

In 2015 the Hampton Historical Society turns 90 years old, and to observe the milestone we are opening an exciting new exhibit, ***Gathering on the Green: A History of the Hampton Historical Society and Tuck Museum from 1925 to the Present.***

The multi-room, decade-by-decade exhibit, featuring rarely-seen photos and objects from the archives, tells the story of the Society, from its founding in 1925 to the present, with highlights of town, beach, and national events. Learn how a society of inspired volunteers evolved from "one man with an idea," through early struggles and triumphs, later successes and failures, to a well-run, financially sound organization ready for the challenges of the 21st century.

Scroll down to see some pictures of the exhibit in place at the museum.

Exhibit in Web-format

You can read the info contained in this exhibit in a web-friendly format by clicking a decade banner below (as with the exhibit itself, the information is sectionalized into decades, from the 1920s thru the current day). The final banner brings you to a page with a list of all HHS volunteers over the 90 years.



The Museum Exhibit







1920s



About 1890 Frank H. Fogg leased several acres on the Hampton town green and built his farmhouse there. In 1925 he sold the house to The Meeting House Green Memorial Association, incorporated that year with 76 charter members for the purpose of creating a memorial, on the site of the first meeting house, to honor Hampton's founders. Edward Tuck, a wealthy philanthropist whose English ancestors had been among the first settlers, donated \$7,000 to the project. He also contributed to the construction of Tuck Field, which was dedicated in 1930. The Association bought the Fogg house, added a room to display Hampton relics, and built Memorial (Founders) Park. As an attraction, they built a log cabin on the grounds to represent what they believed was the first meeting house.

The Hall and Park were dedicated on October 14, 1925, the town's 287th birthday. Organized by Hampton Beach businessman George Ashworth, the event featured a parade, a concert, and a banquet at the Carnival Dance Hall. Rev. Ira Jones, the Association's founder and first president, 'invoked the divine blessing' as descendants of Hampton founder Rev. Stephen Bachiler unveiled the bronze memorial tablet that had been mounted into a 12-ton boulder at the park. The first annual meeting was held that day in the log cabin.

Mr. and Mrs. John Bradbury were hired as live-in custodians. They were paid an annual salary of \$1,000 plus housing to look after the house and the park and to greet summer visitors to Tuck Memorial Hall.

In 1926, to recognize its historical function, the Association changed its name to The Meeting House Green Memorial and Historical Association.

In 1929 the 'admirable hostess' Mrs. Bradbury reported that the interior of the log cabin had been refinished and furnished 'to look like an early home,' and that two hundred and ten visitors had signed the guest register, 'more than twice the number of the preceding year.' President William Brown reported that the 'Association now numbers 36 members, not counting the towns once a part of Hampton.' At the end of the decade the Association reported \$1,057 in the Treasury, of which half was earmarked to pay the custodian's salary. Membership dues were \$1.00 per year.

Presidents during the 1920s were Edward Tuck (Honorary), Rev. Ira Jones (1925-1927), and William Brown (1927-1930). When Ira Jones died in 1927 at age 91, the Town and Association dedicated a memorial in his honor on the Tuck House grounds.

No Vociferous Bally-hoo Men

James Tucker wanted the 'roaring' that was going on in the rest of the country to stay far, far away from Hampton Beach. From the pages of his Hampton Beach News-Guide he informed readers more than once that the beach had a 'reputation for cleanliness that extends from coast to coast. We mean cleanliness as to population as well as in its physical aspects. There are no rattling rides, whirling whips, swirling swings, dizzy drones, silly side-shows or vociferous bally-hoo men.'

Even with Tucker's assurances that 'a splendid class of vacationists has been attracted to this resort,' Federal prohibition agents were certain that Hampton was a main artery for bootleggers running between Boston and Maine. Agents staked out the beach and stopped and searched trolleys and automobiles for illegal liquor.irate local businessmen felt that the checkpoints hurt the reputation of the beach as a clean, well-kept resort.

'This is where we have to get them, if we get them at all. The business men should be glad that the illicit traffic is being suppressed,' said one agent. It was an open secret that 'great loads of hootch' were offloaded from boats in the Hampton River onto waiting trucks. In 1926 agents captured the motor boat Loretta, loaded with illegal alcohol, when it ran aground in heavy fog at the mouth of the river. It was the first successful bust in the area for the 'booze hounds.'

Prohibition Era

The Street Railway

The decade began with the town's \$80,000 purchase of the financially troubled EH&A Street Railway. Since 1897 its electric trolleys had brought over a million visitors to Hampton Beach, and locals relied on it for transportation to school, shopping, and work. But high overhead costs and competition from the automobile resulted in ever-diminishing service, and in 1926 the town abandoned the railway and sold the assets.

Public Services

In this era, public services were becoming regular and professional. Village and Beach shared a fire station and police station at the beach. After a devastating beach fire in 1921, the town enacted building ordinances and appointed a building inspector. Public water, gas, garbage collection, telephones, and motorized snow plowing were available. Public sewers were another matter—sewers at the beach flowed raw waste into the ocean and the Village relied on cesspools and privies.



*In 1920 Hampton's population was 1,251.
By 1930 it had grown to 1,507.*

*Future Historical Society president
Ansell Palmer Sr.*



1930s



In response to the economic woes of the 1930s-era Depression, the yearly dues of the Association were halved, from \$1 to 50 cents. Edward Tuck continued his financial support, donating nearly \$4,000 before his death in 1938. He bequeathed another \$3,000 in his will. With a faulty heating system in need of replacement and only \$614 in the bank, it was a welcome last gift.

1930s



After John Bradbury's death in 1935 the Town assumed the care of Memorial Park. The new custodian, Alice Taylor, paid a yearly rent of \$240 in exchange for opening the 'Historical Room' to visitors on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from May to October. Volunteer member Emily Hutchings took charge of the room and its growing historical collection. Tuck Field was dedicated, committees were selected to 'further historical interest,' copies of Edmund W. Toppan's History were made and distributed, and it was voted to hold annual meetings as close to October 14 as possible.

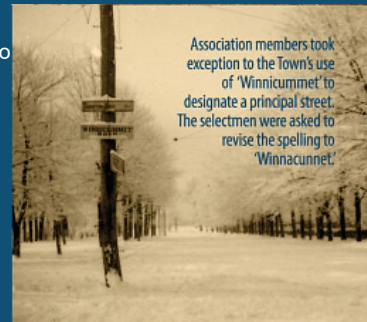
Committees planned for the Tercentenary celebration in 1938, and that year the Taylor and Weare family stones were added to Memorial Park. The records noted that Bernice Palmer's commemorative scrapbook of the Tercentenary events was 'very complete...and since it will be invaluable in years to come, it is not to be taken from the historical rooms.'

Historians were Caroline Shea (1931-1932), Lucy Marston (1932-1934), Sarah Lane (1934-1938), and Annie True (1938-1940).

Other Presidents were Howard G. Lane (1934-1935), Herbert Walker (1935-1940)

Prayer and singing of patriotic songs opened every meeting. With formality in modes of address, personal titles were always used.

Speakers lectured on the value of emulating Puritan virtues, conservatism, and pioneering spirit. At the 15th annual meeting, which capped the decade, members granted the elected officers the authority to determine the 'future care and upkeep' of the Museum and grounds.



Hampton VILLAGE THE DEPRESSION YEARS Hampton BEACH



300th anniversary parade passing the Town Hall (destroyed by fire in 1949). College of Academy students in background.



HAMPTON BEACH FOR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS 300th Anniversary BIG SEASON OF 1938



FDR at Hampton Beach July 17, 1932

Population Boom

The population of the town soared 42%, from 1,507 in 1930 to 2,137 in 1940. As the number of deaths was double that of births, the increase was due entirely to new residents.



America's #1 game, introduced in 1935

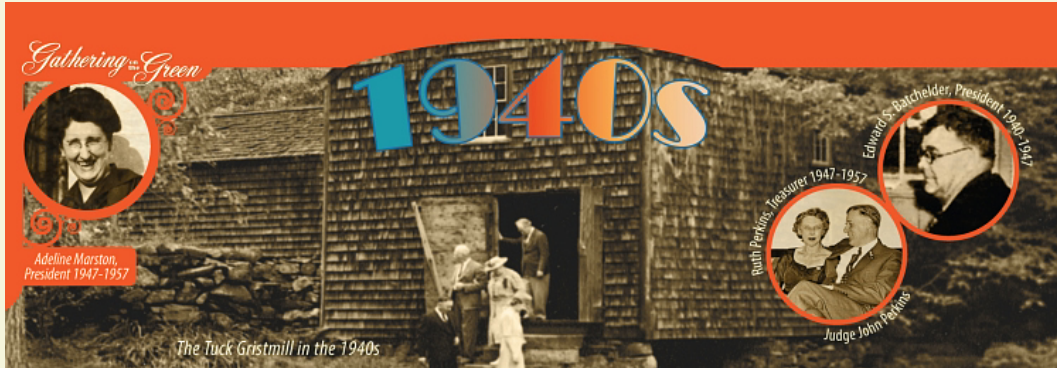
21st Amendment Ratified

In 1933 repeal of the national prohibition on the sale and manufacture of alcohol gave the decision to stay 'dry' or go 'wet' to the individual states. In New Hampshire, where various bans on liquor had been in effect since 1902, towns had the right to decide for themselves. After several no votes, Hampton narrowly voted to allow alcohol sales within the town, but later votes would essentially make it a dry town until the 1960s.

The 1932 Election Bet



'Beach hustler' Fred Lorenz was a precinct commissioner and owner of a Hampton Beach market. One day fisherman Bill Dow predicted to the locals gathered at Fred's store that Herbert Hoover would win reelection over Franklin Roosevelt. Others disagreed and a bet was on. Money being scarce, they decided the loser would walk backwards across the Mile-long bridge from Seabrook to Hampton. When Roosevelt won the election, Lorenz hired a German marching band to attend Dow and 3,000 people came to watch as he made the long, backward walk, carrying a sign that read 'I Voted for Hoover.' Lorenz carried a sign that said 'I Did Not.' The 255-pound Dow made the walk in 23 minutes.



'Owing, perhaps, to the unusual times' (as Vice President Emily Hutchings so aptly put it), this was a quiet decade for the Association, with few visitors to the Historical Room. With gas rationing in effect until 1945, driving for pleasure, such as traveling to a social gathering or to view historical items, could result in the loss of one's gas ration card. As for the Association, it spent money on a new steam heating system for the house and little else.

When Adeline Marston took the gavel in 1947, one of her first actions was to call a summer gathering, the first of its kind on record. That meeting marked the beginning of the end for the old log cabin meeting house, as its deteriorated condition had some persons in attendance questioning the 'advisability of rebuilding it.' John Perkins suggested the 'matter be passed over on account of the high cost of building.' Perkins, a lawyer and a judge, had recently finished a term on the Governor's Executive Council. Who was going to disagree with him? The cabin was quietly torn down and removed from the property.

Honorary member Rev. Roland Sawyer championed an Old Home Day to mark the Association's 25th anniversary in 1950. After nearly 20 years, Vina Jones, the widow of founder Ira Jones, resigned as Treasurer and was replaced by Ruth Perkins. Retired teacher Anna May Cole compiled lists of early settlers and gave talks on local history. Custodian Alice Taylor passed away and her duties were assumed by Mr. and Mrs. William Whitehouse. President Marston, the teacher for whom Marston School is named, proposed that the town's history be taught in the grade schools (with special programs offered by the Historical Society, that course is still taught today).

The formality of the past was gradually fading. Women still retained their titles of Mrs. or Miss, but men were generally referred to by name only. Prayers still opened meetings, but the singing of patriotic songs was largely a thing of the past. On one occasion a recording of 'God Bless America' was played and at other meetings there was a salute to the flag. Historians were Annie Marston True (1940-1946) and her daughter Esther True Davis (1946-1950). The Association ended the decade with \$3,655 in the Treasury.

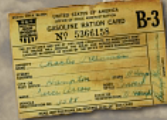
War Time Rationing

In 1941 the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply was created to control what goods Americans were allowed to buy. When the Japanese halted the flow of Southeast Asian crude rubber to world markets, tires were the first items rationed. They were almost impossible to buy, and it was illegal to own more than five at a time.



The quest for synthetic rubber in 1943 led to the invention of Silly Putty. Six million units were sold in the first year, making it the fastest selling toy in history.

Gasoline rationing started on the East Coast in May 1942 and was extended to the rest of the country by December. Many of Hampton's registrants requested the B-3 card, which provided 57 gallons of gas for 45 days. Gas restrictions did not apply to truck drivers (Class T), politicians, or those deemed 'important' (Class X). There were 125 Class X cards issued in Hampton. Persons caught driving for 'frivolous' reasons could have their gas ration suspended. Car pools were encouraged with posters that read 'When You Ride Alone You Ride With Hitler!'



The number of Hampton residents grew from 2,137 in 1940 to 2,847 in 1950, a 33% increase.

Rules To Follow In Blackout



Hampton's Wartime Auxiliary Police



Bundles for Britain & America

War Time Blackouts

Hampton's first blackout occurred on New Year's Eve 1941. Motorists were told to drive without lights, leading to a few fender benders. One accident sent a local man to the hospital. 'Undoubtedly most everyone would like to know all about our blackout,' an unnamed Civilian Defense officer said. 'We most certainly would be only too glad to pass along all information, but this is war and the Army does not divulge its secrets. Our orders were to blackout east of Route No. 1 and this we did. If it is to be our misfortune to have more of these in the future, all we ask is that you do as well then as you did with this one.'

Hampton experienced at least six more 'test blackouts' during the war, the last one on April 25, 1944.

1942 SEASON
 HAL McDONNELL AND HIS
 HAMPTON BEACH CONCERT BAND
 WILL PLAY 4 CONCERTS HERE
 SUNDAYS IN JUNE
 DAILY DURING
 JULY-AUGUST thru LABOR DAY

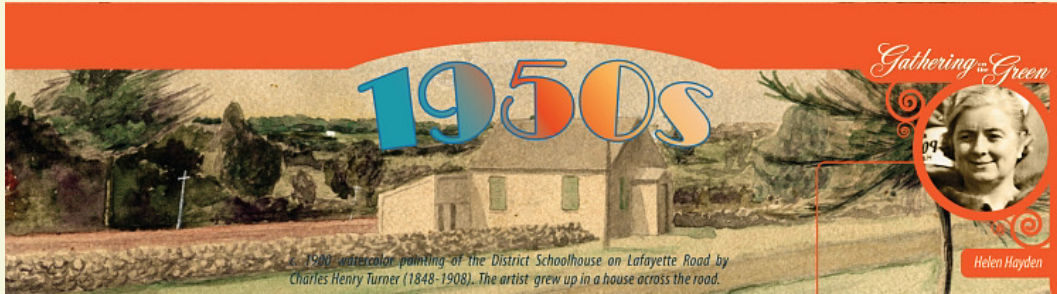
'Making Merry Music for the Masses'

Hal McDonnell performed at the Ashworth Hotel as a child. Later, he and his band played the bandstand from 1925-1936 and 1941-1945. Hal was an 'ebullient and youthful conductor, the effervescent idol of the bobby-soxers.' On V-J Day, August 14, 1945, the band gave a concert to celebrate the news of Japan's surrender and the end of war. The music 'could hardly be heard over the noise of firecrackers, cheers, and noisemakers.'

The summer Beachcomber newspaper crowned Marilan Eaton of Durham their Miss Cover Girl of 1946, marking the first Miss Hampton Beach beauty contest.



Miss Cover Girl 1946



1900 watercolor painting of the District Schoolhouse on Lafayette Road by Charles Henry Turner (1848-1908). The artist grew up in a house across the road.

For the Association, the so-called 'Happy' years of the 1950s were a time to plan for expansion and preservation. As early as 1951, members talked of adding space to the tiny Historical Room with its burgeoning collection of historical items. When Army engineer Wilbar Hoxie was elected president in 1957, his first project was to design the addition we now call the '60s Wing. Through the efforts of Judge John Perkins (President 1959-1961), the Association received its tax deductible status to encourage financial gifts.

From 1955 until 1962, Helen was the Museum's tenant-custodian who oversaw the summer docents. She had served in Hampton's auxiliary police during WWII, was Town Clerk for 19 years, and in 1972 was the first woman elected to the Board of Selectmen.

The Association had the opportunity to acquire Hampton's only remaining 19th century one-room school house. A committee originally declined to recommend the \$300 purchase, but by 1953 the small building had been moved from Lafayette Road to the Museum grounds and the work of restoration started.

There was interest in preserving several historical sites: Hampton's Rune Stone (Thorvald's Rock), Bound Rock, and the Deacon Tuck Gristmill on lower High Street. The Association would not acquire Thorvald's Rock until 1989, and the Town bought Bound Rock in 1956 and the Gristmill in 1959.

There was growing interest in protecting natural resources. Activist Ruth Stimson gave talks to raise conservation awareness and Association VP Sam Towle encouraged preservation of the marsh as a bird sanctuary. Adeline Marston spoke of roadside beautification and preservation of old homes.



An early postcard view of the marshes Ruth Stimson worked to preserve

In 1950 the members voted to meet every three months to maintain a level of interest in the Association, which the recording secretaries began to refer to as the 'Society.' In the first half of the decade meetings were opened with prayer and a salute to the flag. By the end of the decade only the salute remained on record. The tradition of a summer outdoor meeting was continued, and the annual meetings in October were held at Tuck Hall. The first evening annual meeting was held in 1953. The Historians were Esther Davis Proctor (1950-1954), Ruth Pratt (1954-1960), and Allan Towle (1957-1960). The Association ended the decade with \$3,621.15 in the Treasury.

Hampton in the Fight Against Polio



Infantile paralysis, or polio, was one of the most feared diseases in the first half of the 20th century. Highly infectious, it struck mainly children and could leave its victims crippled for life. In 1935 Hampton school nurse Elizabeth Hills Hay, who went on to serve in WWII, issued a warning about a recent epidemic. Then in 1946 a visitor to Hampton sent a postcard that read 'We don't go to the beach much. Too much polio around in places. None in town yet.'

In the early 1950s a massive inoculation campaign using Jonas Salk's new polio vaccine was put into effect. Reagents used to develop the vaccine were made by the Fisher Scientific Company (the forerunner of Fisher Scientific International) with main offices in Hampton, 1991-2006).

Hampton school children began receiving injections of Salk vaccine in the spring of 1955, with oral vaccines available in 1961. Since those early years children have been routinely inoculated against polio, essentially eradicating the disease from the United States.



The first toy ever to be advertised on television, Mr. Potato Head hit the market in 1952, selling one million units in his first year.



The Lady
On Memorial Day 1957, the Marine Memorial was unveiled at Hampton Beach, dedicated to New Hampshire's war dead lost at sea. An Italian-born Vermont sculptor carved the granite statue, designed by Concord artist Alice Cosgrove. It depicts a Gold Star mother laying a wreath upon the ocean waves.



Barbie the Teenage Fashion Model doll was introduced in 1959, selling 350K units in her first year.



Senator Richard Nixon of California campaigned for Vice President at Hampton Beach in 1952. Standing behind him is Judge John Perkins.



In the early '50s local girl Beverly Brindamour placed in several Miss Hampton Beach contests. Later, as Mrs. Beverly Hollingworth, she was elected to the New Hampshire General Court and to the Governor's Council, and ran for Governor in 2002.

By the end of the decade Hampton's population had reached 5,379.



1960s

Under the direction of a building committee chaired by Norman Merrill, the Museum's long-planned-for wing was made a reality. With representatives from Hampton's daughter towns in attendance, the new space was dedicated on August 11, 1962. Six years later the loan for the construction was paid off and the Society threw a party at which President Margaret Barry burned the mortgage.

The Society celebrated Old Home Day in 1960. During the Town's 325th anniversary celebration in 1963, the Locke and Garland family stones were dedicated at Memorial Park (also known as Founders Park) and Goody Cole's stone monument was dedicated on the Museum grounds.

Some members still talked of rebuilding the log cabin meeting house that had been taken down in the 1950s, but it was never agreed to do so. They discussed purchasing the land abutting the east side of the museum grounds (now Eaton Park), but nothing came of it.

In 1962 Mr. and Mrs. Mason Carpenter became the tenant custodians. Their main responsibility was to manage the museum docents during the summer season. They would remain throughout the decade.

One of the more unusual members of the Historical Society was former Boston publicity agent Bill Frary, who had been adopted in the 1930s by an aging baroness, Adelheid Marie von Blomberg, and he became Baron William Frary von Blomberg. When funding for the new museum wing was discussed, the records show that he offered suggestions on how the Society could raise money for the project.

Presidents for the decade were Judge John Perkins (1959-1961), Harold Fernald (1961-1964, 1967-1968), Margaret Barry (1964-1967), and Samuel Towle (1968-1976).

Hampton's population at the end of the decade was 8,011.





THE FLOWER POWER YEARS



Labor Day Riots
 On Labor Day weekend in 1962, rowdy youths blocked traffic on the beach and caused minor disturbances. The problem escalated on Labor Day weekend in 1963, with police using teargas and arresting 55 teenagers. On Labor Day weekend in 1964 the State Police and National Guard were called in to quell a rioting mob of 10,000 youths. One of the Hampton police officers on the scene was Historical Society President Harold Fernald, who theorized that the riots were a 'training ground' for other, larger riots.



Hampton Beach Seashell Stage built in 1962 replaced in 2010



Men on the Moon
 On July 20, 1969 Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, in the Eagle spacecraft, were the first men to land on the moon. Aldrin called the lunar surface a 'magnificent desolation.' After touchdown Armstrong radioed the command center in Houston, Texas: 'The Eagle has landed.'



Miss Hampton Beach
 Johnye McLeod of Hampton (left) was the first local girl to win the Miss Hampton Beach contest. Two years later Sheila Scott (right) of North Hampton won. Born in England, she was a talented singer who performed with local groups like the Starliners from Methuen and the Marauders from Exeter. Both girls were Winnacunnet High School graduates.

Hampton Playhouse

The Hampton Playhouse opened in 1948 in a 200 year old barn on Winnacunnet Road, where New York actors performed top notch plays with a burlesque style. Katherine Helmond of TV's *The Boss* was introduced to Hampton audiences in 1961. Hollywood actress Blythe Danner joined the cast in 1967 in *Strip For Action* and *Barefoot In The Park*. The summer theatre was a beloved venue for 51 years, with the last performance in 1999.



When not performing, these actresses advertised Playhouse shows at the Beach




Fallout Shelter

In 1961 Bill Kennedy and Robert Moore tested their homemade, above-ground fallout shelter at North Beach. Planning to remain in the shelter for five days, their stay was cut short due to a lack of oxygen that sent the men to the hospital for treatment. Repairs to both men and structure were made and they kept at it. The government later asked Kennedy to test equipment for safety. The shelter was demolished a few years later.








Gathering on Green

John Holman,
Curator, 1970-1983



Winnacunnet Plantation Restoration, 1970

In 1970 the Winnacunnet Plantation Restoration was opened on the Museum grounds, with a parade and ribbon-cutting by Governor Walter Peterson. Intended to demonstrate daily life on the seacoast in the 17th-19th centuries, the project was plagued with problems and by 1972 had lost the support of the Society. It was closed permanently after the 1973 summer season.

Other setbacks followed. The [Founders Park](#) memorial stone for the Town of Rye had not been forgotten, but once again plans for its placement fell through. In 1977 the Society's president expressed a disappointment of another sort. 'I was struck by the lack of awareness of who the Meeting House Green Memorial and Historical Association was and where it could be located. I was further to discover that many who knew of us, and where we were, had never taken a few moments to see what we were all about.' - President Roger Garland, 1977 Hampton Town Report.

There were bright spots of progress, too. John Holman was the Museum's curator during the years 1970-1983. His dedication to organization, detail, and historical preservation still resonate in our records today. His wife Connie, whom he affectionately called 'The Commander,' also contributed to the success of the Society.

The Board of Directors took a more proactive approach to the financial future of the Society and the safety of its historical collections. Budgets were formulated and security systems installed. The road around the Museum was named 'Meeting House Green' and opened to one-way traffic only. The Green, Hussey, Emery, and Sleeper family stones were added to [Founders Park](#). The Society reprinted Joseph Dow's History of Hampton, with sales of the book funding improvements to Tuck House and Hall. In 1975 the Society celebrated its 50th anniversary and helped dedicate Bicentennial Park on the site of the old Coast Guard Station. With the Town, the Society celebrated the country's Bicentennial in 1976.

The Custodian for the decade was Marion Freeman. Historians were Harold Fernald (1970-1974, 1978-1982) and Diana LaMontagne (1974-1978). Presidents were Samuel Towle (1968-1976), Minnie Philbrook (1976-1977), Roger Garland (1977-1978), and Leslie Cummings (1978-1981). Dues were raised to \$2 per person and \$3 per family. The Society ended the decade with \$1,000 in the Treasury.

A series of national disappointments—the Vietnam War, Kent State shootings, President Nixon's resignation from office, oil embargoes, a stock market crash, an economic recession—set the tone for the decade. In 1979 President Carter concluded that America was facing a 'crisis of confidence' and blamed overconsumption for—

The Energy Crisis

- 1 Middle Eastern oil-producing nations stopped shipping oil to the United States to protest its support of Israel in the Yom Kippur War. To conserve gasoline, a national speed limit of 55 mph was enacted.
- 9 There were long lines at gas stations and a system of odd-even day gas rationing, based on license plate number, was introduced. On the seacoast, dealers were concerned with the summer season when the 'population increases by 75 per cent because of tourists.' Their fears were never realized as the embargo was lifted in March 1974.
- 7
- 3 Middle Eastern supply disruptions occurred again in 1979. Due to reduced allocations of gasoline, Hampton service stations closed early each day, and some sold by appointment only. A majority of Americans thought the energy shortages were a hoax, including a Hampton man who said he was going out to buy a Cadillac and hoped 'it gets 20 miles to the gallon.' Investigative journalist Jack Anderson of the Baltimore Sun called it 'phony shortage,' citing a CIA report showing that U.S. oil imports had actually increased. Still, panic buying ensued and in the cities the long lines of 1973-74 returned. WWII-style gas ration coupons were printed but never used. Reduced consumption was blamed for the 1980s 'Oil Glut.'



In 1974 Hungarian professor of architecture Erno Rubik invented the Rubik's Cube 3-D puzzle. Since then over 350 million units have been sold worldwide. Cubes have been solved in as little as 5 1/2 seconds, even though there are 43 quintillion (43,000,000,000,000,000,000) possible combinations.



Protesting Seabrook

In 1969 local residents formed the Seacoast Anti-Pollution League to oppose the construction of a nuclear power plant at Seabrook. Nevertheless, in 1976 work was started on two reactors. Over the years thousands of anti-nuclear protesters from all over the region came to the site; in 1979 the protests turned violent and police used force to turn away the demonstrators. The protests continued, yet so did construction, with Unit 1 of the plant receiving its operating license in 1990. Unit 2 was never completed and was torn down in 2003.

Ocean House Hotel (1900-1977)

'Wooden Towers Make Way for Golden Arches' read the March 30, 1977 Hampton Union headline. The old Ocean House hotel, built in 1900 to accommodate Trolley Era tourists, was soon torn down to make way for a McDonald's restaurant.



Coast Guard Station (1898-1973)

The Coast Guard Station on North Beach was used from 1898-1946 and from 1947-1967. The police and fire departments used it for tear gas training and fire studies shortly before it was purposely burned in 1973.



*Hampton's population grew to 10,493
residents over the decade.*





1980s



Gathering on Green



Allen Bridle, President
1981-1983 & 1987-1988

1980s

The 1970s had set the stage for the Society's growth in the 1980s. The last remnants of the Winnacunnet Plantation were removed, sales of Dow's History of Hampton continued to fund improvements, the Salty Marsh Garden Club planted flowers to beautify the grounds, and summer visitors flocked to the Museum now that the oil crisis of the '70s was over.

Donations of historical items poured in and the Museum was once again running out of space. To make more room, for the first time the Society pondered ending the tenant-custodian arrangement that had been in place since 1925. As a potential new exhibit space the Society asked to use the garage where the Town stored its groundskeeping equipment.

The Town agreed to move if the Society would build a shed for the equipment, which it did. The Board of Directors then began fundraising and renovating the garage to display its collection of farming tools. In 1989 the Farm Museum was dedicated.

Frances Souther, daughter of Hampton-raised artist Charles Henry Turner (1848-1908), donated several of his paintings and 18th century furniture from the Goss-Turner house in Hampton. In 1988 the Society participated in the Town's 350th anniversary, and dedicated the General Moulton monument at Pine Grove Cemetery and the new [Fire Museum](#) built by Hampton firefighters. The Society moved [Norseman's Rock](#) from its spot near the seashore to the Museum grounds. Summer hours at the Museum were changed from 7 days a week to 4 days, with a slight increase in the length of the season.

Historians were Harold Fernald (1980-1982), Diana LaMontagne (1982-1983), Les Cummings (1983-1986), Roland Paige (1986-1990).

In the early '80s the Society coffers were as dry as dust (\$20.15), but over the decade several generous donations—\$10,000 from the Henley Group, \$5,000 from the Allied-Signal Corp. (both companies with offices on Liberty Lane), and \$2,000 from the Wheaton J. Lane estate—enabled the Treasury to close the decade with \$16,657.11.

With financial backing from the Town, Peter Randall published his book, 'Hampton: A Century of Town and Beach, 1888-1988.' Society President James Hunt republished Joseph Dow's 1893 two-volume History of Hampton, adding his own volume of updated genealogy.

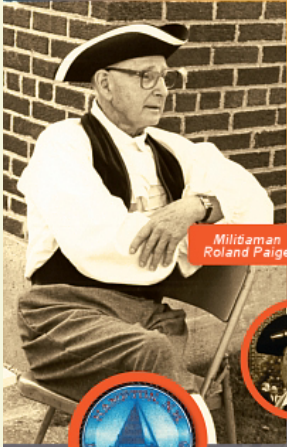


Author & Historian
Peter Randall



President
Jim Hunt

Other Presidents were Leslie Cummings (1980-1981), Roland Paige (1983-1985), Diana LaMontagne (1985-1987), James K. Hunt (1988-1990)



Militiaman Roland Paige

350th Anniversary

In 1988 Hampton celebrated its 350th birthday with a colonial militia encampment and all the usual festivities: parades, balls, Old Home Day, and at last, the placing and dedication of the Rye Town stone at Founders Park - which had been the Society's goal since the 1940s!

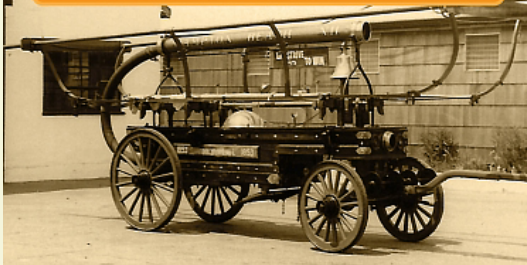


Militiaman Harold Fernald

Harold is a lifelong Hampton resident and retired Winnacunnet High School history teacher. He joined the Society in the 1950s and was an active member for many years. His specialties were militia reenactments and 'the ghosts of history.'



'Winnacunnet No. 1.' The Hampton Beach Fireman's Relief Association donated this 1853 horse-drawn pumper to the Museum in 1988.



Seawalls

Rock seawalls had been in place at the Beach since the 1930s. Steel seawalls were built in the 1950s, but the storm of 1978 damaged many sections, especially at North Beach. People clamored for a fix, and in 1988 new concrete and steel walls were put in place both north and south of Boar's Head.



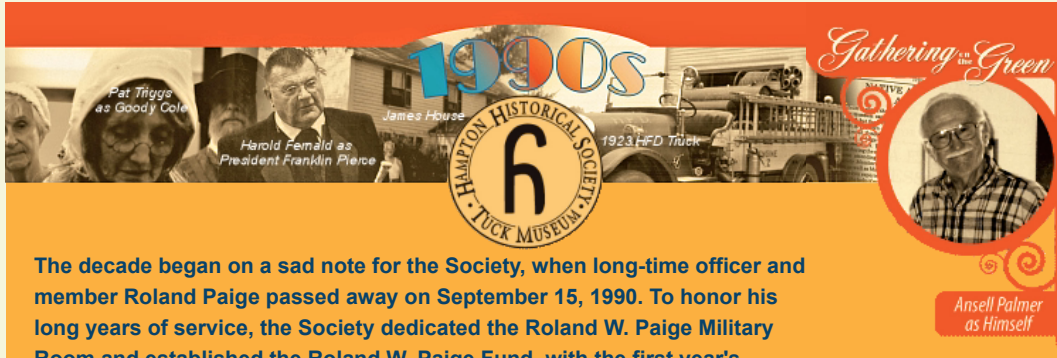
The Hampton Trolley Company ran summer service in North Hampton, Hampton, and at the Beach, with a stop at the Tuck Museum. Fares were 75c.



By the end of the decade, Hampton's population had reached 12,276.



1990s



The decade began on a sad note for the Society, when long-time officer and member Roland Paige passed away on September 15, 1990. To honor his long years of service, the Society dedicated the Roland W. Paige Military Room and established the Roland W. Paige Fund, with the first year's donations totaling \$18,000.

The first issue of the Society's newsletter, *Gatherings from the Green*, was published in 1992. In 1994 it was voted to change the name Meeting House Green Memorial and Historical Association to the simpler Hampton Historical Society. It was voted to appoint rather than elect the Historian.

The Society began using an 'h' logo based on Hampton's old cattle mark. Under the leadership of Ansell Palmer and with the guidance of professionals, new methods of cataloguing and caring for the historical items were adopted. Heat was installed in the Museum, preparing the way for year-round usage. Computers and Internet access were installed, and the first email between Board members was placed on record in 1999.

Long-time Society members Harold Fernald and Pat Triggs performed hundreds of Living History programs throughout New England, recreating the lives of President and Mrs. Pierce, General Jonathan Moulton, and Goody Cole. With voter approval, the Town and Society completed a land swap to define the Society's boundaries and set aside the Kids Kingdom playground. In 1997 a proposed expansion plan called for the demolition of the '60s Wing, but the project was never carried through.

In 1994 Society members Ansell Palmer and Ben Moore helped form the James House Association to preserve the historic 1723 Benjamin James House, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. In large part due to Roland Paige's generous bequest, the Society ended the decade with \$52,000 in the Treasury.

Presidents were James K. Hunt (1990-1991), Ansell Palmer (1991-1993), Betty Moore (1993-1995), Susanne Falzone (1995-1997), Arthur Cairo (1997-1999), Paul Corbett (1999-2001).

The rapid rise of the stock market in the 1990s coincided with the commercial growth of the Internet, fueled by the dot-com 'get big fast' strategy of operating at a sustained loss to quickly build market share.



Gov. Stephen Merrill

Hampton-born and raised Stephen Merrill served two terms (1993-1997) as New Hampshire's 77th governor. He was twice selected as the 'most fiscally responsible governor in America.' The photo at left shows Merrill (center) as a Winnacunnet High School thespian in the '60s. Pictured with him are (l-r) Linda Peterson, Tom Boyd, Marilyn McRae, Marcia Raynes, and Billy Barwick. The play was 'Therese.'

Odd Fellows Hall Burns

Odd Fellows is a benevolent aid society first organized in 17th century England. In 1895 the local chapter built their hall near the town center. In 1897 a tower was added to house the large, four-faced clock given to the Town by John T. Brown of Newburyport. In 1990 the building was destroyed by fire, but the clock was saved and eventually restored. A condominium complex now occupies the location.



Trolley Station Demolished

One of the few vestiges of the Exeter, Hampton and Amesbury street railway (1897-1926) was demolished in September 1990. The Historical Society hoped to move the small building to the Museum grounds, but the owners tore it in down before it could be saved.

Miss Hampton Beach 50th Anniversary

Jennifer DiDomenico of Hampton Falls was crowned Miss Hampton Beach 1992. An honor student at the University of New Hampshire, she graduated with degrees in Business, Sociology, and Theatre. In 1995 the Beach celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Miss Hampton Beach contest. Crowning the winner was 'Singing Cop' Bill Elliot (c. 1940s) who earned his nickname in the 1930s. As a full-time police officer, he would leave traffic duty in front of the Casino to appear at the beach bandstand in uniform.



By the year 2000, Hampton's population had grown to 14,937 residents.



2000s & Beyond



Gathering on Green

'2000 and beyond will be years of great opportunity for the society-->



Paul T. Corbett
President 1999-2001



Betty Moore, Executive
Director, Tuck Museum



Ben Moore Consults with
one of the Executive Staff

Time Flies When You're...

...Running a Museum

Betty Moore joined the Society in 1987 when her family gave her a gift membership. As her husband Ben recounts, 'Our son Jason and I visited the Museum on a Sunday afternoon. Rollie Paige gave us the tour. It was a nice community organization, so I bought Betty a \$25 life membership. If only I could have predicted the future.'

Betty soon joined the Board and volunteered her services in areas such as membership, public relations, exhibits, tours, fundraising, landscaping, collection management and preservation. To gain a professional view of museum management, she earned a certificate in Museum Studies from Tufts University. She served as Vice President (1991-1993), President (1993-1995), and Tuck Museum Committee Chair (1995-2002).

In 2002 the Museum was opened year-round to the public and Betty became its first Executive Director. With determination, creativity, and unflagging cheerfulness, she has carried out the Society's mission to 'increase the public knowledge and understanding of the history and cultural heritage of the town of Hampton.'

Ben Moore joined the Society not long after that fateful day in 1987, helping out whenever his work schedule allowed. Drawing on his experience as the president of his own company, Ben has naturally taken a role as hands-on leader, helping to guide the Society into the 21st century. He was President (2001-2004, 2008-2012) and has served as Treasurer since 2012. He's pretty handy with a shovel, too.

Since 2000, the Society's buildings and grounds have been improved and expanded with a restored barn and tourist cottage. The Museum received air conditioning and humidity control (at last!), new signage, paved walkways, wheelchair access, a new kitchen and restrooms, with much of the work provided by volunteers. The Society abandoned its long-held plan to build onto the Museum, instead expanding offsite in 2015 to the new Collection and Research Center on Lafayette Road. Through fundraising, memberships, charitable gaming proceeds, and several large private donations, the Society ended 2014 with \$160,000 in the Treasury.



Pat Triggs (in white blouse at left) and Harold Fernald, with nearly 120 years of combined membership, are the longest-tenured members.

Society volunteers often wear period garb to make history fun for both kids and adults. Dressed as Hampton's 19th-century seer Madam Ellen, trustee Sammi Moe tells fortunes in her tent at the Old Hampton Tavernwalk.



I see you visiting an enchanting, historical place...



Bob Dennett is the Society's longest serving officer and board member, with 23 years as Treasurer (1989-2012) and three years as a Trustee (2012-present).

Preserving an 18th Century Barn for Future Generations

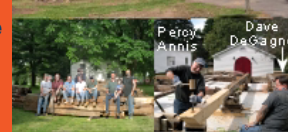
Built c. 1796, this barn was originally located in the 'Widow Leavitt' office complex at the junction of Lafayette and Drakeside roads. In 2004 the property was sold and the new owners planned to demolish the barn. Advised by the Hampton Heritage Commission of the barn's historic nature, the owners instead donated it to the Society for preservation.

Led by Chet Riley, volunteers dismantled the building and placed the ancient timbers into temporary storage, giving an opportunity to admire and photograph the 200-year-old joinery.

Over the next two years, Al Casassa, Charlotte Preston, Bob Wallace, and Ben Moore raised \$65,000 to rebuild the barn at the Museum, while a volunteer crew led by Chet, Dave DeGagne, and Percy Annis made repairs to the timbers and prepared the new site. On June 2, 2007, with help from Preservation Timber Framing, the Society volunteers raised the barn. The barn was completed over the next year and dedicated on June 1, 2008. For more info about it and its restoration, see the [Barn](#) page.



At original location



Percy Annis Dave DeGagne



Preserving a 20th Century Tourist Cabin

This cabin was originally part of the Sea Castle Motel on Hampton Beach. It was saved from demolition and brought to the Museum in 2005. The exterior and interior were renovated, and the grand opening held on August 10, 2008. For more info about it, see the [Beach Cottage](#) page.

Annual Pig Roast

In 2002 the Society hosted its first annual Labor Day Pig Roast, proposed by Cliff Pratt (black hat, rt) as a way to raise funds for the Museum. The 11th generation of his family to reside in Hampton, Cliff was "Pig Master" for the event until his passing in 2014.





90 Years of Volunteers



*Caroline
Lamprey Shea*



‘MEETING HOUSE GREEN FROM OUR EARLIEST DAYS HAS BEEN A SPOT AROUND WHICH TRADITION AND HISTORY HAVE CIRCLED.’

The site of the first meeting house was on the southerly side of the Green where until the 19th century was a succession of churches. In 1811, after the old church site was abandoned, the Hampton Academy was put up near the foundation of the church and once more the Green became a center of activity. Our park was the school's baseball ground. After the Academy building was moved in 1883, the area became desolate, growing only weeds and brambles. Then came a man with an idea. Reverend Ira S. Jones came to town a stranger, learned to love its beauties and know its history. He determined to preserve the sacred spot and make a memorial to Hampton's founders. Meeting House Green Memorial Park, Tuck House, and Hall were the results of his plans, carried out with untiring effort. Mr. Jones asked only that the park be held with love and respect hereafter in everlasting memory of the ideals which caused the founders of Hampton to leave their homes and cross an unknown sea to establish a church and a town in a wilderness. — adapted from Meeting House Green Memorial : An Historical Sketch by charter member and first Secretary (1925-1929), Caroline Lamprey Shea, 1929.

NINETY YEARS OF VOLUNTEERS

MEETING HOUSE GREEN MEMORIAL & HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION CHARTER MEMBERS (1925)



Honorary President and Benefactor Edward Tuck (Paris, France) • Charles Francis Adams • **George Ashworth (3)** • Charlotte J. Batchelder • Fred R. Batchelder • Mrs. Fred R. (Annette) Batchelder • Edwin L. Batchelder • John Bradbury • Mrs. John Bradbury • Elizabeth E. Briggs • Jenny Brooks • **William Brown (2)** • Mrs. William Brown • John C. Chase • Mabel M. Chase • Ernest G. Cole • Fogg Family Association • Elizabeth K. Folsom • Anna H. Gillmore • Lewis R. Hovey • Emily C. Hutchings • E.P. Hutchinson • Mrs. E.P. Hutchinson • Lulu Moulton Hutchinson • Alice James • Vina M. Jones • **Ira S. Jones (founder and first president)** • Captain Randel Keman • Mrs. Randel Keman • Howell M. Lamprey • **Howard G. Lane (4)** • Sarah M. Lane • Frank E. Leavitt • Mrs. F. E. (Sarah) Leavitt • Norman Moulton Leavitt • William S. Leavitt • E. M. Leavitt • Harlan G. Little • Martha P. Locke • Eugenia Locke • **Adeline C. Marston (7)** • Lucy Marston • Ira C. Miner • Mrs. Ira C. (Clara) Miner • Maude C. Mudd • Harry D. Munsey • Harry I. Noyes • Vrylena F. Olney • James W. Perkins • Charles M. Perkins • Carrie H. Perkins • Leonard O. Philbrick • Arnold D. Philbrick • Elizabeth F. Philbrick • William E. Philbrick • Lemuel C. Ring • Lizzie Rollins • Mrs. William Ross • George F. Savage • Helena Savage • Edward Seavey • Marion W. Seavey • Caroline C. (Lamprey) Shea • Richard B. Shelton • Phebe H. Stevens • Christopher G. Toppan • Irene Trefethen (Burnham) • Annie M. True • Esther True (Proctor) • Helen Tufts • Professor James A. Tufts • Mrs. James A. (Effie) Tufts • **Rev. Herbert Walker (5)** • Rev. Edgar Warren • Mrs. Edgar Warren • Margaret C. Wingate

Presidents are marked in red

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Thanks to the Hampton Union, the Town of Hampton, and Peter Randall for providing, through their various publications, the historical information on the Town and Beach; to John Holman, Bill Teschek, and the Lane Memorial Library for making so much of it available online; and to Harold Fernald for giving us access to his personal collection of local history. Thanks to the many persons, organizations, and businesses who over the years have given generously of their time, money, expertise, and historical items. Special thanks to our dedicated Board of Trustees, Officers, and Director.

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