



Historical Society of Cheshire County

*Collecting, Preserving, and Communicating the
History of Cheshire County*

VOL. 36, NO. 2

JUNE 2020

We Are Here For You



During the darkest days of WWII the Historical Society of Cheshire County closed its doors and suspended all activities for approximately two years. It is true that the organization was much different then, with no paid staff and only a few programs a year, but the volunteers who led the society found themselves dealing with new priorities in their lives that did not include their beloved historical society.

We are now facing another global emergency, and the society's staff is working diligently to ensure that the organization remains relevant and useful to the public. We could not have imagined that the rapid suspension of public events across the state would force us to cancel or postpone 50 programs during the difficult early months of 2020. As a result of the current situation, the organization is striving to stay active and available to its audience by employing technology that wasn't available to our predecessors 75 years ago. Through the use of social media, email, and virtual events we are working to engage our audience and illustrate the importance of history in our daily lives.

Through this newsletter, we want to share what we are doing, what's available to you and what we

hope to do in the coming months. Although our facilities have been closed, the staff has continued to work, mostly from home. We are still replying to phone messages and email, including research requests. We are also filling orders for purchases in the museum store and can arrange for curbside pick-up.

We have prepared and shared a weekly pandemic related local history story. We are also collecting stories of the experiences of individuals during the coronavirus outbreak through our "Share Your Story" initiative. Portions of some of the stories may be seen elsewhere in this newsletter. We have added considerable content to the society's website, including sections on Empowered Women of Cheshire County and the Magical History Tour (Walldogs) Murals of Keene. A new Empowered Women of Cheshire County section offers a glimpse at some of our region's female leaders of the past. Two student interns are scheduled to assist staff with research and development of this project. The current feature exhibit on the history of toys made in the region is available virtually on the website. *(Continued on page 2)*

Historical Society of Cheshire County



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We're Here For You(Cont. from page 1):

We have also offered online movies and presentations. The society has canceled or postponed all in-person events through June, but some aspects of some of those will also be available online. Updates will be posted on the society's website.

In addition to new digital content, the staff has been very busy working on grant-funded projects. New Magical History Tour mural-related curriculum for 2nd to 6th graders is under development. The staff continues to research and develop walking tours related to the Magical History Tour murals and the history of women's suffrage in Keene.

As one museum professional stated, "crisis mode is not sustainable." It remains an important task for the Society's staff to keep in close contact with its colleagues in the museum field as well as its partners in the local arts and culture field. The experience of this pandemic will have a long-lasting effect on how the public engages with local history and historical organizations. It will change how we plan future educational events, hands-on learning experiences, summer camps, and the creation of digital content.

The Historical Society of Cheshire County remains both steadfast and flexible in its approach to communicating local history. The staff is determined to provide a safe space for others to make connections between the past and present, whether that is in one of our buildings, somewhere else in the community, or online.

The organization is preparing for a phased reopening. We anticipate that regulations will require the use of masks and hand sanitizer and that we will have to limit crowd sizes. The schedule and procedures for the reopening will also be posted on the website.

We have been very busy despite the fact that our doors have been closed, especially answering requests for historical information and working to juggle, reschedule and adapt many programs to other formats. We are here for you and we are optimistic that we will be able to host some in-person events later in the year. We are very grateful for all of the interest in and support of the Historical Society during these trying times, and we look forward to seeing you all again soon!

Share Your Story

When the state and the country began to close down in early March, the Historical Society staff realized that we were experiencing a unique and unprecedented historical event that should be recorded for the enlightenment of future generations. We quickly launched the **"Share Your Story"** initiative to collect first-hand accounts of the current pandemic. The stories immediately began to flow in by email. People shared feelings, activities, humor, changes to their everyday schedules, and other experiences related to the outbreak. Please help us preserve Cheshire County's response to COVID-19 by sharing a story about how you and your family are coping during these difficult times. **You can learn how to share with us at the end of this article.** The following examples may make you cry or laugh, they may inspire you, and they may make you contemplate what we are experiencing today.

1.) "Dog and cat are enjoying the new normal. We're home now most of the time. Dog walks are more frequent, cat pats are more regular. Nice to have a silver lining thing!"

We're saving money too, no place to spend it anyways. Creative cooking with what we have sustains us. Trips out to grocery stores are a different adventure every time. Clorox bleach wipes and hand sanitizer lotion accompany every step outside. Face masks required for almost everything and Halloween is still over six months away.

We made a special trip to Concord two weeks ago to deliver medications and five pounds of flour to our daughter when she could not get any. The flour was not

Share Your Story (Cont. from page 2):

expensive, but the delivery was. It was like a spy or secret agent drop of stolen secrets. No touching involved!

Thank you for allowing me to get up on the 21st century soap box. History has always been interesting for me and of course, repeats itself. Let's not repeat this event."

2.) "How 'Lady Boomers' became 'Lady Zoomers.'"

No matter how old you are, birthdays are a reason for celebration with family and friends. The COVID-19 virus and social distancing posed a challenge for my recent 68th birthday. The yearly dinner gathering with friends was not an option this year. Working from home and being in isolation for four weeks was unsettling. My friends created an unconventional opportunity to connect with those I had not seen in one month by sending me a Zoom Birthday Party invitation. I was able to see my friends on the computer screen, talking and laughing, sharing support and encouragement. I marveled and was proud of how these Lady Boomers were able to navigate the current computer technology and become Lady Zoomers.

I sincerely thank those who reach out to senior citizens now living with social distancing who possibly suffer anxiety, depression and fear of contracting the COVID-19 virus."

3.) "This has been a very difficult time in my life as well as others. I have never, nor will I ever, live through this historical epidemic.

I am a widow, living in Hinsdale. I'm feeling very lonely, trapped and isolated. I'm a social butterfly and I feel my wings have been "clipped." I took pride in keeping friendships by meeting my friends for lunch or coffee. I also enjoyed having friends come to my house for lunch or coffee. That cannot happen now.

I listen to the news on the TV and the prognosis is grim. I had done a lot of shopping a few weeks ago and hope I don't have to go out and possibly expose myself to contracting this deadly disease that has taken so many lives. More lives than the Vietnam War and more lives than the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on our country.

My most disappointment comes with not being able to go to church for weeks. And not being able to participate in the holy season of Easter. I have NEVER not gone to church on Easter. Even as a child, it was celebrated as a joyous occasion. I can view the mass on my computer or TV, but it is not the same. This is just another way in which I have been isolated.

Being a widow is a very lonely life and being isolated as a widow makes your life even more lonely. Thank you for letting me document a part of my life through this computer."

4.) "I did venture out; have to go to the grocery store to pick up milk and did wear my mask and gloves while doing so. Only four people that I saw had masks on and one had gloves. I was surprised at that but there were plenty of antiseptic towels to be used.

On my way back home, I stopped at our mailbox to pick up our mail and there were two handmade "Happy Day" cards with pictures in them left from our neighbors' twin eight-year-old boys Grant and Ryan. It all made for a 'Happy Day' during the Covid-19 Pandemic. It was nice addition to our "Shelter in Place 2020" experience."

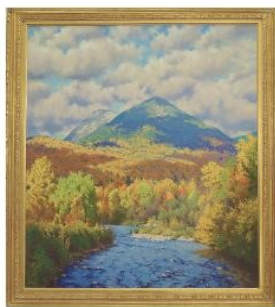
While you are practicing social distancing, we want to hear your stories. What will our descendants think about what is happening to us today? The Historical Society is actively collecting stories via email to preserve in its archive for future educational purposes. Email us a brief story, a photo, your name, and what town you live in to Stories@hsccnh.org. If you prefer, you may send your story to the Historical Society by mail at PO Box 803 in Keene.



Thank you to Savings Bank of Walpole for all you do for the community!



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“Bricking” News!

The team from Lepisto’s Masonry performed the latest installment of engraved bricks at the walkway between the Wyman Tavern and the Bruder House. If you would like to order a brick for the next installment, go to

<https://www.brickrus.com/order/historicalsocietyofcheshirecounty/>



A wood fired pizza will have historic benefits



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Historical Society of Cheshire County Receives Preservation Achievement Award



The Historical Society of Cheshire County was among the winners when the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance announced its 2020 Preservation Achievement Awards at a virtual gathering on May 5. The Historical Society was recognized for restoration and rehabilitation work done at the Wyman Tavern historic house museum (1762) and the Bruder House (1839). The project team included Monahan Architects, Daniel V. Scully Architects, and Ingram Construction Corporation.

Alan Rumrill refers to the Wyman Tavern as the Society's "most important artifact." Built in the Georgian style by Captain Isaac Wyman, a veteran of the French and Indian Wars, the Tavern was in operation as a public house for 40 years. The Trustees of Dartmouth College held their first meeting at the Wyman Tavern in 1770.

Five years later, 29 Minutemen gathered at the Tavern to march to Lexington. In 1968, the building became the Society's historic house museum after it had been a private home for 170 years.

In 2017, the Historical Society was able to acquire the Bruder House next door to the Wyman Tavern, which made it possible to expand and enhance the programming at the Wyman Tavern. We were delighted to be able to combine these two important Main Street properties into a unified and appropriately preserved historical campus. The restored and renovated buildings and grounds welcomed 2,500 visitors for tours, festivals, hands-on activities, cooking demonstrations, lectures, summer camps, living history activities, and performances in 2019 after the Bruder House opened on June 1st. The merging of these two properties has allowed us to expand programming related to the region's history without compromising the heritage of the 18th century Wyman Tavern.

Jeff Ingram of Ingram Construction said he was drawn to the project by The Owner/Architect team and the prospect of helping to preserve a historic landmark on Keene's Main Street. Ingram said, "The community will benefit from preservation of two iconic buildings and the cultural and educational opportunities they will help to provide for generations. For Wyman the challenge was installing modern building infrastructure while preserving the character-defining features of the building. Bruder was more of a gut rehab, so the structural upgrades to the building were very involved and complex and had to be carried out with care so the historic features could be maintained." Ingram is proud of the teamwork put forth by all members of the team. "The Society's building committee and staff were phenomenal to work with," he said, "and the architects Dave Drasba and Dan Scully were able to strike the perfect balance of budget, program, and function."

Thanks to Jim Rousmaniere for His Service

In recognition of Jim Rousmaniere's many contributions to Cheshire County history and his service as President of the Historical Society of Cheshire County Board of Trustees, the Historical Society placed a brick in his honor in the walkway between the Wyman Tavern and the Bruder House. Jim will continue to serve as a trustee for two more years.

We thank Jim for his dedication and service.



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Jonathan Daniels Center

for Social Responsibility
at the Historical Society of Cheshire County

The 1965 Alabama Literacy Test

In 1965 Black citizens in Alabama were required to pass a literacy test before they could register to vote. This test was in addition to the 4-page affirmation of residency paperwork required of all Black registrants. Prospective White registrants did not have to meet these requirements. Several versions of this test were used. These questions were taken from a version with 68 questions. No more than 7 incorrect answers would be accepted. See how you do on these 5 questions. Answers on page 8.

246 Main Street, Keene, NH 603.352.1895
jdcenter@hscnh.org jonathandanielscenter.org

1. The population census is required to be made every ____ years.
2. If a person flees from justice into another state, who has authority to ask for his return?
3. The power to declare war is vested in: _____.
4. On the impeachment of the chief justice of the Supreme Court of the U.S., who tries the case?
5. Does enumeration affect the income tax levied on citizens in various states? Yes No

While these particular requirements have been eliminated, new voter suppression techniques, such as consolidating polling locations and moving them to areas not serviced by public transportation, and voter roll purges have been implemented in the past 10 years. Stay tuned to the Jonathan Daniels Center for Social Responsibility as we continue Jonathan's work and find our new place in Civil Rights history.

Many Thanks to our 2020 Wyman Tavern Keepers

Thomas and Susan Abert
Robert and Deborah Aliber
Larry Benaquist and Tammy Armstrong
Rebecca and Wayne Barton
Phillip "Rusty" Bastedo
Jay and Lisa Blanchard
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NH Gives is June 9-10

Proudly Participating In
NH GIVES
Support Us on June 9-10, 2020 6PM-6PM

On June 9 from 6:00 pm to June 10 at 6:00 pm, thousands of people will participate online in the NH Gives campaign to support New Hampshire's nonprofits. This year, the most urgent need at the Historical Society is to retain staff positions and meet operating expenses so that we can pivot well to provide content online and prepare for our phased reopening.

In addition, we hope you will consider a NH Gives donation to the Jonathan Daniels Center for Social Responsibility, which is now located at the Historical Society of Cheshire County. The new project manager, Mary Jensen PhD, is looking forward to a busy year of developing the Center's space into an interactive, reflective, and forward-looking destination.

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation has committed \$250,000 to match the first \$250,000 in contributions, so we hope you will support the Historical Society of Cheshire County and the Jonathan Daniels Center, and we hope you will give early while the matching funds last.

To donate go to: <https://www.nhgives.org/organizations/historical-society-of-cheshire-county>

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Wed.: 9 am - 9 pm
First and Third Sat., 9 am– 12 pm

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Calendar: Complete List of Events at Historical Society Website: www.hscn.org

All events subject to change or cancellation based on current health concerns. Check the Historical Society's website for additional events and for programming updates related to COVID-19.

July 19, 2020. 2:00 pm. Wyman Tavern Museum, 349 Main Street, Keene.

Sip N' Learn Hour- Switchel and Shrub

Enjoy a quick history of some interesting 18th century beverages

Wed. Aug 12, 2020. 7:00 pm. Historical Society of Cheshire County, 246 Main Street, Keene.

Votes for Women: A History of Women's Suffrage

Aug. 2020. Online 1-hour preview screening. Time and date to be announced.

The Vote: American Experience in collaboration with NH PBS.

Thursday, August 20, 2020. 2:00 pm. Bruder House, 349 Main Street, Keene.

A Pirate in Keene? The short but colorful life of Capt. William Wyman with Becky Barton

Sat. August 22, 2020. 10:00 am. Bruder House, 349 Main Street, Keene.

Colonial Cooking Demonstration

September 9, 2020. 7:00 pm Historical Society of Cheshire County, 246 Main Street, Keene.

Presentation *Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America.*

Literary Test Answers: 1.10, 2. Governor , 3. Congress,4. the Senate, 5. yes