



# GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NUMBER 39  
Spring 2013

NEWSLETTER

## GHS Calendar Summer 2013

### Summer Exhibit

*Hill Family Legacy and  
Faces of our Town: photo exhibit*

June 30—Sept 1

Tues, Wed, Thurs 10-1

Sat. 10-12

**Sun. June 30, 3-5 PM**

Exhibit Opening Reception

**Mon. July 8, 7:30 PM**

*The Block House Dig*  
with Archeologist Jill Baker-  
Fellowship Hall

**Tues. July 9, 2 PM**

*A Century of Greensboro Images*  
Greensboro Free Library

**Mon. July 15, 2-4**

Seminar "*Treasures in Your Attic:  
What should you save?*"  
Achivist Elizabeth Dow  
at Highland Lodge

**Sat. Aug 3, 2-4**

*Ice Cream Social*  
GHS building

**Tues. August 6, 7:30 PM**

*A Century of Greensboro Images*  
Greensboro Free Library

**Mon. Aug 12, 7:30 PM**

GHS Annual Meeting and Program  
*Stories from Winnemere, Edgewood Lane  
and Randolph Camps*  
Fellowship Hall

**Thurs. Aug 15, 10-12**

Seminar- *The Kesselmans Remembered*  
Kessleman House  
91 Breezy Avenue

**Sat Aug 31, 10-2**

*GHS Annual Booksale*  
Lyles Garage

## *The Blockhouse Dig*

For generations the legend of the Revolutionary War period Greensboro blockhouse has fascinated and intrigued historians, aficionados and town residents alike. The story of the blockhouse and those who built it is the story of the early pioneers, their courage and endurance, as they forged a new path for both the fledgling United States of America and the town of Greensboro, Vermont. The soldiers and the first residents who occupied the structure made significant contributions to the formation of the nation, the state and the town. The foundation they laid then had a lasting impact on the Greensboro community as is evidenced in the vibrant cultural and social life of the town today. By studying the blockhouse we may learn more about these pioneering settlers and their way of life, bringing to life a little known chapter in our nation's history.



Archaeologists exploring the site of the blockhouse

On **Monday 8 July 2013 at 7:30 in Fellowship Hall**, Dr. Jill Baker, Executive Director of Archaeological Horizons, Inc. will present for GHS the results of the three preliminary excavation seasons conducted between 2010 and 2012 at the site that she has identified as that of the Greensboro blockhouse. Dr. Baker's presentation will describe the project's research goals, the method of investigation, the evidence of the artifacts that were discovered and she will discuss her conclusions based on this exploratory work. Illustrated with a PowerPoint presentation, the lecture will include photographs of the excavation, artifacts and topographic plans.

## President's Corner

By *Wilhelmina  
Smith*



Over the years we have worked with many other groups in our community to present programs and to design exhibits: the lecture series, the churches, 4-H, the Grange, the stores, the Greensboro Association, artists, centennial families, MVCC, businesses, authors, schools and many others.

In keeping with this tradition, this year we are continuing to forge new bonds with other groups in town. The Greensboro Arts Alliance (GAAR) is sharing our exhibit space to present Greensboro as "Our Town" with photos of our people. The library is showing Henry Merrill's photos and working with our townspeople and the society to identify and learn the stories behind the photos. They are both promoting visits to the Historical Society and we are promoting visits to the library and the GAAR productions. There are many groups in town that we can continue to reach out to and work with to enhance all of our programs. This summer we are continuing that tradition.

### *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. Note our simplified dues structure of \$20 per household (or a lesser amount if this is a hardship). Membership gives you a voice in shaping programs and exhibits, as well as providing essential support.

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

## *Summer Exhibits Part I, Hill Family Legacy*

Our hallmark exhibit, the *Hill Family Legacy*, presents the story of our town through the artifacts primarily from the homestead of one of our founding families. A visit gives you the opportunity to begin to understand what life was like over a century ago when farm families made their own butter and cheese, their own shoes and tools and those with special expertise, like Aaron Hill, performed many tasks for neighbors. Aaron's ledger provides an insight into his many commercial endeavors and how much others paid him to make them barrels in his cooper shop or to repair a tool. The living room hints at the music and other cultural activities that were important to the family; the barn and workshop areas tell of men's activities. A new textile exhibit added this summer shows more about ways women combined artistic design with



Judy Dales, who repaired the quilt, and Nancy Hill with a crazy quilt, part of the textile display in the Hill exhibit.

practical necessities. You won't want to miss the crazy quilt, homespun blankets and pillow shams from the Hill family collection that Nancy Hill and fabric artist Judy Dales have assembled.

In order to assure that information on all the articles in the collection is readily available in the future, Leslie Rowell is "acquistioning" the artifacts by entering all the information on each item into our computer data base, including where the artifact can be found in our collection.

## *Faces of Our Town Exhibit Part II*

Partnering with the Greensboro Arts Alliance (GAAR) this summer, GHS will showcase a photographic exhibit of *Faces of Our Town* in our front room. The exhibit will complement both the theater season which will present Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, and *The Music Man* and the GHS Hill Legacy Exhibit. "Faces" will feature both historic photos, notably those of Ralph Fisher and Henry Merrill, and contemporary ones added throughout the summer, all focusing on pictures that capture a moment of the subject's personality. Don't miss this opportunity to see the embodiment of the quote "*There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being.*" Thanks to Charlier McAteer for the idea of the exhibit and for major work in mounting it.

## *Hazen Road Dispatch*

This year's Hazen Road Dispatch features a great array of views of the past, ranging from Pat Haslam's article about Greensboro's earliest settlers and Elizabeth Dow's exploration of Hardwick's municipal organization to more recent history.

Articles about the nineteenth century include Charlie Morrissey's new appreciation of Greensboro's ginseng merchant, Amos Porter, Dan Metraux's examination of Greensboro's attitude toward the Civil War, and Allen Davis's article about Miss Jean Simpson's parents.

The twentieth century is represented by Clay Simpson's comprehensive piece about Alfred Barr, Jr, Art Wright's history of three cottages in Winnemere, Tom Hurst's musings about John Gunther's shoes, and Anne Harbison's tribute to three women who developed and preserved the Memorial Garden.

*Check out our website:  
[greensborohistoricalsociety.org](http://greensborohistoricalsociety.org)*

## *Treasures in Your Attic*

"Do you have an attic or basement? Have you collected items and family memorabilia that you wonder what to do with? How do you decide what to keep and what is junk?"

On Monday, **July 15 from 2-4 at Highland Lodge** Elizabeth (Wiz) Dow will give you some guidelines for sorting in a presentation *How to Weed Your Attic: Getting Rid of the Junk without Destroying History.*"

Wiz has extensive experience as an archivist including time at the Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, UVM, and Louisiana State University. Her academic credentials include a BA from Juniata College, MAs in history from UVM and in Library Science from University of Oregon and a Ph.D from University of Pittsburgh.

In 2007, Wiz and her husband, David Chesnutt, bought the old Dr. Densmore house in Hardwick village. They will retire there in 2014. Join us for a fascinating afternoon.

## *In Memoriam*

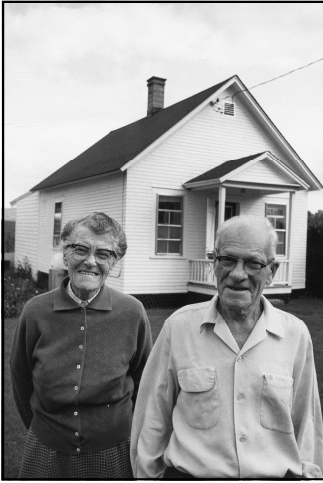
Members & Friends who died since May 2012

Henry W. Merrill, Jr.	Gloria Sternberg
Stephen Greaves	Thompson
Donna Van Leuven Allen	Laurence Richard
William Tyrrel	Jerome King
Joshua H. Billings	Ernest Messier
Frederic D. Carter, Jr.	Ralph S. Boyd, Jr
Virginia Marie Stuart	Stuart Sanders
Howard Hunter	Edith Berson Feffer
Williams, III	Lawrence LaPierre
Pauline F. Andrews	George Porter Perham
Frances Lukens Hays	Barbara F. Rhoades
Kevin Broad	Brownwyn Potter
John MacAllister Reeder	Pauline Demers

## *Calling for Old Time Toys*

What did children in your family play with on rainy days in "the old days"? Do you have any toys, games or even dress up costumes from generations past that you would loan for an exhibit next summer? Contact Erika Karp at [erikalakeview@vtlink.net](mailto:erikalakeview@vtlink.net) to let her know what you will share. The toys and stories about them will be needed by June 1, 2014 to prepare the exhibit.

## *Kesselmans Remembered*



Esther and Louis in front of their home

How can we honor and appreciate a legend? Chris Gulick, who knew Greensboro legends Louis and Esther Kesselman well, suggested a session of reminiscences about them this summer. Louis, born in Odessa, Russia in 1885, served as a tailor in the Imperial Russian Navy and came to Greensboro in 1911, spending his first winters in a tent on Drown land. Later he built his tailor shop next to the firehouse, the current residence of Tom Anastasio and Gina Jenkins. See Louis' sewing machine at the GHS! Many male summer residents had Louis prepare suits or sport coats for them.

Esther came to Greensboro in 1929, taking a week's vacation from the Hebrew Orphans' Shelter in the Bronx where she worked. She met Louis when she was staying at the Caspian Lake House which stood across from Willey's in the park. For many years they were the entire Jewish community in Greensboro. Befriended especially by the Gulick, Pleasants (Lonegren), Stegner and Gray families, they became integral to society in the local and summer communities. Esther was the town librarian, in the present GHS building, for many years. The

Kesselmans figure as Abe and Ruth Kaplan in Wallace Stegner's 1947 novel based on Greensboro, *Second Growth*.

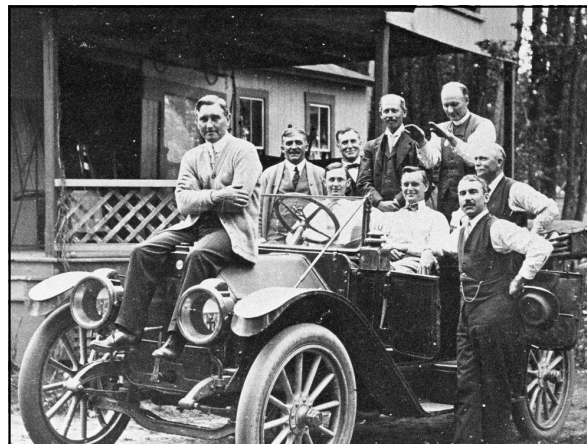
Please come to join in conversation and shared memories of this remarkable couple at **the Kessleman House, 91 Breezy Avenue, August 15 from 10 AM till noon**. Special thanks to Gina and Tom for offering their hospitality.

## *Saga of the Old Perrin Road*

In mid-May GHS thought the saga of the Old Perrin Road (OPR) had almost concluded. Since 2010 an abutter has blocked our access to the shed behind the GHS building, and when in August 2012 the Selectboard declared the OPR a public Class 4 road, he appealed the decision to the Orleans Superior Court. However in December his attorney agreed the Selectboard could authorize removal of the obstructions and repair of the road so that GHS and Willey's Store could both use it, pending the Court's decision. GHS and Willey's met with a contractor, agreed what is needed and that they would share the cost. However when the contractor brought his bulldozer to start the project the abutter then stationed a tractor that blocked both the bulldozer and the road for three days. He removed the tractor on May 18, and we expect repair of the road can now begin.

## *Camp Communities on Caspian and Annual Meeting*

This summer the GHS starts a series featuring the distinct summer communities which have developed around the lake. At our annual meeting **Monday, August 12 at 7:30 at Fellowship Hall, Winnimere, Edgewood Lane, and Randolph Camps** will be represented by their residents on a panel telling their stories and sharing pictures. Everyone is encouraged to bring memories to share.



Bert Hooker and friends at White Cottage, Randolph Camps early 1900s

## *Our Distinguished Local Historian*

*By H. Clay Simpson*



Allen F. Davis first remembers fishing at Caspian Lake in 1935 at the age of four. His family owned the general store in Hardwick; and during the boom times of the granite industry, many Hardwick families owned camps at Caspian. At the Davis camp on the southern shore, he eagerly joined his father in a search for big lake trout. He missed only one summer fishing at the lake since then, when he was drafted for Army service during the Korean War. On occasion he relives the early days by reading his father's fishing diaries.

Another childhood passion was reading New England historical novels by Kenneth Roberts. After a family Labor Day trip to Fort Ticonderoga, he realized that the stories he had been reading actually happened. He recalls that his early life was "much like living in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America because Hardwick and Greensboro did not enter the modern era until after World War II." In 1949 Allen Davis graduated at the top of a class of 23 at the Hardwick Academy and won a scholarship to Dartmouth. He was the first Hardwick student to go south to Hanover since Judge Taylor in 1906.

He graduated from Dartmouth with a love of history and football. He committed to a teaching career, won a Danforth fellowship and enrolled at the University of Rochester. After receiving an M.A., he went on to the University of Wisconsin with its highly regarded American history department. After completing a Ph.D, he taught history for eight years at the University of Missouri and thirty-one years at Temple University in Philadelphia with visiting professorships in Amsterdam and the University of Texas.

Allen Davis won awards for books on social history and the history of Philadelphia. He wrote the definitive biography of Jane Addams, founder of Chicago's Hull House and a history of the immigrants who settled Philadelphia. He served as president of the American Studies Association and lectured at many overseas universities. Earnings from a successful textbook funded the Allen F. Davis Fellowship in Public History, a field he pioneered, awarded at Temple University and the Philadelphia Museum of History.

Returning each summer to the camp at Caspian built by his grandfather in 1923, Allen devotes time to writing about local history. He has written twenty articles for the *Hazen Road Dispatch* and always mentions his first article in 1979: "Caspian Lake: Hardwick's Summer Resort." He served on the boards of the Hardwick Historical Society, the Greensboro Historical Society and the Orleans County Historical Society. Using a large collection of area postcards, he wrote the popular book: *Postcards from Vermont: A Social History, 1905-1945*.

Allen encourages Caspian Lake residents to preserve their family's experiences by writing memoirs and contributing artifacts to the historical society. In 2005 he helped to organize a memoir-writing group at the lake that adopted his unique approach of writing history through family experiences—*Generations: Your Family in Modern American History* by Allen F. Davis. He volunteers at the Greensboro Nursing Home where he helps the residents relate their memories to history. This summer he continues work on a new book: *Growing Up in Hardwick*.

There are several distinguished historians who spend summers at Caspian Lake, but Allen Davis is the only member of the group who can be described as native to the area. His two sons and their families visit each summer to continue the Davis family's tradition of summers at Caspian Lake.

## *A Century of Greensboro Images*

Henry Merrill, a professional photo-journalist, who was passionate about preserving a pictorial history of Greensboro, has left a fabulous collection of digital photos. Starting at the time of the bicentennial, he solicited pictures from the whole community, converted them to computer format, and shared them. Events and people from more than a century, including railroad crashes, mud season, early summer tent camps, school photos from 1920 on and much more are documented.

Come to one of the two sessions jointly sponsored by the library and GHS to learn more about how our town used to be and to help identify some of the people and places seen in the photos. To join in the conversation come **Tuesday, July 9 at 2 PM** or **Tuesday, August 6 at 7:30 PM** at the library.

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### *Book Sale August 31*

Now's the time to look through your books for favorites you are ready to pass on. You can leave them in Janet Long's garage, across from Willey's, ready for the August 31 Annual GHS Book Sale.

Greensboro Historical Society  
P. O. Box 151  
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#### **GHS Newsletter**

PO Box 151  
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