



Hollis Historical Society

Fall 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>

"It does not require many words to speak the truth." Chief Joseph

Dear Members,

I hope this newsletter finds everyone well and enjoying a beautiful autumn!

Do you know that HOLLIS is 275 YEARS old this year? And still beautiful! Did you have a chance to visit the Historical Society booth this year at Old Home Day? In case you missed it, **Sharon Howe** and **Debbe Shipman** put together a terrific display commemorating the occasion. So....**HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HOLLIS**....or is it **HOLLES**?!



New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth signed the Charter for the Town of Hollis on April 3rd, 1746. He named the Town after the Duke of Newcastle, Thomas Pelham Holles, to whom he owed his position. The Duke, being "*so feeble a head and so treacherous a heart,*" was sarcastically called "**Perfidy**" and was reviled as a knave and a fool. He was considered so ignorant of this continent that he addressed his letters to the "Island of New England"!

On the other hand, Thomas Hollis, known as the generous benefactor of Harvard College, and an eminent and wealthy merchant of London, a very exemplary character, was an association much preferred by the people of Hollis/Hollis. Hence, around 1775, the change in spelling to the town first appeared.... and Holles passed into merited oblivion!!!

(The above information was from the History of Hollis by S.T. Worcester and adapted by Sharon Howe.)

HOLLES is GONE....but our beautiful HOLLIS LIVES ON!!
Happy 275th Hollis!!

Goodbye to a Dear Friend



On a sad note, our long, long time volunteer, **Dotty Hackett (Mrs. Robert Hackett)** passed away in September. Dotty is so very missed -- as a co-worker, neighbor, and friend.

Dotty served on many committees over the years, including being a docent, accessioning artifacts, data entry, filing, cleaning, Attic Treasures, and on and on. In addition, Dotty also organized our Annual Dinner every May, often purchasing supplies out of her own pocket. On top of all that, Dotty had a stellar sense of humor!

And Dotty chose to continue to support the Hollis Historical Society with a \$25,000 bequest!!! So incredibly generous! **THANK YOU, DOTTY!**

Volunteer Opportunities

Want to get involved with the Hollis Historical Society? We have a lot of different jobs available and could really use your help. Data entry, cleaning, Attic Treasures pricing and selling, acting as docents, transcribing old documents, helping with displays, collections, and working on our towels (washing towels, ironing, bagging, etc.), and many other projects.

Please call **Freddi** at **603-465-2884** if you'd like to get involved..... and Thank You!!!

Items for Sale

Looking for a special gift? Look no further, we have plenty to choose from:

- * **Postcards**....reproduction and antique post cards pertaining to Hollis (reproduction cards \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00)
- * **Books**....various titles to choose from and all regarding Hollis (prices vary)
- * **Dish Towels**.....numerous beautiful designs to choose from. All designs pertain to Hollis and each has *Hollis, NH*, printed on it (\$8.00 each). New selections available.
- * **Antique ephemera selections**.....various extras from our collection (prices vary)
- * **Notecards**....various prices
- * **Attic Treasures**.....some of our 'treasures' make wonderful gifts. Remember, last sale of the season is Oct 9th.

This newsletter is published three times a year by the:

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 Airways Ready Engine House

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Women of Colonial Hollis

By Mary Ferguson

Anna Keyes Powers

The first English woman in Hollis was Anna Keyes Powers of Chelmsford, MA. She was born in 1708 and married Peter Powers in Littleton, MA, in 1728. The couple settled on a large tract of land called Dunstable that encompassed present day Nashua, NH, and the surrounding towns. Peter wanted to purchase land in the Nissitissit Hills which he heard about from the local natives. In 1730, he began construction of a log cabin there, in present day Hollis, NH, twelve miles from their first home in Dunstable. Within a year, on a beautiful spring day, Anna and their two sons rode from Dunstable to their new home. In 1732, Anna was pleased when Eleazer Flagg and his wife, Hannah, became the second family in the area. They arrived to build a garrison to provide protection from Indian attacks.

The town grew and prospered. In 1739, King George settled the border disputes of Dunstable by dividing the land between New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The Hollis settlers were dismayed to find themselves citizens of New Hampshire with an Episcopalian governor, Bennington Wentworth, known to be a zealot adherent to the Church of England. Nonetheless, in 1741, there were enough families, thirty, to construct the first Meeting House, or Puritan Church. By 1783, there were 1,392 inhabitants, 174 houses, and 144 barns. Hollis was a thriving English colonial community.

Colonial America and the Role of Women

Much of the life of Anna Keyes Powers can only be surmised, as little of colonial history mentioned women at all. Living in a staunchly patriarchal and puritanical society, their lives were dictated by their fathers, and then by their husbands and adult sons. The legal system and church sought to protect them, but suppressed them as well. A woman by law could not own property unless widowed, could not participate in legislation, and could not be involved in church matters. She could not speak at church and must sit apart from the men during service. She could not have custody of her children, attend college, or have a profession. The highest status a woman could achieve was marriage. Through marriage, a woman could advance her economic status and fulfill the role that church and society expected of her. In colonial America, almost all of the women who reached maturity married. Some colonial women pushed against the rigid concept of women's roles, and, in the 19th century, the Women's Movement would organize. Soon society began to allow women into some professions, such as medicine, and into colleges, once the bastion of men.

Preparation for marriage required knowledge of many tasks and was started early in a girl's life. In 1889, Mary Shattuck gave an address to the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) in which

she describes some of that work, drawing from the memory of her grandmother.

- By age 8, a girl could knit socks, sew patches for quilts, and embroider as well as read and write.

- By age 18 she could spin, weave, and dye linen and wool.



She would have knitted a pillowcase full of stockings. She could dip and mold candles, bullets, and buckshot as well as pewter spoons. She could handle a flint-lock, net, spear, and fish lines. She could ride a horse, preserve meat, make soap, braid hats and mats. She could cook bean porridge, meats and fish, cornmeal and rye, wheat, cider, apple-jack and maple syrup. She made cooking soda from the ashes of corn cobs and scoured the floor with river sand. She could make medicines, tend to the sick, lay out the dead, and deliver babies.

Colonial women can be found in town and church records such as for birth, marriage, and taxation. Probate courts would list a woman's belongings at the time of her death, thus giving clues as to her wealth and probable standing in the community. There are a few exceptions. Anna Patch is mentioned in the *History of the Town of Hollis* by Samuel Worcester, published in 1879. She signed a document in 1756, the only woman out of fifteen signatures. The document was an appeal to the governor to allow their land in Dunstable to be annexed to Hollis so that they could attend the meeting house there as it was more accessible and "help us to a Comfortable Enjoyment of Gospel Privileges." We can infer that Mrs. Patch felt herself to be an important part of the community and insisted her voice be heard.

Worcester also notes that, in 1775, in Hollis, there was a law to punish a man who was insolent or violent to women "on the highway." Punishment would be 10 stripes by a whip for the first offense and, for the second offense, to be burnt in the hand. Indeed, the virtue of colonial women was held high, for without it, she could not marry. Any indiscretion would also bring shame to her family and the community at large. She was expected to be chaste, pious, industrious, faithful, and unselfish. She was responsible for the morals of her husband and children, and was watchful of her neighbors. The very survival of the community was dependent on women being able to work together and assist one another when in need, such as in childbirth, illness, death, and inadequate food supplies.

Records of marriages, births, and deaths are valuable in historic research of women and readily available. Hollis church records provide the names of the bride and groom, date of marriage, and the names and birthdates of the children. Not surprisingly, colonial women spent most of their lives either pregnant or lactating! The average family size was 8, with spacing between births about 1 or 2 years.

In the years of 1730 to 1800, infant deaths in Hollis were 5 out of 100, consistent with other towns across New England. Maternal death is hard to determine as no dates of death are listed. One can assume the death of a mother when a second marriage of the husband occurs soon after the birth of a child. For example, Isaac Hardy married Submit Wheat in November 1788. They had 2 children, one in 1789 and the other in 1794. Hardy then married Mahitable Boynton, also in 1794. Divorce being so rare that the death of Submit seems certain as does the probability that she had unfruitful pregnancies 1791 to 1793. It is interesting to find in the registers not a few hints of premarital sex as premature births were duly recorded.

Worcester's book includes biographical sketches of 99 men who were ministers, physicians, and lawyers, prominent citizens of the town. The one woman who was honored was said to be "a frail and delicate girl," although she lived to be 62. She is Miss Mary Sherwin Farley, born in Hollis in 1813. She inherited a substantial estate from her father, a tanner, and managed it, "manifesting more than the usual insight and good judgement." She also managed a considerable farm. Upon her death, she bequeathed \$10,000 to the town for the purpose of establishing a high school. Words like charitable, self-sacrificing, and conscientious are used to describe her, consistent with the image of the ideal woman.

Prudence Cummings Wright

In 1899, the D.A.R. held a ceremony to mark the placement of a plaque to honor the heroism of Prudence Cummings Wright. Born in Hollis in 1740, she married David Wright, also of Hollis when she was 20 and David at 26, and she subsequently bore seven children. They moved to Pepperell to farm. Prudence is described as having "snapping black eyes," and was known as an artist who could draw patterns and paint in watercolors.

Prudence was commander of the Women's Guard in 1775 when our story begins. Prudence was visiting her family in Hollis when she overheard her Tory brother, Samuel, and a man named Leonard Whiting making plans to lead a force of English soldiers through Pepperell later that evening. Prudence returned home and assembled forty women, each dressed in their husband's clothing, to Jewett's Bridge to await the soldiers' arrival. The women carried pitchforks and muskets with bullets they had made. Be assured that these women knew how to use these weapons!

It was around midnight when the soldiers reached the bridge and were faced with the marauding women. They were so astonished to see the women that they fled for their lives. The women succeeded in detaining Captain Leonard Whiting for the night at an inn until they could release him to authorities the next day. A record of what the women ate and drank that night survives as well as the funds that were appropriated to the inn by the rebels for their hospitality.

The plaque reads:

Near this spot a party of patriotic women
Under the leadership of Mrs. David Wright
Of Pepperell in 1775 captured Captain
Leonard Whiting, a Tory who carried
Treasonable dispatches to the enemy
At Boston. He was taken a prisoner to Groton
And the dispatches were sent to the Committee
Of Safety at Cambridge.

Hollis Women of the 19th Century

A peek into the 19th century shows the women of Hollis entering into life outside of their homes and families. These women were prosperous, many of them farmers' wives who could afford to hire other women to assist them at home giving them valuable free time. They could extend their role as moral savior to charitable causes or pursue intellectual interests of their own. Some examples are the Female Charitable Society in 1829 and the Hollis Lyceum in 1851.

Many young women in the late 19th century wanted to attend college. Lucy Swallow of Hollis was the first woman graduate of the University of New Hampshire. She wrote an appeal for permission to attend in 1890 and it was granted, paving the way for countless other women. Teaching was granted to women as a profession in 1808 in Hollis, however, at a reduced salary. Male teachers would be paid \$3 per week and women \$1.25!

I am indebted to our colonial ancestors for establishing this town that has been a home for me for over three decades. Thanks also to the writers of history and to the Hollis Historical Society for preserving what they left behind for generations to come.

Sources:

Worcester, Samuel T., *History of the Town of Hollis*, Nashua, NH; O.C. Moore, Book and Job Printer, 1879

Shattuck, Mary L.P., *Prudence Wright and the Women Who Guarded the Bridge*, Ayer, MA; H. S. Turner, 1899

Nichols, Rudge and Poole, Caroline. *Peter Powers, Pioneer*, Concord, NH; Rumford Press, 1930

Attic Treasures

We have one more Attic Treasures Sale on Saturday, October 9th (9am to 1pm) before we close for the winter. We thank everyone who has donated items for the sale, who worked at the sales, and who purchased items. It all greatly helps the Society! We'll continue accepting donations over the winter. Member, **Louann Swaney**, who volunteered to take over running Attic Treasures has done a terrific job organizing items, working with volunteers, cleaning items, etc., etc. Thank you, Louann!

(We'll re-open in the Spring!!)

Museum Hours

The Wheeler House is currently open every Monday afternoon from 1pm to 4pm and other days and times by appointment by calling Freddi at 603-465-2884.

The Always Ready Engine House is open the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, from 1pm to 4pm, thru October. (If you want to see all *our new displays*, time is limited. October 17th is the last day we'll be open for the season. Thank you, **Nancy Bell** for arranging for docents!

2021 Program Schedule

Programs are FREE, VIRTUAL, and OPEN to THE PUBLIC

Please register for this free, virtual event by sending an email to admin@hollishistoricalsociety.org

You will be provided with a link to the Zoom livestream event

TITLE: Brewing in New Hampshire: An Informal History of Beer in the Granite State from Colonial Times to the Present **PRESENTER: Glenn Knoblock** **WHEN: Thursday, Oct. 21, 7pm**

DESCRIPTION: Glenn Knoblock explores the fascinating history of New Hampshire's beer and ale brewing industry from Colonial days, when it was home- and tavern-based, to today's modern breweries and brew pubs. Unusual and rare photos and advertisements document this changing industry and the state's earliest brewers, including the renowned Frank Jones. A number of lesser-known brewers and breweries that operated in the state are also discussed, including the only brewery owned and operated by a woman before the modern era. Illustrations present evidence of society's changing attitudes towards beer and alcohol consumption over the years. Whether you're a beer connoisseur or a "tea-totaler," this lecture will be enjoyed by adults of all ages.

Glenn Knoblock is an independent scholar & author of fifteen books & over 100 articles. He is also the author & historian on projects relating to Northern New England bridges, New Hampshire cemeteries, & brewing history, & African-American military history. Knoblock has served as the main military contributor to Harvard & Oxford University's landmark African-American Biography Project. He holds a B.A. in History from Bowling Green State University.

TITLE: 12,000 Years Ago in the Granite State **PRESENTER: Dr. Robert Goodby** **WHEN: Wednesday, Nov. 3, 7pm**

DESCRIPTION: More than 12,000 years ago, small groups of Paleoindians endured frigid winters on the edge of a small river in what would become Keene, New Hampshire. In 2009, an archaeological survey for the new Keene Middle School discovered the remains of their stay and brought to light one of the oldest Native American sites in New England. The remarkably intact site produced evidence of four separate dwellings containing over 200 stone tools and fragments of burned animal bone. These early people, rather than being isolated stone-age nomads, were part of a social network that extended across much of northeastern North America. The discovery and excavation of the site was required by the National Historic Preservation Act, a frequently maligned piece of legislation that in this instance worked to save an irreplaceable piece of the human story in the Monadnock region.

Robert Goodby is Professor of Anthropology at Franklin Pierce University in Rindge. He earned his Ph.D. in anthropology from Brown University and has over thirty years of experience studying Native American archaeological sites in New England. He is a past president of the New Hampshire Archeological Society, a former Trustee of the Mount Kearsarge Indian Museum in Warner, and served on the New Hampshire Commission on Native American Affairs. In 2010, he directed the excavations of four 12,000 year-old Paleoindian dwelling sites at the Tenant Swamp site in Keene. His new book, *A Deep Presence: 13,000 Years Of Native American History*, an important volume on the region's first inhabitants, was recently released. It was produced in partnership with the Historical Society of Cheshire County and the Harris Center.



Roaring Twenties Garden Party

If you were one of the lucky folks to attend our 1st annual Roaring 20's Garden Party in August, you know just how much fun it was! We had antique cars, music of the time, people in costume, a faux still, displays inside the Wheeler House and outside in the garden... plus an abundance of period beverages and food!! So gather up your flapper costumes, straw hats, beads, feather boas, and vests and be ready for next year. Lots of members pitched in with food and beverages, but a huge thank you goes out to Dave Sullivan, daughter Bridget, and the rest of the Sullivan family. They supplied the antique cars, music via antique radios and victrolas, faux still, food, and family members in costume.



In closing, we wish you a happy and healthy autumn and Holiday season.

Fredricka Olson
Fredricka Olson, Curator

"We could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world." Helen Keller

