



GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NUMBER 53
Spring 2020

NEWSLETTER

From the Parlor to the Polling Place Women's Suffrage in Stories and Song

In honor of the 100th Anniversary of the 19th amendment, GHS honored the struggle, especially of Vermont women, for the vote for women. Linda Radtke, former teacher, singer and historian and her accompanist on electric keyboard, Cameron Steinmetz brought a wonderful program to the GHS winter meeting.

Ms. Radtke made her entrance, marching up the center isle of the room to the podium singing *Men and Brothers Dare You Do It*, set to the tune of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. She was wearing a deep purple colored turn of the 20th century ladies suit with leg-o-mutton sleeves, a satin cream colored sash draped from shoulder to waist emblazoned with the words "Votes for Women" with a flowered and beribboned bonnet on her head.



She spent the next hour relating the story of the evolution of the suffragist movement as it began in small parlor groups to in-your-face public parades. The seeds of the reform movement in America began in the 1840's. She followed the progression in song and lecture up to the ratification 19th Amendment in August of 1920.

Her talk was punctuated with songs from each era, some sung a cappella, some with accompaniment, each dedicated to a prominent suffragist. She explained that in the beginning songs were set to well known tunes: *Yankee Doodle*, *My Country 'Tis of Thee*, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. The words however, posed the question of the female gender being excluded from the right to vote.

The audience was encouraged to join in on the refrains.

Many of the early suffragist songs incorporated an emotional reference of giving ballots to mothers. This was particularly evident in the last song she sang, a Tin Pan Alley song called *She's Good Enough to Be Your Baby's Mother, She's Good Enough to Vote with You*.

There were as many songs as there was dialogue, delivered with humor and insight. At its conclusion, Ms. Radtke invited the audience to look at her display of period sheet music and bios of many suffragists highlighted throughout her talk. She encouraged sharing family stories of early female voters and mentioned that in the Greensboro Town Clerk's office a large leather-bound book lists 60 women who took the Freeman's Oath in 1920 so they could vote.

SUMMER EVENTS CANCELLED

Summer is usually the busiest time at the Greensboro Historical Society. But after careful deliberation, the Trustees decided it would be wise to cancel our exhibit, annual meeting program, and ice cream social for this summer. Social distancing is very important, and we do not want to contribute to ANY spreading of the Covid 19 virus. Our annual book sale in the fall may happen if it seems feasible, so watch for notices later in the summer. For your Greensboro history "fix" please spend time looking at our webpage (www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org) and Facebook, and pick up a copy of the 2020 *Hazen Road Dispatch* at Willey's. If you have questions, please call Wilhelmina Smith (Tel. 533-2729) or Nancy Hill (533-2609).

President's Corner



One year I wrote this column from my couch in Yokohama where David and I were visiting our son and his family. This year Covid 19 happened and everything has changed. We don't fly, we don't plan and go to events, we don't gather. But the earth is getting a much-needed rest.

That makes me happy.

I am home doing projects and emailing with friends. I work in the archives at the historical society – which are now quite up to date but history continues to happen. See the archive update in this newsletter. We sit outside a lot on our deck and enjoy the view; nay, take time for the view. And see each new flower come up. We talk on the phone, Skype, Facetime, and email with family and friends. I'm watching a musical performed by my granddaughter Kiya's Yokohama International School. This quarantine would have been harder without modern communication.

Enjoy what is turning out to become a quiet, uneventful summer – the way summer was always meant to be.

Wilhelmina Smith,

Co-President

Membership Reminder

Your membership dues are needed. Although we had to cancel programs for this summer, your historical society continues to be very busy as you can see. If you missed previous programs, you can find them recorded on our website, thanks to Kyle Gray. Your dues of \$20 family membership and any donations will be greatly appreciated sent in the enclosed envelope or with Paypal on our website. Plans are already in place for a special exhibit in 2021.

Hazen Road Dispatch

This year's issue of the *Hazen Road Dispatch* offers lots of articles of interest to members of the GHS and the community at large. For example, there's a story which has come down to us by oral tradition in the Bickford-Hicock family, of the 1909 murder of Charles Perkins, a well-respected teacher and farmer whose home near the Hardwick-Walden line was invaded by a drunken neighbor. There's a piece about the beginnings of cross-country skiing in the early 70's at Highland Lodge, and a tribute to the James Carpenter family of Randolph Road, as well as Part Two about the Woodbury and Hardwick Railroad among many other pieces by familiar authors as well as some new voices.

Did you know that Greensboro ranks highest in the state for its number of second homes (a whopping 81%)? These and other historical tidbits are available for your reading pleasure.

Since gatherings have been canceled this summer due to the coronavirus, it may be difficult for you to buy a copy locally. However, you can still get a copy at Willey's and may order a copy to be sent by mail. Simply send a check for \$11.00 to the Greensboro Historical Society and tell us where you would like to receive your copy.

New Floor At GHS

When you next enter the GHS building on Breezy Avenue, you will be dazzled by the shiny, beautiful new-old hardwood maple floor in the entry room. In April, Tom Hayes of Topnotch Floors in Hardwick carefully sanded it and applied two coats of commercial polyurethane. The 2" boards, each of which had been nailed with tiny nails at some time before World War II, are now bright and shining.

Our much-used building had been the home of the Greensboro Free Library until the mid-1990's and the floor had been showing the tramping of many footprints when the citizens of Greensboro, at the March Town Meeting, voted money to restore the floor.

Marion Babbie Turns 100

On May 6, a fire truck from the Greensboro Volunteer Fire Department led a slow cavalcade of cars down Breezy Ave past a gallery of 'socially-distancing' neighbors and friends who were gathered to celebrate Marion Babbie's 100th Birthday.

Marion grew-up on Luce Hill, then the farming district of Stowe (sometimes referred to as 'The Branch' or 'Off the Branch'). She remembers feeding the calves and doing other small farm chores in the morning before joining her classmates on a horse-drawn surrey (in Spring/Fall) or a sleigh (in Winter) to commute on dirt roads to a one-room schoolhouse.

Marion also remembers her father sitting on the front porch of their home in Stowe Village where he exclaimed one evening that *30 cars had passed by the house today*. For a few moments on her birthday, 30 cars filled with friends and neighbors passed by her apartment in Greensboro to honor her.

Marion watched the parade from her front stoop before blowing-out the candles on a symbolic cake while others enjoyed almost 100 individually-wrapped homemade cupcakes. WCAX News held a short TV interview with her; and The Hardwick Gazette helped document the event. For a while, before the warmer weather had arrived, it felt like Spring in Greensboro (amidst the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic).

When asked about her strategy and outlook for longevity, Marion suggested that maybe her determined nature could account for her adventuring past 100-years. *Happy Birthday, Marion!*



In Memoriam

Members and Friends who have died since May 2019

William "Archie" Holbrook
 Pauline "Polly" Anair
 Cynthia "Cindy" Chaffee Hislop
 Loretta A. Sullivan
 Mildred Yessi de Schepper
 Caroline Hastings Goering
 Rachel Lillian Stancliffe Miller
 Bradley H. Gomes
 Mary Osborne Witherbee
 Henry Ingersoll Brown
 David W. Kircher
 Nancy Potak
 Andre Yokana
 Phyllis Alston
 Lawrence Earl Kreider, Sr.
 Raymond Messier
 William L. Shatney
 Harold G. Tolman
 Angela d. Whitney
 Deborah M. Willey

Preserving GHS Collections for You

During 2019 significant progress was made in the care, organization, and description of collections and materials. Willie Smith and Le slie Rowell continued in their work to arrange and describe family collections, with selected digitization, for instance the digitization of the important Aaron Hill account book by Kyle Gray. Work also included attention to the relocation and cataloging of oversized materials and framed items; migration of image and document files into a digital archive; organization and cataloging of audiovisual materials; establishing a reference shelf to aid researchers and staff in responding to research inquiries; and management of environmental conditions in the collections storage room.

Thanks to the Greensboro Association for a grant which helped fund this work.



Kyle Gray scanning photos

What's New in the Archives

Archiving Greensboro's history is often an exercise in what is happening today. We have many files and boxes of artifacts already collected. We are describing them in our data base for future generations. Most of the work now is recording what is happening now. This means saving clippings. In the case of the newly digital only version of the Hardwick Gazette, devising an index for Greensboro articles in the issues.

Old documents still turn up and join our searchable collection. Some give surprising insights into the past. For example we found a letter to Greensboro Bend School from a person, not identified, who wants the job of building the fires at the school. The class of 1935 at Greensboro High School handmade announcement of Commencement Exercise June 21 is there. It includes the class colors, yellow and orchid; class flower, yellow rose, and the class roll of 13 students: Bernard Paul Badger, Durwood Charle Collier, Ruth Evelyn Coolbeth, Ruth Addelade Drown, Florence Ellen Hill, Earle John Hussey, James Patterson Morse, Rupert Wendell Peake, Herbert Hunt Peel, Mabel Julia Richardson, Almy Winona Shatney, Wilma May Spring, Ellen Eliza Thompson; principal, Mr. Harold E. Simpson and superintendent, Mr. J. Newton Perrin.

And more recently, there is a fundraising letter for the Craftsbury Chamber Players written by D. Reed Stuart, June 1973 and a poster announcing the Craftsbury Chamber Players 20th anniversary season in 1985.

And we were just given clippings and photos from Laurie Tolman Hodgdon about her father Harold Tolman. He was such an important part of Greensboro. We mourn his passing.

GHS Newsletter

PO Box 151
Greensboro, VT 05841

Trustees

Lise Armstrong, Barbara Brooke,
BJ Gray, Paula Harmon, Erika
Karp, Janet Long

Officers

Wilhelmina Smith, Co-President
Nancy Hill, Co-President
Barbara Brooke, Secretary
Lise Armstrong Treasurer

Committee Chairpersons

Acquisitions, Wilhelmina Smith
Research, Lise Armstrong
Building, Clive Gray
Membership, Erika Karp
Website, Kyle Gray
Facebook, Kyle Gray &
Lise Armstrong

Hazen Road Dispatch Editor,
Gail Sangree

Newsletter contributors

Jenny Stoner, Editor,
Nancy Hill, Willie Smith
Barbara Brooke, Kyle Gray,
Gail Sangree, Leslie Rowell