



GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

A Look at Summer 2011

From the opening of the exhibit on July 1 to the concluding of the summer on Labor Day, GHS had an extraordinarily rich season of events. The overflow crowd that attended the opening reception included a great many Hills who came from far and wide to see the "Hill Family Legacy" exhibit that gives tangible witness to the way of life of early Greensboro residents. The new exhibit hall had been beautifully arranged to tell the story of many different aspects of life: different rooms of home, shops and barn, with all being situated within the larger context of world and national events. This display will continue to provide the core of telling Greensboro's story and be available to our school-children during the year.



Hill family: Warren IV, Warren III, Laura, and Natalie in the exhibit living room in front of family portrait

Programs started with our ever popular Ice Cream Social and Old Time Games on a



Remembering Miss Jean: one of several programs held at GHS

lovely, sunny July 9. On July 11 Gail Sangree, researcher and editor of the *Hazen Road Dispatch*, gave a fascinating in depth look at hero-scoundrel Timothy Hinman, bringing to life some of the challenges of the banking and legal system in early Vermont. The next week Kevin Johnson, photo archivist of the Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport, ME delighted an audience with historic post card images of Greensboro and the surrounding area. The following week, acclaimed scholar, professor Timothy Breen of Northwestern University led a seminar for twenty individuals who read primary documents influential in establishing the state of Vermont and discussed how they shaped our political culture. The comparison between Vermont's constitution with a Declaration of Rights that forbids slavery with documents from early Virginia highlighted the independent spirit of early Vermont.

Secret Stories from the 1920's



Did anyone in your family ever engage in the secret activities of the world of rum running, line houses or speak easies? Two generations ago, from 1921-1933, during the time of prohibition, many Vermonters (as well as many other US citizens) defied the law for the first time: some for personal pleasure and others either to make a quick buck or to feed their family. Come to Fellowship Hall **at 2 PM on Sunday, March 25** when Scott Wheeler, author of *Rumrunners and Revenuers, Prohibition in Vermont*, will share with us both the history of prohibition and stories of Vermonters whose lives were influenced by it. And, if there are some stories from your family, this will be wonderful time to share them. Scott is owner and publisher of *Northland Journal*, a monthly journal with stories of the Northeast Kingdom.

President's Corner



Greetings to each of you from your new President. I am honored and excited to be stepping into this challenge with its wonderful legacy of a decade of leadership by Jenny Stoner. She has taken our Society far and I hope to continue helping us move forward.

In the last year I've had the opportunity to attend board meetings and get to know the society's leadership. Their passion and energy for the GHS helped me decide to accept this position, knowing I could count on both board and membership. Another motivation was learning that this hard-working group also has wonderful sense of humor and enjoys having fun.

So what do I bring to the Society? I, too, share a passion for history, especially for local history. I am proud to have grown up here in Greensboro on a multi-generational family farm. I went to school here, graduating as a member of one of the last classes at Greensboro High School. When I left, I took with me a rich heritage. My education continued at The College of New Jersey in Nursing at Rutgers University with a Masters Degree in Nursing and at the University of Alabama in Birmingham where I earned a Doctorate in Nursing. I love working with people and helping them to get better; nursing has opened many doors for me to do this. The many positions in nursing that I have held include administration, clinical work and research. My favorite was as an officer doing research with the National Institutes of Mental Health testing medications referred to by numbers and letters that have now been given names and are widely used. Nursing is based on the preciousness of life, and so is history.

Where would I like to take Greensboro Historical Society? My goal is to lead and support this Society in its continuing preservation and sharing of our history. I would like to see the Society grow so we share our history with all members of the Greensboro Community, with visitors and beyond. We should also expand our outreach to youth, nurturing their interest in local history and helping them learn how to preserve and share their heritage with others.

While there are many challenges facing the president of any local organization these days, I feel honored to have been chosen to lead this group as together we bring our past into the present, preserving it for future generations.

Dr. Ernest D. Lapierre

Did you know?

- At one point 180,000 tons of ice from Caspian Lake were harvested in a few weeks in January
- The first school in Greensboro opened in the summer of 1794 in Aaron Shepherd's barn
- The town's public records were lost in a fire in 1831

To learn more interesting facts about our town, go to GHS website greensborohistoricalsociety.org and peruse *Glimpses of History*.

The Hill Homestead Exhibit

The Hill family artifacts donated to GHS by Lewis and Nancy Hill have been assembled in the new exhibit space to replicate rooms in their farm. The parlor features a spinning wheel, an organ, a blanket chest, a clock and Ephraim's backgammon board from his Civil War years. The kitchen, pantry and buttery display butter churns and presses, wooden bowls, bottles, cutlery, cookware, cream cans, egg cartons (all of which survived in the barn at the homestead). Tools of the diverse trades mastered by Ethan Hill are displayed in the workshop: a cobbler's bench with shoe lasts, and general tool chest, snowshoe forms, and a cooper's bench and barrel staves. As one moves to the barn area, harnesses, pig scalding vat, rakes, hoes, shovels, sugaring equipment, wheels are ready for inspection. Several unidentified objects provide hours of guessing by visitors (we don't know the answers, either). Most of their tools were made by a member of the Hill family: as Lewis used to say: "when they needed it, they made it."

At the exhibit opening in June members of the Hill family outlined their connections on a family tree and compared notes on the exhibit time line. The history of the Hill family is the history of the town: settling, thriving and surviving with their inventiveness during hardship and the social upheaval of wars and natural disasters, and founding their modern day enterprises.

By Willie Smith

Recent Acquisition

Neil and Maggie Burnham organized a gift from their family of a beautiful cherry display case that their father, James Burnham, used to store his collection of ocean liner menus. At present it displays Greensboro maps in the front room at GHS. Thank you Burnhams!

Meet Our Newest Board Members

Clay Simpson retired in 2002 after a long career in international banking and took up the career which he had always desired--studying and writing about American history. His

first book was based upon the letters in a family scrapbook and tells the story of his great grandmother, Josephine Clay and her pioneering management in 1890 of a thoroughbred horse farm in Kentucky. The book led to a museum exhibit and a public television program. He was awarded the Order of Merit by the Kentucky Historical Society in 2005.

Clay lives in Hanover, NH with his wife Kitty and spends summers in Greensboro. He is a regular contributor to the *Hazen Road Dispatch* and a member of its editorial review board. He is currently writing an article for the 2012 issue: "Memories of Greensboro's Scholar and Philanthropist, Mansfield Freeman."



Eleanor McQuillen moved to the Greensboro area following a long and distinguished medical career, including 12 years service as the chief medical examiner of Vermont. She first came to Greensboro with her future husband, Jim McQuillen, and his family who

always summered here, renting different cottages. She, Jim and their five children continued that tradition and the love of Greensboro.

Her love of history started from a childhood in historic Weymouth, MA and her interest in genealogy from an Elderhostel program in Salt Lake City. She is now having lots of fun working on a family genealogy. Eleanor now lives history in one of her two historic school houses: Cobb Schoolhouse in Hardwick or Craftsbury Village schoolhouse. Every summer she meets vacationing Cobb School (Hardwick) classmates who love to visit their 'old school' on Bridgman Hill Road @ Cobb School Road.

Archaeology Comes to Greensboro

Did you know that GHS assisted in the search for the legendary Blockhouse? In July of 2010 an archaeological team, led by Dr. Jill Baker, Executive Director of Archaeological Horizons, Inc., identified a site along Lake Shore Road which shows promise of being that of the blockhouse.

On-going and extensive research, which began with a preliminary excavation season in 2011, is required to positively identify the site. During this season GHS provided some logistical support including dinners for the dig team! Surveyor Tim Short and his wife Deborah Holmes helped lay out the grid, which is a prerequisite to the archaeological process. The team's work was rewarded with the discovery of a late 18th/early 19th century structure, the possible location of a well and other signs of human habitation during that period.

Definitive identification of this as the site of the Blockhouse must await further investigation. Archaeological Horizons is planning to return for a further field season in 2012 and is preparing the details of a longer term project and budget to support it in the event that the site proves to be more than an old ruin. Further questions may be directed to Jill Baker at archaeologicalhorizons@gmail.com.

A full report on the dig, including photos, is available for reading at the GHS building.

Thanks for Special Gifts

GHS expresses deep appreciation to Stephanie Herrick who established *The Ann Slack (a founder) Garden Fund* in honor of her mother. The interest of the fund is to be used by GHS, and this summer Stephanie personally restored the Anne Slack Day Lily garden in front of the building and has offered to continue to maintain it.

We also want to express belated thanks to Tim, Susan and Sarah Breen for their gift in 2007 in honor George Edward and Mary Elizabeth Breen. This has been used for the last four years to care for the side day lily garden.

As you think about year end giving, please remember Greensboro Historical Society at Box 151, Greensboro, VT 05841

Acquisition Committee
The work that goes on all year

Cathy Wilkinson, Debbie Kasper, Willie Smith, Nancy Hill and Ercel Harvey gather weekly to carry out the basic work of an historical society. This fall they have been acquisitioning, carefully recording the relevant facts of each item, the artifacts of the Hill Homestead collection. As they work, items spring to life; one of these, the Aaron Hill (1785-1869) account book, has been providing hours of pleasure. The work of the self-sufficient farmer and craftsman of the early 19th century described here will be the subject of an article by Paul Wood in the 2012 *Hazen Road Dispatch*.

An ongoing project is the compilation of obituaries by Janet Long in *The Record of the Memorial Garden in Greensboro, Vermont In honor of those, both winter and summer residents, whom we remember with admiration and affection*. The garden was planted in 1946. The record, now 6 volumes long, is being indexed by the committee.

We also want to complete our collection of *Greensboro Lake and Farm* maps started by William P. Kelly in 1938, often updated by the Lyles, and presently being revised by Greensboro Association volunteers. We have "*Lake*": 1938, 1944, 1945, 1947, 1957, 1960, 1963, 1966, 1973, 1975, 1980, 1984, 1988, 2001, 2007, 2009; and *Farm* or "*Town of Greensboro*": 1960, 1969, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988, 2001, 2009. Please look under those layers of maps on the walls of your cottages and see if you have any of our missing years you would like donate.

GHS Newsletter

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