

MOUNT HOLLY COMMUNITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Volume 24

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Summer 2017

Our mission is to enlighten our community with an understanding of our past to promote an objective vision of the future.

Home of the Vermont State Terrestrial Fossil

Lake Ninevah The Blakely Years (Part II of III) by Paul Nevin



Lake View from the Farmstead

In 1948 Vincent and Mary Blakely bought 300 + acres of land on the west side of Lake Ninevah from the Anderson family. With this purchase came a farmhouse, many out buildings and seven rustic cabins. These cabins were named Meadow Lark, Blueberry Patch, Lake Side, Happy Days, Holiday, Lazy Days and Beachcomber. Over the next few years Vin built four new cabins to rent. These new cabins were Mountain View, Hearthside, Sunny Days and Lakeview. He also bought the Cook cabin which became known as Bluebird.

Vin and Mary then needed to bring people from the cities to fill these cabins for the summer. Vin ran ads in the New York Times which brought many inquires, including my parents. For \$25 to \$35 families enjoyed a week at Lake Ninevah. If they were looking for luxury they were at the wrong place. The original cabins had running hot and cold water to the kitchen sink and only a toilet in the

bathroom. Bathing took place in the lake. The new cabins did have a complete bathroom with a shower. What kept people returning each summer was the beauty of the unspoiled mountain lake.

Many city renters liked the isolation they found at Ninevah. In the early years, no phones existed at the lake. If someone at the lake had to be contacted they would call Mabel Freeman at the beginning of Ninevah Road. Mabel would hang out a flag to alert drivers to stop and they in turn would pass the information along to the family who had the message. This is hard system to comprehend in our age of cell phones. Telephones did arrive at Ninevah in the early sixties - party lines of four. If you got bored you could always listen in on the party line. Eventually anyone who wanted a phone could get a private line.

The Blakely family also provided renters with a variety of activities. Daughters, Leah and Carol, helped out in the early years. Two weekly dinners were held in the meadow, one was a pass the dish supper and the other was a community cookout. After these dinners a lake wide softball game would follow. A small playground existed for the younger set, including a swing and teeter totter.



Vin and Mary

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Mary offered painting and swimming lessons weekly. Hikes, both day and overnight hikes, on the Long Trail were led by Vin. Horses were made available for riding. These horses and ponies, usually four, were leased to Vin and Mary from Frank Lord. A boat came with each cabin and Vin would rent you a motor if you didn't want to row. He also sold the mixed gas for the motors. If you were a fisherman he would sell you bait. Evening activities included a weekly visit to the Mount Holly Grange for a square dance. If you needed food staples the Blakelys also ran a store. Milk, bread, eggs, cheese, maple syrup, canned goods, candy, ice cream and other items could be purchased so you didn't have to make the long trip through Buttermilk falls to Ludlow. Vin also sold fresh vegetables from his garden when they were in season.

One favorite adventure of all the lake kids was the weekly garbage run. Vin would attach his old trailer to a Cub Cadet tractor and make a circuit to all the cabins. So many kids would be riding on the trailer that little room was left for the garbage. The kids would become the runners and would race ahead to the cabins to grab the cans and throw them on the trailer. When all trash was collected, we would head off to a local cellar hole to deposit the trash. Of course, the kids would delight in breaking the bottles against the walls of the cellar hole. We would then make the circuit to return all the trash cans. Vin was a bit of a Pied Piper as many of the kids who came summer after summer trailed him on his daily routine.



Another Vin activity involved the larger community. Vin rented his spare boats to anyone

wishing to try their hand at fishing. For \$1.50 a day you would get a pair of oars and a leaky wooden boat. Many a fisherman would show up late in the day and spend their evening fishing for bullhead, perch, large and small mouth bass, rock bass, sunnies and pickerel were also native to the lake. The state also added trout to the lake each year with limited success.

In Vin's spare time he would build cabins for others around the lake. He sold land to some of his former renters and also built their cottages. He had one basic plan for all the cottages he built. Three bedrooms were built across the rear of the cabin with a kitchen, dining and living area across the front. A small bathroom was squeezed between the kitchen and a bedroom. Six of the cabins built by Vin still exist. Many are still owned by the same families who built them. All the original cabins that Vin bought however are long gone. Only two of the new cabins built for renting still exist today. These two cabins have been extensively remodeled.

Vin was constantly on the move taking care of endless maintenance on his growing number of cabins. In addition, he would do repairs for other lake residents. No one ever called an electrician or plumber, they called Vin or stopped by the store to chat and make arrangements for a maintenance visit.

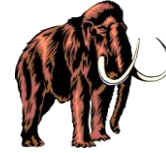


One thing that has changed rather dramatically around Lake Ninevah is the lack of open land today. In the 1950's many hay fields existed along the west and north ends of the lake. When Vin left, these fields were allowed to go back to bush and forest. Very little open land exists around the lake today.

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Things went along the same way until 1964 when the Wilderness Corporation bought out Vin's holdings. However, Vin stayed on until 1970 running the operation the way he always had. Hundreds of families could give testimony to this remarkable man. He was up early and often put in 14 to 16 hour days. Maybe for this reason, after enduring a few of Vermont's winters and his step-daughters finished high school in Ludlow, Vin became a snowbird and spent his winter in Port Salerno, Florida.

Many of the families who rented cabins from Vin and Mary still continue to enjoy Lake Ninevah. Some families now own property and other continue to rent. Vin certainly left his mark on a large number of families. He is an unforgettable man of my childhood and part of the reason I live at Lake Ninevah today.



Summer 2017

Mount Holly begins a special year as we recognize our town's 225th anniversary. We are holding several events this summer to celebrate becoming a town in 1792. The presentation at our annual meeting on July 13th will be about the efforts by those living in Jackson's Gore.

On Saturday July 15th starting at 2pm, Robert Metzler will give a presentation about the old printing press located in the Blacksmith Shop Museum. It was used to make labels for bottles by our local traveling druggist from the 1940s.

On Saturday August 5th the museum will host our annual "**Farm Fest**" from 11am until 2pm on the Church Green. Sheep shearing, demonstrations and more!

The museum board plans to host a panel discussion in August with people that attended our one-room schoolhouses prior to the closing of the last three in 1956.

Date to be determined.

There will be a discussion on the 1860s in our local history series on Saturday, August 19th at 2:15pm ~ Perkins House.

Please plan to join us at Cider Days in October as we offer the "**Take a Seat**" auction of chairs decorated by local artists.

This is the period when we are renewing memberships and with your help we can improve the exhibits and maintain our educational programs. Last year we hosted the elementary school visits, offered programs and continued our annual fundraisers.

Tours of the village and our collection are available on request. We also welcome visits by local home-schooled students. Groups that have enjoyed the museum tour have been impressed with our collection.

The Blacksmith Shop Museum has several permanent exhibits that include farm and blacksmith tools, information on our one-room schools, an old post office and a surrey that was once used to bring guests to inns in the village. The Perkins House collection includes the home's family history, our town's Civil War artifacts, the photo albums, and our mammoth fossils.

Submitted by Dennis Devereux

From The Museum Board

The Mount Holly Community Historical Museum is a valuable resource for the history of the town, and also provides a range of programs and support for activities related to the history of the town and its livelihood. We are writing at this time to ask you to support our museum by becoming a member and to encourage you to participate in the various activities of the museum. The museum maintains two buildings that house our extensive collection. The Will White Blacksmith Shop, our original building, opened in 1969, and the Perkins House, which was renovated in 2012. Each displays different themes of our town history. The Will White Blacksmith Shop has permanent exhibits relating to farming and blacksmith tools, information on our many one-room schools, an old post office, the Warner Edminster display of home-made cooking and medicinal aids, and the surrey that once was used to bring guests to the inns in the village. The Perkins House collection includes the home's family history, our town's Civil War artifacts, historic quilts and photo albums, and our mammoth fossils. The mammoth fossils were discovered in Mount Holly during excavations for the railroad. The original tusk and cast tooth, housed in the Perkins House, are officially our state's "Terrestrial Fossil." A State Historic Site Marker has been placed near the discovery site on Route 103 that recognizes both the discovery, and the last spike driven in 1849 that connected the railroad between Burlington and Boston. In addition to providing access to museum buildings during the summer months, the museum also provides various activities mostly during the summer months. These include organized visits to the museum and other sites in town for the local elementary school classes, a sheep shearing demonstration, and lectures on various topics of historical interest.

We are a 501c3 non-profit organization that receives no money from the town. Our programs are supported by member dues, by fund raising activities, and by private donations. Our annual budget is about ten thousand dollars of which about 25% is raised through member dues. Our budget is primarily to keep the lights on: heating, telephone, insurance, and building maintenance. We hope that you will join us in our goal of conserving our town's history and providing information on and access to this history. There are several levels of membership described in the enclosed envelope. In addition, donations are welcomed. Please call Dennis at 802-259-2460.



Education Committee News

The Mount Holly Historical Museum has educational programs for grades K – 6. The fifth and sixth grades visited the museum in the fall for the program “Making a Living in Mount Holly.” The program also includes a delicious trip to the Crowley Cheese Factory. The sixth grade also has three in class presentations about the town's history. The third and fourth grades visited the museum in the fall for a program about the work of the farm wife. The other classes visited the museum in the spring for their educational programs.

The Kindergarten program is about the Chase Toy Factory. The first grade program is about the history of schools in Mount Holly. The second grade program is about the history of farming in Mount Holly. This is the seventeenth year of our writing and art contest for children in grades 3 - 6. The winners of the contest are as follows:



2017 Creative Writing and Art Contest

Grade 3 Art

First Place ~ Aubrey Pitts
Second Place ~ Caleb Fitzgerald
Third Place ~ Carter Olson

Grade 3 Writing

First Place ~ Emily Buffum
Second Place ~ Alyssa Lambert
Third Place ~ Jacob Lambert

Grade 4 Art

First Place ~ Cohen Ayer
Second Place ~ Zachary Taylor

Grade 4 Writing

First Place ~ Olive Skiathitis
Second Place ~ Derek Wieggers
Third Place ~ Skyler Bickford

Grade 5 Art

First Place ~ Gracie VanAkin
Second Place ~ Owen Fairbanks

Grade 5 Writing

First Place ~ Alexis Clark
Second Place ~ Gavin Turin
Third Place ~ Bella Dunne

Grade 6 Art

First Place ~ Johnna Turin
Second Place ~ Greta Fairbanks
Third Place ~ Ariel Olson

Grade 6 Writing

First Place ~ Johnna Turin
Second Place ~ Ayla Price
Third Place ~ Emma Wentz

Special thanks to the hard working education committee for helping deliver the programs.

Judy Nevin
Education Chair

2017**MUSEUM SUMMER SCHEDULE****2017**

Museum Open Each Weekend during July and August ~ Saturdays and Sundays 2 to 4 pm

Note Additional Special Times on Calendar.

Website: <http://mounthollyvtmuseum.org> Like us on Facebook where updated events will be posted.**Saturday, July 1st Open for browsing 2-4pm****Sunday, July 2nd Open for browsing 2-4pm****Tuesday, July 4th Open for browsing before the Independence Day Parade 10 am-Noon****Saturday, July 8th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Sunday, July 9th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Thursday, July 13th Annual meeting and potluck meal at 6 p.m. at the Hall in Belmont****Saturday, July 15th Talk by Robert Metzler about the printing press in Blacksmith Shop****Sunday, July 16th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Saturday, July 22nd Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Sunday, July 23rd Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Saturday, July 29th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Sunday, July 30th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Saturday, August 5th "Farmfest" on the Village Green from 11am - 2 pm****Sunday, August 6th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Saturday, August 12th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Sunday, August 13th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Saturday, August 19th Talk by Dennis Devereux on the 1860s town history at 2:15.****Sunday, August 20th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Saturday, August 26th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Sunday, August 27th Open for browsing 2-4 pm****Cider Days Weekend****Saturday, October 7th Open from 10am – 4pm****Sunday, October 8th Open from noon - 4pm****"TAKE A SEAT" Auction of chairs decorated by local artists!**

In Memoriam

Phillip Joseph Nexon

Phil was active in our community, serving in many capacities. Linda, irreplaceable museum board member for many years, and Phil were ardent supporters of the museum and their contributions to the success of the museum are greatly appreciated.

Following Obituary abridged from the February 2017 Mount Holly Chit Chat

Phillip Joseph Nexon, formerly of Mount Holly, died Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2016. Born March 18, 1928 in Boston, Phil is survived by his wife, Linda; his children Jill Berman, Cindy Nexon (Peter Filsinger), Alan Nexon, Major Mark Nexon, USAF (Michelle) and Kate Nexon; and four grandchildren.

He was a graduate of the University of Chicago and Harvard Law School where he was an editor of the Law Review. After service as a LTJG USN from 1951 to 1953, he practiced law at the Boston firm of Goulston and Storrs for more than 50 years. He was a trustee for many years and chairman of the board from 1986 to 1988 at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. He moved to Mount Holly in 1991 with Linda, Mark and Kate, and joined the Vermont Law School faculty as an adjunct professor of law. In 1995, he was elected to the Union 39 Board of School Directors.

An avid private pilot, for seven years he owned and operated Rutland Aviation, providing general aviation support and services at the Rutland State Airport. In 2001, he was appointed by Gov. Howard Dean to the District 1 Environmental Commission. In 2010, Phil and Linda relocated to Guilford, Connecticut where he enjoyed life close to the beautiful Connecticut coastline. Phil lived a full life, always with kindness, generosity and absolute love of family.



David Charles Hoeh

David served on the museum board for years. His talents ranged from helping with the capital campaign to pulling a ladder out of his truck at a moment's notice to repair something at Perkins House or the Blacksmith Shop.

Following Obituary abridged from the March 2017 Mount Holly Chit Chat

David Hoeh died February 8 at his home, that he shared with his wife of 31 years Brigid Sullivan, after a yearlong battle with pancreatic cancer. David was born in Boston, Massachusetts on December 1, 1937 to Priscilla (Smith) and Robert Yetter Hoeh. He graduated from University of New Hampshire in 1960. He also earned a master's degree at Boston University in public administration and a Ph.D. in political science at University of Massachusetts, Amherst. David's career spanned numerous urban, regional and state planning projects, ranging from housing to transportation to master planning.

He was involved in numerous political campaigns, beginning with President Kennedy's 1960. In 1968, he managed Eugene McCarthy's bid for President in the New Hampshire Primary. He then chaired the NH delegation to the Chicago Democratic Convention, where he was arrested and jailed for proving the badge admission system for convention floor access was flawed. He published a book chronicling his involvement in the 1968 election titled "1968 McCarthy New Hampshire; I Hear America Singing," in 1994.

He was a descendant of Samuel and Sally Cook, one of Mount Holly's original 1700's settling families. Recent volunteer activity included service on the boards of the Black River Academy and Mount Holly Community Historical Museums, where he managed major capital projects for both museums; the Mount Holly Planning Commission and the Belmont Village street tree replacement project.

The Gift Shop

New Item:

Mammoth Plush Toy

\$20 plus shipping

Books:

Mt. Holly, Its Early Days

by James F. Holden

The newly printed 3rd edition includes a historic photo on each page!

\$10 plus shipping

A History of Mt. Holly

by Carroll Tarbell

\$50 plus shipping

Photo:

A panoramic view of Belmont & Star Lake circa 1900 (when Belmont was still known as "Mechanicsville")

\$15 (shipping included)

To purchase any of the above items, please visit the Museum, or contact:

Dennis Devereux

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P.O. Box 1

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802.259.2460

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