



# GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NUMBER 45  
Spring 2016

[www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org)

NEWSLETTER

## GHS Calendar Summer 2016

### Exhibits

*A River Runs Through It*  
and  
*The Hill Family Legacy*

#### July and August

Tues, Wed, Thurs 10-12, 1-3  
Sat. 10-12

**June 18-19** Vermont History Exposition, *The Power of Water*  
Tunbridge World Fair Grounds

#### Sun. June 25, 4-5:30 PM

Exhibit Opening Reception  
GHS Museum

#### Tues. June 28, 7:00 PM

*Reflections on Writing a Book*  
Timothy Breen  
Co-sponsored by library  
Fellowship Hall

#### Tues. July 12, 10-12

Seminar by Rick Yeiser  
*Caspian Feeder Streams*  
GHS building

#### Thurs. Aug 4, 4PM

*Historic Preservation*  
Dorothy Penar  
Greensboro Free Library

#### Sat. Aug 6, 2-4

*Ice Cream Social*  
GHS lawn

#### Mon. Aug 8 7:30 PM

GHS Annual Meeting and Program  
*Old China Hands*  
with a distinguished panel  
Fellowship Hall

#### Sat Sept 3, 10-2

*GHS Annual Booksale*  
Lyles Garage

## Old China Hands in Greensboro

Talented young people from around the world immigrated to China after the First World War and in the 1930s created a "golden era" of business, art and culture in Shanghai. Four Greensboro families were prominent residents of "Old Shanghai."

At the **GHS annual meeting on Monday, August 8 at 7:30 in Fellowship Hall** a panel of representatives of these families will review their China experiences with a few illustrations and share the circumstances that brought them to Greensboro. The program will be an introduction to our exhibit on *Old China Hands: the Greensboro-Shanghai Connection* being prepared for the summer of 2017. Sponsored by descendants of the four families: Freeman, the Allman-Burnham, Bascom-Hale-Winston and Irwin-Corbett, the exhibit will provide a unique picture of their life in "Old Shanghai".

Family members from far-away places will participate in the discussion in August, including Graeme Freeman from Hawaii and Eliza Burnham from Paris. Other family members have been invited including Neal Burham, June Bascom and Tony Irwin. Local Chinese exchange student Sebastian Zhou will help with the research for the exhibit and plans to travel from China to be in the audience before beginning his Freshman year at Sarah Lawrence College. Join us for a very special evening.



Old China Hands Norwood Allman & Mansfield Freeman relax during a summer evening during the 1970s at Caspian Lake

## Join GHS on Facebook

The Greensboro Historical Society now has our own Facebook page! The page is a helpful way for people to keep track of upcoming events, see videos and pictures of past events, and generally connect with the GHS. Additionally, the page is a wonderful way for those connected to Greensboro to stay in touch. For example, a man whose family used to rent a cottage on the lake in the early 1900's found an old picture of Uncle Hiram's Lodge in a family album. We were able to answer his questions about the Lodge, and, thanks to this connection, to find a previously unseen photo! We currently have 47 people who have officially "liked" our page, so visit and "like" GHS on FB [www.facebook.com/ghsvt](http://www.facebook.com/ghsvt) today!

## President's Corner

### What's News?

By *Wilhelmina Smith*

In a city, a citizen needs to be in a major news story to be part of that city's legend and be included in its history.

In a small town everyone is important; everyone is listened to; everyone affects everyone else.

Small towns in Vermont have very personal local historical societies. Each resident, just by calling Greensboro home or his/her vacation haven, has a place in the archives of our historical society.

If something was reported in the Hardwick Gazette – it is in the Greensboro Historical Society files.

If a person sent out an announcement it could be in the files.

If someone organized an event, it will be in them.

If you played sports at Hazen, or Greensboro High School, or Greensboro Elementary or Lakeview Union the article will be there.

If you wrote a letter to the editor it may be in there.

If you advertized, it may be in there.

If you send us announcements or other news, it will be there.

Remember when there was still a Greensboro and Greensboro Bend Column in the Gazette? Those columns will be in there. Greensboro Awards, Green Sheet summer calendars, Lyles newsletters...all are in our files.

The files are organized by subject – ice cutting, buildings, mills, plays, library, church, hotels, farms, 4-H, etc. Or by people.

The people files are now being scanned and are searchable on our website, [greensborohistoricalsociety.org](http://greensborohistoricalsociety.org). We also have photo and portrait files.

Meeting videos and taped interviews are increasingly downloaded onto the website or in our archives.

And don't forget all the artifacts donated by residents – all acquisitioned and searchable: postcards, store and hotel ledgers, souvenir dishes, Richie Farm butter mold, Drown milk bottles, aprons worn by the Hurst children when they helped fill orders in the store, Hill Farm tools and cobbler's bench, Will Ingalls' sled, Tanguay Garage roller, Willey's Store pen – you name it, if it was made or used in Greensboro we accept it and store it and put it in a data base.

Quickly catch up with the Greensboro stories. We collect original pamphlets, Hazen Road Dispatches, students' school work.

You are part of the history of Greensboro.



## On Writing a Book for a General Audience

*A Conversation with Tim Breen*

Greensboro historian, Timothy Breen, will discuss writing at a workshop on **June 28 at 7 p.m in Fellowship Hall**, co-sponsored by GHS and the Greensboro Library. Breen is a specialist on the American Revolution with a special interest in political thought, material culture, and cultural anthropology. (He is currently working on a study of the American Revolution to be called *Experiencing Revolution* (Harvard University Press).

In discussing the upcoming workshop Dr. Breen states, "Although it would be personally rewarding to praise my own recent book "George Washington's Journey: The President Forges a New Nation", pointing out all the wonderful insights that commentators have overlooked, I shall resist the temptation. Rather, I plan to concentrate my comments on how writers--in this case an historian--actually go about producing a book. This complex enterprise involves



translating basic research into a compelling narrative designed to reach a general audience. I want to explore strategies

of presentation such as the development of a coherent argument, the effective use of examples, and the crafting of a writing style appropriate for intended readers--issues that are easy to take for granted, but which can make the difference between success and failure in the marketplace."

He continues, "During our conversation, I will also examine the curious tensions between readers and writers. Every author hopes to control the reader's response to his/her work, but in fact, readers always have minds of their own. It is interesting, therefore, some six months after initial publication of my latest book, to compare the reactions of the reviewers and the public with those that the author originally intended."

## Tunbridge Expo 2016

### History of Water Power in Greensboro

The Vermont Historical Society hosts a history exposition every other year at the Tunbridge World's Fairgrounds. This year the theme is "H2O – The Power of Water in Vermont History," with over 180 organizations participating.



Norwood Drown at His Saw Mill

There will be demonstrations, re-enactors, a parade each day, food, music, and exhibits from museums and historical societies throughout the state. The Greensboro Historical Society's exhibit will be on the history of the water power and mills that built the community of Greensboro, including grist mills, saw mills, an oat mill and a fulling mill. We look forward to seeing you at the exhibit Saturday, June 18 or Sunday, June 19 in Tunbridge.

### What's New on the GHS Website?

#### Family History Project

Our on-line genealogy tools data base is coming along well, thanks to a 2015 grant from the Greensboro Association and the work of Kyle Gray, Gina Jenkins and Tom Anastasio. We have scanned over 1,400 items and entered over 7,100 names that can be searched from the GHS website. One Greensboro family has spent over three hours exploring the site and reading about their family, even finding a photograph of a great-grandmother that they had never seen. Take a look and see if we have you!

### Our Sense of Place

On **August 4 at 4:00 in the Library**, Dorothea Penar, of Shelburne, Vermont, will speak on "Preserving Our Sense of Place Through Historic Preservation".

Greensboro has many historic areas – buildings that we grew up with and value as the "face" of the town. Many of these areas can be preserved to enhance our Sense of Place. Dorothea Penar has worked with preservation in Shelburne, Vermont, through their planning commission and zoning board. She will have advice for similar efforts in Greensboro.

## Hurst Collection

As the Hurst family moves far and wide, the heritage of the Willey's Store, the familiar anchor store in town, becomes diffuse. Thankfully, Tom Hurst is very much aware of this heritage and his informal stewardship of it.

As he and Merrill prepared to move to Ithaca last fall, Tom called in the Historical Society to help him with the Willey's store artifacts stored in his barn. He asked us to become stewards of this collection and preserve it for the family and for everyone else in town.

Wendy and Bob Parrish and Willie Smith helped Tom identify objects and move them to Historical Society storage. Leslie Rowell archived and stored the objects, which are retrievable through our data base.

Burt Willey bought the store from Randall and Crane in 1900 and a few objects from the previous store are there: the R and C safe was too heavy for our collection but Rob Hurst retrieved it. A bolt of cloth, as pristine as the day Burt Willey took over the store, is in our collection.



Bolt of cloth from Randall & Crane, transferred to Willeys in 1900, now at GHS

We have the post office from the store with some of the residents' names still on the boxes. Many smaller items such as coffee cans, milk bottles, and Phyllis Hurst's clipping album are in the collection. All the clippings about Greensboro have been scanned for our website.

Greensboro History is the story of its people and the historical society is preserving it.

### Summer Exhibit at GHS

Our 2016 exhibit in the front room of GHS, “The River Runs Through It” will include the history of the mills that built Greensboro and Greensboro Bend, the story of the water system in both villages, recreation on water, ice and snow, ice harvesting, maple sugaring, logging, and an ecology corner with some of the creatures that live in our lakes, ponds and streams. We look forward to seeing you, your children and grandchildren.



Map of the early mills in Greensboro

### Protecting Our Collections

In the past 6 months GHS has taken several important steps to protect our archives, artifacts, and building for future generations:

- ◆ Hired Richard Kerschner, Conservation Consultant and former Director of Conservation at Shelburne Museum, to advise us.
- ◆ Installed an automatic fire reporting and low temperature alert system.
- ◆ Purchased two Preservation Environmental Monitors (PEM2) to register temperature and humidity levels upstairs and in the basement, via computer readouts.
- ◆ Installed a dehumidifier that empties outdoors.
- ◆ Purchased a new Miele vacuum cleaner with low suction and HEPA filter to clean archives.
- ◆ Set fire extinguishers, with good signage, at each entrance.

### *In Remembrance*

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Donald Whitcomb Lane          | Clifford B Lake Fletcher      |
| Dorothy Blanche Messier       | Helene B. Champagne           |
| Gailene Brock Richardson      | Mary Ann Jenkins              |
| Ronald A. Ferland             | Jerry R. Colbeth, Jr.         |
| Franklyn Alfred Thompson      | Arlene V. Rich Pecor          |
| William G. Robb               | Josephine (Jo) Ann Van Leuven |
| Nancy Freck Whitten           | Mary Jeanette Durling         |
| Lorraine L. Gomes             | William W. Whitten            |
| John Tillotson Silver         | James C. Cook                 |
| Elizabeth “Betty” Cooke Irwin | Elizabeth Anne Leopold        |
| Kay Elizabeth Charron         | Peter M. Haslam               |

### The Power of Water

The GHS winter meeting provided both an historic introduction to the summer exhibit and a contemporary understanding of the evolution of Greensboro’s current public water system. Jenny Stoner opened the program with some facts about the importance of water mills to early Greensboro. Did you know that the first mill, a saw mill built by Timothy Stanley in 1791, was constructed less than 2 years after the town was settled? And he quickly built a grist mill to grind the grain, both near the outlet of the lake. At the summer exhibit you can learn more about the importance of water power to Greensboro’s first settlers.

The introduction was followed by a most interesting panel of those responsible for the smooth operation of the town’s current water systems: John Mackin, Chair and Operator of the Prudential Committee of Greensboro Fire District #1, Nat Smith, Clerk of the Prudential Committee of Greensboro Fire District #1, and Ernest Machia, Chairman of the Greensboro Bend Prudential Board of Fire District #2. They gave some history of how the district evolved from incorporation in 1912 as a fire district, acquiring land at the top of Baker Hill for reservoirs, and carrying out the primary purpose of providing drinking water for the village.

### *Book Sale September 3*

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 3 Annual GHS Book Sale.

### 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. Your dues of \$20 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.**

## Anne Harbison & Marion Babbie

### Our Famous Nonagenarian Volunteers

By H. Clay Simpson

Anne R. Harbison (95) and Marion L. Babbie (96) have won many awards for their volunteer work. During interviews with these remarkable ladies I found they have quite different backgrounds but hold in common certain values as a result of witnessing the poverty of the Great Depression. Their adult lives have focused on helping other people and improving their community.

#### Anne R. Harbison

The Harbison family was among the early settlers of Buffalo, New York. Anne commented about her upbringing: “we were worthy but not needy.” After enrolling at the University of Vermont, she was forced to drop out in favor of her two brothers. She rebelled by becoming the only Democrat in a large, conservative family. At the age of twenty-five she married Bob Harbison who worked for a Buffalo law firm. Fellow lawyer Barry Mallon introduced the Harbisons to Greensboro in 1957. Later Bob became a corporate attorney for JC Penny & Co. in New York City, and they moved to Ridgewood, NJ. They enjoyed summer vacations in Greensboro with their children Peter, Molly and Kate and bought a Spahr Road camp. When Bob retired in 1976, they purchased a year-round house on Breezy Avenue and became full-time Greensboro residents.

They devoted their talents to helping others in their new community. Bob worked part-time in real estate and delivered senior meals in the area. Anne was a founder of a local chapter of AWARE serving the needs of abused women based at the Episcopal Church in Hardwick. She remembers many difficult trips in the snow to attend court in St. Johnsbury and Newport on behalf of battered women. Bob and Anne together won the Greensboro Award in 1996.

During a ten-year period ending in 1999 Anne worked long summer hours in the pro shop at the Mountain View Country Club, and received its Founder’s Day Award. Her favorite activities included working on the community garden and organizing Greensboro Historical Society (GHS) programs. She was especially proud of an exhibit about the Greensboro women who created a knitting industry threatened by out-of-state unions.

Recently she was honored by Jasper Hill when they named its world-class cheese “Harbison” after “Greensboro’s Grandmother.” The new issue of Greensboro Free Library newsletter tells the story of her 60 years of service. “Appreciating Anne” describes how she raised funds for the new library and created a new garden. She continues to volunteer at the library, church, and the Greensboro Historical Society.

#### Marion L. Babbie

Marion Babbie had a challenging early life that few of us can understand. She grew up in the Stowe area during the Great Depression. Her family could not afford to send her to high school, and she worked throughout her early years. On her own, she finally took a correspondence course to complete high school. She married an auto mechanic and his work assignments caused the family to move frequently. She lived and worked in many small towns in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, spent five years in Hawaii, and twenty years in Marin County, California. She had a long career at the U.S. Department of Housing and Human Development (HUD) organization in California delivering food and essentials to allow seniors to live independently. She worked as a volunteer for nineteen years as supervisor of Marin County elections and received its highest service award. Her favorite volunteer job in California was serving the *Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star* for seven years as Secretary and Treasurer, winning its highest award, “Worthy Matron.”



Marion with award from Marin County



Anne with vase awarded by Mt. View Country Club

Marion moved to a Greensboro apartment in 2002 at the invitation of her cousin Lewis Hill. She was a widow and her famous son, the sociologist Dr. Earl Babbie had a busy life teaching in Arkansas. Today she is in good health, and her activities are the envy of any retiree. Like Anne she sets a fast pace, as she has throughout her life, and has no plans to stop now. She helps with the church newsletter and during the summer hosts visitors, serving as a docent, at the nearby GHS museum. She attends exercise classes and has the following activities: landscape painting (Vermont scenes), knitting, wood carving, pottery making, creating dry flower arrangements, braiding rugs, and baking banana bread. Sunday afternoon finds her watching both the Red Sox and PGA golf on two TVs.

Greensboro Historical Society  
P. O. Box 151  
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"Hiram's Lodge"  
(now Landon's )  
See on Facebook

### ***Hazen Road Dispatch 2016***

After last year's compendium of articles from the first forty years of the *Hazen Road Dispatch*, it is good to know that the well has not run dry. I am happy to report that this year's issue of the *Dispatch* features some writers, well-known in these parts, who haven't previously contributed to our pages. For example, John Stone II has a piece about square-dancing in the 40s and 50s, which will stir fond memories for the older set. Lucile Brink and Jim Sowles write about their cottages on Randolph Road, and Susannah Blachly provides a review of *The Hand of the Small Town Builder*, which has a chapter about Greensboro summer homes. And Jim Fixx's son John has sent us an article his dad wrote in 1983 about a runners' weekend at the Highland Lodge

Familiar stalwarts have also contributed articles about Craftsbury, Greensboro, Hardwick, and Walden. Dan Métraux has written about the East Craftsbury Library, which contains a small museum of artifacts from around the world. Wiz Dow tells us how the work of Hardwick women changed during the granite boom. Paul Wood offers Part One of a close look at late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century inventors from the four towns.

I am grateful that so many of you support this publication.  
Gail Sangree

**If you would like to receive your newsletter by email, send your email address to [secretary@greensborohistoricalsociety.org](mailto:secretary@greensborohistoricalsociety.org)**

#### **GHS Newsletter**

PO Box 151  
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