story we focus on every day. You can help us by submitting items or photographs that reflect how you are coping with the truly novel circumstances we now find ourselves in. We will continue to update you through our social media and e-newsletter. Here are a few photos from around town:

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The mission of the Manchester Historical Society is to collect, preserve, interpret and present the story of Manchester through the research collection, exhibitions, programs, and publications.



Manchester VFW, April 23, 2020



Baseball fields at the Rec Park, May 14, 2020



COVID Testing Riley Rink, July 16, 2020

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