



Historical Society of Cheshire County

Collecting, Preserving, and Communicating the History of Cheshire County

VOL. 37, NO. 4

NOVEMBER 2021

Keene Bureau Returns Home

Early in 2021 Tom Dayton was driving home to Uxbridge, Massachusetts from a visit to Boston. He spotted a bureau beside the road in Upton with a "FREE" sign posted on it. Tom noticed the fancy drawer pulls on the piece and stopped to look at them. Thinking that he might be able to use the handles, he took the bureau home to his garage and workshop in Uxbridge.

Tom explored the piece more closely when he got home, discovering that the drawer pulls were original, that each drawer had a lock, and that the original key was inside the top drawer. Intrigued, he searched further. He removed the drawers and noticed that there was writing inside the bureau. There, in pencil, were the words "Keene Furniture Company, Keene, N.H. July 30th, 1892."

Tom explained: "It was as if this 5-drawer bureau was talking to me and it was telling me 'I need to get home.' I knew right then this was a special piece of furniture to have survived over 129 years with all its original parts plus working locks and the skeleton key. This was incredible."

Tom searched the internet for several days and could not learn anything about the Keene Furniture Company. Consequently, he contacted the Historical Society to ask for guidance. A correspondence began between Tom and the Society's executive director. We shared that the Keene Furniture Company opened in 1868 and soon moved to the new Beaver Mills industrial complex on Railroad Street. The firm was quite successful, despite a disastrous fire in 1889 and a boiler explosion in 1893. Keene Furniture was known for the ornate bedroom sets that were manufactured in its 35,000 square foot factory building. The company closed its doors in 1898.

After sharing information and photos with Tom, he asked if the organization would be willing to accept the bureau as a gift for its collections. We



1892 Keene Furniture Company Bureau found by the side of the road in Massachusetts

readily agreed. This bureau represents an important period of transition from the small shops of skilled cabinetmakers who worked by hand to large woodenware factories that employed a large number of workers using large scale woodworking machines. A sizeable percentage of this machinery was invented and manufactured in Keene.

Tom might well have said that it was incredible that this bureau, which was in excellent original condition, was found sitting beside the road in Massachusetts by the one person who cared enough to save it and return it to Keene. On April 26, 2021 Tom Dayton and his friend Allan Pinkand Jr. delivered the piece of *(Continued on Page 2)*

Historical Society of Cheshire County



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furniture to the Historical Society. Tom later sent us a note that concluded: "Thank you for allowing me to be a very small part in returning this piece of American history to its proper home in Keene, NH."

Fortuitous experiences such as this have helped the Historical Society to save important artifacts on more than one occasion. The recovery of the records of the Winchester Anti-Slavery Society (1838-1847) from the town dump is another example. Please be attentive during your travels and maybe you can also help preserve local history!



Perhaps one of these Keene Furniture Company employees assembled the 1892 bureau.

New Local Titles will Make Great Holiday Gifts

The Historical Society's Museum Store offers a wide variety of books and gifts for holiday giving. Three new books might be ideal choices for the history enthusiast on your gift list. *New Hampshire Now: A Photographic Diary of Life in the Granite State* is the companion volume to the Society's current photography exhibit of the same name. *A Deep Presence: 13,000 Years of Native American History*, by Robert Goodby, shares a history of Native Americans in the Monadnock region. *Chasing Eden: A Book of Seekers* is the latest offering from Hancock author Howard Mansfield. Shop the Museum Store and take advantage of our annual holiday sale, beginning November 17.

Historical Society Holiday Closings

The Historical Society will be closed on November 11th for Veterans' Day, November 24th and 25th for the Thanksgiving holiday, and December 24th for the Christmas Holiday. The Historical Society will also be closed from January 3rd to January 14th for the yearly Staff Organization days.

Museum Store Holiday Sale begins November 17, 2021*



THE MUSEUM STORE
AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHESHIRE COUNTY

246 Main Street Keene NH online at
hscen.org

*Society Members receive 20% off entire purchase &
Not yet Members will receive 10% off entire purchase

The Jonathan Daniels Center Welcomes Executive Director

The Jonathan Daniels Center for Social Responsibility (JDC), a program of the Historical Society of Cheshire County (HSCC), continues its commitment to serving the legacy and work of Civil Rights martyr Jonathan Daniels. Through a process of discernment and in consideration of the current issues in society today, the JDC Committee is taking steps to create a non-profit organization independent from the Historical Society. This autonomy will empower the JDC to take a more activist role in issues of social responsibility in ways that reflect the values that guided Jonathan Daniels in his work.

A significant step in preparation for this next phase is the hiring of Executive Director, Heidi Schwieger. An experienced non-profit professional, advocate,

educator and Fulbright Scholar, Schwieger is poised to guide the JDC through this transition with a view to engaging the center as a champion of human rights and social responsibility through action, education, collaboration and expression. In addition to helping envision the future role of the JDC, Schwieger will sustain the important stewardship of the history surrounding Daniels, offer programming and events as well as finalize an on-site exhibit housed at the Historical Society of Cheshire County in Keene, New Hampshire. The exhibit will be open to the public.

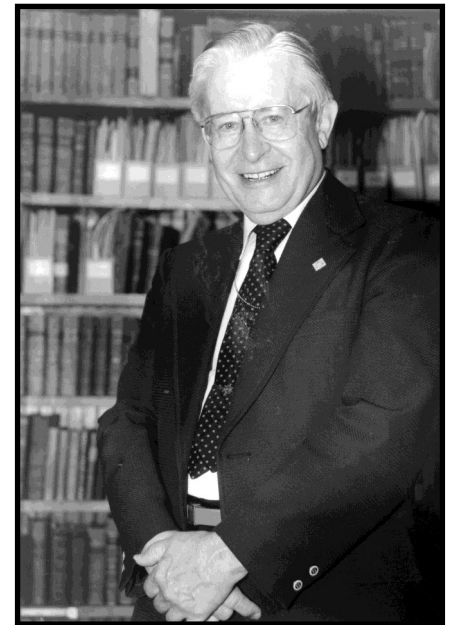


New Jonathan Daniels Center logo

Join the David R. Proper Society by Committing to Make a Legacy Gift.

A legacy gift can take many forms:

- **A gift of appreciated stock.** A donation of appreciated stock can be deductible at its current market value, regardless of its original cost.
- **Remembering the Historical Society of Cheshire County in Your Will or Trust.** Many people include provisions in their wills for charitable organizations as well as their heirs. The Historical Society can provide sample language to set aside a specific amount or a percentage for a bequest, for a residuary bequest, or a contingent bequest.
- **A Donation of Retirement Assets.** You can designate the Historical Society as a beneficiary of a percentage of your IRA. It's easy and free. You just need to get a beneficiary form from your IRA. Also, you can give directly from an IRA and avoid federal income tax on the withdrawal of the asset.
- **A Charitable Gift Annuity.** When you establish a charitable gift annuity, usually with a gift of \$10,000 or more, you will receive guaranteed fixed income for life for up to two beneficiaries.



David R. Proper was a school-teacher, librarian, historian, author, and a member of the Historical Society of Cheshire County for 65 years.

For more information, contact:

Rick Swanson, Development Director
603-352-1895, devdir@hsccnh.org

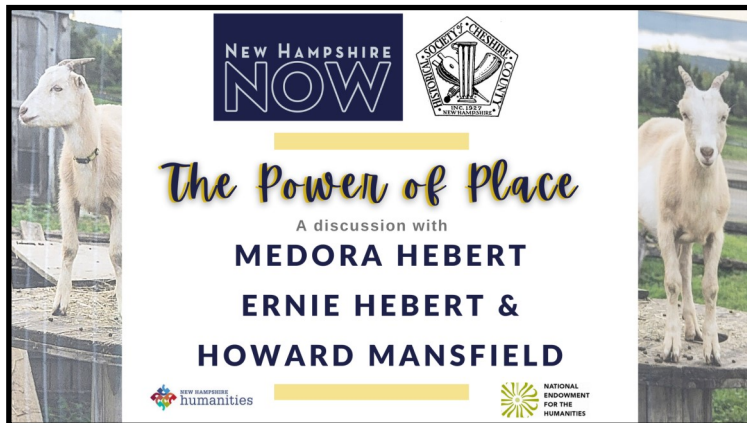
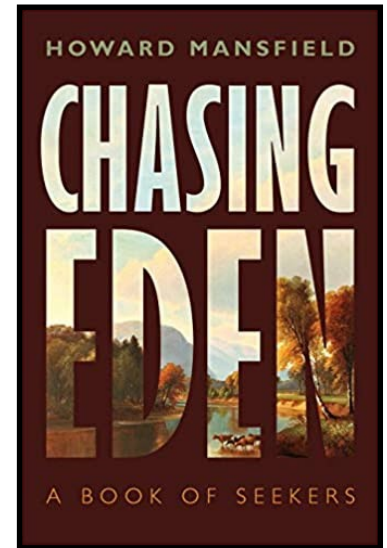
Chasing Eden
Howard Mansfield Book Event

Monday, November 8, 2021. 6:00 pm

Howard Mansfield is guest author at the Historical Society of Cheshire County on Monday, November 8, 2021 at 6pm. He will read from his new book *Chasing Eden* (released October 12) and discuss its connection to local history. Tickets for this free in-person event are limited to 50 attendees, socially distanced. The event will also be available to view and participate via Zoom. For tickets to attend in person or virtually, visit www.hsccnh.org.

Chasing Eden is about the seekers all around us, about Americans seeking their Promised Land, their utopia out on the horizon, which by definition, is ever receding before us. In *Chasing Eden* we meet a gathering of Americans – the Shakers in the twilight of their utopia; the Wampanoags confronting the Pilgrims; the God-besotted landscape painters who taught Americans that in wilderness was Eden; and 40,000 Africans newly freed from slavery granted 40 acres and a mule – only to be swiftly dispossessed. These and other seekers were on the road to find out, all united by their longing to find in America “a revolution of the spirit.”

Howard Mansfield is the author of nine books about preservation, architecture, and history, most recently *Summer Over Autumn* (Bauhan 2017). He has contributed to the New York Times, the Washington Post, Historic Preservation, and Yankee. He and his wife, writer Sy Montgomery, live in a 130-year-old house in Hancock, New Hampshire.



**The Power of Place:
An Evening with Howard Mansfield,
Medora Hebert & Ernie Hebert**

**Wednesday, November 17, 2021.
6:00 pm.**

Authors Ernest Hebert, Howard Mansfield and photographer Medora Hebert will share their thoughts on the power of place and the ways in which the ideas and reality of “place” can resonate in a photograph and in literature. As

they discuss their own work in relation to this theme, they will also draw on the works that are included in the Historical Society's current exhibition, *New Hampshire Now*.

New Hampshire Now features selections from a statewide project in which 50 photographers documented New Hampshire views and events from 2018-2020. The Historical Society of Cheshire County's exhibition features a mix of photographs specific to the Monadnock region along with a large selection of images from across the state. A 300-page publication, with an introduction by Mansfield, accompanies the exhibition.

Tickets for this free in-person event are limited to 50 attendees, socially distanced. The event will also be available to view and participate via Zoom. For tickets to attend in person or virtually, visit www.hsccnh.org. This program is made possible thanks to support from New Hampshire Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Savings Bank of Walpole.

Thank you to the 2021 Wyman Tavern Keepers

Thomas and Susan Abert
 Carol and Lewis Barnes
 Wayne and Becky Barton
 Rusty Bastedo
 Catherine Behrens
 Larry and Tammy Benaquist
 Robert Bermudes
 Jay and Lisa Blanchard/Keene Monument
 Chris J. Booras and Mary J. Booras
 Sybil Dupuis
 Tom Durnford and Lisa Clouet
 Dick and Pat Dugger
 Bill and Lisa Edwards
 Robert and Alfrieda Englund
 Fenton Family Dealerships
 Joslin Kimball Frank
 Russ and Kathy Fleming
 David Frechette and
 Sydney (CeeCee) Croteau Frechette
 Henry Frechette
 Marilyn Gemmell
 Susan Landers Gilbert and Sarah Handford
 Elke and Tom Hanna
 Bridget and Peter Hansel
 Roger and Nancy Hansen
 Donall and Joyce Healy
 John and Jean Hoffman
 Carl and Ruth Jacobs
 Peter, Cornelia and Catherine Jenness
 John and Ruth Joslin
 Paul and Suzanne Krautmann
 Walter and Barbara Lacey
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 Steven and Jane Larmon
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 June Rawlings
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 Jim and Sharon Rousmaniere
 Marie Royce Ruffle
 Josephine and JC Russell
 Gary and Jane Shapiro
 Art and Lynn Simington
 Edwin and Sharron Smith
 Katherine Snow and Paul Ledell
 David and Jane Stabler
 Robert Stephenson
 Jon Sundstrom and Betsy Ruffle
 Richard Talbot
 Kimball and Maria Temple
 Rob and Lianne Therrien
 Anthony and Barbara Tremblay
 Ken and Pam Walton
 Phil and Janet Warren
 Jan Weekes
 David R. Weir
 Rebecca and Wayne Whippie
 Jeanne Williams
 Peter and Martha Wright
 Robert and Lisa Wyman
 Gretchen Ziegler

And welcome to the 2022 Tavern Keepers

Thomas and Susan Abert
 Wayne and Becky Barton
 Betty and Mike Christansen
 David Frechette and
 Sydney (CeeCee) Croteau Frechette
 Mike Giacomo and Rachel Eschle
 Susan Landers Gilbert
 Sarah Handford

Carl and Ruth Jacobs
 Paul and Suzanne Krautmann
 Michael Remy
 Art and Lynn Simington
 Edwin and Sharron Smith
 To become a 2022 Tavern Keeper, go to
www.hscnh.org/support/tavern-keeper.

Welcome to the 2020-21 Life Members of the Historical Society of Cheshire County

Eleanor Ball
Juliana Bergeron and Arto Leino
Jay and Lisa Blanchard
Chris J. Booras
Mary J. Booras
Peter and Maria Bradshaw
Megan Burke Kidder
Margot Close
Robert and Jeananna Farrar
Barry and Carol Faulkner
Charles Felix
David Frechette and Sydney Croteau Frechette
Michael Giacomo and Rachel Eschle
Phyllis Gove and Steve Casad
Judith and Glenn Guyette
Bridget and Peter Hansel
Roger and Nancy Hansen
Carl and Ruth Jacobs
Richard and Judith Kalich
Claire Kluskens
Howard and Elaine Lane
Jane Lane
Denise Lindgren
Bob and Karen Lyle
Jacqueline Lyon
Daniel and Michal Mariaschin
John and Susan McGinnis
Bruce and Elizabeth O'Brien

Paula and Lee Page
Dominic Perkins and Deirdre Chretien
Anne Piper
Chris and Gaynelle Pratt
Thomas and Barbara Putnam
Michael Remy
Valerie and Lawrence Santilli
Arthur and Lynn Simington
Lael Stabler Schwabe
Katherine Snow
Rosanne Snow
Jane and David Stabler
Jeanie Sy
Georgia Tasoulas
Kimball and Maria Temple
Robert and Lianne Therrien
Anthony and Barbara Tremblay
Robert and Susan Wellwood
Julie White
John and Loren Wright
Martha and Peter Wright
Susan M. 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 a lapel pin and an invitation to an exclusive event each year. Life memberships are \$1,000

In Recognition of our 2021 Business Supporters — Thank you!
We are deeply grateful for the support we have received from about 50 businesses in the Monadnock region. You have been there when we needed you!

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

Patron sponsors: John G. Burk and Associates, Hamblet Electric, Pinney Plumbing and Heating, Price Chopper, Silver Direct

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Historical Society of Cheshire County
P.O. Box 803 – 246 Main Street
Keene, New Hampshire 03431
603-352-1895 – www.hscn.org
Hours: Tues., Thurs., & Fri.: 9 am - 4 pm
Wed.: 9 am - 8 pm; First and Third
Saturday, 9 am - 12 pm

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Collecting, Preserving, and Communicating the History of Cheshire County

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Calendar: Complete List of Events at www.hscn.org

November 2021:

Monday, November 8, 6:00 pm, Exhibit Hall and Virtual, Howard Mansfield Book Launch

Thursday, November 11, Historical Society Closed for Veteran's Day Holiday

Wednesday, November 17, 6:00 pm, Exhibit Hall and Virtual, *NH Now* Panel Discussion with Ernest and Medora Hebert and Howard Mansfield

Wednesday, November 17, Museum Store, Holiday Sale begins (20% off for members, 10% off for not yet members)

Thursday and Friday, November 25 and 26, Historical Society Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December 2021:

Thursday, December 23, Museum Store Holiday Sale ends

Friday, December 24, Historical Society Closed.

Friday, December 31, Historical Society Closed

January 2022:

January 3 through 14: Historical Society Closed for Staff Organization days.

Ongoing events: Through April 2022 Exhibit Hall, *NH Now* Photography Exhibit

