



## Historical Society of Cheshire County

*Collecting, preserving and communicating the history of Cheshire County*

### Helping Those in Need During World War II by Alan F. Rumrill

We recently shared a story about Cheshire County residents offering help in a time of need by donating materials to assist those serving in the military during the Civil War. Local residents offered similar support for the war effort during WWII. Two ways that local residents expressed their patriotism and became involved on the home front were through scrap drives and by selling and buying Defense Stamps that could be used to purchase U.S. Defense Savings Bonds.

Keene residents were very active in the collection of scrap that could be used to support the war effort. Rubber, metal and paper became scarce because imports were interrupted or because the government needed huge supplies of them for the war effort. These types of items often ended up in the trash on the home front, so the government began to encourage scrap drives to gather materials that were needed. Tin, steel and copper were melted down and reused. Paper was needed as packaging for supplies, as well as for military paperwork and letters written to home by soldiers. Rubber was used for a variety of military applications.

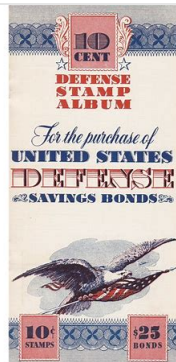
Scrap drives became important community events and competitions were held to determine which towns and states could collect the most. Keene became very involved in these efforts. One hundred thirty tons of scrap collected in local drives was shipped out from Keene in January of 1943. A local sale of salvaged scrap metal in the city brought in \$700 during October of the same year. Some of the items donated included metal fences from front yards and antique cannons and fountains from the region's town commons.

Keene residents young and old also collected tons of paper and loaded it on railroad freight cars to be sent to mills to be prepared for reuse elsewhere. Scrap drives were an important part of the war effort. This was true not only because they provided needed material, but also because they helped make those on the home front feel like they were playing a role in winning the war. The purchase of Defense Stamps was another initiative that allowed regular citizens to help fund the war effort. Individual stamps could be purchased and placed in a stamp album. When the albums were full, they could be used toward the purchase of Defense Savings Bonds.

Various groups worked to sell the stamps locally for Uncle Sam. One such group was the youngsters who sold and delivered the Keene Sentinel to their neighbors. In mid-March of 1942 the Sentinel reported that the newspaper's leading Defense Stamp salesman was Robert Rumrill. Fifteen-year old Rumrill had sold 575 stamps in the previous week and a grand total of 1,870 stamps during the five weeks of the sale. All of the Sentinel salesmen had sold a total of 17,177 stamps. Rumrill's service to the country changed in the years to come. Three years later, at age 18, he was on a U.S. Navy battleship as it plowed through the waves of the Atlantic Ocean - on its way to war.



WWII paper drive in Keene



Keene residents donate WWI metal relics to support WWII



## Jonathan Daniels Center

for Social Responsibility  
at the Historical Society of Cheshire County



The Virginia Military Institute (VMI) has formally awarded five Jonathan Myrick Daniels Humanitarian Awards since 2001. The history of the award actually begins with the Promaji Club, founded by black students at VMI in 1972. Promaji is a variation on the Swahili word meaning "togetherness". Founded in 1839, VMI did not have a black graduate until 1968. In 1991 the Promaji Club bestowed their Jonathan Daniels award to Cabell Brand of Salem, Virginia, a 1947 graduate of VMI. "Cabell was honored with the Award, not for his military service, but rather for his life-long work as a civilian, philanthropic businessman, civil rights advocate, community and anti-poverty leader". In 1997 the VMI Board of Visitors voted to establish the Jonathan M. Daniels '61 Humanitarian Award. The Award "emphasizes the virtue of humanitarian public service and recognizes individuals who have made significant personal sacrifices to protect or improve the lives of others". The first person to receive this Institute-wide award was former President James Earl Carter in March 2001. Subsequent awards have been given to Ambassador (formerly a member of SCLC, a congressman, and a Mayor of Atlanta) Andrew Young in 2006, international humanitarian worker Paul V. Hebert ('68) in 2011. Georgia congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis in 2015, and Carolyn Miles, president and CEO of Save the Children in 2019.

## The Great Grey T-shirt Project



### The Great Grey Tee Project Week #2

Thank you for your support in week #1! Thousands of t-shirts have been ordered to provide relief for businesses and non-profits in the Monadnock Region.

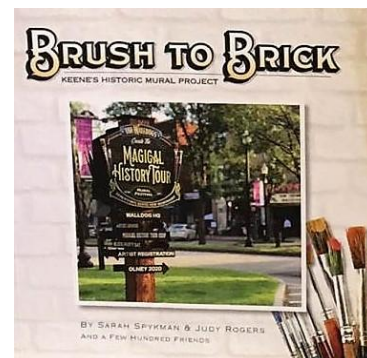
You still have an opportunity to support this wonderful community project. Click the link to order your t-shirt today.

<https://greyteeproject.itemorder.com/product/13957520>

We want to say thank you to Joe, Karli Toleman and the rest of the Bulldog Team for organizing the Great Grey Tee Project and for being such amazing community supporter.

Had enough screen time? We would strongly recommend "Brush to Brick: Keene's Historic Mural Project" by Sarah Spyman and Judy Rogers

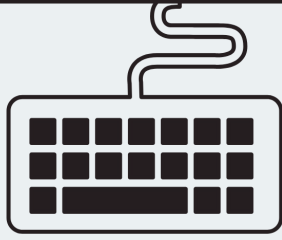
[Click here to purchase](#)



WHAT WILL OUR DESCENDANTS THINK ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US TODAY?

## Share your story

Email us a brief story, a photo, your name, and which Cheshire County town you live in to [Stories@hsccnh.org](mailto:Stories@hsccnh.org)



Many people have kindly wondered how they can help the Historical Society of Cheshire County make it through this crucial time. Please consider making a donation at <https://hsccnh.org/support/donate/>. Your generosity will help sustain us until we can open our doors to the public once again.

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