



Historical Society of Cheshire County

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

VOL. 39, NO. 5

FEBRUARY 2024

The Historical Society's YouTube Channel 'Drops the Puck' this March for Women's History Month

GIRL'S BASKETBALL



*Front row, seated—Lorna Elwyn, Beatrice Whitcomb, Emeline Colony, Elvira Whitney.
Middle row—Elizabeth Tracy, Lona Williams, Mr. Drew, Barbara Smith, Helen Lane.
In back—Marcia Wheelock, Florence Aliber.*

1925 Keene High School girls' basketball team with Florence Aliber at back right

On December 8th, 1923, Keene High School freshman Florence Aliber wrote in her diary, "In morning, went and played basketball, and in afternoon, went again. In evening, went up street shopping with mother." As a typical 13-year-old girl of the era, Aliber loved going to the movies, baking brownies, and playing games with friends, especially basketball. She continued to play the game throughout her high school career, earning her varsity letter at Keene High School before graduating in 1927.

Basketball had been growing in popularity with teenage girls for thirty years prior to Aliber's time on the team. James Naismith is credited with inventing the game of basketball in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1891. The following year, the first girls' game was organized at Smith College and by 1900 a small number of collegiate and high school teams were in

existence. Keene High School began a girls' team as early as 1915. By the time Florence Aliber was playing, thirty-seven states offered high school girls' teams.

One hundred years later, local high school girls continue to broaden their contributions to female athletics. In January 2024, sophomore Lily Runez was named Keene Sentinel's *Athlete of the Week* for her contributions to the Keene High wrestling team. Runez was voted *Outstanding Wrestler* at the recent David Minickiello Invitational tournament.

Keene High School student, Alix Dumont (she, they), is interning at the Historical Society and working on a topic close to their heart. They are researching the history of women's hockey in New Hampshire in order to produce a short video on the

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Historical Society of Cheshire County



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Women's History (continued from page 1):

subject. Dumont discovered that the University of New Hampshire established one of the first women's hockey teams in the state during the 1970s. The first high school girls' team began in Hanover, NH, in 1990. It took seven more years for Keene High School to enter the mix, establishing a girls hockey club in 1997.

A varsity girls' hockey team was finally established at Keene High School in 2016. Today, Dumont is captain of the team.

When asked about why they want to



Alix Dumont on the ice

highlight the history of this topic, they remarked, "An emphasis on girls' hockey has been a long time coming. The boys' high school team, for instance, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. We're celebrating our 7th. Hockey is a really fun sport for anyone and I'm excited to see more young girls become interested in the sport."

Dumont will work with Historical Society's program coordinator, Peter Kelleher, to interview current coaches and players as well as players from the original 2006 varsity team. The video will be launched on the Historical Society of Cheshire County's YouTube channel for Women's History Month in March of this year.



First Varsity Keene High School Girls' Hockey Team, 2015-2016

Mountain As Muse: 2024 Summer Exhibit At the Historical Society A Call for Artwork

For almost 200 years artists have focused on the landscape of Mount Monadnock as a subject for the canvases. For these artists, Monadnock has been a source of inspiration for their art. For some artists, the mountain may have inspired a single painting; for some, it was one of many subjects on which they focused, and for a few, such as William Preston Phelps, it was their main subject and source of inspiration. This exhibit will share the art of painters, the words of authors, the sound of music, and much more. It will explore the lives of the artists and what their work tells us about the mountain, the region, and the artists themselves.

Among the artists featured in the exhibit will be: Tim Campbell, Amos Emerson Dolbear, Alicia Drakiotes, Barry Faulkner, Mary Iselin, Charles Jackson, Alexander James, Rockwell Kent, Eric Koepel, Charles Mason, Richard Sumner Meryman, William Preston Phelps, Albert Quigley, John Traynor, Art Tremblay, Nora Unwin, Henry Webster Rice, and Richard Whitney. Please contact Jennifer Carroll, Education Director, at jcarroll@hscnh.org, if you have artwork depicting Mount Monadnock by these or other artists that you would be willing to loan for the exhibit. The exhibit will be in place from May 24 to August 30, 2024.



History of the Sign Trade
Wednesday, February 21, 2024
6:30 pm
Historical Society of Cheshire County
Exhibit Hall

The Historical Society of Cheshire County is pleased to host Peter Poanessa of Keene Signworx for a presentation on the evolution of the sign trade over the last 100 years or so. This event is held in conjunction with the Society's current exhibition, **Signs of the Times**, on view through April 19.



Tour of Keene Signworx
Saturday, March 23, 2024
10:00 am
12 Base Hill Road, Swanzey

Peter Poanessa will offer a tour of his sign-making facility, Keene Signworx, allowing visitors to see today's process for making trade signs. Signs from businesses past and present line the walls. This event is limited to 30 people and is held in conjunction with the Society's current exhibition, **Signs of the Times**, on view through April 19.

To register for the tour, please go to the Historical Society's website: www.hsccnh.org.



Monadnock Historical Societies
Roundtable Meeting
Thursday, February 8, 2024
9:30 to 12:00 pm
Exhibit Hall

The meeting of the Monadnock Historical Societies Roundtable group will be held in the Exhibit Hall of the Historical Society of Cheshire County on Thursday, February 8, at 9:30 am. Contact Jenna Carroll, Education Director, for more information: jcarroll@hsccnh.org.

Newsletter available online
and by email

If you would like to receive your newsletter by email, please contact Kathy Schillemat at hsc@hsccnh.org. Current and past newsletters can also be viewed on the Historical Society's website, www.hsccnh.org.



Photo by Medora Hebert

Alan Rumrill Announces Upcoming Retirement

Alan F. Rumrill, executive director of the Historical Society of Cheshire County, announced that he will retire in October of 2024 after forty-one years on the job. For many Cheshire County residents, Rumrill has become the voice of history in the region. His “Monadnock Moments” radio stories have been broadcast weekly on WKBK Radio since 1985. He writes weekly columns in *The Keene Sentinel* and *The Monadnock Shopper*. Alan makes frequent public presentations and field trips on topics such as railroad history and the Walldogs murals in downtown Keene, and he is often interviewed by the media for historical context on news stories. He has authored many articles and has had nine books published.

Dominic Perkins, the Board President of the Historical Society, said that the Board will do a nationwide search to find Alan’s replacement. Perkins noted, “Alan can be really proud of the organization that he helped shape. Because of his leadership, we expect a lot of interest in his position given the strength and size of the organization, the overwhelming support from donors and the community, and the diversity and breadth of our programming. He’s truly turning over a top-notch organization to his successor.”

In 1983, Alan Rumrill became the first paid employee at the previously all-volunteer organization – the Historical Society of Cheshire County, New Hampshire. Under his stewardship, the Historical Society of Cheshire County has grown to six staff members, 130 volunteers, three buildings, 150+ programs annually, an annual budget of over \$500,000, and an endowment over \$4 million.

Alan’s co-workers at the Historical Society of Cheshire County say that they appreciate his management style. Rick Swanson, the Director of Development, says, “Alan finds a great balance between supervising his staff and giving them freedom. He pays close attention to what we are doing, yet he encourages us to make our own decisions.”

Jenna Carroll, the Education Director, says, “Alan Rumrill has been a guiding force for the staff at the Historical Society of Cheshire County. I am grateful to have had ten years of history in this region alongside him, learning at every turn. His commitment to preserving our local history and enthusiasm for sharing stories with the community is infectious. I’ve learned to become a better storyteller under his leadership. I truly appreciate Alan’s ability to encourage us on staff to find our place in history, where our curiosity and creativity is valued, and our successes are shared. I’m confident we can carry those lessons into the future: to reliably collect, preserve, and communicate the region’s past with objectivity, context, empathy, humor, and grace.”

In the months leading up to his retirement, Alan Rumrill has been honored with three career awards: the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance’s 2023 Preservation Achievement Award for outstanding leadership in research, public outreach, and stewardship; the American Association for State and Local History’s 2023 Leadership in History Award; and a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow award.

After his retirement, Alan intends to continue working part-time at the Historical Society of Cheshire County as a Senior Historian, a new position for the agency, and as a resource for historical research and use of the society’s collections. Locals should be glad to hear that he will continue to present public programs and prepare media programs such as “Monadnock Moments.” Perkins added, “It will be hard to find anyone with the local knowledge that Alan has accumulated over the years, which is why we are really happy to know he will be staying on part-time as our Senior Historian.”

An endowed fund in his name has been created to support the ongoing cost of the new position. The Historical Society of Cheshire County welcomes gifts to support the position for years to come. For more information, contact rswanson@hscnh.org, call 603-352-1895, or go to the web page hscnh.org/alan-rumrill-fund.

Your Legacy Could Make History

A legacy gift to the Historical Society of Cheshire County is a powerful way to preserve local history for future generations. Legacy gifts can take the form of bequests, beneficiary designations for IRAs or life insurance policies, stock transfers, charitable gift annuities, or other forms of planned gifts.

Individuals who include the Historical Society of Cheshire County in their will or estate plan are recognized and thanked with inclusion into the **David R. Proper Legacy Circle**. David Proper was a teacher, librarian, historian, author, and member of the Historical Society of Cheshire County for 65 years. He had the foresight to leave an impactful legacy gift to the Historical Society. Legacy Circle members are invited to special events and are kept updated on the Society's progress in fulfilling our mission.

Here is an example of typical bequest language you could add to a will:

I bequeath \$ _____ or ____% of my estate to the Historical Society of Cheshire County, a nonprofit organization located at 246 Main Street in Keene, New Hampshire (mailing address P.O. Box 803, Keene, NH 03431).

The Historical Society of Cheshire County's tax identification number is 02-6007201. We encourage you to consult with your financial advisor, accountant, or attorney to help you pursue your philanthropic goals. For more information contact Rick Swanson, Development Director at rswanson@hscenr.org or 603-352-1895.



Donations and Buyers Needed for the Historical Society's Annual Used Book Sale

May 3 – May 11, 2024

The Historical Society's 24th annual Used Book Sale will be held in the Exhibit Hall of the Society from May 3 through May 11. History lovers can expect to find hardcover books on topics such as history, biography, and antiques, and any lover of books should be able to find something of interest – art books, architecture, cookbooks, travel, hardcover fiction, children's books, and much more. In all, there will be about 6,000 titles including some high-quality books that might be considered treasures. Numerous NH town histories have been donated for the sale this year, for example. Most books will sell for \$1.00 to \$2.00. The proceeds will support the Historical Society's programs to collect, preserve, and communicate the history of Cheshire County.

We need books and we are hopeful that Society members and friends will donate volumes in the above categories for the sale. Please check your shelves to find books you are willing to donate and share with someone new. We will accept book donations through April 19, or until we reach our capacity. We cannot accept mass-market paperbacks, textbooks, encyclopedias, older fiction, DVDs, CDs, or VHS tapes. Please donate and buy at the Used Book Sale to help support our important programs. For more information, or to arrange to donate books, please call 603-352-1895.

We are deeply grateful to the 2023 Leadership Circle Donors

Leadership circle members give \$1,000 or more in a calendar year to support the work of the Historical Society of Cheshire County. Their gifts make a huge difference!

Robert Aliber
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Raette Trombly
JB and Loren Wright
Peter and Martha Wright

Gifts to the Historical Society of Cheshire County have been made in 2023 and 2024 in memory of the following people:

Dorothy Arwe
Barbara Hurd Cowdrey
Randy Frazier
Wayne S. Fulton
Carole Landry
Elizabeth Sadoques Mason
Robert C. Nichols
Veronica G. Pecora
June Rawlings
Jane Brown Reynolds
James Rousmaniere
Roseanne Snow

SAVE THE DATE
10TH ANNUAL WYMAN TAVERN BREW FEST

AUGUST 3, 2024
AT THE WYMAN TAVERN
KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
DOORS OPEN AT 12:00PM (VIP)
1:00 (GENERAL ADMISSION)

EVENTS
• LOCAL BEERS
• SPIRITS
• FOOD TRUCKS
• LIVE MUSIC
• DUNK TANK
• MOCKTAILS

SUPPORT LOCAL HISTORY

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.HSCCNH.ORG



AVAILABLE NOW IN STORE AND ONLINE

THE MUSEUM STORE

AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHESHIRE COUNTY

One of the trends to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic is a resurgence of interest in jigsaw puzzles. The Museum Store at the Historical Society has decided to join in the fun. **A 300 piece jigsaw puzzle has been created using photographs of the signs from the "Signs of the Times" exhibit.** It is on sale now for only \$23.00 (member discount can be applied). In addition to the exhibit catalog also for sale in the Museum Store, the puzzle would be a great souvenir of the current exhibit.

Check out the puzzle and many other great gifts, books, crafts and fine art at the Museum Store. Currently, **a mini-exhibit of fine art by Alicia Drakiotes** is on display and for sale in the Museum Store. In addition, there is a large selection of items available at clearance sale prices. The store is open during regular Historical Society hours.

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
UPCOMING PROGRAMS, EVENTS,
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES,
MEMBERSHIP, AND MORE....

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Historical Society of Cheshire County
P.O. Box 803 – 246 Main Street
Keene, New Hampshire 03431
603-352-1895 – www.hscenh.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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Calendar: Complete list of events and descriptions at www.hscenh.org

February 2024

Thursday, February 8, 9:30 am, Exhibit Hall, Monadnock Historical Societies Roundtable

Wednesday, February 21, 6:30 pm, Exhibit Hall, *A History of the Sign Trade* with Peter Poanessa (see page 3)

March 2024

Saturday, March 23, 10:00 am, 12 Base Hill Road, Swanzey, Keene Signworx Tour (see page 3)

April 2024

Friday, April 19, Exhibit Hall, Last day to view “Signs of the Times” exhibit and the last day to drop off used books for the book sale (see page 5)

Save The Date(s):

Friday, May 3 through Saturday, May 11: Exhibit Hall, 25th Annual Used Book Sale (see page 5)

Friday, May 24, 4:00 to 6:00 pm, Exhibit Hall, “Mountain as Muse” Exhibit Opening

Saturday, August 3, 1:00 to 5:00 pm, Wyman Tavern Grounds, 10th Annual Wyman Tavern Brew Fest (see page 6)