



GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NUMBER 47
Spring 2017

NEWSLETTER

GHS Calendar Summer 2017

Exhibits

*Greensboro's Old
China Hands
and
The Hill Family Legacy*

July and August

Tues, Wed, Thurs 10:30—
2:30
Sat. 10-12

Sat. July 1, 10-12

Independence Parade
Museum Open

Sunday July 2, 3-5

Exhibit Opening Reception
GHS Museum

Sat. Aug 5, 2-4

Ice Cream Social
GHS lawn

Mon. Aug 7, 7:30 PM

GHS Annual Meeting and
Program

*Stories from Old China
Hands families*

with a distinguished panel
Fellowship Hall

Sat Sept 2, 10-2

GHS Annual Booksale
Lyles Garage

Summer Exhibit Americans in Pre-War China

The Greensboro Historical Society's 2017 summer exhibit will feature four Greensboro families whose ancestors were American citizens who traveled to China in the 1800s and whose succeeding generations were born, grew up and lived in China into the 1940s and left China during the turmoil created by the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s. The focus of the exhibit is the connection that drew these families together both in China and then later as summer and year-round residents in Greensboro. The *Old China Hands in Greensboro* exhibit will show – through photographs, film, documents, artifacts and a map and timeline – what took the Winston/Hale, Corbett, Houghton/Freeman and Allman families to China, how they lived, where they worked, and how world events shaped their lives. The “*Old China Hands in Greensboro*” exhibit will provide an opportunity for residents and visitors of Greensboro and surrounding areas to learn about the lives of families from the community and a slice of what life was like for them in China. The GHS would like to thank the Freeman Foundation for sponsoring the exhibit.



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Old China Hands in Greensboro - Part 2: Life Stories.

Descendants of the Hales, Allmans and Corbetts will share stories of their families uncommon lives growing up in China. June Bascom will talk about the experiences of her mother, Margaret (Hale) Bascom, her mother's family, parents William and Elizabeth (Winston) Hale and brothers Ted and Rich, and their imprisonment in a Japanese internment camp in Shanghai. Eliza Burnham will talk about the experience of her grandfather, Norwood Allman, as a Consular Officer, Assessor on the International Mixed Court and a lawyer in Shanghai. Tony Irwin will talk about the multigenerational experiences of his family; great grandfather Hunter Corbett, a Presbyterian missionary in northern China, and grandfather Ross Corbett and mother Harriett (Corbett) Irwin both born and brought up in China. This panel presentation will provide further insight into the families featured in the Greensboro Historical Society *Old China Hands in Greensboro* summer exhibit.

If you'd like to receive your newsletter by email, send your email address to secretary@greensborohistoricalsociety.org

President's Corner



Asia

As we learn about our Greensboro *Old China Hands* through our summer exhibit and our annual meeting, I am reflecting, from our couch in Yokohama, how Asia has influenced our Greensboro

community over the years. The Chinese dragon marches in the Funky Fourth parade, so incongruous in a rural Vermont village, yet part of our historical society exhibit.

Our first citizen to go to China was Amos Porter, to trade Greensboro ginseng in 1802. Since then many Greensboroites have traveled, worked and studied in Asia.

One of the Old China Hands, Mansfield Freeman, established a Foundation which promotes Asian studies. It is funding our exhibit and in the 1980's it funded an exchange program of rural Chinese and rural American students in a cooperative venture with UVM and Hazen Union School. For a few years, dignitaries from Niu Lan Shan and Hardwick, met on both sides of the world. Then a student and a teacher from Hazen were selected to represent our school. With this, our family was changed forever.

Our son Alex, a boy born in Vermont and raised in Greensboro and Hardwick schools, left with Norma Wiesen and her husband Ron for six weeks in China. It was right after Tianamen Square and they were not given free access at the school or in the countryside, but were driven everywhere. In spite of this, the trip instilled in Alex an interest in Asia, and particularly in language, so that his future was set as he studied Japanese language and culture in college and graduate school and today lives with his Japanese family in Kamakura and runs his own

translating company. He works via internet with his partner in Austin, TX and with his best friend from Craftsbury, Elye Alexander, a writer, who polishes, and edits their translations. Our Japanese grandchildren interpret for us as we go about our daily lives. And I write columns for the Greensboro Historical Society from the other side of the world.

Willie Smith
Co-President

From Our Archives



Post Card dated July 30, 1913

Inscription reads

*Ever your loving friend, and grandmother - Ellen
Elizabeth Kelly Greensboro Vt.*

“Car Talk: The History of Garages in Greensboro”

On March 5th, a panel representing Greensboro and Greensboro Bend spoke about the history of three local garages. Janet Long from Lyles Garage, Tim Nisbet (recently retired) from the Greensboro Garage, and Jacquie Molleur and Anne Hanson from Tanguay Garage spoke about their experiences as either owner/operators or family members thereof.

The panel touched on themes of community-mindedness, generosity, overcoming adversity, and technical expertise. Stories ranged from happy childhoods amidst 24-hour service to responding to mid-winter house calls requesting help for cars that wouldn't start.

Janet Long recalled her family's arrival in Greensboro in 1946 when Breezy Ave was still a dirt road and the gas price was “around 3 gallons per dollar.” Her parents, Helen and Everett Lyles, supplemented their income with sales of Sunday newspapers, ice cream and bait for fishing.

Jacquie Molleur recalled a happy childhood in the apartment above her father's garage in Greensboro Bend. She reflected on the many businesses in Greensboro Bend during a time when many farms were growing potatoes. Emeric Tanguay, her father, was always ‘on-call’ at Tanguay Garage and often traveled to the many local farms to work on-site with farming equipment.

Anne Hanson remembered her grandfather, Emeric “Pepe” Tanguay working on cars outside the shop during all seasons. Emeric was a masterful welder, a trade he learned from John Heidger after buying his garage in 1948. Anne also read-aloud from Robin Cappuccino's colorful remembrance of her grandfather.

Tim Nisbet reflected on the founding of Greensboro Garage, from the lineage of previous owners to the near-current incarnation that he and Chris Day started in 1971 (with Steve Ferber joining in 1974). Tim recounted several amusing stories that reflected the business and life of a small-town mechanic and foreign car expert...from taking a break while rebuilding a BMW engine in order to fix a neighbor's boot, to speaking about a collection of objects and photos from over the years.



Panelists: Janet Long, Tim Nisbet, Anne Hanson and Jacquie Molleur

Opening Reception July 2, 3-5



Willie Smith and Martha Niemi welcome guests to an exhibit opening - Plan to come July 2, 3-5 PM

In Remembrance

Helen Bean Wheeler	Robert J. Pickett, Sr.
Patricia Bixby McHugo	Anne Pinkney
George Haynes Bickford	Peter W. Roudebush
John Raymond Collier	Lorraine D. Tolman
Gordon Marshall Richardson	David S. Perham
Robert Goodwin Olmstead	Ruth Vogan Carr
Jennifer Calloway Thorne	David Alfred Massey
Constance Alfriend Peterson	Marshall C. Howard
Catherine Perry Wilkinson	Ercel Perry Harvey

Special Thanks

GHS will miss all our friends listed above. We give special thanks for the countless contributions to GHS of former president Anne Pinkney, former secretary Cathie Wilkinson and former board member Ercel Harvey. All three dedicated many, many hours to helping with exhibits, archiving and otherwise supporting GHS

Greensboro's Master of Modern Art: An Update

By H. Clay Simpson

Glenn D. Lowry, the sixth director of the Museum of Modern Art vacations in Newport, Vermont, and for exercise he occasionally bikes twenty-five miles to and from Greensboro, where the founding director of his museum, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. once lived. Perhaps it was on one of these trips to Greensboro that he decided to honor Barr by using his famous graphic chart presenting the relationship between modern artists and art movements as the basis for a new exhibition.

Barr created his first graphic chart in 1928 when he was twenty-six years old and teaching a course in modern art at Wellesley College. He spent the summer in Greensboro preparing the course content, and it was unique. All nine students in the class were referred to as "faculty," making each responsible for mastering and teaching a part of the course. The course focused on painting, but Barr used a chart to illustrate how modern painting had changed over the years as part of the culture of society. The enthusiasm of Dr. Sachs (of Goldman Sachs) at Harvard for Barr's teaching skills encouraged Mrs. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and her friends to make a controversial choice. He was selected to be the first director of the Museum of Modern Art.



The museum began with a gift of eight prints and one drawing displayed in rented rooms on Fifth Avenue and 57th Street. After only a few months he successfully arranged an exhibit in this small space titled "Painting in Paris." The artists were controversial and new to the New York museum world—Picasso, Matisse and Van Gogh. According to some critics, it was "degenerate art," but there were long lines of students outside the building on Fifth Avenue waiting for entry.

After several years of well attended but small exhibits, he organized his first major exhibition "Cubism and Abstract Art" in 1936 described by art textbooks as "a monumental achievement." The catalogue written by Barr includes his famous chart illustrating how abstract artists have been influenced by a series of movements. In 1939 the museum opened its permanent home on West 53rd Street.

Spending his summers in Greensboro, Alfred Barr, Jr. designed and built a camp for his parents Rev. and Mrs. Alfred Barr Sr. who came to Greensboro in 1915 when Alfred Jr. was 13. He built a smaller home for his family with a one room "Think House." It was here that he wrote his famous book "What is Modern Painting" revising it several times after receiving comments from neighbors at the lake. He created the famous trademark MoMA despite what one board member wrote: "A. H. Barr is losing his sight and mind in Greensboro..." After many years at the museum, he retired in 1967. Alfred and Marga Barr are buried at the Lincoln-Noyes Cemetery on Lake Shore Drive. Their tombstones were designed by close friend, architect Phillip Johnson.

In 2010, Glen Lowry at MoMA adapted Alfred H. Barr's chart for a new exhibition, *Inventing Abstraction: 1910-1925* (December 2012-April 2013). Today, Tate Modern in London presents counterarguments focusing on an art world influenced by individual painters and societal changes.

Andrew (Tony) Barr remembers his uncle's advice: "ignore the opinion of others and develop your own impression of a work of art over a long period of time. A painting I select for the museum always impacts me a different way each time I see it."

Archaeological Horizons, Inc.

By Jill Baker

Preparations for the publication of Archaeological Horizons', *The Greensboro Blockhouse Project: An Historical and Archaeological Investigation in Greensboro, Vermont*, are currently underway! From 2010-2015 Archaeological Horizons' archaeological micro-team investigated a site considered to be that of the fabled Revolutionary War period blockhouse in Greensboro, VT. This one volume publication aims to share the data and results of these investigative seasons with donors and supporters, the local community, and wider archaeological and scholarly communities.

The first chapter of the book will discuss the evidence that led us to consider the site as that of the blockhouse. Subsequent chapters will include a discussion of the history of blockhouses in general; a description of the architectural remains and stratigraphy; a discussion of the artifacts, comparative analyses of the artifacts and the architecture; and the development and composition of the early post-war neighborhoods. The final chapter will offer a presentation of our preliminary conclusions. Though by no means extensive or exhaustive, the work completed at the site thus far has been instrumental in helping to identify the forgotten location of the blockhouse. By sharing this raw data, we hope to make a useful contribution toward understanding the history of the Greensboro blockhouse, those who inhabited the structure and the early settlement of the town. Overall, we hope that by identifying the location of the blockhouse, future generations will not forget its whereabouts or significance and will endeavor to preserve the remains.



Pat Haslam & Jill Baker work on the book

Greensboro Historical Society's FaceBook Page Update

The Greensboro Historical Society has a discussion page on Facebook. Please feel free to post any historical photos and stories that you may have. Help us to collect and share our collective memories to paint a more colorful picture of our history...and to keep our history alive and growing! Find us now by searching for "Greensboro Historical Society - Vermont" on Facebook, www.facebook.com/GHSVT.

Barr Exhibit September 2017

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts announced that their new exhibit: *Partners in Design: Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and Philip Johnson* will be open from September 7, 2017 to December 9, 2017 at NYU's Grey Art Galley at 100 Washington Square in New York. "The exhibit will spotlight the development of American modern design and the collaboration between Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (1902-1981) and Philip Johnson (1906-2005), MoMA's first curator of architecture and how these visionaries spread the ideas of modern design and architecture at MoMA." The catalog and exhibit will include Alfred Barr's design for his family home in Greensboro.

Membership Renewal Time

Now is the time to become a new member of Greensboro Historical Society or to renew your membership and make a donation to help preserve Greensboro's unique past. Your dues of \$20 give 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.**

Annual Book Sale

Now's the time to look through your books and choose some you have enjoyed that would be perfect to pass on. Books can be delivered to Janet Long's garage across the street from Willey's anytime. Volunteers are needed to sort and arrange books two weeks before. Can you help?

Hazen Road Dispatch

This year's Hazen Road Dispatch has a varied assortment of pieces, some by new writers, on topics relating to Greensboro, Hardwick, Craftsbury, and Walden. The lead article concerns the flood of 1927 and its effects on Greensboro and Hardwick.

We also have a memoir by an 89 year old woman who summered in the Barre camps with her grandparents from 1930-1941, and a research article about Jabez Pinney whose stereoptical photo by Charles Goodrich shows the Pinney family standing proudly in front of their home in 1880. The new issue should be available in early June at Willeys and at the GHS building.



Sam Daniels with furnace he designed ca. 1916
(Learn more in HRD article by Paul Wood)

GHS Newsletter

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GHS Ice Cream Social
Coming August 5, 2-4 PM