

Newsletter

Summer 2019

Brentwood Historical Society



Another Busy Year

Hello to the members of the Brentwood Historical Society! Time to bring you up to date on what's been happening since our report in the newsletter of Winter 2018-2019.

The Programs

The programs of 2019 are continuing to attract audiences of 35-45 people. We can all be proud that our Historical Society is clearly known for programs that you don't want to miss. And people don't hurry home. Everyone enjoys the comfortable atmosphere of snacks and conversation afterward.

March 30 "A Colored Man in Exeter"



We learned about Michael Ward's new book, about his father Harold and his family, all of a sudden and hurried to arrange a joint program with the Library, at the Library. Even on a Saturday afternoon at 1:00 p.m., the room was full of

people. Some of Mike's friends from Lincoln Street in Exeter were there, coming to say hello to the son of their buddy Harold who used to work at Gerry's Restaurant. He turned out to be a riveting speaker. I'm sure we'll be watching to see if the second book in his series is published this summer as scheduled. That will suggest another program by Mike Ward.

April 11 "Vintage Dolls, Trucks, and Other Toys"

Doug Cowie and Linda Cowie led off this evening by showing samples from their large collections of trucks and dolls, and explaining how they happened to have them. Others in the audience brought their own toys to add to the exhibit for the evening and told their individual stories. Our Curator Rebecca Davis and the Program Committee had artfully arranged an enhanced exhibit of the Museum's permanent collection of

dolls, books and other toys. Members who shared their story of a toy included Rebecca Davis, Rebecca Dunham, Joyce Miller, Frank Northrup, Linda Rousseau, Dexter Swasey, and Robin Wrighton.

June 13 "New Hampshire Roadside Historical Markers"



This program also drew a roomful of people, including some from other towns who read about it in the paper.

Michael Bruno was a dynamic speaker, refreshingly relaxed but passionately interested and knowledgeable about his subject. Not many states even have historical markers, and none have as many as New Hampshire, we learned. With the publication of his book *Cruising New Hampshire History: A Guide to New Hampshire's Roadside Historical Markers*, the state has a new and willing expert, with a larger audience of interested travelers than we might have expected. His 564-page paperback is available through Amazon and local bookstores. Great to keep in the car for quick reference.

The March Bake Sale



Linda Rousseau at the Bake Sale table Many thanks to those who baked, manned the table during the day, who purchased all the goodies, and who even gave extra. Over \$600 went to the bank as a result, a record-breaker for sure!

We can't lose the opportunity to say what a remarkable success we had with the March 12 Bake Sale at the Community Center on Election Day.

Brentwood Historical Society Summer 2019

The New Open Hours

Perhaps the most telling proof of how we're growing has come with the announcement that we are now open to the public more often! When an organization doesn't have a paid staff person, it has to be very careful about promising to be open on a regular basis. For years all we dared to do was three Saturday mornings in the summer, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. This year we took a leap and committed the Society to being open seven Saturday mornings of the year – the first Saturdays of April through October, from 10–1.

Being “open” means having two to four members on hand for the full time, ready to greet members or other visitors who come in and would like to be shown around and hear some “Brentwood lore,” or who would like to sit down on their own with some books or scrapbooks, or poke around on their own and ask questions once in a while. For the periods when there are no visitors, there is always some kind of work to be done – cleaning, filing documents or photographs, helping to move something or arrange an exhibit, whatever the crew for the day has in mind. Being open means either working or greeting visitors, never just sitting and being bored until closing time.

Members – if you would like to be part of the crew on duty for an occasional Open Day, give your name to President Rebecca Dunham, at the Museum phone number 642-8944, or at president@brentwoodnhhistory.org. She'll be glad to hear from you!

The Fall Programs

Thursday, Sept. 12, 7:00 p.m.
“Spotlight on NASA”



While we have hardly been paying attention, NASA and the space industry have been working steadily (with admittedly less funding) on the goal of achieving more in space.

Building on the celebration of this year's 50th Anniversary of the first lunar landing in 1969, the September program will also give us a taste of NASA's efforts in the near future. We will dip into the memory of the excitement and fear and jubilation surrounding the 1969 landing. Please bring your own stories of how and where you saw it!

We will have a special report from Kameron Virkaitis, a Brentwood resident who spent a week in 2016 at the Advanced Space Academy at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala. He graduated from Exeter High School in 2018. He is now an Airman First Class in the NH Air National Guard while attending Southern NH Univ. full time, studying aeronautical engineering. Do plan to be at the Museum on September 12.

Thursday, Oct. 10, 7:00 p.m.
“The Gravestone Girls”



Brenda Sullivan, who founded the company known as “The Gravestone Girls” in Worcester, Mass., combines a thorough knowledge of the history of the symbolism in New England graveyards with her training in art history and restoration. She spent most of her young years studying gravestone rubbings with her mother. Now The Gravestone Girls give lectures on cemetery carvings and the meanings behind the symbols, dating back to the 17th century. They teach classes on gravestone rubbing. Finally, they produce, through a special process, hand-formed reproductions of gravestone art for use as wall decorations, garden décor, or household art pieces.

Her program with us will include information about some of the noteworthy symbols in our own town cemeteries. There will also be samples of the art pieces for sale. They also take orders for special individual pieces relating to one's own family. This field attracts those with an interest in genealogy, history and symbolism. Save this date for a very special night at the Museum.

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The President's Letter

Dear Historical Society Members,

I trust all of you stayed comfortable as best you could during the heat and humidity. Summer is passing by quickly and the chilly nights mean fall is coming.

It has been a productive spring and summer for the Historical Society. In addition to hosting a number of excellent programs and summer Open Hours in 2019, we have been busy taking care of the collection. The grant from Historic New England (HEN) last summer was used to purchase Past Perfect Museum Software to catalog the collection. Board members Karen Ellis and Rebecca Davis have been evaluating items and doing data entry. Kudos to both for their time, dedication and making great progress on this important project. The database will make it easier to utilize our collection for exhibits and programs and help with genealogy research requests.

Also, there have been quite a few donations of a variety of objects and documents in recent months.

Janet Trabucco, a Rowell family descendant, donated a loom made in Brentwood by Robert Hertz. The whole story will be in the September issue of the Brentwood Newsletter.

Shane Enos donated military items from his service in the Navy, as well as many items that belonged to his grandfathers who served in World War II.

Frank and Lois Northrup gave three matted Little League champion team photographs from the 1970s, when Frank was a coach, and also gave the championship trophy from 1978.

Marleen Page of Exeter, who grew up in Brentwood, donated photographs, documents, and memorabilia of the Block family. Gordon Block, for whom Block Drive is named, was the only Brentwood resident to be killed in World War II. The items represent the history of his family and chronicle his life from birth to death.

Roger Crosby donated a framed anniversary poster of the wooden New Hampshire ballot boxes.

Dawn Smith Higley added valuable information to our files on the Smith family, that in the 19th century owned greenhouses, a nursery and a well-known seed business on Rt 125. She also donated photographs and a story about the Smith Family Reunion held this past June.

John Hallinan, of Exeter, donated three ledgers from one of the post offices located in Brentwood, back in the early part of the 19th century. They had been stored in the basement of the Exeter Post Office after the Brentwood location closed. Thanks to all above for helping to preserve and enhance Brentwood's history.

Our upcoming events and projects include two fall public programs, two Open Hours events and a joint meeting with the New Hampshire Old Graveyards Association, our Annual Meeting, and the installation of new exhibits. We are also working with other groups in Brentwood to produce a welcome packet for new residents.

Watch for news of the Historical Society monthly in the Brentwood Newsletter, and for those of you looking for an interesting volunteer opportunity, we have many from which to choose! Thank you for being a member of the Brentwood Historical Society and supporting our preservation and educational efforts.

Rebecca Dunham

President.

**Annual Meeting of the
Brentwood Historical Society
Sunday, November 7, 2019, 3:00 P.M.
Program to be announced.**

**Thank you to David Abusamra for
his many photographs on page 4.**

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The Doll, Truck and Toy Program

Doug Cowie

Linda Cowie



Robin Wrighton



Rebecca Davis



Joyce Miller



Dexter Swasey



Rebecca Dunham



Frank Northrup

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