



Hollis Historical Society

Spring 2021

Wheeler House
20 Main Street, P.O. Box 754
(603) 465-3935
Hollis, New Hampshire 03049

<http://www.hollishistoricalsociety.org> <https://www.facebook.com/hollishistoricalsociety>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPVHSOP8tjHeGvkxkb-F8CA/videos>

“Adopt the pace of nature: Her secret is patience.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Happy Spring Everyone!

Hope this finds everyone well and enjoying a much brighter spring than last year. I don't know about you, but, to me everything seems brighter: bulbs, flowering trees and shrubs, all seem to be flowering in abundance. We have a lot to be thankful for (except maybe for black flies).

In this newsletter, we have two guest contributors: Bruce Hardy, our Historical Society President, and Sharon Howe, our Hollis Historical Society Historian.

Annual Letter to Our Membership

Greetings to all of our members!

Once again, we are dealing with the fallout from the pandemic as our organizational year comes to an end. We will not be hosting our Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner, even though restrictions are lifting on some of the pandemic precautions. We feel that it is wise to use precautions until the risks associated with the pandemic are more definitively reduced. But we do have some news to report and some procedural matters to deal with.

A few news items are noteworthy. First, we were able to get the roof on the Wheeler House replaced with a rubber membrane system that should last for many years. While replacing the roof, the roofing contractor pointed out that the chimneys were in need of maintenance work. We have received quotes on fixing those problems and will have the chimneys repaired this summer. We replaced the front porch decking and structural framework, as they were showing significant deterioration. We thank all members who contributed to our capital improvement funds for their specific help towards fixing those important items. We also accomplished some upgrades to the display signs at the Engine House and have a new wall map showing the farms in Hollis in the 1950's. Finally, we welcomed an exterior paint job at the Engine House undertaken by the Town.

We hope to open up the Attic Treasures fund raising activity this summer as the outdoor functions seem to be less problematic than indoor group meetings. So look for follow-up emails and notices about our timetable.

We have continued with the Towel Sales project by placing these decorative, locally inspired towels at retail outlets around Hollis. To date, we have cleared over \$3,000 in net revenues from these sales.

The Wheeler House and the Always Ready Engine House will continue to be generally closed to public access. Some staff members may be there on a limited basis to take care of required activities. However, we have not yet planned to reopen the museums on a regular basis and have not scheduled docents to be present at the museums. We hope to re-open both museums later this summer.

Many of you already know that Becky Crowther passed away this past year. She had been active in the Society as both Clerk and Treas-

urer and was an important source of information to our organization. We miss her input and presence at our meetings and functions.

This brings me to the discussion about the officers and directors of the Society and a request for your help with solving a technical requirement of our organization. We are supposed to have an Annual Meeting where officers and directors are elected for two- or three-year terms, depending on the position. We could not do that last year. As we are not having an Annual Meeting again this year, we decided to proceed with a mail-in ballot in order to satisfy this important requirement. This step then raises the question of the length of the terms of the officers and directors as well as the status of directors who were elected for three-year terms, some of which technically have expired. Therefore, we are proposing a slate of officers and directors whereby the officers will be elected for a two-year term and the directors who had three-year terms will be elected to the same terms that existed after the Annual Meeting of 2019.

Some new people have joined the board since our Annual Meeting of 2019 and some of the officers have changed positions, all with designating resolutions of the Board of Directors. We also have new people on our list of proposed officers, as vacancies are opening up. Therefore, the following is a list of the proposed officers and directors which the Board of Directors offers as a slate of officers and directors:

President	Bruce Hardy	2-year term
Vice President & Program Director	Bette Finnern	2-year term
Clerk	Erin White	2-year term
Treasurer	Bridget Sullivan	2-year term
Corresponding Secretary	Ellen Allen	2-year term
Curator	Freddi Olson	2-year term
Director	Doug Nye	1-year term
Director	Nancy Bell	2-year term
Director	Dave Sullivan	3-year term

(continued on page 2)

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Hollis Historical Society
20 Main Street
Hollis, New Hampshire 03049
(603-465-3935)

The Hollis Historical Society is a private, non-profit organization incorporated in the state of New Hampshire.

The mission is to provide an opportunity for all ages to connect with the history and heritage of the Town of Hollis and its residents to gain knowledge and perspective from the past and to find inspiration and purpose for the future. We do this by:

- Acquiring, preserving, and making available to the public, memorabilia and historical materials significant to the Town
- Conduct research and make available historical and genealogical information to interested persons and organizations
- Present educational and informative programs and exhibits for our members and the community
- Maintain the structure and collections of the Ruth Wheeler House and the Always Ready Engine House

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Annual Letter to Our Membership *(continued from page 1)*

Included in this newsletter is a Ballot which we ask that you fill out and return by mail before June 15, 2021. Please note that there is an option to write in anyone else for each of the positions. Also, if there is more than one Society member in your family, additional members can sign at the bottom of the ballot.

Also, please don't forget to return the attached Membership Renewal form with your annual dues. We hope you'll continue to support the Society during the trying times.

Thank you in advance for your attention to these organizational details. We hope to resume public programs this fall and then have another Annual Meeting next spring. And everyone on the Board of Directors thanks you for your support and patience during these past pandemic years!

Bruce Hardy

Bruce Hardy, President

Lucie Beebe Garden News

The Hollis 'Phantom Gardener' and her cohort have joined forces with long-time Historical Society gardener, **Diane Rizzo**, to help work their magic in the Lucie Beebe Garden (located behind the Wheeler House). Not only is the garden looking great, but the grounds around the Wheeler House are also getting a once over. You're welcome to visit the garden anytime!

At the Always Ready Engine House, we're letting one small area grow to milkweed to help support Monarch butterflies. If anyone is good at making a simple stick-in-the-ground sign, that says, '**Monarch Butterfly Garden**,' it would be much appreciated. Last year, with all good intentions, it got weeded out by the Town-contracted landscapers, and we understand why, as it did look rather unsightly. No one knew we were growing the milkweed on purpose.



Museum Enhancements

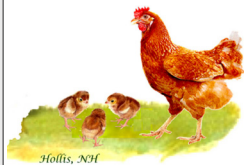
Once the Wheeler House and Always Ready Engine House open again, you'll be treated to some new displays, thanks to **Lynn Schur** and her band of worker bees: **Sue Birch, Sharon Howe, Freddi Olson, and Debbe Shipman**. The entryway at the Wheeler House has an antique trunk donated by **Lynn Schur**, plus a hat display showcasing some of our collection, along with other interesting touches. At the AREH, there is a new **Farming Map of the 1950's**. You'll be amazed at how many farms were in Hollis! Also, there is a new **Locke's Ice Cream** area, a relocated and revamped **Grange** area, and a continuation of the **Addie Eastman** photo display, including past and present photos of current buildings in town.

Attic Treasures

Once we resume our Attic Treasures sales, hopefully midsummer, we're going to need a lot of help. Before the sales begin, we'll need cleaners and pricers for the items we sell. Then on set-up Saturdays, we'll need three or more set-up people (to set-up tables, move items to tables, etc.), one or two cashiers, and three or more closers (to put unsold items away, take down tables, etc.). We can do this in shifts, such as 8:00 am to 10:30 am and 10:30 am to 1:00 pm. Our sales are the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month (once we get started again). So, **PLEASE**, if you can lend a hand with any of these tasks, please call me, Freddi, at (603) 465-2884. **THANK YOU!**

New Towel Design

Lynn Schur has added a new design to our towel selection: a chicken and baby chicks. Now you have a choice of: apples, strawberries, peaches, corn, grapes, evergreen boughs, and the new chicken and chicks. Our towels are available at: Lull Farm, Brookdale's, Kimball's Fruit Farm, Fulchino's Vineyard, and the Wild Salamander. Just \$8.00 per towel! (Color photos of all designs are available on our website). A big thank you to all our distributors!



Bits & Pieces of Hollis History

The Benjamin Rideout Place: Revealing Hidden Treasures

by: Sharon M. Howe, Historian

About a hundred years ago, a local auction notice went out advertising a “COZY FARM” for sale. The notice stated: “Within 5 miles from city (Nashua) on main road to Hollis, N.H., place formerly known as the Benj. Rideout home contains about twenty Acres good strong soil in Good cultivation and handsome field between roads, Lot of grafted apple trees, On rising land and a set of buildings, Roomy cottage, stable, carriage and woodshed. All Painted, good condition with pleasant yard, handsome row of maples in front of building, never failing water R.F.D., telephone service, a well-located neat farm.”

Last year, this 200-year-old farmstead came up for sale again. Located on the corner of Broad Street and ‘dirt’ Nartoff Road, it might well have suffered the fate of many an 18th century country farmhouse in this town and been demolished and replaced by something much larger and more modern. But, according to reports, the last owner who had recently passed away placed restrictions on the sale of the property: the house and barn were to be preserved by whomever purchased the property. And, fortunately, that is exactly what happened. After being inspected by a preservation specialist from the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, it was determined that the old barn on the property was indeed an English style barn with a newer addition – much like the construction of the Lawrence Barn that the Town of Hollis saved from demolition 20 years ago. Oliver Fifield, a preservation carpenter, was called in to save the oldest sections of the barn by dismantling, repairing the timber frame, and re-erecting it to become a functional garage for the homestead.



Benjamin Rideout Shop Being Dismantled

In the process, Mr. Fifield needed to remove a small outbuilding that stood in front of the barn facing Broad Street. Filled with chicken wire and roosts, it had obviously been used as a small chicken house. The new owner didn’t want the building. Oliver wondered what to do with

it and, by a fateful coincidence, I just happened to stop on that day to speak to the new owner about the history of the farm. To make a long story short, I walked away the owner of a 9’ x 9’ square “chicken house.”

But there is more to the story! One peek inside the little chicken house revealed that it was comprised of two halves. The front half was a 9’ x 9’ square, scribe-rule, timber-framed building. That would make it about 200 years old – the same vintage as the oldest part of the adjacent English barn. The rear half of the building had been added on at a later date, and was of newer construction and in poor condition, but the little timber frame half was solid and irresistible. The fact that this farm was once known as the Benjamin Rideout place may have had an influence on my decision, since my great, great grandmother’s name was Almira Rideout, and she had lived but

a half mile away.

A closer examination of the tiny building revealed that it had probably been moved or reconstructed at least once before and been modified somewhat. One of the beams had a mortise that didn’t have a matching tenon. The building is only about 6’ high; the height of the roof rafters had been raised a foot or

so and the rafters were newer than the posts and beams. It was likely a little farm shop prior to its conversion to a chicken coop, reflecting the changes in farming practices over time. Most family farms of the 1700’s had small outbuildings that were used for a wide variety of purposes, such as wooden ware, shoe, or broom making. Any number of activities could be accommodated in a farm shop. The small size was just large enough to suit the purpose and keep heated in the winter when farming activities were less demanding and allowed more time to devote to other home industries.

The little shop, after being repaired over the winter, has found a new home, and was recently re-erected at 69 Ranger Road, just around the corner from Broad Street. It stands just behind the ‘Old Pine Hill Schoolhouse,’ the building where Almira’s grandson and my grandfather, John Howe, attended school.

And... the Benjamin Rideout farm has now been fully restored and is ready for resale. The house and carriage shed are updated, freshly painted; the English barn turned a quarter of a turn to face Nartoff Road; and all are awaiting a new owner ready to add their family history to those that have occupied this homestead for the last 200 years. For all involved in securing the future of the Benjamin Rideout farm this past year, we thank you! You have chosen to save a piece of Hollis’s history and add to the tradition of historic preservation in our town. You have our appreciation and we can’t wait to welcome our new neighbors!



Benjamin Rideout Chicken House/Shop Being Rebuilt



Benjamin Rideout Shop Completed

October 1855, Alcohol Sales by the Town of Hollis (WAIT, What??!!)

by Fredricka Olson, Curator

A few newsletters back, I wrote an article on Taverns in Hollis, of which there were a lot. The ledger I used for some of my information was dated from 1823 to 1851, and it granted some folks in town a license to sell alcohol, i.e., to become Taverners. I don't know what happened between 1851 and 1855, but for some reason, the Town of Hollis started buying liquor by our agent from the City of Nashua by their Agent George Tuttle. In small part, Hollis purchased:

- 6 Gals New England Rum
- 1 Gal Cognac Brandy
- Plus, there were four other fairly large purchases of various types of alcohol in this one order.

Then it appears they purchased containers to hold the alcohol from a couple of Hollis folks, "Bought of Edward Hardy one Gal keg for 75 cents and one 6 Gal Demijohn for 50 cents." From Edward Emerson [one of our former tavern keepers], they purchased "4 one Gal Demijohns for 25 cents each."

A few pages further on in the ledger (also October of 1855), it appears the Town started selling small amounts of liquor (pints and quarts) to individuals in Hollis. Dates, names of purchasers, name of liquor or wine purchased, amount purchased, and prices are all listed. However, it doesn't note where in Town the alcohol was sold. No location! In addition, some of the purchasers had been tavern keepers, but the amounts they were listed buying from the Town were small, not the amounts a tavern keeper would buy, but what an individual would purchase.

Then on April 21, 1856, the ledger states: "Remainder of Liquors Delivered to E.T. Wheeler at his request as Agent for Town of Hollis." The remainder of the ledger is blank (as is most of it) until you get to the very last page, where it says, "Amount Bot Liquors \$35.34, Casks, Demijohns, Measures \$2.50". (For a total of \$37.84). Sales \$28.86. Amount delivered to Agent \$11.24 minus \$8.98 equals \$2.26."

Thanks to **Sue Birch** for finding this new ledger and for donating it to the Historical Society!

I don't know if there weren't any more taverns in town after 1851, so the Town decided to try selling alcohol and wine or what. It's all a bit of a history mystery. If anyone has any thoughts or further information, please let me know.



Replica Tavern in Hollis

In closing, we wish you a wonderful summer! Please keep an eye out for e-mails from us announcing the re-opening of our museums and also when Attic Treasures will resume.

Fredricka Olson

Fredricka Olson, Curator

"To believe yourself brave is to be brave."

Mark Twain



Reminder: Membership Dues Are Due!

Although we weren't able to present any programs last year because of the Covid pandemic, dues will be optional. However, we are a non-profit and have continuing expenses, such as: heat, electricity, maintenance, etc., and no income from Attic Treasures last year.

We hope you will send your annual dues to the Society with the attached Membership Renewal form. Your continued support is crucial to our efforts to support our museums and the preservation of maps, documents, photographs, and artifacts. We appreciate your help in preserving and promoting the rich history of Hollis. Thank you very much!