

## Jericho Historical Society – 2024 Report to the Town

2024 was another busy year for the JHS. The Craft Shop continued to add new vendors, and now features over 90 artists and crafters from around Vermont. The thoughtfully curated collection was enjoyed by visitors from across the country and around the world. Revenue from the Shop grew by approximately 20% over the previous year, due in large part to our wonderful team of volunteers and the leadership of shop manager, Sue Richardson.

We continued to increase our media presence through our Facebook pages and website, radio advertising, and for the first time, utilized WCAX-TV to introduce our beautiful Mill and Craft Shop to a larger audience.

We upgraded our Point-of-Sale system to provide much better reporting and inventory tracking, allowing us to operate more efficiently. We also upgraded our security cameras to provide full coverage of the shop, exhibit, and outdoor areas.

Due in part to a generous donation from one of our Bentley Exhibit visitors, we were able to upgrade the lighting in the Exhibit space to LEDs, which will provide energy savings as well as generating less heat and causing less damage to delicate artifacts.

Continuing to work with Preservation Trust of Vermont and Eliot Lothrop from Building Heritage, the condition assessment of the Mill was completed in the Spring of 2024. It revealed that there has been significantly more movement in the foundation than previously thought, and a need to rebuild the Southeast corner, rather than simply anchor it to stop further deterioration as had been previously suggested. We have assembled a team of experts who are developing the plans for the project, so that it can move forward as soon as the funding is secured. Preservation Trust is working closely with JHS in the grant application process and has been an invaluable resource and partner. The project will be done in such a way as to cause minimal disruption to our operations, particularly the Craft Shop.

A significant piece of the project involved removal of several large boulders from the river channel. These boulders had fallen from the riverbank over a span of years, causing debris to build up during storms, raising the water level, and ultimately causing the riverbank to washout in 2019's Halloween storm.

ECI (Engineer's Construction), under contract with the Town, utilizing two large cranes, was able to remove most of the boulders, substantially lowering the water level. The project was watched with great interest by several Jericho residents. Despite the presence of cranes in front of the building, the Craft Shop was able to remain open during the project.

In September, the JHS was pleased to host a very informative program on Conserving Your Vermont Land. Long-time Jericho residents Tammy and Gary Davis shared their experiences and insights into this sometimes daunting process.

Sue continues to do Zoom programs, podcasts and in-person presentations about Snowflake Bentley. The Exhibit continues to host visitors from around the world, which this year included large groups of tourists from Italy and New Zealand, and a PhD candidate from Germany.

Through the dedication and hard work of our Board of Directors, which includes Ann Squires, Sue Richardson, Stacie Griffiths, Betty Koshinski, Keiko Williams, and Shelly Dion, and our volunteers without whom we could not do what we do, the JHS is proud to continue our more than half century tradition of preserving our heritage, history, and treasures, and teaching people from around the world about our famous "Snowflake Man".