



Historical Society of Cheshire County

*Collecting, Preserving, and
Communicating the History of Cheshire County since 1927*

VOL. 41 NO. 1

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America's 250th

Reflections from the Monadnock Region

2025 - 2026



Keene minutemen march as depicted by artist Arthur Tremblay

The March to Lexington & Concord

By Senior Historian Alan Rumrill

On the morning of April 20, 1775, a messenger arrived in Keene on horseback and met with militia captain Ephraim Dorman. He told Dorman that British troops had marched out of Boston the previous day to seize some arms gathered by local militiamen in the outlying towns. This was one more act in the growing tension between Great Britain and the increasingly frustrated colonists in America. The messenger reported that the colonial militia had confronted the British troops at Lexington and Concord and during the battle dozens of colonial militiamen had been killed.

Capt. Dorman immediately crossed the Main Street to the tavern of his neighbor and fellow militia officer Isaac Wyman to relay the news. The two men sent messengers throughout the town notifying the inhabitants to meet on the town common that afternoon. The townspeople gathered and those present voted unanimously to send a company to “oppose the (British) regulars.” Isaac Wyman had served in the French and Indian Wars and the men chose him as commander of the company. Twenty-

nine men stepped forward when he called for volunteers; Wyman made the total 30.

He told the men to go home and prepare their arms, equipment and provisions and to meet at his tavern at sunrise the next morning to march to support the Massachusetts troops. Later that evening, Wyman, Dorman, Lt. Jeremiah Stiles, and other leading patriots of the community met in the tavern’s north parlor to discuss the events in Massachusetts and the plans for local support of the colonial cause.

The minutemen mustered in front of the tavern the next morning. One of the residents who joined the militiamen that morning was Keene’s Abner Sanger. Abner kept a detailed diary of his experiences during the Revolutionary War period. He wrote that it was a cold and very snowy April morning. The men began to gather at sunrise and at “about nine o’clock we all march from Captain Wyman’s in Keene.” They went south down the street, turned left onto Baker Street and began the

Continued on page 2:

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of Cheshire County**



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March (continued from page 1):



Early print depicting the Battle at Lexington, 1775. Engraving issued by John H. Daniels & Son, Boston, 1903. Library of Congress

75-mile journey to Boston. The day was “wet and sloppy,” and the men marched through “mud and mire,” according to Sanger. They walked 23 miles on the first day, to Nichols’ Tavern in Winchendon. The next day was also “very wet and rainy.” After breakfast at Nichols’, they “set out in the rain,” making 18 miles to Lunenburg before stopping for the night at another tavern there.

They completed their journey to Concord the next day, traveling 23 more miles, once again beginning the morning march in the rain. When they arrived in Concord, the fighting was long over. The men were ordered to guard two cannons that would be taken to Cambridge, where the Colonial troops were gathering as they set siege to the town of Boston, where British troops were quartered. The Keene men accompanied the cannons on the 11-mile journey to Cambridge the next day. They then settled into camp, but did not see any fighting following their 75-mile march from southwest New Hampshire.

About 1000 men from New Hampshire joined the forces near Boston. Many stayed and fought at the battle of Bunker Hill two months later. Many others, including Abner Sanger, returned home to care for their farms and their families. Few of the men who made the journey from Wyman’s tavern 250 years ago may have realized that they had just marched into history; they were there at the beginning of the American Revolutionary War – a war that would result in the creation of the United States of America.



Become a Tavern Keeper in 2025.

Be entered to win a trip for two to Lexington, MA; includes an overnight stay, dinner and a VIP tour (\$1,100 value).

Visit our website or call.






Visit our Museum Store

Shop local history in person or online www.hsccnh.org

**Special 250th deal on
The Journal of Abner Sanger \$17.75**

Learn more about the American Revolution



There are so many ways to learn more about life in Cheshire County 250 years ago

Upcoming Programs

April 23, 2025. 6:30pm. Presentation “The Unhappy Disputes Now Subsisting” or “1775: A Year of Civil War”

Professor Gregory Knouff of Keene State College will deliver a talk entitled “The Unhappy Disputes Now Subsisting” -or- “1775: A Year of Civil War.” His presentation will focus on the local region and New Hampshire in the first year of what became known as the American Revolution. The conflict in 1775 was understood by participants as a British American civil war. Contrary to popular assumptions of a unified cause, colonial North Americans were deeply divided by political and social events of the year. Some were zealous leaders of the resistance, others were cautious critics of Royal government, and a few were outright vocal Loyalists. The presentation begins at 6:30 pm, following a brief annual meeting of the Historical Society.



June-October. Guided Tour: A Patriotic Stroll

Seven Keene men who supported the Lexington and Concord alarm, and what followed will be discussed as guests stroll down lower Main Street where five of the seven men lived. Walk past the location of the old fort and hear details about a few of the men who lived here in 1775: patriots Eliakim Nims, Luke Metcalf and Dan Guild. Learn about Ephraim Dorman and Thomas Baker, Jr., good friends who supported the cause but stayed in Keene. The tour will end at the Wyman Tavern, home to father and son patriots Isaac Wyman, Sr. and Isaac Wyman, Jr.



June-October. Guided Tour: Loyal Subjects

Discover the story of some steadfast loyal subjects of England living on Main Street in Keene, during the 1770s. Coming from different backgrounds were Dr. Josiah Pomeroy, Major Josiah Willard and Abner Sanger. Why did they support the King? What risks and rewards might they encounter? Meet at the Tavern and come inside to the Tap Room to learn more about why these three men chose not to fight against Mother England.

For more information on tour dates and times, visit www.hscenh.org.

Open House at the Wyman Tavern, Saturday, July 5, from 10 am to 2 pm. Free admission.

Upcoming Online Videos

March 2025. Recorded Presentation. “Patriotic Speeches & Pompous Declamations Program”

Professor Greg Knouff of Keene State College shares the larger Atlantic World context of the explosive political crisis in parts of British North America in the year 1774 in the wake of resistance to the Tea Act. In March of 1774, the town of Hinsdale declared in its meeting that “patriotic speeches and pompous declamations” by self-interested demagogues threatened good order and “true personal liberty.” Learn how southwest NH responded to the global crisis.

April 2025. Short Film. “Abner Sanger and the Minutemen of Keene”

Historical Society media technician Peter Kelleher collaborated with local educators and re-enactors JJ Prior (Symonds School) and Emilia Whippie Prior (Nelson School) to produce a short film based on the 1770s diary entries of Keene’s Abner Sanger, a minuteman who responded to the call to march to Lexington and Concord, MA, but soon afterward became a Loyalist in the American Revolution.

Videos may be viewed on the Historical Society of Cheshire County YouTube channel.

Annual Meeting Announcement

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

By order of the esteemed Historical Society of Cheshire County, you are most cordially invited to attend our Annual Gathering, to be held on the twenty-third day of April in the year two thousand and five and twenty.

5:30pm. Social Time & Refreshments

6:00pm. Annual meeting of the Historical Society. The public is welcome. Historical Society members will have an opportunity to vote on this year's slate of board members and changes to the Society's bylaws.

6:20pm. "1775:" A presentation by Professor Gregory Knouff of Keene State College

Your presence is most earnestly requested, as your attendance contributes greatly to the continued preservation of our shared heritage and traditions. Register for the Annual Meeting at www.hsccnh.org.

Vote for Board Members

Matthew Boulton

Keene, NH

Completing first 3-year term for another board member



Julie Pearson

Alstead, NH

Second 3-year term



Susan Silver

Keene, NH

Second 3-year term



Mary Delisle

Keene, NH

Second 3-year term



Reinette Reilly

Keene, NH

Second 3-year term



Vote on Bylaw Changes

The Governance Committee of the Board of Directors of the Historical Society of Cheshire County proposes the following bylaw changes, to be voted on by the membership at the April 23rd annual meeting:

Article V.1 - changed to Annual Meeting vs. Annual Member Meeting.

Article VII - Committees updated to reflect all of the current board committees.

Article VIII -Rephrased Secretary description.

Article XII - ... proposed amendments or new by-laws will be available 14 days in writing in advance of the annual meeting.

The Board of directors unanimously supported the changes proposed at its March 17, 2025 meeting.

A complete copy of the proposed bylaw changes as well as a copy of the 2024 Annual Report is available on the Historical Society of Cheshire County's website.

Visit www.HSCCNH.org and head to the About Us section.

Current and Upcoming Exhibits



On view through May 9, 2025

For 60 years many Antioch students, faculty, staff, and alumni have won important victories for the Monadnock Region. Our latest exhibit highlights the profound ways in which the University has left its mark.



Rowland Russell, Antioch professor and alum, and guest curator of the exhibit, welcomes visitors to the Antioch Exhibit Opening reception on February 21st.

**WIN AN ORIGINAL OIL PAINTING BY LOCAL ARTIST
Mary Iselin of Marlborough, NH
"From the Back Field"**



Framed oil painting 30" x 24".

Winner will be drawn on September 6, 2025.

Need not be present to win.



**TICKETS 1 FOR \$5 OR 5 FOR \$20
Raffle #RF-2025-019**



May 30-September 6, 2025

Our Story

The art of community connections in the Monadnock Region

Over 50 local artists have applied to participate in the Historical Society of Cheshire County's juried summer art show, opening May 30th in the Putnam Exhibit Gallery at 246 Main Street, Keene.

Our Story showcases the diverse ways in which individual artists and writers interact with, and contribute to, our shared community experience. The exhibit will feature paintings, photography, poetry, film, ceramics, pottery, and more. Many of the art pieces will be for sale, with a portion of the proceeds going to support the Historical Society's mission to collect, preserve, and communicate local history.

The opening reception for *Our Story* will be held on Friday, May 30th, from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. The exhibit is free and will be open to the public during the Historical Society's regular business hours through September 6, 2025.

Meet Michelle Walker



After an eight-month national search, the Historical Society is excited to announce that Michelle Walker, current Education Manager at the Rhode Island Historical Society, will be joining the team as the new director of education in May.

In her own words, we introduce the newest member of our team: “My name is Michelle Walker, and I am so excited to be joining the Historical Society of Cheshire County as the new Director of Education! Prior to working in the historical society field, I was a middle and secondary social studies educator for 25 years. I am a Rhode Island native relocating to New Hampshire with my husband and younger of two daughters, and am eager to learn more about Cheshire County’s history. I have taught Geography, World History, American History, AP US Government, and Civics. I am a 1997 graduate of Assumption College (now University) in Worcester, MA with a degree in History and Political Science. I am passionate about bringing history to life for all ages and strive to help all people see themselves in history. I'm looking forward to working with and learning from all of you!”

We want to hear from you!



Calling all Extras! With the upcoming Festival celebrating the 30th anniversary of the 1995 film Jumanji, the Historical Society of Cheshire County is seeking people to be interviewed on camera in a "mini-interview" about their experiences with the film.

We're looking for those who were extras on the set, played some kind of role in the filming, or remember watching the activity downtown.

No story is too small! The Historical Society plans to create a short film using all of the mini-interviews.

Please contact: Peter Kelleher, Media Tech Specialist at 603.352.1895 or pkelleher@hscnh.org to book your appointment today.

The Historical Society's short film is scheduled to play at the Colonial Theatre on Main Street, Keene, prior to the free showing of the film at 7pm.

The deadline to participate in this project is May 1st.

Caption (left, right): Jumanji extra Madeline Murphy of Keene shares her movie memorabilia with Peter Kelleher before her mini-interview.

In Memory

Chris Booras
Cynthia Cantlin
Richard Dugger
Doug Fish

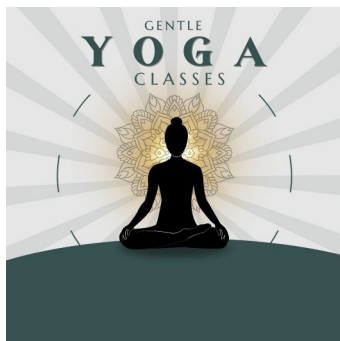
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Savings Bank of Walpole
Silver Direct, Inc.
Steelman Productions
Thai Garden Restaurant

Feeling stressed lately? So are we!



Drop in on Thursday mornings from 9:00 to 10:00 am with your yoga mat. Join our staff and volunteers in some gentle yoga to start your day. The sessions are free and open to all levels. No registration is required.

A Special Request from a Historical Society Member and Local Author

Historical Society member and co-author of three volumes of *Iron Roads of the Monadnock Region* and of *Marium Foster's Boston & Maine Railroad*, Brad Blodget, would like to hear from anyone who might have or know the whereabouts of images taken of the waiting room inside the Keene Railroad Station. Train service into Keene ended at the end of May 1958 and the station was demolished in January 1959. Please contact Brad by email at bgblodget@hotmail.com OR write him at 1246 Main St., Holden, MA 01520.

Lunch & Learn Offering



Keene
STATE COLLEGE

Lunch & Learn

**That leap of faith which carries us
from the past into the present.**

Keene State's Creative Non-fiction Class

**Friday, April 11, noon to 1 pm
Exhibit Hall
Historical Society of Cheshire County**

On Friday, April 11, from noon to 1 pm, bring a lunch and join your fellow Historical Society members and patrons to hear Keene State College students from Professor Rodger Martin's Creative Non-fiction class share essays inspired by artifacts from the Historical Society of Cheshire County collection.

To attend this free event, please register online at www.hscenh.org



Historical Society of Cheshire County
P.O. Box 803 – 246 Main Street
Keene, New Hampshire 03431
603-352-1895 – www.hscenh.org
New hours:
Tues., Thurs., & Fri.: 10 am - 4 pm
Wed.: 10 am - 6 pm;
First and Third Saturday, 9 am - 12 pm

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar: Complete list of events and descriptions at www.hscenh.org

April 2025

Friday, April 11, 12:00-1:00 pm, Putnam Exhibit Hall, Lunch and Learn with KSC Students

Wednesday, April 23, 5:30 pm, Putnam Exhibit Hall, Historical Society Annual Meeting and Presentation by Greg Knouff of Keene State College

May 2025

Friday, May 9, Putnam Exhibit Hall, Antioch University Exhibit Closes

Friday, May 30, 4:30 –6:00 pm, Putnam Exhibit Hall, “*Our Story*” Exhibit opening

Save the Date

Saturday, July 5, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, Wyman Tavern Open House

Saturday, August 2, Wyman Tavern Brew Fest

Newsletter available online and by email

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



**Annual Report &
Information
available online
www.hscenh.org**