



# Hollis Historical Society

Wheeler House

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[www.hollishistoricalsociety.org](http://www.hollishistoricalsociety.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/hollishistoricalsociety>

**Fall 2017**

*“Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower”  
Albert Camus*

Dear Members,

We hope you had a wonderful, relaxing summer full of good reads, good friends and family, and good times.

- We’ve had a busy summer at the two museums. Our 2017 display of **Hold It**, a collection of items that *held* and, in some cases, still *hold* things, has been enjoyed by the many people who visited. This interesting display will continue to be available for folks to see the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, from 1pm to 4pm, now through October (except Labor Day weekend). The Wheeler House is also open these same Sunday afternoons.
- And let’s not forget **ATTIC TREASURES** (at the Wheeler House), which operates the 1st and 3rd **SATURDAYS** of the month, from 9am until 1pm, now thru October. The exception being September 16, **Old Home Day**. On that date, Attic Treasures will be selling at Old Home Day, so visit us there! We’ve collected some very special offerings for the day.
- **Debbe Shipman** and I took three of the Historical Society’s antique samplers to the **Museum Textile Services** in Andover, MA, to see what might be involved to conserve them and the cost of same. We should hear their recommendations and associated costs in approximately a month. Our Attic Treasures sales will help us defray the cost of this endeavor. So we THANK
  - \* Everyone who has donated items to us to sell
  - \* The folks who help price merchandise
  - \* Those that help set-up, sell, and break-down on sale days

We couldn’t do it without each and every one of you. So, if you have a spare Saturday morning and would like to give us a hand... please call or e-mail; we can always use the help.

- We have a special treat for you in this issue. Some time ago, we put out a call to our members asking if any of you would like to write an article for our newsletter..... and **Eleanor Whittemore** did just that! It’s called:

### **Hollis Schools, 1930s into the 1940s**

You’ll find it on page 2 with corresponding photos on page 3.

*(Now, if anyone else feels inspired and wants to send us an article about “old Hollis” .... PLEASE DO!)*

- On a SAD note, we’ve lost two members this year:
  - \* **Hilda Blood Tolles**, age 101. Hilda was born in Hollis and lived here most of her life. She was a long-time Historical Society member too.
  - \* Also passing, **Basil Mason**, who was also a Hollis native as well as a member of our Historical Society. Our condolences to their families. They will be greatly missed.
- **Programs:** We’re putting together a terrific line-up of entertaining and interesting programs for the 2017-2018 season. The descriptions of the first two programs are on page 4. Be on the look-out for the entire list in the mail soon!

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This newsletter is published three times a year by the Hollis Historical Society, 20 Main Street, Hollis, New Hampshire 03049, (603-465-3935). The Hollis Historical Society is a private, non-profit organization incorporated in the state of New Hampshire.

The mission is to provide an opportunity for all ages to connect with the history and heritage of the Town of Hollis and its residents to gain knowledge and perspective from the past and to find inspiration and purpose for the future. We do this by:

- Acquiring, preserving, and making available to the public, memorabilia and historical materials significant to the Town
- Conduct research and make available historical and genealogical information to interested persons and organizations
- Present educational and informative programs and exhibits for our members and the community
- Maintain the structure and collections of the Ruth Wheeler House and the Always Ready Engine House

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## Hollis Schools, 1930s into the 1940s by Eleanor Whittemore

The last of the town's one-room school houses had closed in the early 1930's, so all students were moved into the school house now called the Farley Building. Yes, grades one through twelve were located there. Grades one through eight were housed on the first floor with two grades to a room. The teacher taught both grades by giving one grade something to keep them busy while working with the other grade. Some of the teachers taught in the same room for many years. The third and fourth grade teacher taught in the same room for so many years that the students thought she had eyes in the back of her head, at least, it seemed that way to the students. She could be writing on the blackboard with her back to the students and she always could tell who was whispering (a no-no to do in any class!). She was the third and fourth grade teacher when my mother was in those grades, back at the turn of the century.

The four high school grades were on the second floor. Also on this floor was the lab for chemistry class. In high school, students had a homeroom, but they changed rooms for classes. The teachers stayed in their homeroom throughout the day. Each teacher was identified by what they taught. The choices were limited to the ones that were required to get into college at that time.

The school day back in this time was from 9:00 AM to Noon. Lunch was an hour. Those of us who lived close to the school walked home for lunch, had our dinner and walked back to school during this one hour. Being late was not acceptable. The students who lived further away brought their lunch, sandwiches from home. Sometimes, those of us who walked home were jealous of the ones who brought their lunch. They had more time to play on the swings and teeters that were on the south side of the school house.

All school functions took place in the Town Hall. In winter, this was basketball which was held in the upper area with the balcony being a favorite place for many of the townspeople to go to watch the games. Other functions that took place in the Town Hall were school plays of which there was usually one or more per year. Also, things such as school dances or proms were upstairs, and graduation from high school was up on the stage with each graduate sitting and waiting to take their part in the ceremony.

There were some classes as small as four or even two graduates!

The only sport besides basketball was baseball, which was played either in the field beside the Library or down on Nichols Field on Depot Road. Some years, the girls had a softball team. Their games were sometimes played in the field by the Library.

During this period, there were problems that were not because of local difficulties. There was gas rationing. Many young men were in military service. So many of the high school boys were on the local Fire Department. The town siren, which was down on Broad Street, would blow, and if it wasn't noontime, the high school boys who had volunteered on the fire department would leave class, get on the back of the truck, and go to the fire. At that time, it (the fire department) was mainly a volunteer group, and was located directly across from the school.

The boys had the opportunity for many years to attend a class called Shop, so, in the early 1940's, the school board decided that the girls needed a class also. The class was Home Economics. The first year, it was cooking. Soon we were making soups from several different recipes that ended up being prepared as an addition to the sandwiches that the students in grades one through twelve brought from home. This was the beginning of the Hot Meals that are a part of today's lunch.

It was during this period that Hollis had its first school bus. It was not like the yellow bus of today. It was a truck with a flat-bodied back with sides and a tarp over the top. There were benches that the students sat on. This vehicle was privately owned and often left at school with the keys in it during the day. One beautiful spring day, a group of senior boys decided to skip school and take a ride in the new bus. They were in trouble when they got home because they stole the bus and went to Nashua. What they did there, nobody knows. Their comment was 'What was so bad with what we did? We were back to the school before school was out!' One of those boys was my brother.

*(Eleanor Whittemore is a life-long resident of Hollis and a member of our Historical Society. THANK YOU, ELEANOR..... GREAT JOB!)*

# October/November Programs

## October 19, 2017 7:30 PM at the Lawrence Barn

In our first program of the new year, **Dr. Lourdes Avilés** will tell us how, on the morning of September 21, 1938, people throughout the northeastern United States awoke to a dim red sky and high humidity. Weather reports gave no forecast of severe weather. Modern day forecasting technology did not exist. From Portland, Maine, to Long Island, New York, people had no indication that the most severe weather event in their lifetimes was about to happen, leaving nearly 700 dead and the equivalent of more than \$4.5 billion in damage that would impact the region for decades.

Dr. Avilés received her Ph.D. in Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is Associate Professor of Meteorology at Plymouth State University and author of **Taken by Storm, 1938: A Social and Meteorological History of the Great New England Hurricane**.

## November 16, 2017 7:30 PM at the Lawrence Barn

Long-time favorite **Steve Taylor** returns to tell us about **New Hampshire's Long Love-Hate Relationship with Its Agricultural Fairs**. The first agricultural fair in North America was held in what is now Londonderry in 1722, and it would become a wildly popular event lasting for generations until it came to be so dominated by gambling, flim-flam, and other "scandalous dimensions" that the legislature revoked its charter in 1850. Steve Taylor will discuss the ups and downs of the fairs down through the years and how public affection for rural traditions helps them survive in contemporary times.

Steve Taylor is an independent scholar, farmer, journalist, and longtime public official. With his sons, Taylor operates a dairy, maple syrup, and cheese making enterprise in Meriden Village. He has been a newspaper reporter and editor, and served for 25 years as New Hampshire's commissioner of agriculture.



First Hollis School Bus  
Harold A. Frost



School Bus - Louis C. Lull



School Transportation  
Louis C. Lull's Truck



## OLD HOME DAY

Saturday, September 16, 2017

Be sure to visit the Hollis Historical Society Booth,  
at Nichols Field on Depot Road  
Saturday, from 10AM to 5PM!

We've discovered a stash of old Hollis post cards, so we'll be selling duplicates of these fascinating cards, depicting various old scenes in Hollis, on a first come, first served basis.

Don't miss this great opportunity.... which also includes some duplicates of old brochures and booklets about Hollis, of which we have very few.

Think what a great Christmas, birthday, or house warming gift these would make!

The Wheeler House is open  
Monday and Wednesday afternoons  
from 1PM to 4PM, year round.  
As well as the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month,  
June through October.

The Always Ready Engine House  
will be open  
the 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month,  
June through October,  
from 1 PM to 4 PM.

Both museums are available for tours at other times,  
by special arrangement,  
by calling (603) 465-3935.



***In parting***, we hope you visit us at the museums, at Attic Treasures, and at our programs. And, remember, our programs are free and open to the public, so bring your friends and family. It's always a good time (and the refreshments are yummy)!

Best regards,

*Fredricka Olson*

Fredricka Olson, Curator

### **HELP WANTED:**

- **WRITERS:** *If you're interested in writing, we'd love to have contributions to the newsletter. If it helps, we have all sorts of interesting research material from which to draw ideas. Or use your own. Hollis history is the name of the game. It's fun! Give us a call and give it a try.*
- **ATTIC TREASURES HELPERS:** *Sales helpers on our open Saturdays. Help set-up at 8:30am, sell, have fun meeting nice people, then help put unsold items away at 1pm.*