



GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 33
Spring 2010

GHS Calendar Summer 2010

July 3 - July 10

Kingdom Craft Alliance exhibit at
Miller's Thumb (GHS participating)

July 8, 4 - 6

Celebration Party
Official Opening of New Building

July 12, 7:30

The Colonists' Revolution
Presented by Tim Breen
Fellowship Hall

July 17, 2-4

Ice Cream Social & Old Time Games
GHS building

July 19, 3-4:30

Discussion with Tim:
Framework for the Revolution
Greensboro Free Library

August 2, 3-4:30

Discussion with Tim:
Enforcing the Revolution
Greensboro Free Library

August 9, 7:30

Annual Meeting and
Early Life in Greensboro,
featuring Allen Davis
Fellowship Hall

August 13, 14, 15, at 8

Greensboro Arts Alliance & GHS
co-sponsor play *The Contrast*

August 17, 3-4:30

Discussion with Tim:
Experiencing the Revolution
Greensboro Free Library

September 4, 10-2

Book Sale (with cider and doughnuts)
Lyles Garage

Early Greensboro, A Hill Perspective

The Greensboro Historical Society program on March 7: *Early Greensboro, A Hill Perspective*, was enjoyed by a standing room only crowd in Fellowship Hall. The highlight of the afternoon was a 20 minute video interview with the late Lewis Hill showing and talking about the antique tools and household utensils made by his ancestors. Ed Donlon, retired journalist and GHS member, made the visit in the summer of 2008, when Lewis gave him a tour of the mostly handmade implements that Hill ancestors made and used on the family farm. The video is full of Lewis' humor and wisdom, as well as lots of fascinating information.

The video was preceded by an introduction that set the context of what else was happening in America during the time the first Hills came to Greensboro, followed by some Hill family background given by Greensboro Selectman, Warren Hill. He told how Peleg Hill from Saybrook, CT was one of 66 proprietors granted the charter for the town in 1781, during the Revolutionary War. Of these 66, only four settled here, and descendants of two of these families: the Hills and Tolmans not only still live in town, but are still civic leaders. (Jefferson Tolman is also a selectman).



An overflow crowd enjoys the March Program.



Warren and Nancy Hill show the portrait of Aaron and Susan Hill.

Following the video Paul Wood, a noted Vermont historian who specializes in tools, provided in-depth explanations for the selection of tools and household items that Nancy Hill had brought to share. As one child remarked afterward, "It's much more fun than a museum because I can touch things." The items that were shown are part of the collection that will soon be housed in the new GHS exhibit hall.

A large number of Hills from near and far attended the event and seemed to delight in their reunion as well as the program.

Early Greensboro, A Hill Perspective

Copies of the DVD: *Early Greensboro, A Hill Perspective* are available for \$10 at GHS events or by order (plus \$4 P&P) from GHS, Box 151, Greensboro, VT 05841

President's Corner

by Jenny Stoner



For me, this has been the Year of the Historical Society. The focus on fund raising last summer gave way to a zoning hearing in September, considering bids and selecting a builder in October, then consulting with builder and architect as construction started, while meeting with the Select Board regarding conditions on the grant from Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. As the new year began, it continued with helping our builder deal with problems at the building site and continued efforts for completion of legal work needed for the grant from VHCB. All this has been supported by a wonderful team of Earl Kasper, Clerk of the Works, and a committee of Clive Gray, Nancy Hill, Willie Smith, Ercel Harvey and others. It has been exciting.

Now that summer is upon us and the Phase I of our building, the "barn" exhibit hall, nearly completed, the great variety of new possibilities has my attention. The space we have dreamed of will be ready for community use, first for a party to officially open the building and celebrate its beauty, then for bringing in some of the artifacts from our collection and planning creative ways to display the town's story.

As important as the building is, this is only the backdrop for the rich programming that GHS is offering the town this summer. Our theme, *The World of Early Greensboro* will be presented in two outstanding lectures and a series of discussion seminars with noted historian and GHS trustee, Tim Breen using primary documents to delve into particular aspects of the Revolutionary War period. In addition, we are co-sponsoring the historic play, *The Contrast*, being presented by the Greensboro Arts Alliance and also participating in the exhibit of the Kingdom Craft Alliance. I anticipate an exciting summer as history in Greensboro comes alive in many new ways.

Membership Renewal Time

Now is the time to become a new member of Greensboro Historical Society or renew your membership and make a donation to help preserve Greensboro's unique past. This investment continues to be a super bargain.

Individual Membership	\$6
Family Membership	\$12
Life Membership	\$200

An envelope is included for your convenience.
Thank you for your generous support.

Remembrance

GHS members who have died
since November 2009

Members

Evelyn Woodruff
Joan J. Landon
Carroll Perry Jr.
Kathryn Eisner Redfern
Carol Cameron Smith
Marion Faye Robb
Lee Horn

Life Members

Jean Reeder Smith
Rolf Muentner
Anne Lukens Saunders
Henry Jordan

Summer Intern & Focus Groups

GHS is most fortunate that Celidh Galloway-Kane, daughter of Patrick Kane and Anne Galloway of East Hardwick and a Smith College major in history and museum studies, will be an intern for us this summer. She will be assisting GHS in providing the history aspect of Kingdom Craft Alliance exhibit at the Miller's Thumb July 3-10 and then will focus on helping us to plan and design the first exhibit in our new exhibit barn to be staged the summer of 2011.

As one step in developing our first enlarged exhibit we will hold focus group meetings in the new exhibit hall space. Celidh will lead these discussions, sharing her museum expertise with all who are interested in learning more about exhibit design, selection of items for an exciting exhibit, materials available and more, while providing a forum for your ideas.

Plan to join in one or all of these focus groups on three Tuesday afternoons from 2-3:30 to help create an exhibit that will tell some of the multi-faceted story of Greensboro.

Focus Groups How to Exhibit Our History

Place: the exhibit hall of the GHS building
Dates: Tuesday, July 13: 2-3:30
Tuesday, July 27: 2-3:30
Tuesday, August 10: 2-3:30

Please email Ceilidh Galloway-Kane at
cgallowa@smith.edu
if you would like to participate.

Cribs for Fishing Redux

By Allen F. Davis

I read with interest the account in the Fall 2009 Newsletter of sunken log cabins at the north end of the lake: "Local legend has it that some farmers built such cribs. . . both to hold the rocks cleared from their land and to enhance the fishing." At least one person remembers when a swimming platform was atop the rocks. I doubt that the cribs were placed there to improve the fishing. I suspect that they were always intended as anchors for diving rafts. There are similar, but smaller, cribs in twenty feet of water near my camp which were placed there in the late 1930s as anchors for a raft. I was often assigned the task when I was ten or twelve of diving in fifteen or twenty feet of water to recover one of the chains. These boxes of stones still startle unwary swimmers when they spot them on the bottom for they seem mysterious and out of place.



Where's the crib? Jacob & Sebastian Stoner on raft that replaced the Spahr crib.

I also doubt that the Greensboro farmers constructed such elaborate cribs in order to get rid of the rocks on their fields, unless they were paid to do so by the "summer people." Most farmers deposited the stones they collected at the edge of their fields where they eventually became crude stone walls. Oscar Perrin (Ted and Ida's father) found a convenient way to get rid of his rocks; he dumped them in the lake. I remember watching him pick stones one by one from his land and carry them in a horse-drawn wagon to the edge of lot he owned next to my family's camp. Eventually the rocks created a small peninsula that is now Chuck Goering's dock and lawn.

The article reports: "Bruce Young was said to have put a dead calf on one of the cribs to attract fish when he was a fishing guide." I doubt this story as well because placing a dead calf in shallow water would have invited a visit from a game warden. It is true that Bruce Young was a legendary fisherman on the lake, though I never knew he was a guide. He was famous for the way he rowed his boat in a particular jerky style, making him recognizable from a long distance. He never seemed to be trolling, but he was always going somewhere in a hurry. The story I remember about the dead calf was that he sank it in about sixty feet of water and then set lines attached to syrup cans anchored just below the surface. Most observers assumed he was rowing rapidly across the lake to check his lines. This story may well be apocryphal, but he certainly was a colorful character.

As for the cribs of rocks as a device for attracting fish, there may be something to the story. It is true, at least, that piles of rocks (especially out from the shore near the Stoner and Spahr camps) attract Mayflies and when they hatch, rainbow trout feed on them and that attracts fly fishermen. In the period before World War II there were few fly fishermen in part because there were few rainbow and brown trout in the lake. The state has had an aggressive rainbow stocking policy in recent years. Most fishermen before the war fished for lake trout, and lake trout, except in the spring, are found in deep water. Even Bliss Perry, who describes in his book, *Pools and Ripples* (1927) how he fished with flies on the streams near Greensboro, recounts fishing with bait in Caspian at sixty or seventy feet.

The rock-filled cribs at the north end of the lake may not have been there to improve the fishing but they remain intriguing. There must be other sunken objects in the lake and fascinating stories, true or exaggerated that help to explain their presence. I would love to hear about them.

The Contrast: History and Theater

What would it have been like to attend the first theatrical production that criticized the British in colonial America? This summer you will have the opportunity to live this experience when the Greensboro Arts Alliance brings Royall Tyler's musical farce *The Contrast* to town. This play, the first written by an American to be professionally produced, made its debut in Philadelphia in 1789. This year, it is being revived in our town at 8 PM August 13, 14, and 15, presented at the Greensboro United Church.

GHS is co-sponsoring this event which shows an aspect of the world of early Greensboro and also celebrates the accomplishment of the playwright, Royall Tyler, who was the first Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court. Join us for what promises to be a delightful and enlightening event.

To add to your evening's pleasure Highland Lodge is offering a per-theater dinner.

Thank You All!

A Preservation Grant of \$50,000 to the Greensboro Historical Society made possible by a partnership between the Freeman Foundation and the Preservation Trust of Vermont has made all the difference, enabling us to move forward with building the new exhibit hall, scheduled for completion in early June. A second grant of \$18,500 from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board is being used for historic restoration and to correct all the problems that have caused moisture and mold in the old building. With this work done, the entire building will be a healthy place for both people and historic artifacts.

These grants are in addition to the generous bequest by Margaret Ford Twombly in honor of her brother Charles Olmsted, the Olmsted family gift of Peg Olmsted's paintings, grants of \$10,000 two different years by the Town of Greensboro, a grant of \$10,000 by the Freeman Foundation in memory of Lewis Hill and donations by many friends of GHS. These gifts bring the total pledged for the building of \$243,000. Thank you all for your generosity!

With this commitment by all of you, the Board of Trustees decided that we are able to go ahead with Phase II and complete the lower level office and archival storage space this summer. This means that work will continue during the summer and the entire building should be completed by early fall. Additional funds will be needed for some furnishings and equipment, but when all pledges have been paid we will have finished the major work.

New Possibilities

In 1990, the old Greensboro library building was perfect for Greensboro Historical Society. We needed a home for our records, activities, and displays and this place, especially with its central location, was ideal. Since then, the historical society's continued success has created a pressing need for additional space. Valuable artifacts, documents, photographs, letters, deeds, maps, and manuscripts have been offered to us for safekeeping, bringing with them additional space requirements.

As years have passed, our vision of keeping Greensboro history has broadened. We see its relationship to both the larger world and our future, bringing with it the need to have archives readily accessible for research by the public and for the preparation of interpretive exhibits. Now, with the summer completion of the new GHS building, the Accession and Exhibit Committees are examining various ways this wonderful new space can help us fulfill, even surpass, our original mission goals.



East side of building, showing how the barn complements the original building 5-15-10.

of the public will be more readily available and items of special interest, especially to our student researchers, the children at Lakeview Union School, will be easily retrievable for study.

The original Historical Society building, the old Tolman library, will be freed up for additional purposes. This may be the place for public research on computers with access to our files, a more extensive gift shop with our printed matter, tee-shirts, and postcards, or perhaps the place for smaller, seasonal exhibits.

Any ideas? We will welcome your ideas and comments.



The rear of the GHS barn & entry to archives and work space on lower level 5-22-10.

The large barn will house exhibits – we will finally have room to display the tools and equipment from the Hill family, original settlers who still have many descendants in town – as well

as treasures from many other old Greensboro families. To show these treasures as effectively as possible, we will be planning state-of-the-art exhibit space with multiple ways to tell Greensboro's untold stories.

Downstairs in the building, the archival and artifact storage space will protect items from deterioration due to building moisture and other hazards. The adjacent work space with tables and computers will have easy access to files, storage, map cases and miscellaneous artifacts, eliminating repeated trips up and down stairs from storage room to work room. With this new space, information requested by members

Summer Programs



Tim Breen, who will speak on the American Revolution

This summer the Greensboro Historical Society will explore the *World of Early Greensboro*, with a focus on little known aspects of the American Revolution. The activities begin in Fellowship Hall at 7:30 on July 12th, when Northwestern

University historian T.H. (Tim) Breen will give a public lecture entitled *How a Rumor Almost Sparked A Revolution in 1774*.

This presentation based on his recent book, *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People* examines not only how ordinary men and women were mobilized in resisting the British Empire, but also how they often found themselves staking out political positions far more radical than those of their own leaders in the Continental Congress. Professor Breen will further explore aspects of the Revolution in a series of seminar discussions.

Our second evening program will be presented in Fellowship Hall at 7:30 on August 9, following the GHS Annual Meeting. Allen Davis, noted Temple University historian, will bring the study of the Revolutionary period back home with his presentation on *Early Life in Greensboro*. Davis will talk about how ordinary people lived and the problems they faced here in the first decades following the war and the settlement of Greensboro in 1781.

Greensboro Arts and History

GHS is joining with the newly formed Kingdom Craft Alliance of the greater Greensboro area to mount an exhibit of local art and crafts July 3-10 at the Miller's Thumb. The exhibit, our local entry into the statewide celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Vermont Crafts Alliance and promoted by the Vermont Folklife Center, will feature the work of local artists within a perspective of the last 50 years. The Greensboro Historical Society, with the help of intern Ceilidh Kane, will provide the historical aspect of the show with a display that tells the story of artists in the area since the 1960's. The *State of Craft* exhibit will be open from 10-5 for the week from July 3-10.

SNIPPETS from Hazen Road Dispatch 2010

By Gail Sangree, Editor

This year's issue of the *Hazen Road Dispatch* is jam-packed with fascinating bits of history and features several new voices. Here's a sampling of a few of them:

From a letter of Ruth Hibbard, April 1969 describing why her basement now features three sump pumps:

"On Friday night Mr. Foss came eight times to check on the flood from the well, and the last two nights he has stayed through both days and nights draining the cellar and thirty minutes later draining it again. . . . Caspian Lake rose eight inches on Saturday, the day when my well boiled over keeping a 7000 gallon pump working at full capacity for hours until we got ahead of the inflow."

From the memoir of Helen Dimick about her years working as a licensed nursing assistant:

"One of the first memories that come to mind at Greensboro was a cook named Molly. She was mean and no one got along with her. One of her duties was to make a cake for everyone who had a birthday. As it turned out, one day she made a cake for a resident who also happened to have a cake made for her by a professional baker. Well, needless to say, everyone ate the pretty cake made by the baker and no one touched Molly's. Then I noticed that Molly was crying, so I made all the girls take a piece of Molly's cake. When we got to our cars and were headed home, everyone threw Molly's cake out the window. There was cake scattered all over the highway from Greensboro to Hardwick, but Molly was happy."

From a memoir written by Doris Sanders Emerson (1894-1994) about growing up on a farm in North Craftsbury:

"Since we lived twenty miles from a dentist, and had no car, it meant the loss of two days time and cost of transportation if [my father] had a certified dentist do the job. However, one bright summer day, along came a man with a horse and buggy, doing just that for a living. My father made a deal with this man. Dad stepped into the kitchen, picked up a chair, put it on the piazza and sat down in it. The dentist opened his little bag, took out his forceps and was ready for action. My father opened his mouth and the teeth began to fly all over the place. As I remember there was not even a groan from my father as it was all so sudden like. However, I suspect he suffered severe pain since there was no anesthetic used and I don't remember the forceps being sterilized. His mouth healed well, with minimal expense, no loss of time or cost for transportation. I think this must have happened around 1910."

GHS Offers Discussion Seminars

Pursuing the theme of his July 12 evening lecture, *The Colonists' Revolution*, Professor Tim Breen will moderate a three-session informal seminar for those interested in a more in-depth exploration of the coming of the American Revolution. Discussion will be based on documents he supplies, selected to provoke significant questions about the origins of our political culture.

These hour and a half discussions will be held in the Greensboro Free Library on Mondays from 3-4:30 PM. Discussion July 19 will be on *Framework for the Revolution*, with a short readable book as reference. On August 2nd, the topic is *Enforcing the Revolution* based on a packet of documents. August 16th the group will explore *Experiencing the Revolution*, again with a packet of documents.

The seminars will be limited to 15 participants. Registration can be made by email to jennystoner@gmail.com or at the GHS program on July 12.

All Donors & Friends of The Greensboro Historical Society

are cordially invited to
celebrate the opening of the new building on

Thursday, July the 8th
from four to six o'clock.

Wine, soft drinks, & hors d'oeuvres will be served.

GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Published Twice Yearly
P.O. Box 151

Greensboro, Vermont 05841

Trustees

*Tim Breen, Clive Gray, Linda Johnston, David Metraux
Martha Niemi, Catherine Wilkenson*

Officers

*Jenny Stoner, President
Wilhelmina Smith, Vice President
Catherine Wilkinson, Secretary
Janet Long, Treasurer*

Committee Chairpersons

*Wilhelmina Smith, Acquisitions
Catherine Wilkinson, Program
Earl Kasper, Building
Janet Long, Membership
Martha Niemi, Volunteers
Clive Gray and Tom Woodward, Capital Campaign
Earl Kasper, Clerk of the Works*

Newsletter Contributors

*Tim Breen, Allen Davis, Betsy Donlon,
Debbie Kasper, Gail Sangree, Wilhelmina Smith,
Jenny Stoner & Tom Woodward*