



GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

Highlights of Summer 2015

The founders of Greensboro Historical Society nearly 40 years ago would probably be shocked to know how active the Society has become, especially in summer. The reception that opened the “Health Care” exhibit in late June is typical. An overflow crowd, including the Hardwick Rescue Squad members with their truck, came to the museum to explore the new exhibit and honor Dr. Mark Lichtenstein who retired after many years of service in the Health Center and Nursing Home. The Society presented him with a Dolgo Apple Tree, which was later planted at the Greensboro Nursing Home with a plaque. A few days later, Kyle and Andrew Gray pulled the Society’s buggy in the town’s Fourth of July parade.



Andrew & Kyle Gray with GHS buggy in parade

The daylily bank and the Ann Slack garden were in full bloom on the warm, sunny August Saturday when Greensboroites flocked to the building again for the annual Ice Cream Social, attracted by ice cream sundaes, visits with friends, and a “yard sale” of items the society was no longer using. Every item was gone before evening!



Willie Smith introducing the panel from left to right: David Allen, Chip Troiano, Judy Carpenter, & Elke Schuman

The Annual Meeting in Fellowship Hall mirrored the VT Historical Society’s current exploration of the 1970’s: “The Hippie Era in Greensboro”. Elka Schuman of Bread and Puppet, David Allen of Hazendale, Judy Carpenter, retired local teacher, and Chip Troiano, local representative to the VT. legislature discussed those counter-culture years and entertained the audience with tales of their back-to-the-land exploits.

An evening “Under the Tent” program in August sponsored by GAAR and the Society introduced the GHS latest publication: *Forty Years of the Hazen Road Dispatch*. Tim Breen

chaired the discussion with its editorial board:

Gail Sangree, Editor, and Allen Davis, H. Clay Simpson, Patricia Haslam, and Charles Morrissey (Elizabeth Dow and Paul Wood were absent).

On Labor Day weekend, society members arranged multiple wonderful donated books from Janet Long’s garage, where she keeps an ongoing sale for GHS, and served cider and donuts to browsers gathering books for winter reading.

Our volunteer docents welcomed visitors to the museum exhibits-- *The Doctor is In* and *The Hill Exhibit*-- several times a week throughout July and August. Never a dull moment in a Greensboro summer!



Editorial board of HRD: Clay Simpson, Allen Davis, Charlie Morrissey, Gail Sangree, & Pat Haslam with moderator Tim Breen. (missing Elizabeth Dow & Paul Wood)

President's Corner



Several GHS members attended the League of Local Societies and Museums annual meeting in Burlington on October 30th. We applauded Gail Sangree, our Editor par excellence, who accepted the Award of Ex-

cellence for *The Hazen Road Dispatch – 1975-2015* and heard Stuart Comstock-Gay, President of the Vermont Community Foundation, give an inspirational keynote address which I wish you all might have heard.

He focused on the material in Robert Putnam's book *Bowling Alone* with data that shows declining social capital in the U.S., such as loss of membership in traditional civic organizations and decline in involvement in community. The result has been lack of connection, trust, and reciprocity among our citizens. Interestingly, the same issues surfaced last week at the local Hardwick Area community discussion of what makes a community feel "safe".

Comstock-Gay noted that community organizations are essential in building social capital and he praised local historical societies for doing important work to create the fabric of our communities, linking past, present and future.

The talk reinforced my feeling that the goal of our small society goes far beyond that of saving the past. As we meet and work together, we build connection, trust, and reciprocity in ways that time with Facebook, Twitter, etc. cannot. You hard workers and supporters of our society are helping to build a better future for Greensboro.

Nancy Hill
Co-President

Old China Hands In Greensboro: The GHS Exhibit Planned for the Summer of 2016

John Gunther, the famous travel writer and summer resident of Greensboro, in his popular book *Inside Asia* (1939), described Shanghai in the 1930s. "It is the sixth largest city in the world with almost 4,000,000 in population, the chief mart of Chinese trade . . . and the seat of the most grisly factories, the handsomest country clubs, and the finest night-life on earth." The "Old China Hands" in the International Sector of Shanghai during this era included four Greensboro families—the Freemans, Allmans, Hales and Corbetts.

Their descendents will help GHS illustrate life in Old Shanghai and participate in a GHS program in early August. For more details, contact the exhibit organizers Clay Simpson and Allen Davis.

Cemetery Tours

Gina Jenkins led a tour of the Lincoln-Noyes cemetery on Lakeshore Road for the Greensboro Free Library in July. She used the Historical Society resources to find information about the various people buried in the first ten rows. Twenty-eight adults and eight children attended the event and many people have asked for a repeat in 2016. Gina led a second tour for the homeschool group from the library in September. Each child was given a copy of an obituary and asked to find the corresponding stone. They talked about the lives of each person and then the children were shown how to do stone rubbings, using butcher paper donated by Willeys Store. Since then, the homeschool children have been to look at the monuments in a Barre cemetery.

If you would like to receive your newsletter by email, send your email address to secretary@greensborohistoricalsociety.org (The photos are in color! The color version is also available on our website www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org)

Summer Exhibit at the Museum

This summer's exhibit at the Historical Society Museum explored the history of health care in the Greensboro area, from the first recorded surgery to remove frostbitten toes with a mallet and chisel, to the present. It included information on the various physicians, nurses and midwives who have served Greensboro, a history of the Greensboro Hospital Association, and the Hardwick Rescue Squad. Dr. Mark Lichtenstein was honored at the June opening of the exhibit for his 40 years of service to Greensboro and a tree has been planted in his honor at the Greensboro Nursing Home.



Anika Leahy and Brandon Taradif from Mrs. Casavant's 2-3 grade class, ready for patients

In September, we had visits by grades 3 and 4, and grades 5 and 6 from the Lakeview Union School to see the exhibit. The children particularly liked the hospital room display with the patient in the hospital bed and another in a wheel chair. They were also interested in the medicinal herb garden where Willie Smith invited them to smell several of the plants donated by the Glover Historical Society from the garden of Hannah Parker, a midwife who lived in the first Glover settlement at the beginning of the 19th century. The children were able to dress up in hospital scrubs and a lab coat and to play with stethoscopes, ace bandages, and pretend syringes in the doll hospital. BJ Gray provided a fun coloring page of medicinal herbs. A big thank you to all who contributed to the success of this exhibit, including Tom Hurst, the Greensboro Nursing Home, and Dr. Prunty who loaned her model skeleton "Bone-ita."

Winter Program—Water, Lifeblood of Our Town

From Greensboro's earliest days, water -- from the lake, rivers, streams, and clear, pure springs — has shaped the ways we live. Today, lakefront property is considered highly desirable, but did you know that Aaron Hill moved his family from prime lakefront land to North Greensboro in order to have water power for both a grist mill and a sawmill? Everyone knows that the Miller's Thumb building was once a mill, but what was the importance of this mill and the many other mills in town?



One of many millponds around 1901

At the GHS winter meeting on **Sunday, March 6 at 2 PM in Fellowship Hall**, a panel will explore some of the fascinating stories of role of water in our community. What businesses, as varied as ice harvesting in the early 20th century to brewing world class beer today, have been dependent on water? Is recreation the only use of water that attracted our vibrant summer community? When did the town first decide that a village water system was needed and how has the water district evolved? Have you heard details about the new hightech reservoir? Come join us for a an enlightening and delightful afternoon. Do you have a water story to share? If so, please bring it along.

Tom Hurst: Greensboro's Man for All Season

By H. Clay Simpson

Tom writes in 1968 "I was born on November 25, 1952 at the Hardwick Hospital, near Greensboro, Vermont, where many people have family dairy farms or work in the woods but my family operates the Willey's Store." His mother, Phyllis Willey Hurst, and her three children became the fourth generation of storekeepers. His father, Ernest Hurst, grew up in a Finnish community in Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Tom's earliest memories of storekeeping go back to when he was 5 or 6 and wearing a little white store apron made by his grandmother, Gertrude Smith Willey, so he could work with his older brother Robert, bagging purchases for customers.

Tom didn't have to work very hard to be in the top one third of a class of nine students at Greensboro High School and he was a good cross-country runner. He enrolled at Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, NH. Tom enjoyed KUA but decided that he did not want to go to college at another all male school. He attended Bates College in Maine, and he said this was one of his best decisions ever because Merrill, his future wife, was also a student at Bates.

Part of his Bates schooling was a semester in East Harlem in New York City. Mornings he attended NY Theological Seminary and afternoons he taught math at Public School #6. On weekends he volunteered at a local church and explored the city. It was in East Harlem that he decided to change his major from math to psychology and devote his life to serving other people.



After graduating from Bates, Tom entered Andover Newton Theological School in Newton, MA. His seminary training included pastoral work at Boston City Hospital and churches in East Walpole and Natick MA, East Granby, North Haven and Unionville, CT. He also spent a semester studying at The Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland. After receiving his Master of Divinity degree, Tom was ordained in Greensboro and became Associate Pastor at Arlington Congregational Church in Jacksonville, FL. In 1982 Tom was invited to become the pastor of a UCC New Church Start in Melbourne, FL. Over the years, he had been in contact with Merrill. After earning a Masters Degree in Occupational Therapy at Boston University, she joined the staff at Vero Beach Community Hospital down the road from Melbourne. Tom and Merrill were married in August 1983 in West Hartford, CT. Their first child, Emily, was born in Melbourne, in 1985. Their second daughter, Whitney, was born in Doylestown, PA in 1987, while Tom was Pastor of Carversville Christian Church in Bucks County.

Both Tom and Merrill missed their families and the beauty of New England. An opportunity to return to Greensboro came in 1990 when Tom's mother Phyllis said she and Ernie needed help at the store. When Tom and Merrill returned with their family to Greensboro, friends say that Willey's Store became Tom's new church. He always had a friendly greeting for everyone who stopped by, an available and good ear for listening, and at The Willey's Store, you could buy on credit if it was needed.

Tom tells many adventure stories about being a storekeeper. One favorite is the response to five lines of text that ran one day in an article written by Marian Burros, food editor of the New York Times. Her recommendation to readers that they purchase "floursack towels" from The Willey's Store generated thousands of \$25 telephone orders from around the country. A second free number was set up by the telephone company because the local exchange was flooded with calls. But he also tells the story of a tragic loss of the store's hard earned cash reserves when Caledonia National Bank in Danville failed, and an even greater loss when the top executive of TruValue (a hardware cooperative) cooked the books and got away with \$131 million dollars in "accounting discrepancies" from the owners of TruValue Hardware Stores.

When Ernie Hurst died in 1998 Tom picked up the reins at Willey's. In 2000, at age 47, he received the unfortunate news that he had Parkinson's disease. Tom managed the store until 2010 when Parkinson's made it difficult for him to keep up with responsibilities. He continued to provide needed assistance for his aging mother. After her death in 2007, the owners of Willey's Store stock voted to turn over the management of the store to his brother, Robert Matthew Hurst and Tom's paychecks ended on August 30, 2010. The next day, on Sept. 1, 2010, to keep both mind and body functioning, Tom set out to walk around Caspian Lake. Realizing that exercise is a key to battling PD, he set out "every day and in all conditions of weather" for exercise. While walking, he took 55,000 photos of beautiful Caspian Lake and people of the community, picked up trash and trimmed apple trees. Eventually his health forced him to stop after completing 614 walks.

Recently he became active in the Greensboro Historical Society and is now organizing and annotating his photographs. In March 2011 the Town of Greensboro presented Tom with its annual Greensboro Award for "compassion and kindness." He always brought his famous chocolate chip cookies from his grandmother's recipe to town functions.

Tom (con't)

In late October of this year, Tom and Merrill left the store under the capable management of their nephew, Robert Willey Hurst, and move to Trumansburg, NY to be near Emily and Nathaniel and granddaughters Natalie (3) and Edith (2). Whitney and Jeff will visit from their new home in California. Tom and Merrill look forward to their new life, but will cherish their many memories of years in Greensboro, and the wonderful support they have received in this community.

New GHS Trustee



We welcome BJ Gray as the newest member of GHS Board of Trustees. A long-time summer resident, she and her husband Hal are now permanent residents, fulfilling a cherished dream.

BJ credits her Scottish Grandmother Duncan for instilling in her a love of history and genealogy. This love was developed with encouragement from her high school history teacher in Wallkill, New York who introduced her to the Huguenot Historical Society, where BJ gave tours and recatalogued the museum. Her career was based on her love of art. This included teaching art at schools in many locations, including Rutland, VT and acting as docent at the Smithsonian Institution.

While visiting a friend in Tunisia, BJ met Hal Gray, and the rest, as they say, is history. Hal and BJ started their married life in Tunisia, but a year later moved to Bethesda, MD where they raised their two sons Andrew and Kyle (see photo of GHS buggy in July 4th parade). BJ has already made significant contributions to GHS by painting our new Museum sign, and helping with displays and archiving.

GHS AWARDED 2015 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

The Greensboro Historical Society was honored at the League of Historical Societies and Museums Annual Meeting and Conference on October 30th, 2015. In a ceremony presented by the Vermont Historical Society at the historic Congregational Church in Burlington, VT, the GHS was awarded the 2015 Award of Excellence for its Publication, *Forty Years of the Hazen Road Dispatch, 1975-2015*. Gail Sangree, editor, received the award on behalf of the society.



Gail Sangree receives award from Governor Douglas

GHS members Nancy Hill, Clive Grey, Jenny and David Stoner, Wendy Parrish, Anne Harbison, and Lily McAteer and Hardwick Historical Society members Elizabeth (Wiz) Dow and Charlie Morrissey (integral contributors to the book) attended the ceremony in support of Gail and the GHS.

Jim Douglas, former Governor of Vermont and current Interim Director of the Vermont Historical Society, served as Master of Ceremonies for the award presentations. His sense of humor and clear respect for the awardees set the perfect tone for the proceedings. In his introduction, Governor Douglas recognized Nancy Hill for her position as a trustee with the Vermont Historical Society and Charles Morrissey for his years of service as Director of VHS. The League of Historical Societies and Museums Awards, of which there are two types, Awards of Merit and Awards of Excellence, are to “recognize exceptional work in the preservation of history”.

The League awards four categories: publication, preservation, exhibitions, and lifetime achievement.. Governor Douglas noted that the Greensboro Award of Excellence was given for its “scholarly essays and personal reminiscences” “thoughtfully curated,” “showcasing gems of the Hazen Road Dispatch,” and said the judges had “praised the arrangement and editing”. Gail Sangree, in her gracious acceptance, specifically thanked book designer Brian Prendergast for his help both in the designing and choosing of the photographs within the publication, stating that the GHS had “learned so much from him for future publications of the annual Hazen Road Dispatch”. Always looking forward to the future in the preservation of the past!

Lily McAteer

Highlights of GHS Website

Greensboro High School Yearbooks

Gina Jenkins worked with OCI Digital Imaging Services this summer to digitize our collection of Greensboro High School yearbooks. OCI provides digital imaging services to state agencies and other tax-exempt organizations to preserve documents such as newspapers, magazines, images, county records, rare books, college and other annuals, and any other documents needed. The yearbook project was a free service that other historical societies in Vermont have also used. Gina sent all the books for which we had duplicate copies, including 1941, 1943, 1950 - 59, 1960 and 1961, 1964 -1966, and 1968. OCI returned the copies of the yearbooks with two CDs. Tom Anastasio has put them on the GHS website.

Genealogy Project

The genealogy project that was begun last winter by student interns from Lyndon State College is progressing well. Kyle Gray has been hired with a grant from the Greensboro Association to scan and enter material from our genealogy files. Gina Jenkins has been scanning and entering material from the Memorial Garden books. We invite you to go to our website. When you enter a name, you will find any associated newspaper articles or other materials. This will be a long-term project as we have thousands of documents to be scanned. We invite interested volunteers to contact Gina to become involved with this project.

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GHS Newsletter

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