



GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NUMBER 37
Spring 2012

NEWSLETTER

GHS Calendar Summer 2012

June 30—Sept 1
Exhibit Hours
Tues, Wed, Thurs 10-1
Sat. 10-12

Saturday, June 9
Barn Raising at the
Old Stone House
Brownington

Saturday & Sunday, June 16-17
10-5 each day
Vermont History Expo
Tunbridge Fair Ground

Sat. June 30 3-5
Opening of Exhibit
The Hill Legacy
&
Scenes of Childhood
Murals by Anne Mattill

Monday, July 9, 7:30
Greensboro Fire Department
the first hundred years
Presented by a Fire Department panel
Fellowship Hall

Monday, July 16, 2-3:30
Vermont in the Civil War
Seminar presented by Daniel Metraux
Greensboro Free Library

Monday, July 23, 2-3:30 0
Vermont in the Civil War
Seminar presented by Daniel Metraux
Greensboro Free Library

Saturday, August 4, 2-4
Ice Cream Social &
Old Time Games

Monday, August 13, 7:30
GHS Annual Meeting
The Very First Vermonters
The Early Abenaki
Robert G. Goodby
Fellowship Hall

Saturday, September 1, 10-2
GHS Annual Book Sale
Lyles Garage

Greensboro Fire Department *the first hundred years*

Anyone who has had their house or barn catch fire has a deep appreciation for our local fire department, for their prompt response to calls and the effective way they contain the blaze whenever that is possible. On Monday, July 9 at 7:30 Fire Chief Junior Salls and other members of the Greensboro Volunteer Fire Department will share stories of both how this group of volunteers trains to be ready for dealing with disasters and stories about specific fires. If you have seen photos of firefighters with icicles hanging from a beard or sweat pouring down one's face, you understand that this is no job for sissies, but one that requires dedication and expertise.



Greensboro Fire Department fighting the fire at Salmon's Store in
Greensboro Bend circa. 1914

Come to hear how the fire fighting equipment, training and organization have changed over the years, when women first joined the department, the nature of many non-fire emergencies to which the department responds and much more. There will also be photos of some memorable fires. While the way the department works has evolved over the years, and much is different from 1912, the dedication of our firefighters to saving lives and property of townspeople has remained the heart of the department.

President's Corner

By *Wilhelmina Smith*



When I moved to Greensboro 32 years ago I had never lived in a small rural town. I could find few connections to what I knew: Amsterdam, Houston, and the metropolises of Portland, Me and Burlington, VT. I started reading Dorothy Canfield Fisher. I researched the history of Highland Lodge. I taped Dorothy Ling, Donald Drown, Lora and Bernie Atherton, Cleora Collier, Ted and Ida Perron, Helen Lyles, John Allen. After each of these taping sessions or after each research session in the town hall I walked outside as through a time warp into the Greensboro of today.

I had never lived in a place where history is so palpable. Because the town is so small and families live here for generations one feels a continuity lost in larger places. This is what I value. This is what the Greensboro Historical Society values. This newsletter is part of that history.

What They Left Behind Come to Tunbridge to See

In honor of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, the overall theme of the Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge is this period of our history. Greensboro Historical Society will participate with selected items from our exhibit that show life at home under the title *What They Left Behind*, sharing some of our priceless artifacts from the Hill Legacy collection along with some letters and other specifically Civil War items. The fair, open from 10-5 on **Saturday and Sunday, June 16 & 17**, features exhibits from 150 local historical societies, along with many special exhibits, reenactments, hands on demonstrations, musical and other programs. For more information, visit the History Expo tab on the VHS website <http://www.vermonthhistory.org/>.

Hazen Road Dispatch our unique treasure

Did you know that Greensboro Historical Society journal, HRD is as old as the historical society itself and that we are the only Vermont society to have published a journal continuously for 37 years? This distinguished journal is a special part of our historical society with original articles and stories that relate the unique history of our town and area. We encourage all readers, members and friends, to be sure to get your copy for only seven dollars, available at GHS or Willey's.

Available in early June, this year's issue of the *Hazen Road Dispatch*, dedicated to the memory of former editor Sally Fisher, has lots of articles of historic importance. Paul Wood has studied Aaron Hill's account book (1809-1868), which reveals that Hill was a man of many trades. He gave his sons this advice: "Do your work so men won't curse you for it after you have gone." Clay Simpson's carefully researched piece about Mansfield Freeman and his legacy to Vermont is a delight to read. First-time contributor Neal Burnham writes about his uncle, William Allman, a friend of the Freemans and another long-time summer person born in China. Pat Haslam has done extensive work on Greensboro's earliest families who settled on what we now call Lake Shore Road. Pat's niece, archaeologist Jill Baker, has written about the Blockhouse project which she began in the summer of 2010. Along with pieces by long-time contributors Daniel Métraux and Charlie Morrissey, this issue promises to be a stimulating read.

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.

Hill Family Legacy Summer Exhibit Part I

GHS exhibit hall will continue to display the Hill Family Legacy with our extensive collection that shows life in early Greensboro. The display has been enhanced and we are offering a delightful way for young and old alike to experience it more completely. We have developed questions for fun and for a contest to help you appreciate what life was like.

Below is a sampling of the questions to whet your appetite. When you go to the exhibit, please pick up a list of questions (there's a special list for children) and see how many you can find answers for. Completed questionnaires can be submitted and at the end of the summer we will have a drawing of those with correct answers. The prize will be one of the rare hard cover copies of our Greensboro History for adults and a Greensboro tee shirt for kids.

What did Aaron Hill charge for charge for killing and dressing a calf?

Which Hill fought in the Civil War?

How much was Aaron Hill's estate worth at his death?

What does a cooper do?

Name 3 toys in the exhibit.

What was happening in the world when Peleg Hill came to Greensboro?

List 10 things the Hills made at home.



The living room of the Hill home

Of course the exhibit continues to be of interest to the casual viewer, but we invite you to accept the challenge and have fun with the questions to gain a deeper appreciation of the diverse life of these early Hills.

The Very First Vermonters The Early Abenaki

When we talk about the early days of Vermont, we think of those who came here just over 200 years ago, bringing with them the customs and ideas of Europe. No one has found evidence of settlements of Native Americans precisely in Greensboro, but findings in neighboring New Hampshire shed light on what they most likely were like.



Robert Goodby, Archaeologist

On Monday, August 13 at 7:30 PM we have the honor of learning about the life of the Abenaki starting in the Ice Age from Archaeologist Bob Goodby (son of Bob Goodby of Craftsbury). An associate professor of Anthropology at Franklin Pierce University, Dr. Goodby directs the Monadnock Archaeological Project, a long-term program of archaeological field research focusing on the prehistory of the upper Contoocook and Connecticut River valleys of southwestern New Hampshire. To date, the project has conducted excavations at four Native American sites, uncovering evidence of hundreds of generations of settlement.

Ice Cream Social

As you check the calendar of GHS events, you'll notice that the Ice Cream Social will take place August 4 instead of the traditional time in July. With the Independence Day celebration moved to July 7 many events were competing with each other the second weekend in July, so we decided to move the fun. Be sure to come August 4 from 2-4 for delicious ice cream in front of the GHS building and Old Time Games for children.

Book Sale September 1

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 September 1 Annual GHS Book Sale.

Scenes of Childhood Summer Exhibit Part II

Scenes of childhood designed over a period of 25 years by the late Anne Waterman Mattill will be a featured special exhibit this summer at the Greensboro Historical Society in the former library portion of the building.

Anne was devoted to Greensboro from an early age, spending part of almost every summer here until her death September 2, 2011. Her grandfather, Josiah Votey, built one of the first five summer cottages in Aspenhurst in 1897 and was a founding member of the Greensboro Country Club. Anne's father was Earle Waterman, who received his engineering degree from UVM and married Florence Votey, Josiah's daughter. Constance Votey (author of "Growing Up with Aspenhurst") was a favorite aunt.

Anne studied art at Carleton College and the University of Iowa, as well as early childhood education at Tufts University. Her marriage to John Mattill took her to the Boston area and they settled in Concord, where her artistic talent and interest in child development made a first public appearance during the years she dressed the windows of the town's famous Toy Shop. When she spotted a 4 x 10-foot blank wall above a bookcase in the children's room of the Concord Library, she found her next challenge. She designed a mural for Book Week, an annual library-sponsored event.



Children enjoying outdoor activities



Read on a rock with a dog

That mural, a cut-paper collage, turned out to be the first of a 25-year series of monthly murals on the wall (nine months and one for the summer). They were inspired by children's lives in Concord, by the town's history and its natural resources, and most important, by books. The series became an institution for library-goers and generations of parents in the town.

The Mattills saved photographs of over 75 per cent of those murals and the pictures have been scanned and restored by Electa Tritsch of Concord. This summer the scenes that speak best to childhood and summer in Greensboro will be on exhibit here. Children's activities are part of the show, and the Greensboro Library will be featuring books included in Anne's images.

Barn Raising

On June 9th you will have the chance to participate in a real Vermont Barn Raising at the Old Stone House Museum in Brownington. They will rebuild the historic barn that Alexander Twilight constructed shortly after he constructed the stone dormitory for the first secondary school in the county in 1836. The old barn deteriorated and was taken down 1924, just before the Old Stone House opened as a museum of Orleans County history. Now, 88 years later, it will rise again, to become the site of the Old Stone House Farm Museum.

Madeline Gebbie *Celebrating Seventy Years of Community Service*

By H. Clay Simpson

Madeline Gebbie received her first job offer as the new “home economics” teacher at Greensboro High School in 1941. She was well qualified. Graduating valedictorian of the Peoples Academy in Morrisville, she was one of the few students who went on to study at the University of Vermont. She earned a BS in Agriculture and paid for her college expenses by operating a summer camp for the children of UVM professors at her family’s Morrisville farm.

Her mother and father, Dorris and Clifton Greaves, operated a home delivery service for milk in Morrisville where she grew up. She remembers driving to Greensboro for the first time. When she descended the hill from Hardwick and saw Caspian Lake she was overwhelmed by its beauty. She wanted to live and work in this town. The teaching job was gladly accepted.

When World War II began in December 1941 many young men volunteered, and Madeline was one of the three remaining teachers at Greensboro’s K-12 school. In addition to “home ec,” she began teaching senior English, French, Latin, chemistry, U.S. history and music for all grades. After school, she enjoyed playing the piano with her student Phyllis Hurst at school dances and served as music counselor at summer camps in the area. She began serving as the librarian for the community, organizing the books by the Dewey Decimal System. And she became an active member of the Greensboro United Church of Christ.



Anne Harbison recalls that all Greensboro citizens of a certain age have something in common. At the time of a birth, Madeline added the baby’s name to a “cradle roll” at the church. Newborns received gifts for their first two birthdays; Madeline delivered a homemade cake in the shape of an animal. After twenty-one years of baking and delivering cakes from the 1950s to 1970s, Madeline went on to other projects.

United Church members in the 1950s recall that she taught Rev. David Travers enough Latin to speak the liturgy correctly. She played the organ at the Church and took on many volunteer projects. Her specialty was difficult jobs no one else wanted; for example, organizing food and deserts for 100 members at Christmas or July fourth celebrations. Her success allowed her to be “outspoken” on occasion when members did not help.

Madeline received the Governor’s Award for Outstanding Community Service in 1991 and the Greensboro Award the following year. Some of the projects she was working on at that time:

- Executive Board of Volunteers for Waterbury State Hospital for the mentally ill where she had worked since 1972
- State Chairman of the Remembrance Project at the hospital to support patients without friends or family
- Organizer of a Kazoo Band that for eight years entertained monthly at area nursing homes

She was the Greensboro correspondent for the *Hardwick Gazette* for many years and still maintains “awards” files on people in Greensboro who have provided service to the community. After retiring from teaching she founded what she called a “domestic engineering” business providing a cleaning service for 45 Caspian area camps. Her daughter Patsy now manages this business.

She married Donald Gebbie (who predeceased her in 1980) and raised four children: Patsy Mercier, Susan Locke, Donald II (who predeceased her in 2000) and Peter. She has twelve grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren who like to visit “Grammy Madeline.”

Madeline Gebbie lives in a comfortable white house near the Greensboro Post Office where she plays an organ for guests. She believes “education never ends,” and despite the fact she is now legally blind, she uses a digital device allowing her to slowly read four biographies a year. She is often called upon to “solicit” on behalf of community events by telephone.

The Greensboro Historical Society Board voted unanimously to honor this remarkable lady for “her service to the Greensboro community for the past seventy years.”

Seminar on Vermont in the Civil War

Continuing a tradition started by Professor Timothy Breen 2 years ago, Daniel Metraux, professor at Mary Baldwin College is offering a seminar on Vermont in the Civil War. He has compiled a reader of source material that provides insights into both official and personal Vermont perspectives and experiences of this war.

Session I focuses on the time leading up to the war: why Vermont joined so enthusiastically, expectations of soldiers enlisting early, and experiences of the first days of the war, both at home and as reported by soldiers.

Session II will look at the impact of the war as it dragged on, both at home and on the field. It will also touch on some of the long-term impact on Vermont including the high mortality rate of soldiers and later emigration west of many who "saw the world" while away. A local connection presented in the *Soldiers' Record: Town of Craftsbury* tells of individual soldiers, where and how long they served, and whether they died or came home, giving a particularly poignant picture of the tremendous impact of the war on our communities.

The seminar will meet Monday afternoons July 16 and 23 from 2:30 – 4:00 at the Greensboro Free Library. To reserve a place email to jennystoner@gmail.com or sign up at the GHS meeting July 7 or any day at the building. A suggested donation of \$25 will benefit the historical society.

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GHS Newsletter

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