

Draft - Wilmot Historical Society annual meeting

October 30, 2022; Wilmot Town Hall

President Liz Kirby convened the meeting 1 p.m. She welcomed everyone to the event and mentioned that there would be a speaker after a brief business meeting.

The main item of business was to elect directors to the WHS board. Incumbents Bill Chaisson, Marc Davis, and Nola Aldrich had agreed to run again. The bylaws allow the board to include as many as 12 people. Bruce Sanborn and Carolyn Rayno were nominated at the October meeting of the WHS and accepted their nominations. All five were elected in a unanimous voice vote.

The president then invited those interested to look through the annual report, hard copies of which were available at the entrance. This invitation replaced the older tradition of reading the reports of each committee aloud. Treasurer Mary Fanelli reported that Mascoma Bank would charge a fee \$5 a month for inactivity. The assemblage voted to remove the \$5,000 and deposit it into a more fiscally advantageous account.

The president accepted a motion to adjourn the meeting from Marc Davis, seconded by Mary Fanelli. A voice vote adjourned the meeting.

After an intermission during which guests helped themselves to a buffet and socialized, the meeting reconvened for the presentation by Dr. Robert Goodby, a professor of anthropology from Franklin Pierce University. Kirby introduced the speaker, who was to speak about prehistory rather than history, noting that she had recently attended his presentation on a different topic in Boscawen.

Dr. Goodby's topic was life in New Hampshire 12,000 years ago. During this period of prehistory, the Ice Age was ending, continental ice sheets had withdrawn from southern New Hampshire, but it was still very cold and the landscape did not resemble any modern one. Goodby focused on an excavation he did in Keene, where he uncovered the remains of four campsites that suggested four families had spent the winter near the Ashuelot River 12 millennia ago.

Goodby does excavations that are required by law when federal money is to be spent on a project, in this case a new middle school campus. This was the first time that his initial investigation had yielded artifacts

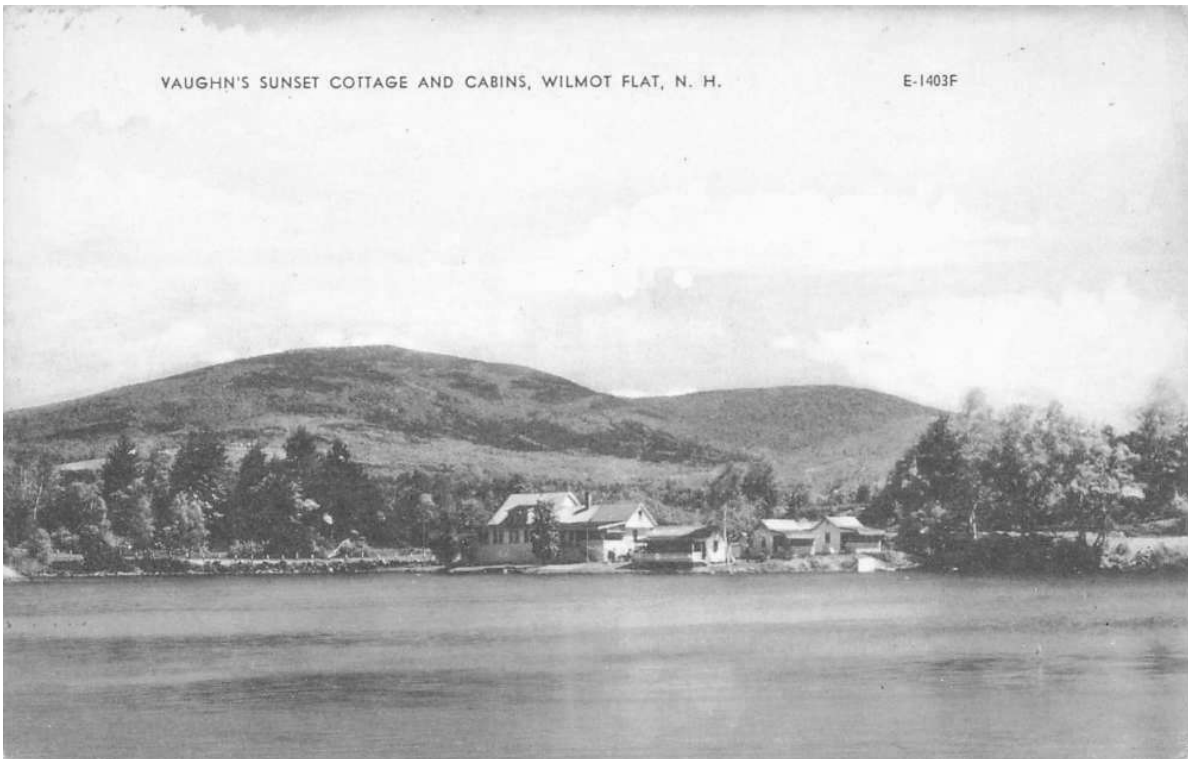
that were important enough to undertake a full excavation. In the end, the extent of his findings recommended that the location be made a national heritage site.

He and his crew found four oblong encampments centered on stone-tool-making sites. They found many stone chips broken off to make tools, but very few tools. He showed an image of shelter still used in Greenland in the early 20th century that he believed was analogous to the ones uncovered at Keene. He also disputed a gender-based division of labor because there was no sign of hunting being done on these sites, but he doubted half the population would just sit around and do nothing all winter.

The information assembled to explain the activities in these encampments has been incorporated into the curriculum of the middle school classes and the sites are now under part of the athletic facilities.

Submitted by Bill Chaisson

Annual Report
Wilmot History Society
2022



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On the second Thursday of every month the Board of Directors has met at 5 p.m. at the Wilmot town office. We have made every effort to complete business within one hour. This schedule has made it possible for people with daytime commitments to attend. These meetings are always open to the public, and we welcome participation and input.

At the beginning of the year the volume of artifacts and records we have acquired overwhelmed the space in the history room, so we rented a climate-controlled storage unit especially for larger items and to make the displays manageable. The history room was open to the public every Saturday morning during the summer when the Farmers' Market was open. Usually there were two docents present, one of whom was available to assist with genealogy research. We helped new residents research records of about who owned their property 100 years ago and advised visitors from out of state where they could find good hiking trails. Sometimes there were as many as 15 or 16 visitors a day. There have been a number of times when Catherine Stearns has met researchers by special arrangement. We have a complete set of Wilmot town reports since 1890 when vital records were first published and other genealogy records. Family history records from 1916 have been digitized and are accessible on our computer.

In addition to the public programs we have sponsored, we provided the meal for a band concert on August 20. A number of members have attended workshops and seminars relevant to our goals and visited other historical societies in the state. We had a table at the Andover Old Time Fair with exhibits and many conversations. We have supported the restoration project for the North Wilmot Church, which included a donation for the repair of the palladian window over the front entrance. We continue to support the restoration of the Wilmot Town Hall and have pledged a sum of money for this purpose. Casper LeVarn's *Early History of Wilmot* is being prepared for republishing.

The Wilmot Historical Society is vital to the town of Wilmot because at this time there is no other entity dedicated to the preservation of and access to the last 215 years of our town's life. Our greatest need is a space large enough to accommodate our one-of-a-kind artifacts and records and adequate workspace now and for the future. We appreciate the support we receive from our residents and friends in the past and ongoing.

Respectfully submitted

Liz Kirby, President

Wilmot (NH) Historical Society

ACQUISITIONS

The Acquisitions Committee's responsibility is to collect, catalogue and preserve Wilmot related ephemera, objects, photos and stories. The process will enrich current and future residents with an understanding of its past and those peoples who have lived here for more than 200 years.

This year's donations and acquisitions include:

- Dozens of photos and postcards;
- A framed Linda Peterson print showing Wilmot buildings;

- A large collection of Tomie dePaola books;
- Wilmot's Boston-Cane-holder Walter Walker's collection of Fred Goodhue glass negatives of scenes from the early 20th century. Walter secured the negatives from Freddie LaJoie after he found in an old chicken coop!

We would like to express our gratitude to New London's archivist Jim Perkins for assisting us with digitizing and securing the Goodhue glass negatives in an archive environment.

Our collection exists and continues to grow through the thoughtfulness and generosity of people who realize the importance of history's preservation. We thank you all! Please remember, today's events are tomorrow's history.

Our current Acquisition Committee members are Catherine Stearns, Marc Davis, Julie Morse, and Al Price.

Catherine Stearns

FUNDRAISING

We have been fortunate to continue to receive annual grants from the Barnard Foundation to support our "Memories of Wilmot" video program. During the summer of 2022, the Wilmot Historical Society provided dinner at the first bandstand concert. There was a huge turnout, and we made \$350 after expenses. Other income came from the sale of books and Donald Hall DVDs. Donations that came in with membership totaled over \$2,000.

Mary Fanelli

PROGRAM

We had three programs this year.

Last fall, Steve Taylor gave his popular talk on the New Hampshire sheep boom of the early 19th century. Almost every small town in the state was home to several thousand sheep (even Wilmot) in the years leading up to the Civil War. For a few decades it seemed that the ideal use for our rocking hillsides had been found ...

The second program was May 8. Lourdes Aviles gave a fascinating program about the Great Hurricane of 1938. She had many stories and photos about this storm that seemingly came out of nowhere and wreaked

destruction on many towns in New England. Local stories, photos, people's journals, news and magazine articles of the times, and more, were all part of the trove of research she shared with us.

The third program will be presented at our annual meeting on October 30. Dr. Robert Goodby might want to argue that the last Ice Age put the Hurricane of 1938 to shame. Goodby, an archaeology professor at Franklin Pierce University, who had previously presented a program on indigenous people in New Hampshire, returns with a different topic: "Life in New England 12,000 Years Ago." Dr. Goodby has excavated the remains of the state's earliest inhabitants and is a dynamic speaker.

Mary Fanelli & Fred Ögmundson

ORAL HISTORY & VIDEO PRODUCTION

Theresa Chamberland of StoryCatcher Studios has been producing all of our videos for the "Memories of Wilmot" project, and the team of Lindy Heim, Judy Hauck, and Fred Ögmundson have conducted most of the interviews. This year we interviewed Liz Thompson Kirby and her brother Charles Thompson and have uploaded four videos so far. Theresa came this summer and interviewed Julie and John Morse and Tootie Fleury and her brother Duke Evans. Videos and audio transcriptions may be accessed through the WHS website (wilmothistoricalociety.org) on the "Memories of Wilmot" page.

Mary Fanelli

GENEALOGY

This year, the Wilmot Historical Society established a new committee, the Genealogy Committee. The Genealogy Committee currently consists of six members - Liz Kirby, Catherine Stearns, Carolyn Rayno, Bruce Sanborn, Karen Hanson, and Heather Mather. Each of the committee members have invested a significant amount of time in their own genealogical research and have joined the committee to connect with others who share their enthusiasm. In its inaugural year, the Genealogy Committee developed the following mission statement and objectives:

Mission Statement

The Genealogy Committee of the Wilmot Historical Society strives to be a dynamic resource for people in pursuit of Wilmot related genealogical information.

Objectives

1. Assist others with researching their genealogies by sharing our knowledge and resources.
2. Expand our information and resources related to Wilmot genealogy, past and present.
3. Organize our resources to make them more accessible to the public.

With these objectives in mind, the Genealogy Committee initiated a number of ongoing projects. First, the committee put together an informational packet to help guide people who are new to genealogical research. The packet includes a list of online resources, a list of physical resources available in the Wilmot History Room, and information about creating a family tree. Packets are available in the Wilmot History Room. Additionally, a member of the Genealogy Committee has been available in the Wilmot History Room each Saturday morning during the Wilmot Farmer's Market, ready to assist anyone with questions related to genealogy.

In an effort to expand the Wilmot Historical Society's collection of genealogy resources, Bruce has been meeting with Wilmot's Boston Post Cane holder, Walter Walker. Walter has graciously invited Bruce to create digital copies of hundreds of items from his collection of Wilmot historical documents. These items will be available for viewing on the computer in the Wilmot History Room, and hopefully on the WHS website in the coming months.

The History Room collection includes countless photographs which have all been organized into binders by Catherine and other members of the Acquisition Committee. Heather has begun to index these binders by individuals' names in an effort to make them more accessible for genealogical research. The partially completed index is currently available on the computer in the Wilmot History Room.

The Genealogy Committee looks forward to continuing and expanding upon these projects in the coming year.

Heather Mather

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elizabeth Kirby
President

Catherine Stearns
Vice President

Mary Fanelli
Treasurer

Bill Chaisson
Secretary

Nola Aldrich
Marc Davis
Judith Hauck
Heather Mather
Julie Morse
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Website
wilmothistoricalociety.org