
HENNIKER HISTORIAN

APRIL 2021 NUMBER 83

NEWSLETTER OF THE HENNIKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Henniker Historical Society Board 2020-21

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Everyone,

The Henniker Historical Society is very excited to enter our 50th Anniversary year. We begin our celebration in June of 2021.

When we choose to remember our past, it can remind us not only of our history but also where we are heading. We can't forget that history is a living thing, continually being born. This past year was a perfect example of what was completely, and overwhelmingly, a serious life event for our town, our country, and our world. Soon, hopefully, it will be in our past.

What we learn from the pandemic, and where we go from here, will have to be informed, to a degree, by history. Because of the Historical Society's work, what our children and grandchildren will learn about this epoch event will come not just from family stories but from news clippings, videos, and artifacts archived to preserve and inform future generations. This same type of work has informed and educated generations for the last 50 years.

We hope you are looking forward to our celebration year. We want to share with, and hear from, you. It is our common experience and our history that we will celebrate together. Please visit our website and visit the museum to stay in touch.

Lastly, for 50 years, the Henniker Historical Society has been a living and breathing organization dedicated to preserving the history of this town and its citizens. Thank you to those who founded the HHS and to those who, over the years, and today, have volunteered to keep it going.

Sincerely,
Marc McMurphy
Henniker Historical Society President

Houses of Henniker

The House Plaque program of the Henniker Historical Society is off to a great start. Headed by board member Kristen MacLean, so far over 12 houses have been diligently researched to determine their approximate (circa) date of construction. Photos of three of the recent houses to mount circa plaques are below. Can you estimate the date of construction? (See page 2 for answers)

A



B



C



Order your plaque at our website today!

How Pop Schultz Got Its Name Another Theory!

In our previous newsletter, we discussed the origins of the name of the store known as Pop Schultz. Apparently not everyone agreed with that version. According to HHS member and longtime resident, Ruth Zax: "So, Pop Schultz name. I always thought Alan named it for the character in the Archie Comics who ran the local soda shop. Alan grew up in Manchester. There was a Jewish deli on Bridge Street started by Murray Onigman that had a wall mural of all the Archie characters because Bob Montana, creator of Archie, graduated from Central High School in Manchester. Murray and his family lived downstairs from us in Manchester and I went to high school at Central with his kids. I figured that Alan got the idea for the name from that."

So, was the shop named after Paul Strelzin, the oldest of the group with the least pronounceable surname or after the character in the Archie comics? Any other theories!?

New Book Coming!

Soon to be added to our list of publications is ***Some Returned: Henniker's Men in the Civil War*** by Susan Fetzer. This will be an invaluable resource to anyone researching their Henniker ancestor's Civil War activities. Susan has provided information on each Henniker man known to have participated in the conflict, including which regiment and battles they were involved in as well as their personal lives before and after the war. Whether you have relatives involved or not, this is a fascinating book for anyone interested in New Hampshire's role in the Civil War.



VISIT US ON THE WEB:

www.hennikerhistory.org

email: hennikerhistoricalsociety@tds.net

Facebook

VISIT US AT ACADEMY HALL

51 Maple St

Henniker, NH 03242

603-428-6267

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Monthly board meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month at 9:00 am in Academy Hall. Members and prospective members are invited to attend. **(Currently being held via Zoom)**

MEMBERSHIP

Your membership expiration is noted on your mailing label. If yours is about to expire please renew to continue to receive the newsletter and support us as we preserve Henniker history.

To renew, send \$25.00 per household, \$15 per individual or \$7.50 for seniors 65+ (checks can be made out to Henniker Historical Society) along with your name and address to:

Henniker Historical Society
PO Box 674
Henniker, NH 03242

Change in Membership Dues

The Henniker Historical Society was formed in November of 1971 and in the past 50 years, our dues have never been more than \$5 for an individual and \$10/family. After much discussion, we realized the time had come where we need to increase our dues to help pay our bills and continue our work in preserving Henniker's history. So, the new dues are now:

Household: \$25
Individual: \$15
Senior (65+): \$7.50

Thank you for your understanding and continued support!

House Quiz Answers

House A. circa 1895 – 209 Rush Road
House B. circa 1790 - 32 Ramsdell Road
House C. circa 1772 – 233 French Pond Road

Items from the Museum Handle Shop Whistle

Prior to the Flood Control project in the early 1960's, the Contoocook River was the center of manufacturing in Henniker. It provided the power for a number of different industries such as a shoe factory, paper mill, bicycle rim factory and more. One of these successful businesses was the Henniker Handle Shop.

In 1913, H.E. Bertrand purchased the defunct steam laundry on Water Street along the river and converted it into a woodworking shop called Crown Woodworking which was sold to Consolidated Stamp Manufacturing in 1926. CSM made the moldings for the backs of rubber stamps. In 1930, CSM was sold to a new corporation started by Dean Morrison, Eaton Sargent of Nashua and Mr. Schmidt who had previously worked for CSM. This new company continued turning out wooden handles for things like shaving brushes, percolators, knives, tools and darning eggs. The factory was damaged in the floods resulting from the 1938 hurricane, but continued on as a thriving business until it was forced to close as a result of the flood control project in the 1960s. The whistle in the photo below was used to signal the shift changes at the factory and was recently donated to our museum.



The Henniker Handle shop c.1930

Website Update

<https://www.hennikerhistory.org>

Three resources have been added to the Henniker Historical Society website to assist genealogists uncovering Henniker relatives. The first is a list of the original settler families of Henniker. Learn about the background of the King's grant to Captain Mason with a list of Henniker's first settlers and where they came from *before* the town was incorporated in 1768. The second is an historical description of nine of the major cemeteries of Henniker and includes a photo of each. Finally, birth, marriage and death reports found in the Annual Henniker Town Report reports from 1931 to present have been transcribed by the Henniker Historical Society. Information can be accessed alphabetically, by year or by child, parent, bride, or groom.

Did You Know Eric Von Schmidt?



While going through our archives, we recently discovered this album called *Who Knocked the Brains Out of the Sky?* by an artist called Eric Von Schmidt. None of us were familiar with him, although we were told he lived in Henniker at one point. Doing some more research, I was amazed to find out that Von Schmidt was actually a very well-known and accomplished artist. He moved to Henniker around 1970 after meeting his second wife and apparently lived here until sometime in the 1980's. He was influential in the folk revival scene of the 1960's and a good friend of Bob Dylan's. He recorded numerous albums and won a Grammy award for his work on a compilation album entitled *Anthology of American Folk Music Vol 1-3* in 1997. He was also well-known for his art and illustrations. He did album covers for artists such as Joan Baez and illustrations for children's books by Sid Fleischman. He was known for his historic and Western paintings such as *Storming the Alamo* and *Here Fell Custer*. Sadly, Von Schmidt passed away on Feb 2, 2007.

Did you know Eric Von Schmidt or where he lived? Do you have any stories about him that we could add to our archives? Just send us an email or pop a letter into the mail. We would love to know more about our famous local artist!

Farewell to the Leatherboard Factory

We frequently get photos we cannot identify. Often, it's a photo of a person or persons unknown and anyone who might know them is long gone (so please label those family photos!). We also get photos of an event or place we can't identify and going to longtime local residents can sometimes resolve our mystery. We found a series of pictures of what appeared to be someone transporting a sewer pipe. Volunteer, Kristen MacLean met up with resident, Steve Connor, who soon set us straight. This was no sewer pipe, but the old smokestack from the Leatherboard factory (also known as fibre board) that was once situated on the Contoocook River near the Ramsdell Rd. steel bridge. Leatherboard is a material that can be used for lining shoes, trunks or in book binding.

The first fibre or leatherboard factory was established in Henniker in 1906 but the plant was destroyed by fire in 1916. A more modern factory was built and sold to F.E. Norton and Sons, Fibre Board Manufacturers, in 1923. The factory employed fifteen people and produced about three tons of fibreboard a day using waterpower and steam to dry the fibreboard sheets. Like the handle factory, the plant was heavily damaged by the 1936 and 1938 floods. It eventually burned in 1940 and was replaced with a more modern factory which employed men around the clock in eight hour shifts until forced to close. In 1962, the factory was demolished because of the flood control program and the last bit to go was the smokestack. In the photos below, we have a postcard image of the factory and bridge followed by a photo of the smokestack as it is about to be taken down. The last two photos show the smokestack being transported out of town, going south on 114, to most likely be sold as scrap.



Henniker Notables: Reverend James Scales and James Peters

In response to the question “Who was the first resident of Henniker?” it is difficult to respond. The issue is always ‘temporary’ or ‘permanent’? Prior to the outbreak of the first French and Indian War in 1744, a few settlers had taken up residence, with names of Craney, Varnam, Patterson, and Walker. However, documentation is scarce and Henniker historian, Leander W. Cogswell noted that “no other white man lived here until 1760.”

In the spring of 1760, the Reverend James Scales traveled from Hopkinton and built a small log cabin in the easterly part of town at the foot of Foster Hill. Scales only lived here for 6 months. During that time he executed deeds, was a justice of the peace and occasionally preached in Henniker. Scales was not the rough, wild pioneer one would expect of a first settler. He was a restless, energetic and adventurous intellectual. During his lifetime he practiced each of the four professions-educator, ministry, medicine and law. He would leave his mark on four communities in New Hampshire-Concord, Hopkinton, Canterbury and Henniker.

Reverend Scales was born in Boxford, Massachusetts in 1707 and graduated from Harvard in 1733. He married Susannah Harvey in 1736 and the couple made their home in Concord. Scales was credited as being Concord’s first school teacher. In 1742 he was licensed to preach and hired in Canterbury. There he also practiced medicine and served as a sergeant in the company of men protecting Canterbury from Indian attacks. By 1857, he was preaching in the Hopkinton Church. In January, 1761 Scales returned to Hopkinton but never lost interest in Henniker. He served as a partime preacher and conducted baptisms, including that of the first child born in Henniker, Persis Howe.

Scales never owned the land. It was held by John Logan, one of the original land grant proprietors. Logan sold the land in 1754 to Thomas Wallace. Wallace sold the 100 acre property in June 1761 to James Peters.

James Peters was born in Andover, Massachusetts in 1711 and married Elizabeth Farnham of Concord, New Hampshire in 1736. The couple resided in Manchester until the spring of 1761 when they came to Henniker with his two sons. James Peters erected a log house west of the former cabin of Reverend Scales and became the first permanent settler in Henniker. A third son would be born in 1768.

Found in the Archives

William Wallace Esq. was the third son of Thomas and Mary Willson Wallace. He was born in Henniker on January 17, 1760. While he grew up in the shadow of his mother’s reputation as ‘Ocean-Born Mary’, as an adult he became an influential citizen of Henniker. He served as a selectman, two terms as a legislator in Concord and in 1803, after serving as Henniker’s Justice of the Peace, was appointed a judge in the Court of Common Pleas in Hillsborough County.

The Henniker Historical Society archives hold some of William Wallace’s hand written land deeds and account records dating back to 1799. Included in the records is a summons, signed by William Wallace, Justice of the Peace and dated July 30, 1802. The summons requests the presence of Petter Codman and George Little of Hillsborough to appear on September 6, 1802 in the Court of Common Pleas. Failure to appear would cost Codman \$100.00 dollars and Little \$50.00. They were to

“anfwer all fuch matters and things as fhall be objected unto him, in behalf of the State of Newhamfhire; more efpecially, by Agness McWilliam who had charged him with having knowledge of her by which means she is with child, and not depart without leave of Court.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Josiah Ward was selected at the first town meeting after Henniker’s 1768 incorporation as the first hog ‘reeve.’ Nearly every town had a hog reeve. A hog reeve was designated to catch hogs who roamed loose around and dug up farmer’s crops.

Henniker Historian

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PERMIT NO. 35**

**April 2021 Newsletter
Issue No.83**



COMING SOON: HISTORICAL TOURS

One of the activities the Henniker Historical Society is working on to celebrate our 50 years of service is the creation of several different town tours. In the works are narrated, self-guided walking, driving and virtual tours that you can access via your phone or computer. Each of Henniker's historical markers will be fitted with a QR code that will let you access information about that marker. On the website, we will be offering virtual tours for those unable to visit the markers in person. We also plan to offer special interest tours such as the impact of the historic floods of 1936 and 1938 on downtown Henniker. Watch our website for more information!