



# HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter for April - May, 2012

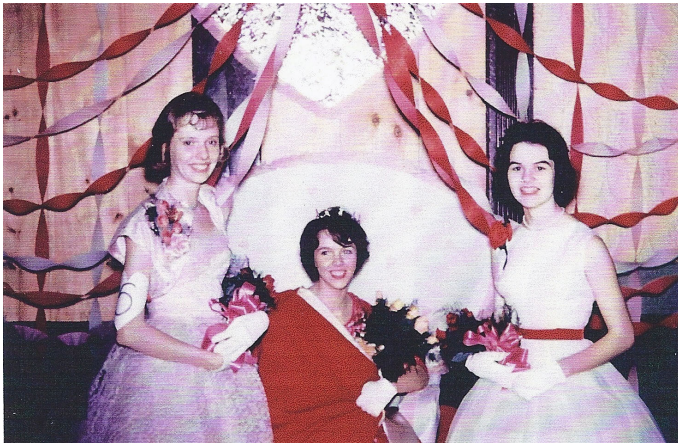
### A Scrapbook of Memories of Hollis Sixty Years Ago

by Dick Lates

I grew up in Hollis during the Fifties, and I have some vivid and wonderful memories of that time in my life. To sum it up, Hollis was a wonderful place to be a teenager sixty years ago. Here are some of the scrapbook images that come to my mind as I reminisce...

**Locke's Ice Cream** – Locke's was the place where we all congregated on summer evenings, during and after dances, after baseball games, after school, and on weekend afternoons. The homemade ice cream was the best in New England, in my opinion, and the popcorn was always freshly popped. A double cone was only 15 cents, and a sundae was a quarter. I'm not sure who invented it, but my favorite sundae was a "double gooney!" This creation consisted of two scoops of ice cream, strawberries, butterscotch sauce, chocolate sauce, marshmallow sauce, and crushed walnuts. I still dream about those! What I liked about Locke's is that the whole family seemed to like having us kids around all the time. It was a busy place.

**Town Hall Dances** – First of all, I had to learn how to dance. Ballroom dance lessons were offered in the fall, and I endured that ordeal because we lived right behind the Town Hall where they took place. All dances were held upstairs in the Town Hall, and you didn't need a date to attend.



Hollis High School Valentine's Ball (February, 1961): Dotsie Kimball (Queen); Aides: Nancy Crook (L) and Sharon Howe (R)

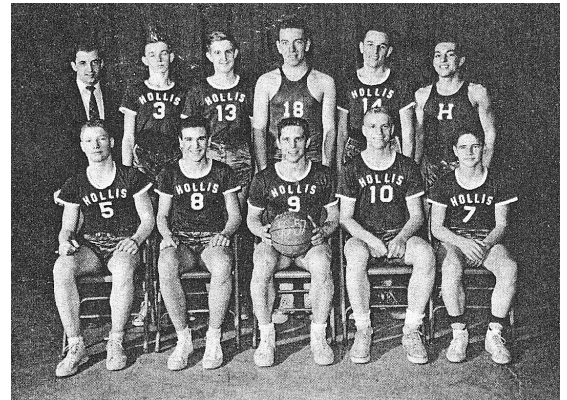
Each year, we could look forward to a Junior and a Senior Prom, a Valentine's Ball, and a Firemen's Ball. Music was provided by a live orchestra – Zaza Ludwig was a pretty popular group. Boards covered the windows during basketball season and crepe paper streamers hung from the basketball hoop, decorated after school by the students.

About 10pm, the lights would come up and the Juniors or Seniors would lead a Grand March around the hall. Our par-

ents and grandparents would observe the march from the balcony, and then they would all head for home. We would all stay until the last dance and then head for pizza at Adamo's. Proms weren't the only dances, however. We also had many record hops, where we practiced our jitterbugging and polkas. On Saturday nights, we often attended square dances that featured "callers" who were imported from out of town.

**Band Concerts** – I was a junior member of the Hollis Church School Band that was a multi-generational band of about 30 members and led first by Pop Wilson and then by Eddie Dumaine. We were a marching band when I was a member and played mostly march music. Our major event was leading the Memorial Day Parade and playing at each of the town cemeteries where the graves were decorated. I had selected the snare drum as my instrument, and my Dad was a little disappointed about my choice until he discovered that he could greatly reduce the noise level with a practice pad that he was able to acquire.

**Sports** – Baseball and basketball were the high school sports when I was growing up. Perhaps because there were only about 70 students in grades 7 to 12 in the Farley Building, there was usually a place



Hollis High School Basketball Team 1956-57

for us in the lineup. Most of us started on the teams when we were in the 7th or 8th grade and played together all through high school. We didn't have bus transportation to baseball games, but some of the older players on the teams had cars and drove us to the games. It was a big day in the spring when an athletic supply salesman came to the school and each of us on the baseball team purchased our glove, spikes, and bat for the season. We did have bus transportation to basketball games. Boys' and girls' teams traveled together by bus to the games, and it was a necessary game for the driver to keep flipping on the interior lights on the bus to make sure that everyone minded their manners.

**Work after School on Weekends and During the Summer** – It seemed like just about everybody I knew had a job or farm chores to do. There was plenty of work available in town

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## A Scrapbook of Memories of Hollis Sixty Years Ago

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Hollis High School Baseball Team 1956-57

on the many fruit and vegetable, dairy, and poultry farms. I think work helped shape our values as we were growing up. We bought our clothes, had money in our pockets for entertainment, and eventually bought our old cars, and put gas in them. And we felt valued as kids, because we were able to do work that mattered to the town. I particularly enjoyed haying in the summer, and the feeling of accomplishment that came with loading the bales on the trailer and stacking them in the barn. It was hot, hard work, but it was appreciated by the farmers.

**Duck and Cover** - This memory represents a distinct chapter in our nation's history. As a result of the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, as students, we received training in what to do in the event of a nuclear attack. The main drill was known as "duck and cover." We each practiced crouching under our desks and covering our heads after we had watched a film about the effects of an atomic bomb explosion. It was a very sobering experience to watch a mushroom cloud appear on the screen and to imagine that event actually taking place in the United States. For me, it was a scary prospect, and I recall hearing that some folks were equipping bomb shelters in their homes for protection in the event of an attack.

**Skating Parties** - Much of our fun and entertainment as teenagers we had to create ourselves, and one of our favorite winter pastimes was ice skating. There were lots of irrigation and beaver ponds around town, and we knew them all. The pond behind Hildreth's was one of our favorite skating spots, and, when the ice was good, we'd meet there for hockey games and races after school. We'd stay until dark or until we were frozen. The best times were the night skating parties, when we'd build a fire on the ice and skate by moonlight. It was great fun and it didn't cost a dime!

**Piano Lessons** - Some of you may remember my sister, Susan, who now lives in Burlington, Vermont. I asked her to write down her recollection of the time she entertained the entire village of Hollis on the church carillon, so here are her words...

"My first piano teacher, Miss Ethelyn Edwards, taught music in the Hollis schools (all grades) twice a week, and

then gave private lessons in the afternoons. My best friends, Betty Jane Twichell, Maxine Manning, and I were three of her most loyal students. My mother always served her hot tea with lemon in a pretty cup when she came to our house for my lesson each week. (The tea was important because our piano was in a room that wasn't heated.)

"We had been paying Miss Edwards a dollar a week for eight years when she retired. Betty Jane's father, "Peanut" Twichell, was quite a musician in his own right, and he was quickly able to locate a new teacher for all three of us. The new teacher, Mrs. Dixon, gave lessons on Saturdays in a music store in nearby Nashua. I loved Mrs. Dixon. She had style and flair and tons of personality. She reminded me of a gypsy with her exotic looks, dark wavy hair, and long skirts. She played beautifully. My style, if you could call it that, was to play loud and fast and sloppy. I didn't like to practice. I just wanted to play my pieces right away - the way they were supposed to sound - without going to the trouble of learning them properly. Mrs. Dixon was kind of flashy herself, but she had no patience with sloppiness. She made me do the requisite drills and scales, but, pride and joy.

"When I was about 15 years old, I told Mrs. Dixon that my heart's desire was to learn to play the organ. Mrs. Dixon told me that she would be happy to give me lessons on one of the organs in the music store if I could locate an organ to practice on. We lived right in the center of town, and our little community church was just up the road... So the next day, with some trepidation, I approached Judith Brown, the church organist. Judith took her responsibilities very seriously, particularly when it came to caring for her precious organ. As I was generally considered to be a responsible, if somewhat unusual, girl, with some misgivings, she gave me permission to practice on the church organ after school. She showed me basically how the organ worked and gave me the key along with a stern lecture. I was not to "fool around" on the organ. I was to lock it up when I was finished, and never --repeat NEVER-- to touch the buttons that controlled the carillon. (The carillon was a new acquisition and Judith's pride and joy. Ruth Wheeler, a lifelong member, had recently given the expensive set of bells to the Congregational Church in memory of her late husband. Every Sunday the bells called the faithful to church, charmed us during worship, and accompanied our passage out into the world. I found the bells fascinating.)

"And so my organ lessons began. For several months, I practiced at the church without incident, strictly adhering to Judith's rules and regulations. But there was one problem. Because I was a novice, I found my organ pieces very simple and quite boring. In fact, they were downright baby-ish, compared to what I could turn out on the piano. So, after a while, I started bringing my piano music with me to church. When I had finished practicing, I would try out some of my piano pieces on the organ. That made the whole organ experience much more interesting. One day, it occurred to me that it would be fun to play the bells. I had noticed that the carillon controls had both an "Inside" button and an "Outside" button. It couldn't hurt, I thought, if I just played them for a few minutes on the "Inside" mode. Operating the bells made me feel powerful, and the sound was heavenly. Thereafter, every day, before locking up the organ, I would flip the switch from "Outside" to "Inside" and play the bells for my own amuse



ment -- just for a few minutes. It was my delicious little secret.

"Eventually I found myself wondering how the bells would respond to one of my faster piano pieces, so one day I tucked "Bumble Boogie" into my music bag and headed up to the church. ("Bumble Boogie" is a marvelous number. You play a boogie beat with your left hand -- "Bum BUM bum bum bum BUM bum BUM"- while essentially playing "Flight of the Bumble Bee with your right hand. "Whirrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr." It satisfied all my needs for flash and fun and drama. Well, the bells went nuts! They were falling all over each other trying to keep up with the boogie beat and those whirring bees. It was thrilling! Definitely the high point of my day. When I'd had enough excitement, I closed up the organ, turned the key and walked home with a smile on my face.

"My mother, Helen Lates, met me at the door. When I saw the look on her face, my smile quickly faded. "Congratulations," she said grimly. "You just played 'Bumble Boogie' for the whole town!" OHMIGOD! What could have happened? I

quickly reviewed my last few minutes at the church. Perhaps I had forgotten to flip the switch to "Inside." Or maybe Judith had left the switch on "Inside" so that when I flipped it, I inadvertently switched it to "Outside." It didn't really matter. Whatever had happened, I was sunk! I didn't have much time to think, because the phone started to ring. The first two calls were from my piano buddies, first Betty Jane and then Maxine. Betty Jane lived half a mile away, and Maxine, two miles; but their message was the same: "I heard you playing 'Bumble Boogie' on the carillon." (We all kept track of each other's piano pieces.) No sooner had I hung up with Maxine than the phone rang a third time. It was a very short conversation. "This is Judith. You're cut off!" Judith lived at the end of a dirt road at least five miles from the church. In spite of feeling humiliated at the ignominious termination of my brief organ career, I remember marveling at just how far those darn bells carried."

## Membership Dues

**REMINDER: DUES ARE DUE! Don't forget to get your annual dues into the Society by sending in the enclosed Membership Renewal form. Our current capital improvement project is the renovation of the "ice house" (the building behind the Wheeler House) to provide additional display space for our exhibits. Your additional capital improvement donations this year will be applied to this project with our gratitude. Your continued support is crucial to our efforts, and we appreciate your help in preserving and promoting the rich history of Hollis. Thank you very much!**

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# ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK DINNER

Thursday, May 17, 2012  
Lawrence Barn

Dinner at 7:00PM  
Program at 8:00PM

## *Tools and Construction Techniques Used in Cooperage* presented by Bruce Hardy

Bruce will discuss the types of cooperage common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the tools and techniques used for constructing a barrel.

For dinner reservations, please call Lydia Schellenberg at (603) 465-2495 by  
Monday, May 14.

Please bring either a salad or main dish. Dessert will be provided by the Board.



*Hollis Historical Society*  
*Wheeler House*  
*20 Main Street, P. O. Box 754*  
*Hollis, New Hampshire 03049*