



GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NUMBER 35
Spring 2011
NEWSLETTER

GHS Calendar Summer 2011

Friday, July 1, 4-6

Opening of Exhibit

The Hill Legacy

One Family's Early Greensboro

Exhibit Hours

Tues, Wed, Thur 10-1

Sat. 10-12

Saturday, July 9, 2-4

Ice Cream Social &
Old Time Games

Monday, July 11, 7:30

*Why Does Greensboro Claim
Timothy Hinman?*

Presented by Gail Sangree
Fellowship Hall

Monday, July 18, 2-3:30

*Greetings from Greensboro: a slide show of
historic post cards*

Presented by Kevin Johnson
Greensboro Free Library

Monday, July 25, 2-3:30 PM

*Imagining Vermont at the Moment
of Statehood*

Seminar led Tim Breen
GHS Building

Wednesday, July 27, 10:00-noon

*Gathering Memories of
Miss Jean Simpson*
Led by Laura Akin Driver
GHS Building

Monday, August 8, 7:30PM

GHS Annual Meeting

*Sing Me Back: Vermont's History as Sung by
Those Who Lived It*

Presented by Walter Woodward
Fellowship Hall

Saturday, September 3, 10-2

GHS Annual Book Sale
with coffee and doughnuts
Lyles Garage

Music and Vermont History

For our winter program, *Vermont History Through Song*, singer and researcher Linda Radtke joined by pianist Arthur Zorn brought Vermont history to life, singing and providing commentary about the songs found in the Vermont Historical Society's collection of sheet music. Their delightful program introduced the appreciative audience to songs written for special historical events, starting with the Revolutionary War up through a catchy political jingle for Calvin Coolidge: Keep Cool (a Vermont soft drink), Keep Coolidge.



Linda Radtke and Arthur Zorn perform for
winter program

Sing Me Back

Walter Woodward, official state historian of Connecticut, returns to Greensboro to bring us a different, and equally delightful, perspective on the history of Vermont music entitled: *Sing Me Back: Vermont's History as Sung by Those Who Lived It*. A professor at University of Connecticut, Woodward is both a scholar and entertainer, as evidenced by the two Grammy Awards he has won. He is currently writing a book on early American folk music.



Walter Woodward

His talk is based on Vermont's premier collection of folksongs and ballads. Woodward reminds us that in 1930, Helen Hartness Flanders of Springfield, Vermont, daughter of a former Governor of Vermont and a trained musician, was appointed by the Vermont Commission on Country Life to spearhead a project to document the traditional music of Vermont. Over the next thirty years, she documented over 4800

folksongs and ballads sung by native Vermonters and other New Englanders. Today the Helen Hartness Flanders Ballad Collection at Middlebury College is recognized as one of the nation's great archival collections of New England folksong, folklore, and balladry.

Using materials from this collection, Walter Woodward will combine his abilities as a historian with his musical talents as a former hit songwriter and award-winner music composer to bring to life tales from Vermont's history in story and in song. This is a program not to be missed!

President's Corner

by Jenny Stoner



Our building is completed; a dedicated team is working hard to properly acquisition our new collection and to mount an engaging exhibit; we have an exciting program planned for the summer. This is a time to celebrate.

And yet, as I write this, GHS still has one difficult challenge. Access to the rear of the building is being denied. Many of you are aware that \$10,000 was added to the cost of construction because we were blocked from using the "Old Perrin Road" access to the rear and side of the building. We now need to protect the bank and properties down the hill from us and to complete landscaping. This can be done only from the access road between us and Willey's Store. In addition this access is needed to move things (like the carriage for the July 4th parade) in and out of the shed which we acquired from the Housing Authority in 2007.

After much deliberation your trustees decided that the best way to solve this problem for the long term was to petition the select board to reclassify this access as a Class 4 Road. Vermont Class 4 Roads provide public access but do not require town maintenance. A petition was circulated, more than enough signatures were acquired and a hearing is set for June 22 at 7 PM in the Lakeview Elementary School gym. Anyone interested in this matter may attend. A summary of the rationale for this decision follows.

Membership Renewal Time *Every Gift Counts*

After many years of no dues increase, the board has decided to change the GHS' dues structure to a single level of \$20 annual household membership with a provision that if \$20 is a hardship, a lesser amount is acceptable. We voted not to invite further Life Members, but to encourage the annual donations that many Life Members have been making.

Members' donations are essential and we are deeply grateful for your support. Now, with our expanded space, GHS is able to offer more than ever. Our new work room and archival space on the lower level provides easy access to artifacts and records, and volunteers are ready to help in your search for information on your family or events of interest. Our internet connection allows you to do on-line research on the spot. The beautiful exhibit hall gives wonderful space for our exhibits all complementing our outstanding programs and the world class Hazen Road Dispatch.

An envelope is included for your convenience.
Thank you for your generous support.

- Perrin Road has long been regarded as a public road; in Sept 2009 the Zoning Board of Appeal denied GHS an application for a variance on that basis. We changed our building plans to accommodate that ruling.
- No one pays taxes on the property. Many old deeds go to the bounds of Old Perrin Road, but none include it.
- We understand that no one has found an official designation of Perrin Road, but neither has there been any record of its being thrown up.
- We know of two parties with deeded access to the right of way. One of these parties blocked it so that neither he, the other party with a deeded right to use it, nor anyone else could use it, all with the express purpose of preventing GHS from completing our building.
- When we acquired the shed in 2007 the only access was via "Old Perrin Road"; we have used it, as had our predecessors. Such access was implicit.
- The blockage continues to prevent GHS from installing a needed retaining wall to help drainage and denies us free access to our shed.
- Declaring this a Class 4 Highway will not curtail the rights of those with a right of way.
- If the Housing Authority had a problem with their septic system, they would need to access it by means of the Perrin Road.
- If there should be a fire at the back of Willey's Store, in David Massey's barn or at the Historical Society shed, the Fire Department would need access.
- The land and building leased by the Historical Society are owned by the Town of Greensboro and it is in the interests of the Town that free and reasonable access to the property be allowed.

Why Does Greensboro Claim Timothy Hinman?

On Monday, July 11 at 7:30 in Fellowship Hall, Gail Sangree will present a program on Timothy Hinman, whom many identify with Greensboro. He is best known locally for the Hinman Road, which he built to go north from Greensboro, but road building was only one of his ventures.

Come to hear about this complex man, who has long been associated with Greensboro, and learn of his checkered career that included serving as chief judge of Orleans County court, being a dealer in real estate, a subsistence farmer, and even becoming an imprisoned debtor.

Lora Atherton, A Woman for All Seasons

By Wilhelmina Smith

The first time Dave and Carol Smith met Bernie and Lora Atherton was in 1954 when the Smith family moved to Greensboro to run the Highland Lodge. The Atherton's property on the hill was adjacent to the Lodge property. Bernie immediately told Dave of the Vermont tradition of neighbors sharing the cost and the work of building a common fence between them. Although Dave had no need to keep anything in or out, he immediately complied. That story became part of Lodge legend.

"Good fences make good neighbors" was certainly true of the Athertons and Smiths. Dave, Jr. taught Lora to snow shoe when the Lodge ski trails followed the ancient maple-lined road that joined the Lodge driveway to the Atherton's gardens and beyond.



Lora and Bernie 1929

Lora and Bernie told us how they used to drive a car or pull a sleigh on a woods road up to Barr Hill. They helped David find it and encouraged us to clear it again. We'd stop by their house on the way and Bernie wished he could help us, but he was too old by then to chainsaw and haul brush or join our son, Alex, sledding back down the road that was once again cleared.

Lora was born a Marckres, one of three girls, in Craftsbury in 1908. She attended Craftsbury Academy and Johnson State College then became a Greensboro teacher in many of the schools in town. She was a no-nonsense teacher and in the words of Ernie Lapierre, a neighbor and a student, "She was a great role-model who made you want to learn and share your learning with others." Ida Perron, who was also a student and later taught with her, remembers that when her brother, Ted, came to first grade with not enough warm clothes, Lora bundled him up before sending him home again. One year

she rewarded her best students by inviting them to her house for dinner, which, to them, was like being invited home by royalty, but royalty who cooked.

In 1929 Lora married Bernie Atherton from Greensboro. They set up housekeeping and ran the Summey Farm on the north end of the Lake. Lora was a feisty lady. One year, when Bernie wanted to buy a new tractor, she said he could if she could have the same amount of money to spend on herself. She did. When taking teaching courses in Burlington she decided to take flying lessons. She didn't tell Bernie. The day she was to solo the winds were too high and she had to tell him that she wouldn't be home that day because she had to do her solo flight the next day. She went up, soloed and went home, never to fly a plane again - the war years and fuel rationing intervened. But after Bernie died she went on many trips because she loved flying.

In the 40's, Lora and Bernie bought their farm on the hill (on Atherton Way) from Almond Tate. There they had a dairy farm and when they retired, they worked in their extensive gardens. They grew every kind of vegetable and berry and the most spectacular sweet peas and glads. Their favorite meal was peas and new potatoes from the garden, warmed up in milk. She sold the Lodge berries but made us a gift of her flowers. That was her way.

When they sold the farm to Tom and Beryl Smith, they moved to Parker Pond in Glover where they could continue to garden and Lora could continue her ice-fishing which she did religiously all winter.

Now Bernie is gone and Lora lives on her own in a house in Barton. She is 103. On the wall of her kitchen is a letter from George and Laura Bush congratulating her on her 100th birthday. Nieces and nephews and former students, themselves in their 80's, visit her. She is slowing down but is still planning to have a garden this year. I asked her if she remembered me and she said, with a twinkle, oh yes, you and I used to go for walks and sneak cigarettes together. Lora, you and Bernie were great neighbors.



Lora Atherton with her Greensboro class 1939

Hill Family Legacy Captures the History of Greensboro

The year was 1791 and the first settlers of what is now Greensboro had started to arrive from Connecticut. Among them was one of the original proprietors, Peleg Hill, Sr with wife and sons Peleg Jr and James. Peleg had three parcels of land, two on the North Shore of Caspian Lake and one in North Greensboro. Fast forward to 1809 when Peleg Jr's son Aaron moved to North Greensboro where he operated a sawmill, a grist mill, then a tavern, a leather business and with his sons, built many of the houses in North Greensboro. He was also a farmer and a cobbler. In 1843, he and his sons built the Hill Homestead which replaced the old tavern. It was there that generations later Lewis Hill, a founder and always active member of the Greensboro Historical Society, was born and lived his entire life. Over the years, the house, barn and outbuildings accumulated a treasury of artifacts that represent not only the history of the Hill family but the Town of Greensboro as well.

Several years ago Lewis and his wife Nancy made the decision to donate many of the "treasures" from the Hill Family homestead to the historical society. This commitment spurred GHS to initiate a capital campaign to raise funds for an addition to the original building to provide space to preserve their collections in a safe, climate controlled environment and to have room for permanent and rotating exhibits. With the completion of that addition in 2010, the Hill Collection was moved to the new building. The 2011 summer exhibit features



*A sneak preview of the exhibit
Life in Greensboro ca. 1800*

many of the artifacts from the Hill Collection not only to tell the story of the Hill Family, but also the story of Greensboro in the mid to late 1800s. In recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, the exhibit will include items that Aaron's son Ephraim brought back from the war as well as other Civil War items in the GHS collection. Be sure to come to enjoy the exhibit: *Hill Family Legacy: One Family's Early Greensboro*.

Greetings from Greensboro

In times gone by, the standard request to a friend going on vacation was "Send me a postcard." On Monday, July 18 from 2-3:30 at the Greensboro Free Library, you can see postcards visitors to Greensboro sent during the early 20th century. Kevin Johnson, photo archivist for the Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport, Maine and Greensboro summer regular, will present and narrate a slide show "*Greetings from Greensboro: Historic Postcards Come to Life*". The historic views of Greensboro and the surrounding towns come from the extensive collection of The Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company of Belfast, Maine. Founded in 1909 with the goal of promoting tourism, the company produced over 40,000 glass plate negatives of New England and New York from 1909 and 1947. The images take viewers back to the time when the roads were dirt, horse drawn carriages outnumbered cars, coastlines were undeveloped, and elms lined the streets.

Kevin Johnson is intimately connected to the photos for he worked for several years to preserve the negatives and since 2007 when the collection was donated to the Penobscot Marine Museum he has been their archivist. Kevin has spent a few weeks in Greensboro every summer since childhood.



*Greensboro village with Caspian Lake Hotel ca 1910
From GHS postcard collection*

In Memoriam

Members and Friends who have died since November 2010

Caroline (Cookie) Brown	Houghton (Buck) Freeman
William S. Eisner	Whitney S. Landon
Edna Zucker	William H. Allman
Alfred W. Fuller	John Reed Irwin
Joanne Nobel Olmsted	

Other Summer Programs

Ice Cream Social - The Historical Society will hold our ever-popular Ice Cream Social from **2-4 on Saturday, July 9**, ably organized by Janet Long. Old Time Games for children will also return with Noeleen McIntyre graciously leading the fun on their lawn across the street. Plan to come by, enjoy the delicious ice cream, visit with friends, watch (or play with) the children and come in to see our new building and the exhibit.

Remembering Miss Jean - If your time in Greensboro dates back to the 1950s or before, you will remember Miss Jean Simpson, grand lady of East Craftsbury, whose love of Shakespeare led her to direct and produce a Shakespeare play each summer. A majority of roles would go to young people (I remember when Lisa Landon (Hewitt) was Juliet) and Miss Jean would take the most difficult ones, like Shylock or Iago. Laura Akin Driver has fond memories of this remarkable woman and would like to hear the recollections of others and plans to record the event. Anyone who would like to share reminiscences of Miss Jean is invited to an informal gathering at the GHS building from **10-12 on Wednesday, July 27** for *Gathering Memories of Miss Jean Simpson*.

GHS Book Sale - Labor Day weekend is the time to visit the GHS Book Sale and stock up on new books for winter reading. During the summer, we ask you to set aside good books that you have read and are ready to pass on. In late August, please drop them by Janet Long's. Then **Saturday, September 3 from 10-2**, come to Janet Long's "Lyles Garage" across from Willeys to enjoy cider and doughnuts while perusing the fine collection of books.

Check Our New Website

Thanks to hard work by Ernie Lapierre and Jenny Stoner, under the direction of web designer Micah Mutrux of Craftsbury, the GHS website has a totally new look and lots of new information. At same address: greensborohistoricalociety.org you will find our calendar of events, glimpses of Greensboro history, photo gallery, helpful links and much more. This is a work in progress, which we will continue to develop. Keep checking to stay informed

SNIPPETS from Hazen Road Dispatch 2011

By Gail Sangree, Editor

This year's *Hazen Road Dispatch* is chock full of fascinating historical material. Here's a sampler from a few articles:

From Pat Haslam's *Near This Spot*:

"The Bixby sisters, Pat McHugo, Gerry Averill, and Barbara Laing all remembered 'dancing around the flagpole' on Memorial Day when they were children growing up summers in the 1930s at the Bixby cottage in the Barre Camps. Pat remembers the flagpole as standing somewhere in the field in front of Karley Donavan's new house. Perhaps it was removed when the granite marker was placed in 1941."

From Daniel Metraux's *Craftsbury Soldiers' Civil War letters*:

" . . . for the last few days we have had most horrible times. Our regiment has been in four battles and I was in them all. . . . The enemy were in heavy force in front of us, surrounded by strong batteries. They commenced to shell us, and for a short time the shells cracked and whizzed around us fearfully. But not a man of us flinched."

From Patricia Billingsley's *How Highland Lodge Got Its Name*:

"The central figure . . . was Harry Foster Cummings (1875-1934), a Hardwick real estate agent with grand ambitions but spectacularly bad timing. The story travels from Vermont to Florida and back again, just as Harry did, and reveals how the Florida real estate boom (and subsequent bust) of the mid-1920s affected the lives of people in Hardwick and Greensboro."

From Bud Kast's *China Memoir*:

"Exactly four hours after leaving Calcutta, India, we arrived in Kunming, China. . . . I looked at my watch. . . . In a few hours Angela and Chrissie would be waking up to start another day."

The *Hazen Road Dispatch* will be available at Willey's Store and at the Historical Society in early June.

History Seminar Returns

Why are Vermont and Virginia So Different?

Historian Timothy Breen has again offered to lead a discussion seminar that offers an exploration of an engaging topic. Through engagement with Samuel William's 1792 *History of Vermont* and selected passages from Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* participants will gain an appreciation of some distinctive features of early Vermont and an understanding of why the two states are so different today. As those who took part in last summer's seminar which explored varied perspectives on the American Revolution gained insights on contemporary events, so this summer's participants will enjoy lively discussion and new ways to think about current affairs.

The seminar, limited to 15 participants, will be held at the GHS building on **Monday, July 18 from 2 to 3:30**. You may register in advance by email with jennystoner@gmail.com, by signing up on the list at the GHS building or at the GHS program on July 11. A suggested donation of \$25 will cover the cost of reading materials.

**You Are Cordially Invited to the Opening of our
2011 GHS Exhibit in Our New Exhibit Space**
The Hill Legacy
One Greensboro's Early Families
Friday, July 1
From Four To Six O'clock
Refreshments Served

GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Website, Ernie Lapierre*

Newsletter Contributors

*Tim Breen, Gail Sangree, Wilhelmina Smith, Jenny Stoner,
Catherine Wilkinson & Tom Woodward*