



The Friends of Valley Falls, Inc. Newsletter

www.friendsofvalleyfalls.org

Volume XXVIII Number 1

SPRING 2019

THE WREATH ON THE STABLE AND HOW IT CAME TO BE

Every December a large wreath is hung on the east end of the stable - have you noticed? It has become an iconic part of the Farm during the

holiday season. We thought you'd like to know how it came about, and whom we should thank for this lovely holiday treat, a perfect addition to the winter scene at Valley Falls Farm.

Board member Ginny Gingras tells us the story:

"After the Friends purchased Valley Falls Farm in 2000, I took my friend, Sally Katkaveck to view the Farm from Bolton Road. She took one look at the Farm and said 'Ginny, the stable needs a wreath.' I agreed and asked if she would be willing to

make one, and she has done so every year since. She gathers the greens from her yard in Ashford.



Pictured (l-r) Paul Gingras, Ginny Gingras and Sally Katkaveck. Photo by Bill Katkaveck.

ribbon. Sally is a terrific gardener, whom I met years ago at a meeting of the North American Rock Garden Society. She has made many wreaths and enjoys the delights they bring. This year will be the last one made for the stable." Thank you, SALLY and BILL! 🌿

When completed, Sally and her husband, Bill, drive to the Farm to deliver the wreath. Bill parks near the stable, climbs onto the back of the truck and with a pole (made especially for the "project"), places the wreath on the hook my husband, Paul, had made for it. I supply and tie on the

HERITAGE CENTER UPDATE

We're moving along! Architect Bob Hurd has been discussing needed interior work for adaptive reuse with contractors. An RFP has been issued to select a graphic artist for display panel work. We're making improvements in the woodshed to enable storage of items now taking up space in future display areas. And research into the history of the illustrious prior inhabitants of Valley Falls Farm continues - many thanks to **Jon Roe** and **Maryann Levesque!** 🌿

WHAT'S NEW AT THE PARK

FRIENDS OF VALLEY FALLS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NEWSLETTER

Lisa Letendre 633-7666



Proposed Exercise Station at Valley Falls Park

Marty Sitler, Director of Vernon Parks and Recreation, was contacted by Eagle Scout Logan Parent about a proposal to put in an exercise station at Valley Falls Park. The area described would be about 25 feet square and would be located to the left of the pond as you face it. The station would consist of steel monkey bars, wood balance beam, wood incline bench, wood box jump, and parallel dip station. Equipment to be made by hand of pressure treated wood. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact the Parks & Recreation Department, 860-870-3520.



VALLEY FALLS DAM

Project Update

by Dave Smith, Director of Engineering, Town of Vernon

The Dam Rehabilitation Project should be completed in April. The significant tasks that remain include the fencing along the new crest and installation of the ADA accessible fishing area near the new spillway. This work is currently on-going weather permitting.



On a side note, the Vernon DPW will be milling and overlaying the parking area in late April or May to rejuvenate the existing surface which is showing signs of deterioration. Naturally, during that time access to the parking lot will be restricted and we appreciate everyone's patience while this very important work is completed.



NOT GETTING OUR E-NEWSLETTER? READ BELOW!

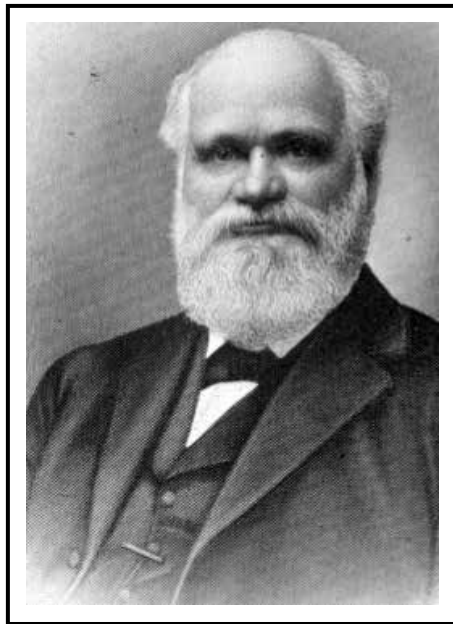
If you are NOT getting our e-newsletter, and you indicated on our last survey that you would like to receive it, PLEASE CONTACT Janice Fournier at fournijs@gmail.com. You can also check your spam folder!

A PEEK INTO THE PAST: SNIPPETS OF HISTORY FROM VALLEY FALLS

We've been digging! Research digging, that is, not spade and shovel! Our latest project, the Heritage Center in the stable, has prompted us to dig into the past of this unique area, Valley Falls Farm and its environs. Who were its past residents? Why did they live here? We will be sharing our findings with you in a regular column of our newsletter "Snippets of History from Valley Falls." The column will highlight an interesting fact or event that contributed to the rich history of Valley Falls. Many thanks to our researchers, Jon Roe, Maryann Levesque, and Musevue 360. Enjoy our first contribution!

MARY ELIZABETH BATTERSON – THE TRAVELERS CONNECTION

How is Valley Falls history connected to Travelers Insurance Company? Mary Batterson Beach purchased 157 acres at Valley Falls in 1915 and later added 109 acres. Much of that land encompasses what is now Valley Falls Park and Valley Falls Farm. Born in 1856, Mary was the daughter of James G. Batterson and Eunice E. Goodwin, a prominent Hartford couple who resided on Trumbull Street in Hartford with several servants.



James G. Batterson

James Batterson considered his main occupation as a marble dealer, and in 1845 owned New England Granite Works. However, he was also a wealthy

young entrepreneur and open to new business opportunities. While traveling in London, he learned of a unique form of insurance that English travelers took out when embarking on long train journeys. When he returned to the U.S., he embraced the idea of insurance for travelers, and in 1863 founded Travelers Insurance Company!

Today Travelers Insurance Company keeps a large room filled with historic information about the company. It is open to private viewings. The most imposing piece in the room is a large marble statue of James G. Batterson sitting in an armchair, in a pose reminiscent of the Lincoln Memorial. We wonder if it was intended? 🌐



NEWSLETTER SURVEY - THANK YOU!

We received 152 responses to our survey questionnaire on our newsletter! Thank you all for taking the time to give us this valuable feedback. We were very pleased to learn that 86% of you read and enjoy the newsletter! The results tell us that 60% of you want to continue to receive the hard copy, so we will continue to publish and mail the issues, twice a year as we've been doing. At the same time 66% of you want both the hard copy and the e-news copy, which we'll also accommodate. Many of you sent some excellent suggestions, and we do plan to follow up on those also. We do have a Facebook page, as a couple of you recommended, but it needs to be updated and reworked, so stay tuned for that addition also!



The Friends of Valley Falls, Inc.
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UPCOMING EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Annual Hoppin' Hodges Race

The annual Easter morning race will begin at 8:00 a.m. The start is at the Church Street parking area of the Rail Trail. Proceeds from the race go to the Friends, for which we are ever grateful. Many thanks to Janit Romayko and the Silk City Striders who organize and participate in this popular event. Come and join us... bring your bunny ears!

Three Walk Weekend at Valley Falls Park

May 18 and 19

Bird Walk led by Denise Anamani, May 18, 7:30 a.m.

Wildflower Walk led by Ginny Gingras, May 18, 1:00 p.m.

Rocks, Railroad and Industry Walk led by Don Sierakowski. He will take us on a jaunt through the historic parts of Valley Falls Park discussing the history of the area, the cotton mill, the coming of the railroads, and the rock formations of the valley on May 19, 1:00 p.m.

CT Open House Day

Saturday, June 8th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We'll be participating in this event again this year and will be open for tours! Come and visit us!

Summer Farm Tours

On select Wed. and Sun. afternoons from 1:00-3:00 p.m. beginning on the last Sunday in June and ending on the last Sunday in August. Check the website for specific dates.

Artists Day at Valley Falls Farm

Sunday, August 18, 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. featuring art, music and history! Come and enjoy a peaceful afternoon at the Farm.

FVF Annual Meeting

Sunday, September 29, 1:00 p.m. Stay tuned - we're working on an exciting event!

As always - check our website for updates at www.friendsofvalleyfalls.org