



Hollis Historical Society

Fall 2020

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>

"Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest." Mark Twain

Hello Everyone,

I hope this finds everyone well and making the best of a highly unusual year.

As requested in our last newsletter, we hope some of you are keeping a diary of this current time we're living in. It will be a very helpful record of the pandemic on the local level. Notes, thoughts, photos, etc., anything to do with this current pandemic will be most appreciated.

WHAT'S NEW at THE HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Opening the Wheeler House on a By-Appointment Basis: The Hollis Historical Society museums have not been open during this Covid-19 pandemic, nor have we been able to have any of our programs. However, starting October 1st, we will be opening the Wheeler House on a by-appointment basis for one or two people at a time. No group tours. If you would like to schedule an appointment to come to the Wheeler House, please call **Freddi Olson** at (603) 465-2884. Masks (please provide your own.) and social distancing are required.

Coming Changes at the Always Ready Engine House Museum: We hope to be able to re-open the AREH in the spring of 2021. When we do, you are going to see some wonderful changes at the Always Ready Engine House Museum. **Lynn Schur**, a member and the person in charge of displays, has been busy this whole time doing research, changing displays, and making new signs, to mention but a few of her many projects. She's also been arranging for retailers to sell our Hollis Historical Society dish towels, and she's even making new towels! (**Sharon Howe, Nancy Bell, Debbe Shipman**, and **Freddi Olson** will be taking over the towel making process for Lynn). Lynn is a one-woman wonder...and we are so very fortunate to have her on our team.

Early in the season, **Sue Birch** and I cleaned the AREH, and the **Town of Hollis** has had the exterior of the building painted. Even the exterior signs on the front of the AREH are being repainted. **Sharon Howe, Sue Birch, Debbe Shipman**, and I have been working with **Lynn** re-arranging the agricultural display, designing a new map showing farms in Hollis in the 1950's, re-locating the Grange display to the top floor, doing research, and making new signs for artifacts. A huge thank you to **David Orde** for loaning us his Locke's Ice Cream artifacts. It's a wonderful new look and very nostalgic for many folks who fondly remember Locke's Ice Cream. And thanks also to some folks from the Hollis Fire Department who have helped us with moving and relocating some heavy pieces throughout the museum. Plus thanks to **Paul Armstrong, Clark Lambert**, and **Anita and Ed Walker**, as well as Lynn's husband, **David Schur**. It's a joint effort and things are really taking shape. Even the basement of the AREH has been pretty much cleared out under Lynn's direction. But don't worry, the jail cell is still there, just in case you might misbehave and need a place for a little time-out. We'll be happy to accommodate you!



Jail Cell in Basement of
Always Ready Engine House

ATTIC TREASURES

Unfortunately, Attic Treasures has also been closed during the pandemic. But thank you to the folks who have still donated items, which will go on sale once we resume operations, hopefully next Spring. If you want to donate items, just leave them on the front porch of the Wheeler House. Then call **Freddi** at (603) 465-2884 to let her know you left items and she'll put them in the Attic Treasures sales area.

SAD NEWS

We have lost five HHS members in the past year. They are all sorely missed. Our sincere condolences to their families.

- **Nancy Wall**, a long-time member.
- **Thelma Pollard**, a long-time member.
- **Robert Cushman**, a long-time member as well as a volunteer at both museums for many years.
- **Carolyn Hackett**, a long-time member and a volunteer at most of our Attic Treasures Sales.
- **Rebecca Crowther**, a long-time member, our Treasurer at the time of her death, past Secretary, refreshment donor, and program speaker, to mention but a few of her many contributions to our Society.

DUES

We really depend on members' **Dues** to keep operating. So, if you didn't pay your dues last spring, when the reminder went out via e-mail with our last newsletter, please consider mailing them in now. **Thanking you in advance!!!!**

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 Always Ready Engine House

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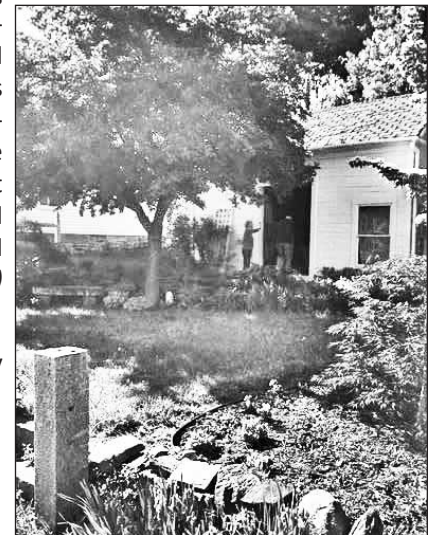
Please send address changes to:

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Hollis, NH 03049



BOARD NEWS

- **Debbe Shipman**, long time member, who had been our Secretary and also Treasurer at one time, has graciously volunteered to be our Treasurer once again.
- **Erin White**, a Hollis native and teacher at the Hollis Middle School, has volunteered to be our new Secretary. Welcome aboard, Erin!
- Long-time handyman and jack-of-all-trades, **Joe Harlin**, has retired from his regular caretaking of the Historical Society museums. We have only found out now just how much Joe did to keep everything running smoothly. Joe, we will miss you!
- All other Officers and Board Members remain the same. All were voted in this Spring. We thank you for your service to the Hollis Historical Society!
- The back side of the Wheeler House roof is being replaced this fall.
- Everyone is missing our programs, however, there are some interesting programs being offered on-line through the New Hampshire Historical Society and New Hampshire Humanities, plus many other museum sites around the country.
- New time for Board Meetings: We're going to be holding board meetings at night for the foreseeable future and hopefully they will all be at the Lawrence Barn so we can spread out. Another benefit of evening meetings is that members interested in getting more involved with the Historical Society will be welcome to come and see what we do and maybe find areas of interest where they can participate. The next two board meetings will be **Thursday, October 15th**, and **Thursday, November 19th**, both at the **Lawrence Barn** and both starting at **6:30 pm**. *Masks (please provide your own!) and social distancing are required!*
- Membership Chairman, **Sue Birch**, tells us that the Society currently has 227 members.



Beebe Garden

GARDENS

As always, **Diane Rizzo** has been maintaining the Lucie Beebe garden and the planters at the Wheeler House and Always Ready Engine House. **Sue Birch** is helping out with watering at the Always Ready Engine House. **Debbie Fox** and our President, **Bruce Hardy**, have been taking care of the lawns at the Wheeler House.

We've been trying to let milkweeds grow in the lower, south side of the Always Ready Engine House, to help out Monarch butterflies. Unfortunately, the ground maintenance crew, trying to be helpful, weeded them all out. However, milkweed is a tenacious plant, and is coming back, but I fear not in time to bloom and set pods. Maybe next year. I think if we had a sign made that said "**Monarch Butterfly Milkweed Garden**" or something similar, it might help. Is anyone reading this good at making signs?



Monarch Butterfly on Milkweed

ORDINARIES, PUBLIC HOUSES, INNS , TAPROOMS, AND TAVERNS

*“Religion was the one force, the one aim, the one thought, of the lives of our forbears in settling New England. It was indeed an ever present thought and influence in their lives; but they possessed another trait which is as evident in their records as their piety, and which adds an element of human interest to their story which their stern Puritanism never could have done; with them, their neighborliness was as ever present and as sincere as their godliness. Hence the establishment of a hostelry, an ordinary,” a **tavern**, “for the entertainment of travelers and for the mutual comfort of the settlers, was scarcely second to providing a gathering place for the church.” (from **Stagecoach and Tavern Days** by Alice Morse Earle).*

It should be noted that a lot of folks thought drinking water was harmful. And it well may have been since outhouses and wells were not always separated by much distance.



Worcester Homestead

allowed the tavernor to sell “not less than one pint, delivered and carried away there from in case of sickness for medicinal purposes.” And other licenses allowed the tavernor to sell “wine, rum, gin or other spirits ...in less quantities than one gallon and may sell mixed liquors part of which are spiritous.” Thus, in some public houses, you could go in, sit down, and have a drink, while in others, you could only take the liquor to go...for medicinal purposes. (And the amounts of pints and gallons were interesting!)

One of the earliest public houses in Hollis, if not the earliest, was located at 20 Depot Road. In 1740, before licenses, Lt. Benjamin Farley built a two-room **public house** where parish meetings were also held before a meeting house was built. This became and, still is, known as the location of the Worcester Homestead.



Eagle Tavern and Sign Board, Newton, NH,
from **Stage Coach & Tavern Days**

At one time, starting in the 1820's, it appears there were several taverns quite close together at 19, 22, 28, and 34 Main Street. (In fact, the current owners of two of these old tavern locations are re-creating personal tavern rooms as part of their décor and past history). There were many other taverns in Hollis over the years as well, located in all corners of the town. One humorous story related by Daniel Hayden goes as follows: “One winter, a certain Joseph Eastman (who lived on Main St.), had the misfortune to lose a horse (as in the horse died). Mr. Eastman, not wishing the animal to remain on his premises, instructed his hired man to convey the horse to Long Pond (now called Silver Lake) and leave it on the ice. Captain Wright (who lived near the lake) was not pleased with the proximity of the animal. He said ‘boys, the oxen are in the barn and there is plenty of rum up at Patches (another tavern owner whose tavern was located just north of Silver Lake). The next morning the horse was back in the dooryard of Mr. Eastman. Mr. Eastman directed that the horse should be taken back to the pond, which was done. That night Captain Wright said, ‘boys, the oxen are in the barn and there’s more rum up at Patches.’ The following morning the horse was found propped up against the front door of Mr. Eastman’s house. It was not taken again to the pond, but was removed to the woods.” (From information at the Hollis Historical

Society believed to be written by **Mrs. Flora Wentworth**).

“Taverns were a major part of Colonial community life. Styled after English coffeehouses, they provided food, drink and accommodations to local citizens and travelers. In many towns and cities, before government buildings were erected, taverns were the meeting places of the city fathers and merchants.

“The tavern keeper of Colonial days may not have been the town’s most important man, but he was probably the best known, and the most popular. The first ‘house of entertainment’ at Cambridge, Mass., was kept by a church deacon, who later became steward of Harvard College.

*“We don’t know the names of the taverns in Hollis (perhaps they carried the owner’s name), however, the Revolutionary War developed originality in American tavern signs. The ‘King’s Arms,’ ‘St. George and the Dragon,’ and other British symbols gave way to American eagles and patriots’ names. Nearly all of the taverns had some role in the Revolutionary struggle. It was at the local tavern that the returning victors were feted and feasted – in the same room they may have enlisted to fight, and in the same place where many of the plans for the building of a new nation had been laid.” (by **Myra Vanderool Gormley, C.G., Colonial Homes**).*



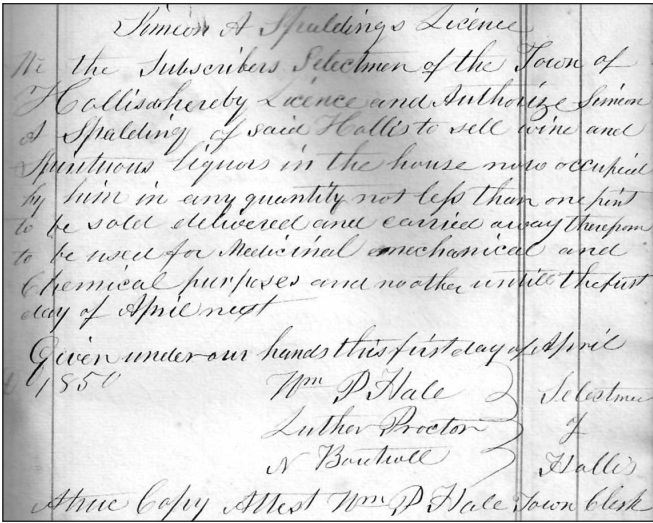
19 Main Street

In regard to Hollis, not a lot has been written about taverns , and what information was found is not always clear, and some of it is contradictory, but it appears we’ve had quite a few taverns over the years. “*The History of Hollis tells us that in the year 1792, the New Hampshire General Court passed Acts authorizing the Selectmen of the Towns to grant licenses to keep tavern to **suitable persons having accommodations** who might make application, with the right to sell by retail, rum, brandy, wine, gin, and other spirituous liquors, such license unless renewed to continue but one year.*” Also, from the records kept by the Hollis Selectmen of that time, between the years of 1792 and 1821, licenses were granted to approximately eighteen (18) Hollis residents. Some licenses



Re-Created Tavern Room

(continued on page 4)



Tavern License for Simeon Spalding

What did they drink in taverns? One favorite was ‘flip.’ “American flip was made in a great pewter mug or earthen pitcher filled two-thirds full of strong beer; sweetened with sugar, molasses, or dried pumpkin, according to individual taste or capabilities; and flavored with a ‘dash’ – about a gill -- of New England rum. Into this mixture was thrust and stirred a red-hot loggerhead, made of iron and shaped like a poker, and seething iron made the liquor foam and bubble and gave it the burnt, bitter taste so dearly loved. Flip was often served in flip glasses, great glass tumblers without handles, sometimes holding three or four quarts apiece.” (Did you read that? **Three or Four Quarts!!!!** I hope they shared!) Taverns also served beer, cider, wine, gin, and other spirituous mixed drinks. (From “Stage Coach and Tavern Days” by Alice Earle).

And, oh yes, they also smoked pipes in taverns. According to a short, but a wonderful video on the **Friends of Minute Man National Park** website, women -- especially New Hampshire women -- were quite fond of smoking pipes in taverns!” (Good grief! What was the world coming to?! Next, women would probably be riding horses astride! Wearing britches! All I can say is: It would be wise not to mess with New Hampshire women!) In the late 1700’s, one New Hampshire boy said his “mother chewed, smoked and snuffed and [his] sister helped her

in the smoking department.” (from “Comfortable Subsistence”).

From “On the Road North of Boston” by Donna-Belle Garvin and James Garvin, it’s written that “drinks typically served in New Hampshire taverns bore such picturesque names as flip, sling, bounce, grog, toddy, and sangaree.” And in what type of drinking vessels were beverages served? Well, the “vessels evolved during the 18th century from the tankards and bowls listed in the earlier tavern bills to glasses and mugs at a later date. Toddy, in particular, once available by the bowl, was later offered in mugs and glasses. Part of the reason for this change may have been a trend away from the customary sharing of common drinking vessels.” (Can you imagine the sharing of drinking vessels happening today?!)



Flip Glasses, Loggerhead, and Toddy Stick

By the way, if you’re a direct descendant of an ancestor who operated an inn, ordinary, or tavern in the United States before July 4, 1776, you might be able to join a hereditary society called the Flagon and Trencher, a group that was started in 1962. Look them up on-line.

Names of SOME of the Hollis taverners from 1823 to 1851: **Noah Hardy, Nehemiah Woods, Joseph Patch, Benoni Cutter, Henry Eastman, Ambrose Gould, Mrs. Ester Emerson, Daniel Emerson, Oliver Scripture, Edward Emerson, William Hale, William Butterfield, Freeman Marshall, William Lewis, Simeon Spalding, Alpheus Rideout.** The licenses don’t give street address, only that they lived in Hollis and that the tavern was operated from where they reside.

TOASTS (these toasts come from the **Flagon and Trencher** website):

- “Drink down all unkindness.” (Shakespeare)
- “Better to pay the tavern keeper than the druggist.” (A Spanish proverb)
- “Behold the rain which descends from heaven upon our vineyards, to be changed into wine, a constant proof that God loves us, and loves us to be happy.” (Benjamin Franklin) You can always count on old Ben for a good one!
- “A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry.” (Ecclesiastes 10:19)

But then, times change...in 1909, when Arthur Gilman wrote his book about Hollis, **My Cranford**, there were no more taverns in town. I do not know when the last one closed. But tavern days must have been an interesting and actually a very friendly time in our little town. Women and children went into taverns as well as men. News was exchanged, people visited, read the newspaper, and generally socialized. In fact, in one Hollis tavern, a person could even pick up their mail, as one tavern keeper happened to also be the first postmaster in town. And, no, his name wasn’t **Cliff**, it was **Ambrose**. But, yes, probably throughout the tavern.....**everyone knew your name!**

In closing, wishing you all good health and good cheer!

Fredricka Olson

Fredricka Olson, Curator



34 Main Street

“You have not lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” John Bunyan