



GREENSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NUMBER 61
Spring 2024

NEWSLETTER

GHS Calendar Summer 2024

Exhibits

*Rails to Trails
and
The Hill Family Legacy*

Museum Hours

July and August

Wed., and Thurs.
10:00 to 2:00
Sat. 10-12

Sunday, June 30, 3-5

Exhibit Opening Reception
GHS Museum

Saturday, July 27

GHS Annual Book Sale

10-4

Janet Long's Garage

&

Ice Cream Social

2-4

GHS lawn

Monday, August 5, 7 PM

GHS Annual Meeting &
Program:

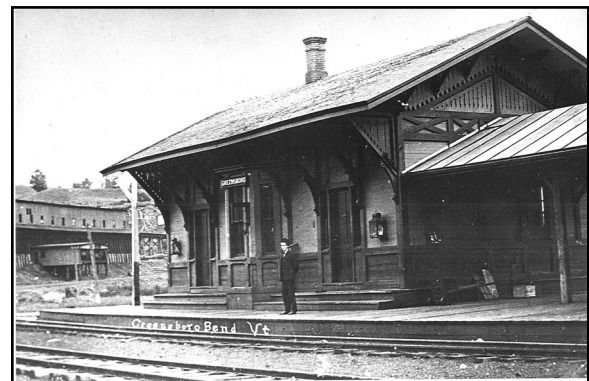
Greensboro Rocks!
Fellowship Hall

Summer Exhibit: "Rails to Trails"

The upcoming summer exhibit at the GHS museum will focus on the arrival and departure of the railroad in Greensboro Bend, as well as the transition to the 93-mile multi-access "Lamoille Valley Rail Trail." The town of Greensboro Bend, colloquially called "The Bend," received its descriptive name from the 7 mile train loop that added a train station between Walden and Hardwick. The presence of this station brought visitors, investors and tradespeople to the area and created a bustling commercial presence in The Bend.

The exhibit, "Rails to Trails," will feature informative panels depicting the socio-economic boon that the railroad created for The Bend as well as the greater Greensboro/Stannard/Walden/Wheelock area. Much like the late 20th century arrival and growth of the internet, the arrival of freight trains in the 19th century opened an expedited exchange of supplies between local and distant markets. Likewise, the presence of passenger trains brought about an influx of vacationers who could more easily access the natural beauty that surrounds Caspian Lake and the neighboring mountains and valleys.

The exhibit will track the rise and fall of coal-and-water-powered steam engines and the transition to diesel-powered engines. It will explore the effects of freight and passenger train travel on the area, the logistics of the train and its station in The Bend, as well as the changing times and the inherent impacts on the rail system as a whole. Finally,, it will show the change to a section of the year-round, recreational rail trail that extends from St. Johnsbury to Swanton.



Displays will include maps, timelines, photos, press clippings, personal anecdotes and curiosities from inspired poems, artwork and a kids corner (including a train-themed light-up board and outdoor story walk) to a wide array of train industry paraphernalia. These will help to characterize the impact of the train and to reflect on the changing local industries (granite transportation, dairy farming, potato farming, vacationers) and all the trades and services that arrived with them through time.

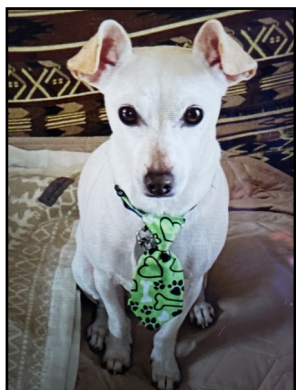
Opening Reception June 30, 3-5 PM

You are invited to the opening reception for this summer's exhibit on Sunday afternoon, June 30. Come for tasty refreshments, conversation and for first view of the exhibit.

President's Corner

Docent - The Scent of a Deer?

Now that I have your attention, the meaning of the word docent is really derived from the latin word “docere” meaning to teach. A person who acts as a guide, typically on a volunteer basis, in a museum, art gallery or zoo is a docent.



Eliot— GHS mascot

Being a docent is a two way street. We always learn from visitors as well as guiding them. Visitors bring life, experiences, anecdotes and sometimes shopping opportunities as in the case of a visitor who shared his handcrafted Greensboro oriented items.

Another visitor brought artifacts for the museum collection and first-hand stories of Greensboro history. Two teenagers who came to use our bathroom facilities, were so entranced by the docent's accounts of the exhibit that they stayed for an hour.

I was fortunate to be selected to be a docent at The Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. The docent program taught museum artifact preservation procedures at their labs and how to guide school children. The Huguenot Historical Society of New Paltz, New York, was started by my high school history teacher, who inspired me to become involved. Never underestimate the effects of teachers who are docents in their own right. I learned how to categorize artifacts and give tours at this museum. It is likely that you, too, bring relevant experiences for being a docent and could be one .at our own local Greensboro Historical Society. Volunteering once a week in July and August for two hours, using training provided, will bring you face to face with history.

The museum includes a yearly in-depth exhibit, publications, the Hill Exhibit of local farm culture, gift items to purchase, Kid's Corner, comfy chairs, occasional refreshments, a possible visit with our mascot and as the saying goes, “Much, much more.”

A photo of our mascot is included here. I hope to see you soon.

BJ Gray, President

The Hazen Road Dispatch: 48 Years Old and Still Going Strong

The National Bicentennial in 1976 spurred not only the beginning of the Greensboro Historical Society but also its journal, *The Hazen Road Dispatch*. Daniel Metraux published the first issues, and it is still a treat for local readers when it appears early each summer. The society is grateful to the many writers and wonderful editors including Sally Fisher, Stefanie Ayers Cravedi, Andrea Perham, and, most recently, Gail Sangree, who edited it for 22 years until her retirement in 2023.

It will continue in 2024 with new editors: Stefanie Ayers Cravedi and Nancy Hill. You'll find an array of not-to-be-missed articles relating to the history of Greensboro and other local towns along the Bayley-Hazen Road. The lead story by Mateo Kehler describes the beginnings of Greensboro's famous Jasper Hill Creamery.

You'll also find a fascinating story about the water-powered mills in early East Hardwick and the much more recent creation of “Our Community Park” in Greensboro Bend. Craftsbury is included as the location of the book *Green Mountain Farm* and its author, Elliot Merrick; and many area towns are covered in the article about the Northern Rivers Land Trust. Bob Merrill shares knowledge about Greensboro geology. You'll find out about the woman in Greensboro who, over the course of 40 years, has written and had published over 100 novels and novellas.

Some of you may have been part of the tales of “The Caspian Lake Runaround” or the Caspian Foliage Run in the 1970s and 1980s. You'll find contributions from long-time HRD writers Clay Simpson, Charlie Morrissey and Daniel Metraux, as well as reviews of recent books, *The Morse Code* and Rob Merman's just-published *Circle of Sawdust: A Circus Memoir of Mud, Myth, Mirth, Mayhem and Magic*.

Volume 48 will be available in neighborhood stores and at the Greensboro Historical Society Museum bookstore. All previous issues are available and the index for the past issues is on the society website:

www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org

Annual Book Sales July 27, 10-2 October 12, 10-2

Our year-round book sale is a town favorite. For two days the door is wide open and this photo shows avid readers making their selections. For your donation, you are invited to take as many books as you like.



Our books are all donations, some with the author's signature, book marks and notes from the past owners. The categories are diverse. A favorite category is serendipity - good luck in making unexpected and fortunate discoveries.

Ice Cream Social July 27 2-4 PM



Plan on joining us for our annual Ice Cream Social: a chance to visit with friends, visit the exhibit and enjoy a delicious summer treat

In Remembrance

Justin Robert Howard	Lorraine L. Daniels
Stephanie Slack Herrick	David H. Allen
Patricia Ann Larrabee	Susan Stone Slater
Maurice H. Richardson Sr.	Lorraine Lavertu Hussey
Tom Woodward	Marilyn L. Maynard
Marion Babbie	Madeline Cecile Molleur
	Sally Pleasants Lonegren

Messier and Pudvah Present Snowmobiling History

About 30 townspeople gathered in Fellowship Hall on March 3rd for the GHS Winter Meeting. Building on the success of our 2023 *Skiing in Greensboro* winter meeting, Shawn Messier of Walden-based Coles Pond Sledders and Dennis Pudvah of the Hardwick Sno-Flake Ridge Runners joined us to discuss the history of snowmobiling in the area. Both speakers brought deep knowledge gained from years of snowmobiling as well as insights from leading their respective snowmobiling groups.

We learned that snowmobiling used to attract thousands of people to much-anticipated events such as massive ride-ins in St. Johnsbury, group rides to restaurants and dances, and field day races in Hardwick. Engaging slides with vintage photos demonstrated the evolution of snowmobiling equipment, from the old tow-behind groomers to the new and improved groomers that pack feet of powdery snow in the dark of night, or from the noisy and sluggish older sleds to the quieter and yet powerful snow machines on the trails



Snowmobiles lined up for a race in February 1978

now. We also came to appreciate the work that snowmobilers and VAST do to keep the trails open, including landowner negotiations and improvements such as bridges, so that snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, and snowshoers can all enjoy the trail access.

Perhaps the most important part of this presentation was demonstrating the value of a sport that has brought together tens of thousands of community members from all around Vermont--and one that continues to support Vermont's businesses as an enduring part of the winter culture. Thankfully, groups such as the Coles Pond Sledders and Hardwick Sno-Flake Ridge Runners encourage and facilitate participation in this sport rooted in our area's history. Thank you to Shawn and Dennis for presenting this year and answering the flurry of questions from the audience.

Greensboro Historical Society Supports Students for Vermont History Day 2024

Students from the Craftsbury History Club participated in Vermont History Day in April 2024, held in Burlington at the University of Vermont’s Davis Center. The students developed a wide range of topics addressing this year’s theme, “Turning Point in History.” The club was grateful to receive support and research assistance from the Greensboro Historical Society, with Craftsbury student Ada Allen researching in the collections of the society to develop her topic addressing the rise of recreational swim culture in Vermont and the nation as a whole. Working with Archivist Leslie Rowell and volunteer Jenny Stoner, Ms. Allen visited the collections and was able to review a wide range of local sources, including historic period bathing costumes, photo collections, and periodicals that helped her situate her project in a local context. Ms. Allen received the Special Prize for Women’s History at Vermont History Day for her work. Of her research at the historical society, Ms. Allen said, “It was so fun to see how my topic was connected to so many local stories.” She also said that she is looking forward to visiting again and studying more local strands.



Ada Allen with her display

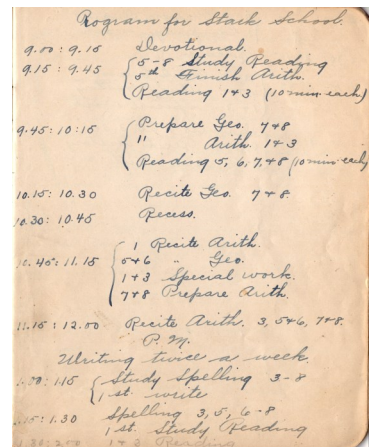
The seven members of the Craftsbury History Club each had a display on a very different topic. They look forward to more opportunities to collaborate with the Greensboro Historical Society and other local societies, and are most grateful for the expertise and love for our local stories that drive the stewardship and management of these collections.

A Recent Addition to the Archives

Plan Book 2024.007

GHS recently received a Greensboro teacher's plan book, 1908-1909, sent to us by the St. Johnsbury History & Heritage Center. It is a composition-style notebook with a brown paper cover, with the name, "Miss Clark" penciled on the front cover. Students' names inside include Alice, Carl, Allan, and Morris Spier, and Myrtie Thompson.

The 1910 Greensboro Census shows the Speir children - Alice, Carl, Allan, and Maurice (Morris), with their parents David and Margaret, and grandfather Allan; and Myrtie Thompson, daughter of Will A. Thompson and a niece of the Speirs (she is listed as living at both residences). Other students' names include Ida Jerome, Violet Young, Robert Cassevah, Loretta Cassevah, Reba Littel, and Iris Littel, who are listed in the back with attendance tallies and grades received. The daily school schedule is listed on two pages under "Program for the Stark School."



Toad Bag – A New Way to Involve Children

A tote bag, named with a whimsical touch, became a Toad Bag, ready to be decorated for GHS by Lakeview students. Jayne Donahue, teacher at Lakeview, collaborated with BJ Gray, President of GHS, to offer students the creative challenge of designing a “toad bag” for the historical society. Thirteen students participated and their drawings are all on the bag. Each student will receive a Toad Bag and membership card to The Greensboro Historical Society designed by Lakeview student, Harvest. The Toad Bag will be for sale for \$15 at The Historical Society Museum this summer. Get one before they hop away.

GHS Annual Meeting August 5, 7 PM Greensboro Rocks!

The GHS annual meeting on Monday evening, August 5, at 7:00 p.m. will help us better understand the rocks around us. Geologist Dr. Robert (Bob) Merrill will present a program specifically on the geology of Greensboro. Bob Merrill grew up on a dairy farm on Road 8 in North Greensboro, where he developed his interest in geology while wandering over our hills and picking up rocks from the fields before planting. He pondered over such discoveries as the quartz rocks on Barr Hill and the clays of Caspian Lake and how they were formed.

Bob Merrill's interest in geology was not just a hobby but became a lifelong pursuit. After graduating from Greensboro High School, he furthered his studies at Colby College and Arizona State University. For the past 50 years, he has been applying his knowledge in the field, with a recent focus on the humanitarian applications of geoscience through "Geoscientists without Borders."



Bob Merrill

Join us on August 5 in Fellowship Hall to peruse geologic maps and learn more about how our landscape was formed and what is here now, including our local "Rocking Rocks", Pulpit Rock, the ledge carved out by the glacier at the top of Barr Hill and much more.

The Grand Opening of LVRT That Didn't Happen

On July 15, 2023, Greensboro Bend was to be a water stop for Governor Phil Scott as he rode the whole 93 miles of the *Lamoille Valley Rail to Trail* (LVRT) from Swanton to St. Johnsbury. Unfortunately, on July 10-11 there was a flood of major proportions and the eastern half of the trail hardly existed anymore. That storm system dropped 6-9 inches of rain in parts of Vermont. Only the Great Flood of November 3-4, 1927 exceeded this flooding of 2023.

Some bridges over the Lamoille were gone, and there were great landslides and washouts on the trail. After close to a year of work the LVRT is almost completed again! Repair of a major washout between East Hardwick and Walden is scheduled to be completed in August and the sections from East Hardwick to Hardwick should be completed by the time this newsletter is published.

Also in that infamous week, work on the trailhead and parking lot in Greensboro Bend was to start. Needless to say there were other priorities for the town because of the flooding. Hopefully the parking lot will be done this summer along with a picnic table, a portalet building, bike repair station (already there-donated by Bournes), a 32 ft mural depicting the history of the railroad, The Bend and several other amenities. Watch for a Grand Opening of the Trail. in October 2024!! Work on the improved parking lot has now begun.



Membership Renewal Time

Your dues of \$20 to Greensboro Historical Society and all donations will help preserve
Greensboro's unique past and give you a voice in our future.
An envelope is included for your use or you may give by Paypal on our website

Greensboro Historical Society
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www.greensborohistoricalsociety.org



GHS "Toad Bag"

GHS Wins Achievement Award

On May 10, the GHS was honored with an Award of Excellence at the 70th Annual Meeting of the League of Local Historical Societies & Museums in White River Junction. Our summer exhibit, "Saving Land, Saving History: 50 Years of Land Conservation in Greensboro," won the highest honor in the "Exhibitions, Engagement, & Public Programs" category, "for the creation of exhibits that reflect the imaginative interpretation of some aspect of local history, for educational or public programs that encourage the study and appreciation of local history, or for projects that encourage and incorporate civic or community engagement."

This is our 7th Achievement Award, and our third Award of Excellence. Our prior awards included one in 2002 for this newsletter and another in 2015 for our publication, *40 Years of the Hazen Road Dispatch*.



VHS representative presents award to Nancy Hill, President BJ Gray and Jenny Stoner

GHS Newsletter

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