



Historical Society of Cheshire County

Collecting, Preserving, and Communicating the History of Cheshire County

VOL. 36, NO. 5

FEBRUARY 2021

PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVES: HISTORICAL SOCIETY STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES OF THE LAST 12 MONTHS

During the pandemic the employees and volunteers of the Historical Society of Cheshire County have not been “essential workers,” but we have come to realize that the Historical Society provides a needed service. We have received a positive response from the community for the stories we have shared that connect people with their local history. At times such as these, it can be comforting to know that our region has faced challenges before and gotten through them. For this issue of the newsletter, we asked staff members and some of our volunteers to share what it has been like to work at the Historical Society during the pandemic.



Rick Swanson, Development Director:

When we had to close our doors in March of 2020, I appreciated the can-do attitude on the team about finding ways for people to work remotely from home. I set up a makeshift home office in our spare bedroom. It was a short commute – from the coffee pot past the wood-burning stove and down the hall to my desk. As development director, I had to pay close attention to the changing landscape of fundraising, and the only thing that was certain was the uncertainty. I started a lot of days by watching Mayor Hansel’s virtual town halls. The meetings were a good way to find out the latest information, often from informed sources such as the mayor, the Small Business Administration, and Senator Shaheen’s office.

When we realized that we couldn’t conduct our signature fundraising events in person, I was relieved to see the community support them beyond our expectations. The Auction of Historic Proportions became a live online auction, and the Wyman Tavern Brew Fest became a “brew tour.” Our book sale became a month-long event rather than a weekend event so that we could do it in a



socially distanced manner. It has been heartwarming to see the level of support that we and other organizations have received from the community - a real reminder that our community takes care of its own. People have been willing to contribute if they were in a position to do so, and they have been very appreciative of the work we have been doing.



Sandy Sliviak, Archives Volunteer:

Life in COVID-19 isolation has been a challenge. I have been able to keep myself busy at home working on transcribing Revolutionary War records which will become accessible online. Soldiers from Richmond were among them! Also, I was able to digitize five generations of family photos, some of which will become part of the Historical Society’s collection. I found two photographs of a women’s march in Keene in the early 20th Century. The women may have been Cheshire County suffragettes.

(Continued on page 2)

Historical Society of Cheshire County



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Pandemic Perspectives (Cont. from page 1):

When we were able to return to the Historical Society to volunteer, I was grateful to be able to see each of our “smiling eyes,” to be with friends again and to get back to our research here.



Becky Barton, Collections Volunteer and “Wymaniac:”

Dealing with Covid-19 at HSCC leaves me with divided feelings. As a volunteer who is retired, I can be flexible with my one day of work. It is nice to concentrate on registering new items and then accessioning them without interruption. But it is so quiet; there is no buzz of activity in the halls, no laughter of two staff members who have school age children and work remotely. I look forward to everyone coming back.

Then there is the Wyman Tavern, my other volunteer day during the warmer months. It has been closed up, furniture covered, no tours and no events inside or outside. I miss the candlelight tour the most, when people bustle through the rooms, talking with each other and experiencing 18th century games, conversations and clothing.

Eventually we will return to a new normal, and I think back to the small pox outbreaks in Keene in the 1770's, and how that disease must have been so scary, even with the inoculations. Today, at least we know how to stay healthy and not spread the germs as we all wait for our vaccine shot. I look forward to greeting you at the tavern.

Kathy Schillemat, Administrative Assistant:



As a confirmed extrovert, I have found it very lonely at times here at the Historical Society during the pandemic. I celebrated when the volunteers were able to come back and it delighted me to hear their laughter as they visited together. On especially quiet days, I discovered that if I turned on the monitor for the security cameras, I could see other people moving throughout the building. It was comforting to know that, even though we had to maintain our distance, I was not alone.

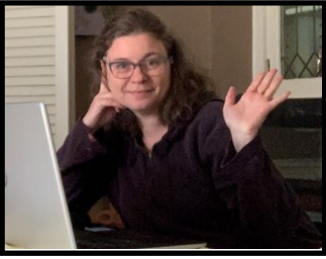
The security monitor also proved a valuable tool this summer when the alarm went off in the middle of the night and we couldn't determine why. So I checked the camera footage and saw a bat flying around the foyer, down the hall and into the museum store. The bat stayed in the building for a day or two, providing some excitement for all of us working at the time. Finally, I was able to capture and safely deposit it outside. I can add Bat Wrangler to my job description!

One thing I have come to appreciate is what we *were* able to do during this time. While we had to cancel in-person programs, we have been able to provide virtual programs that have actually reached far more people than we could have if the programs had been held in our buildings. The Historical Society YouTube channel provides informative and entertaining educational opportunities any time of the day or night. Articles in local print media, social media and on our website have provided historical context to our current situation. And because we didn't take down the Toys Exhibit in April as we had originally planned, members of one of the toy makers' family were able to come for private visits to the exhibit and see their ancestors' work.

It has been heartening to see the generosity of our members and donors during this time. Rick and I have had many “happy dances” over the successful fund-raising campaigns and activities of this past year. The community's support has sustained me through these lonely times.

Jennifer Carroll, Education Director;

I was on the phone with the director of another museum when the text came in--my daughters' school was closing due to COVID-19. "FUDGE," I texted in all caps



(except it wasn't fudge). How was I going to handle their needs and my job and all of the 90+ programs we had just scheduled for the year? Was I going to HAVE a job if things continued to escalate?! Over the next couple of months anxiety and fear came quite naturally and at all hours of the day/night. What was unnatural was my identity crisis. I have been a museum professional for 23 years. I had never been a stay-at-home mom. I had never been a work-from-home kind of person. It was isolating and unfamiliar.

But thanks to a smart, creative, patient staff and board of trustees, we all just eased into our new roles by summer. We cancelled what was necessary to cancel and brainstormed new initiatives to bring local history to teachers, students, and community members. I set up a home office in our guest room where it was quiet. Those plans changed one summer day when the police came to our door. Unbeknownst to me, my six and eight year old daughters had emptied the refrigerator of my fruits and vegetables to create a farm stand on the side of the road. They were found in the road on our quiet street flagging down cars in order to upsell product (that's my girls!). My home office was promptly moved to the dining room, with full view of front, back and side yards. The front parlor was turned into a classroom with desks, white boards, Chromebooks and art supplies. My schedule shifts from schooling to my own work a million times a day until I crash at 7:00 pm with a glass of wine.

I also brought my children into my work, creating and editing YouTube videos and local history lessons together. I had forgotten until this summer that the number one reason I took this job was to raise my daughters in a museum setting. But their engagement with local history didn't always have to occur within the four walls of the historical society. They can make history meaningful and create their own sense of the past from any place (except the middle of the road). I am a museum educator anywhere, anytime of day, and I feel blessed to have the opportunity to get creative with my work, while meeting the needs of my family.



Andrea Cheeney, Marketing Coordinator and Museum Store Manager:

Working fully remotely has been the most amazing, stressful and challenging adventure for me. We have adjusted rooms in our home to accommodate remote learning and office space. As a family we have spent a considerable amount of time here on the farm raising chickens, working in the gardens, the forge and the sewing room. My husband always jokes that "he has been preparing for social distancing his whole life." However, I miss my co-workers, and our volunteers. We are a tight-knit bunch.

The Society Staff has spent countless hours on webinars, zoom calls and google meets, learning new technology to provide programming and fundraising events to our supporters. I have created a new online store for the Museum Store and we now offer curb side pick-up. The work we are doing at the Society has been a positive

beacon for so many during these uncertain times. I have also enjoyed reading your story submissions of your pandemic experiences. I am so proud to be a part of this team and the work we are doing. Stay safe and thank you all for your continued support.

Mary Jensen, Jonathan Daniels Center For Social Responsibility Project Manager

Starting as the inaugural Project Manager for the Jonathan Daniels Center for Social Responsibility during a pandemic has certainly been a challenge! Developing the museum, educational programs and outreach were all part of the charge when I was hired last February. Six weeks in - lockdown.

Three lights have provided direction. First, the HSCC staff is wonderful; smart, creative people, committed to their work, focused on improving and growing their projects and programs. Their thoughtful suggestions and humor have been invaluable. Second, the community is proud of their hometown hero, Jonathan Daniels. People have willingly suffered through Zoom calls, phone calls and email chains and shared their ideas about the best ways to honor Jonathan Daniels and expand on the many initiatives that already exist in his name. Third, moving to more online topical and educational presentations, and webinars, has opened our eyes to the advantages of connecting virtually to people from other parts of the country and world, who are also interested in what we are doing. We won't lose those virtual chops; they will enhance future work.



We will all be happy when we can have a cup of tea together or enjoy a speaker in person. I can't wait to stop wearing masks, to open our doors without worry, to meet with people in person and to invite people to visit the Jonathan Daniels museum. Until then, sign up at jonathandanielscenter.org, or like us on Facebook, to keep up to date on Center activities.



Alan Rumrill, Executive Director:

On the afternoon of March 26, 2020, the three Historical Society staff members who were still working in-person spontaneously gathered in the corridor of the Society's headquarters building. The governor had just issued a "stay home" order, effective at the end of the following day, indicating that all non-essential businesses should close and that staff should work from home. We discussed our plans to complete our work under the new directive.

The Historical Society had closed its doors to the public nine days earlier for the safety of the public and the staff. Now we had to close the doors to the staff as well. I decided to come to work most weekdays because no one else would be present in the facility, thereby ensuring a safe environment. The next few weeks were lonely and a bit eerie. Keene State College closed and there was no traffic on the roads; lower Main Street was a ghost town.

We quickly canceled dozens of in-person programs and the staff had to determine how to remain relevant to our members and to the public during a time of crisis. I am proud that the staff was able to quickly revise the way that it presented information. We were able to present more than 120 programs and activities during the year, most of them virtual. We also added considerable new content to our offerings and learned new ways to reach wider audiences, in the present and in the future.

When the shut-down began, I imagined I would have time catch up on some overdue projects. I was badly mistaken! It seemed that people needed our services more than ever as they were forced to stay home throughout 2020. Many people trapped at home decided it was time to answer their long held genealogical and historical questions; the number of queries increased as our number of available volunteer researchers decreased. It also took considerable time to produce new content and learn new technologies. I am grateful for the gratitude expressed by our audience and the generosity shown by our supporters. In the end, the year of the pandemic was strange and sad at times, but a successful one for the Historical Society.



Jonathan Daniels Center

for Social Responsibility
at the Historical Society of Cheshire County

Downloadable walking tours for the Jonathan Daniels Center for Social Responsibility are now available! There are three parts to the tour. Puja Thapa, our intrepid KSC intern, has done a great job organizing the information. The first tour is devoted to the life of Jonathan Daniels in Keene. The next part of the tour encourages a walk down the Ashuelot River Park trail named after Jonathan Daniels. There you can read about civil rights legislation while you sit at the bench, or take a pause to enjoy the peacefulness of the river. The third component highlights the national and international memorials, plaques, stained glass and sculptures that honor Jonathan Daniels. This tour can be downloaded from the Google or Apple app stores and is free. We hope you enjoy the tour in the comfort in your home and encourage you to get out and visit in person, once the weather improves! Sign up at jonathandanielscenter.org to keep up to date on Center activities.

**The Spanish Flu Epidemic in
Southwest NH, 1918-1920
Wednesday, March 24, at 6:00 pm**

INFLUENZA

All persons are notified of the presence of this disease and on account of its communicable character are warned against visiting or coming in contact with those sick with it. All persons sick with this disease are prohibited from leaving the premises or coming in contact in any way with the general public. All persons are forbidden to remove, obscure or mutilate this card or to interfere in any way with these restrictions, under penalty of a fine or imprisonment as provided in section 4608 of the statutes.

As the world, the United States, and Cheshire County deal with the coronavirus pandemic, it may be comforting to learn that our predecessors faced a surprising similar situation 100 years ago, and promptly saw life return to normal. How did the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918 affect southwest New Hampshire and what comparisons can be made to the current epidemic? Alan Rumrill will provide a historical perspective on our current situation in this online program.

Register for the program at www.hscn.org.

The Rusts, The Slades and The Burroughs:

What a small historic cemetery can teach us
about the function and structure of early Anglo-
American communities in New Hampshire



**February 17, 6:00 pm
Online program**

On February 17, 2021 at 6:00 pm, Gail Golec will discuss the history of the town of Alstead as seen through its cemetery. After the end of the French and Indian War (1763), Anglo-American towns all along the Connecticut River Valley sprung into being. They were

generally populated by groups of interrelated extended families from established and overcrowded towns in southern New England. Alstead, NH was one such place. But years before the town proper was established, a group of those Anglo-American settlers, a handful of siblings, in-laws and neighbors, set up an early enclave that functioned as a town in microcosm. It provided its residents with traditional English political and social infrastructure, including a cemetery.

To register for this event, visit the Historical Society's website, at www.hscn.org.



Yankee Spy! Stoddard's Jonathan Hale in the Civil War

**Saturday, March 13,
11:00 am
Online**

Cheshire County native Jonathan Davis Hale left New Hampshire to seek his fortune in the mid-1800s. He gained wealth in his

adopted state of Tennessee, only to lose it all when the Civil War began because he supported the Union. His amazing life story is a tale of wealth, happiness, patriotism, danger, loss, and, finally, heartbreak and poverty.

This program is a joint program between the Historical Society of Cheshire County and the Friends of the Olivia Rodham Library. Register for the program at www.hscn.org.

Panel Discussion: Recovering Black History in NH



**February 22, 2021
6:00 to 8:00 pm Online**

Three NH historical organizations, in partnership with the NH Black Heritage Trail of Portsmouth, have embarked upon a research and documentation project to recover black history in their respective counties. Join the Historical Society of Cheshire County (Keene), the Monadnock Center for History and Culture (Peterborough), the Warner Historical Society, and the NH Black Heritage Trail (Portsmouth) to learn more about their projects.

Each organization is in a different stage of their work. Each organization is seeking virtual volunteers to assist them with documenting the lives of black individuals and families living in Cheshire, Hillsborough, Rockingham, and Merrimack Counties. All of the results from this multi-year project will be used to create new educational programming and to assist New Hampshire educators in their efforts to integrate more black local history into their curriculum.

To register for this event, please visit the Historical Society's website at www.hscn.org.

Monadnock Historical Societies Forum Roundtable Meeting

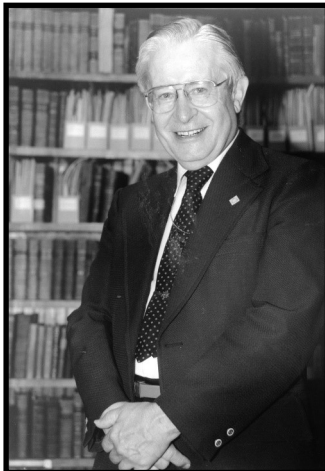
**Thursday, February 11, 2021.
9:30 to 11:30am.**

Local conservator Darlene Biolowski will lead a workshop on the overall responsibilities and best practices on working with your collections. The workshop will be followed by the roundtable discussion. Email dired@hscn.org to register to attend this zoom meeting.

Remembering the Historical Society of Cheshire County in your will or trust

A common and simple way of supporting the Society is to make a provision in your will or trust. Your will designates your beneficiaries and spells out your final wishes. In addition to your heirs, you can include provisions for charitable organizations such as the Historical Society. A bequest can take one of several forms such as specific dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, or a residual portion of your estate.

People who designate the Historical Society of Cheshire County in their estate plans can join the **David R. Proper Legacy Society**, named in honor of David R. Proper, who was a schoolteacher, librarian, historian, author, and a member of the Society for 65 years. Your attorney can find sample language on our website at www.hscn.org/support/planned-giving.



Many Thanks to our 2021 Wyman Tavern Keepers

Thomas and Susan Abert
 Sybil Dupuis
 Carl and Ruth Jacobs, Jr.
 David Frechette and
 Sydney (CeeCee) Croteau Frechette
 Susan Landers Gilbert and Sarah Handford
 Monadnock Garden Club
 Susan and Gary Murata
 Lee and Paula Page
 Michael Remy
 Jim and Sharon Rousmaniere
 Art and Lynn Simington
 Robert Stephenson
 Kimball and Maria Temple
 Ken and Pam Walton
 Rebecca and Wayne Whippie

To become a 2021 Tavern Keeper, go to www.hscn.org/support/tavern-keeper

In Grateful Recognition of our 2021 Business Supporters and Granting Organizations — Thank you!

Major sponsors: C&S Wholesale Grocers, Keene Eye Care, Mascoma Bank, The Melanson Company, A Tecta America Company, Monadnock Broadcasting Group, Savings Bank of Walpole, Yankee Bottle Club

Patron sponsors: Amoskeag Beverages, Bergeron Construction, John G. Burk and Associates, Hamblet Electric, Pinney Plumbing and Heating, Silver Direct

Sponsors: Aloha Keene, Clark-Mortenson Insurance and Financial Services, Davis Oil Company, Filtrine Manufacturing Company, Ingram Construction Corporation, Keene Monument, Moggies Auction Services, Monadnock Food Co-op, Norton and Abert PC, Prime Roast Coffee Company, Silver Direct

Members: Clear Solutions, Moore Nanotechnology Systems, Oster and Wheeler, Toy City, True North Networks

Supporters: Aldworth Manor, American House, Berkley & Veller, Carbone's Windows and Awnings, Carlisle Wide Plank Floors, Daniel V. Scully Architect, Furlone LLC, Green Energy Options, Greenwald Realty, Steve's Equipment Repair, Thai Garden, Toadstool Bookshops, Weller & Michael Architects

Thanks to the following granting organizations:

Frances R. Dewing Foundation
 Kingsbury Fund
 LCHIP
 National Endowment for the Arts.
 New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
 The Thomas P. Wright Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
 New Hampshire State Council on the Arts
 New Hampshire Humanities
 Putnam Foundation
 State of NH Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery
 U.S. Small Business Administration

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



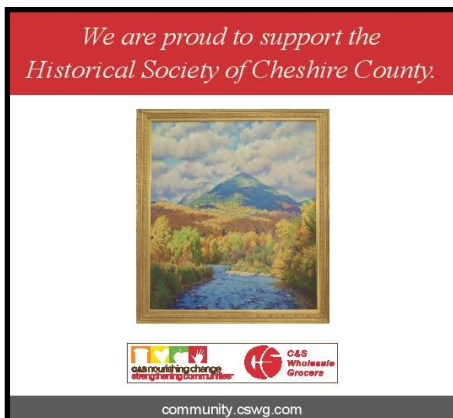
In honor of....

Over the past year, the Historical Society of Cheshire County has received gifts in honor of several individuals:

In honor of Edith Atkins
In honor of Kim Faulkner
In memory of Randy Frazier
In memory of Norman and Maria Harper
In memory of Bob Heald
In memory of Dorothy Farrar Howard
In honor of Richard Kalich
In memory of Joan Kibbe
In honor of David Joseph Parody
In honor of John Tyler
In memory of Thomas P. and Story Wright

We would like to share a reminiscence regarding one of these gifts:

“Edith Atkins was a wonderful amateur historian who cared so much about the history of this area, especially Richmond and Winchester. I remember her as the town librarian who was so good with kids (and adults). I met her in the late 1970s because of my interest in the history of Pisgah Park, much of which is in Winchester. In 1980 Edith and several others helped me with money and encouragement when I wanted to reprint the 1858 Cheshire County wall map. Their trust and support led to the reprint of that map in a boxed set. The project was a critical success but not a financial one. But now, many years later, I have a successful small business reprinting historical maps. And it is time to ‘give back’ in memory of a wonderful lady, Edith Atkins.” (Dave Allen, Old Maps www.old-maps.com)



Welcome to the newest Life Members of the Historical Society of Cheshire County

Eleanor Ball
Juliana Bergeron and Arto Leino
Jay and Lisa Blanchard
Peter and Maria Bradshaw
Robert and Jeananna Farrar
Charles Felix
David Frechette and Sydney Croteau Frechette
Bridget and Peter Hansel
Roger and Nancy Hansen
Carl and Ruth Jacobs
Claire Kluskens
Jane Lane
Denise Lindgren
Bob and Karen Lyle
Jacqueline Lyon
Bruce and Elizabeth O'Brien
Paula and Lee Page
Chris and Gaynelle Pratt
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Jane and David Stabler
Georgia Tasoulas
Robert and Lianne Therrien
Anthony and Barbara Tremblay
Robert and Susan Wellwood
John and Loren Wright
Martha and Peter Wright
Anonymous

A life membership supports the Historical Society in perpetuity. The tax-deductible contribution goes into an endowment fund that is permanently restricted for operations. The income from the fund in effect covers your membership dues in perpetuity. Life members receive all the benefits of annual memberships; in addition, they receive a lapel pin and an invitation to an exclusive event each year. Life memberships are \$1,000 for individuals and \$1,500 for couples. To become a life member, go to hscenh.org/support/memberships.

We deeply appreciate the generous contributions of the Historical Society of Cheshire County's life members!



Historical Society of Cheshire County
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Calendar: Complete List of Events at Historical Society Website: www.hsccnh.org

February 2021

Wednesday, February 17, 6:00 pm, Online. The Rusts, The Slades and The Burroughs: what a small historic cemetery can teach us about the function and structure of early Anglo-American communities in New Hampshire

Monday, February 22, 6:00 pm, Online. Panel Discussion: Recovering Black History in New Hampshire

March 2021

Saturday, March 13, 11:00 am, Online. Yankee Spy! Stoddard's Jonathan Hale in the Civil War

Wednesday, March 24, 6:00 pm, Online. The Spanish Flu Epidemic in Southwest NH, 1918-1920



Used Books Wanted!

The Historical Society of Cheshire County is once again collecting books for the Annual Use Book Sale. We will be holding the sale in late April and early May this year, with a format similar to the Used Book Sale in November 2020. Art books, architecture, cookbooks, travel, biographies, history, hardcover fiction, and children's books are welcomed as well as antique books in good condition. For more information, and to arrange to donate books, please call 352-1895 or email hsc@hsccnh.org.