



# The Nashua Historical Society

## *Preserving the Past for the Future*

**Issue No. 1 Summer 2024 [www.nashuahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.nashuahistoricalsociety.org)**

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*Notable Nashuans Reenactors May 7, 2024*



*Abbot-Spalding House in the springtime 2024*

Greetings to my fellow historians, and a big thank-you for doing such a great job preserving the past for the future.

I recently took a little time to review the events of the past several months, and I was left wondering if we've ever experienced such a wide range of emotions in any similar period in recent society history.

First, our minds and hearts were focusing on Eileen Herring, our recently-retired administrative assistant, and her husband, John, who were both battling separate serious illnesses since the fall. When we got word that Eileen and John passed close to within 24 hours of each other, we felt assured it was meant to be.

At the same time we were keeping good thoughts for them, we were immersed in rehearsing our respective roles in our "Notable Nashuans: Voices from the Past Cemetery Tour" project, which took place in May and turned out to be successful beyond our wildest dreams.

The many officers, volunteers and board members who made the event possible and made it the success it was deserve a huge thank-you -- with a special shout-out going out to our leader, choreographer, period-clothing seamstress and doting teacher and coach Paula Lochhead.

We had some great programming in June as well, starting with the opening reception for our newest exhibit, *WWII In Nashua: The Homefront and Beyond*. Curated by Collections Technician Sarah Jauris, the celebration continued with a presentation "Letters to Nashua: Stories of World War II." A week later, we hosted the premiere of *At Home and Abroad: Nashua and World War II*, a compelling documentary produced by new board member and longtime volunteer Jeremy Frazier, former board member John Saad, assisted by Sarah.

Upcoming programs can be found at [www.nashuahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.nashuahistoricalsociety.org) where our updated Facebook account can also be found.

Positive changes are also coming in the financial arena -- thanks to Finance Committee Chairman Roger Lochhead and his fellow members. We are in the process of reviewing our investment and endowment accounts to maximize our growth on fronts going forward.

Congratulations to all candidates for office and board membership who were approved by ballot at our annual meeting. Looking forward to working with everyone!

Dean Shalhoup, President

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**Abbot-Spalding House 1 Nashville Street/1 Abbot Square Nashua, NH**  
**Florence H. Speare Museum 5 Abbott Street, Nashua, NH 03064-2119**  
**(603)883-0015, fax (603)889-8515**  
**[nashuahistorical@comcast.net](mailto:nashuahistorical@comcast.net)**

# Collection Committee Annual Report 2023 - 2024

A Special thank you goes out to The Nashua Historical Society staff and volunteers for the significant progress on collection projects that were accomplished during this past year. We were fortunate to have achieved all that has occurred.

Total Number of Records in Past Perfect 49,256	Additional Records 04/15/2023-04/15/2024
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Objects	5,772	249
Photographs	26,408	309
Archives	8,376	208
Library	981	5
Accession	4,789	105
Contacts	2,930	72

Items in Container List	7,495	326
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## Individual Contributions to the Collection:

**Barbara Bankeroff** fulfilled the management of the Nashua Historical Society's software, PastPerfect. Barbara has trained new PastPerfect users and she has been the computer support person to all of the PastPerfect staff. Barbara has worked on many photograph Research Requests, She has completed numerous accession records, she has worked on pre-catalog tasks for many artifacts and she has furthered the catalog records for various eclectic artifacts. Barbara has been the leader of a book club, the group responsible for the organization and co-mingling of the Historical Society's book collection.

**Jeremy Frazier** has cataloged and completed many photograph catalog records in Past Perfect. Jeremy has been involved in all of the functions required for interviewing World War II veterans and individuals related to World War II veterans. A large number of interviews have been completed. Jeremy completed a trailer with audio for the Nashua-focused World War II documentary.

**Janice Fronko**, a textile conservator, has continued to apply expertise while providing guidance and hands-on-helpfulness with the Historical Society's extensive Textile Collection.

**Matt**, a client, and **Rick Walker**, an employee of The Plus Company, have organized and prepared for cataloging and have cataloged numerous business receipts from Frank Mooney's extensive Nashua Collection.

**Eileen Herring**, former Administrative Assistant, continued to organize, prepare, and add to the container list catalog for the World War II newspaper clippings and genealogy files.

**Sarah Jauris**, Collection Technician, has participated in different collection projects. Sarah has assisted volunteers with their collection questions and concerns including PastPerfect Assistance. She has been the primary creator, researcher and installer of the upcoming WWII Exhibit.

She has been involved in all facets of the World War II documentary. She has been an exceptional support person to numerous aspects of the Historical Society's operations.

**Paula Lochhead** is a textile expert who has continued to provide her expertise, guidance and assistance to the Historical Society's textile collection.

**Beth McCarthy**, Curator, provided support and guidance to all of the individuals who worked/volunteered on the following Committees: Collection, Exhibit, and Research and Records Committees. Current accessioning practices and past accessioning maintenance along with furthering the preservation of numerous aspects of the Historical Society's eclectic collections were the Curator's area of focus along with the maintenance of all of the collection support files.

**Troy Nikander**, a graduate student at Wayne State University with an archival major completed a fifteen-hour internship including accessioning and cataloging numerous audio/video files from the Historical Society's collection.

**Marissa Romano** organized, prepared and cataloged numerous photographs. In addition, she cataloged 307 letters into container lists in Past Perfect.

**John Sadd** has been involved in all of the functions required for interviewing the World War II veterans, civilian, Holocaust survivors and family members. The Nashua focused World War II documentary has been completed.

## Donations and Acceptance:

### Archives:

Scrapbook formerly belonging to World War II Navy Veteran, Earl Edward Robinson; an 1868 Holy Bible containing the New and the Old Testaments from one of the guest rooms at the Old Indian Head House; a catalog from Nashua Sporting Goods Store which was a Philip Morris and Company store

### Objects:

One Hex Steel Nuts Box, 6-32, Whitney Screw Company; Two Nashua Giants; 1968 football member jackets; a 1903 sterling silver Nashua teaspoon

### Photographs:

Two aerial photographs of the Nashua Manufacturing Company Neighborhood in the 1940-1950s; a mural of "Celebration of the Yankee Flyer" by artist Tom Gillis

Respectfully Submitted,  
Beth McCarthy, Curator,  
Sarah Jauris, Collection Technician  
Barbara Bankeroff, Collection Committee Co-Chair



## Annual Exhibit Report 2023 - 2024

The Nashua Historical Society has had a fulfilling year of Exhibit progress. Thank you to all of the staff and volunteers in accomplishing these Exhibit goals.

### Florence Hyde Speare Memorial Museum:

Following a World War II exhibit plan, considerable research was completed, exhibit text was drafted and text boards have been drafted and created. Some exhibit display cases have been set up in draft format for the *WWII In Nashua: The Homefront and Beyond* Exhibit.

### The Abbot-Spalding House Museum:

A special exhibit *And The Bride Wore... A Showcase of 150 years of Nashua Bridal Fashion* has continued featuring The Nashua Historical Society's wedding collection and wedding accessories. Genealogy research behind the individuals who wore and enjoyed these wedding fashion items has created a wealth of complimentary information providing visitors with the ability to relate to the different eras represented.

### City Hall Exhibit Changes:

Churches and Places of Worship in Nashua  
The History of the Nashua Mall

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth McCarthy, Curator, Sarah Jauris, Collection Technician, Alice Fisher, Assistant Secretary, Janice Fronko and Barbara Bankeroff, Volunteers



***Alderman Thibeault and Alderman Klee at exhibit ribbon-cutting with Sarah Jauris, Beth McCarthy, Dean Shalhoup. Note: the exhibit *World War II In Nashua: The Homefront and Beyond* is currently open for viewing.***

## Webpage 2023 - 2024

Sarah Jauris maintains the Society's Website and many changes have been made to it this past year:

An Events slide show has been added to the homepage by Sarah Jauris and Eileen Herring. This is updated when events are over and when new events are added to the calendar. The Events page has been updated with photographs, the format has been changed to be more dynamic, and new rotating exhibits were added.

A trailer for the upcoming World War II documentary video was added to the Video page. A blog has been added and includes topics on Nashua history, collection highlights, and Society exhibits. Posts are added periodically. The ability to sell tickets on the Website for an event was created and was first used for RSVPs for the cemetery tour in early May.

## Research Report 2023 - 2024

<b><u>Research Requests</u></b> <b><u>(1505-1580)</u></b> <b><u>5/1/2023-4/30/2024</u></b>	<b><u>Research Requests</u></b>
<b><u>Number of Requests</u></b>	<b><u>76 Total Requests</u></b>
<b><u>NH Requests</u></b>	<b><u>54 Total NH Requests</u></b>
<b><u>Nashua Requests</u></b>	<b><u>33 Total Nashua Requests</u></b>
<b><u>Genealogy Requests</u></b>	<b><u>10 Total Genealogy Requests</u></b>
<b><u>History Requests</u></b>	<b><u>44 Total History Requests</u></b>
<b><u>Photographs Requests</u></b>	<b><u>24 Total Photos Requests</u></b>
<b><u>Out of State Requests</u></b>	<b><u>20 Total Out of State Requests</u></b>

Respectfully Submitted,

Ralph Sommese, Research Committee Chairperson

## Technology Committee 2023 - 2024

The router in the Abbot-Spalding House basement was replaced and a Universal Power Supply was added to give backup power to that setup.

The museum software PastPerfect is used for processing artifacts and for membership. This database resides on the Server and is backed up several ways: online backup by Carbonite and a periodic manual backup to a portable hard drive and a flash drive. All files in the shared area on the Server are backed up by Carbonite and a periodic manual backup to a portable hard drive. This ensures that in case of a catastrophic issue with the Server, our database will not be lost. At this point, a total of 35.68 gigabytes of data are backed up – 10.78 gigabytes of PastPerfect data and 33.9 gigabytes of data in the shared area. This is an increase of 1.78 gigabytes since May 2023, the last reported increase.

The computer in the office has been added to the Carbonite backup schedule because it is the main computer for the Society and handles most of the email. As of this month 24.79 gigabytes of data are backed up. This is an increase of 7.29 gigabytes of data since May 2023, the last reported increase.

We have continued to add records of our collection to our online site. At this point there are 143 records online, including photographs from the Frank Ingalls Collection, Nashua Fires Collection, Wedding Attire Collection, and Baby Clothes Collection. These can be accessed at [nashuahistorical.pastperfectonline.com](http://nashuahistorical.pastperfectonline.com), and by using the link on both our Facebook page and our Web page. More records will be added over time.

Technology Committee and Website Reports

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Bankeroff, Technology Chairperson





*Speare Library research*



*Much appreciated donations*



*Mary Kirkwood and Barbara Blake  
NPL Volunteer Fair 2024*

## Annual Office Report 2023 - 2024

One only has to look at the various committee reports to know that The Nashua Historical Society was very busy this year! When the phone and email went down for a stretch this winter, it created a challenge, as correspondence was in the works with various people and organizations. Please reach out if you feel there is an outstanding issue; it may have been a result of our mini-outage. We are here to assist.

In 2023 and again from May 1 – 10, 2024, the Society was named a recipient of charitable gaming funds at the Lucky Moose Casino. We are awaiting the results.

Thank you to Roland who put up the whiteboard and fixed a desk and Margaret who provided decorations for the office area. Thank you to Jeannine and Sue who helped us process invoicing, contracts, insurance, and a wide range of other official business.

Thank you to Kathy Daansen for contributing our much-needed new stove. It works great!

New regulations for bulk mail presented a challenge but Beth was sure we could make it through the quagmire and we did. The Posh Pink Tea and Notable Nashuans Cemetery Tour events required extensive staff time managing ticket sales but also provided a wonderful opportunity to communicate with long-time members and many people who have never interacted or visited the Society before now.

Increases to facility rental fees and speakers' fees are now in effect.

This year saw some interesting additions to our gift store including Abbot Ink brilliantly made by Paula Lochhead from the Society's own Black Walnut tree. Alderman Trish Klee kindly donated Nashville t-shirts; always a great way to prompt a conversation about the saga of the mid-19th century division in town. Nashua Historical Society lanyards are a hit. We love to see people wear them and show others their association with our organization.

Notable Nashuans: Voices From The Past cemetery tour t-shirts are as comfortable as they are intriguing. The 100% cotton t-shirts list the names of the Nashuans highlighted in our cemetery tour and advertise our event sponsors: ActorSingers, Charlie & Tracy Hall, Davis Funeral Home, Landmark Dental, Rochette Funeral Home, the UU Church of Nashua and our Society.

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped me learn the ropes. I appreciate this opportunity to serve the Society as a staff administrative assistant and as a volunteer.

## Visitors Report 2023 - 2024

Based on visitors who gave their addresses in our guest book, we had people come to The Nashua Historical Society from many towns and cities across New Hampshire including Amherst, Bedford, Boscowen, Brookline, Candia, Concord, Derry, Hillsborough, Hollis, Hudson, Jefferson, Keene, Lancaster, Litchfield, Littleton, Loudon, Londonderry, Lyndeborough, Manchester, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, New Boston, New Ipswich, North Chelmsford, Rochester, Salem, Swanzey, Windham, Wolfeboro. Other states & countries: AZ, CA, CT, FL, MA, Germany, ME, MD, MI, NC, NJ, NY, TX, VT, Wash DC.

Groups included: The Amherst Questers Club, Kai-Pod, a local robotics club that did a test drive of the scavenger hunt, Great American Downtown, Humane Society for Greater Nashua, Leadership Greater Nashua, and the Nashua Garden Club.

### Florence H. Speare Visitor Total: 644

May (26), June (32), July (7), August (17), September (41), October (154), November (29), December (34), January (11), February (83), March (167), April (43).

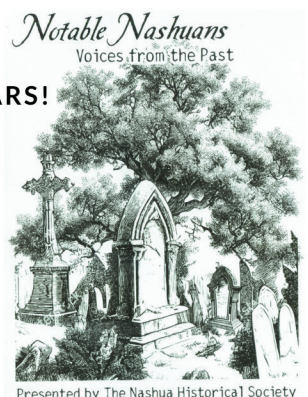
### The Abbot-Spalding House Visitor Total: 142

May (32), June (32), July (0), August (1), September (13), October (4), November (5), December (55), January – April: closed while changing exhibits - bridal exhibit to WWII.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Foran, Admin. Assistant

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

*Sat. Sept 7 at 1 pm*  
**Notable Nashuan  
Cemetery Tour  
with a TWIST**



Presented by The Nashua Historical Society





*Unique donations*



*Barbara Bankeroff discusses PastPerfect software*



*Posh Pink Tea Party March 2024*

## Volunteers Report 2023 - 2024

The Nashua Historical Society has once again been very fortunate to have an enthusiastic group of volunteers to keep our two museums running smoothly. Whether being an officer or director on the board, using computer skills to document our artifacts within our collections, caring for our textiles, guiding in both museums, providing delicious goodies at our programs or maintaining our buildings and grounds, your help is greatly appreciated.

At present, we have thirty- five (35) adult volunteers and one (1) junior volunteer. The total hours that have been documented are four thousand, four hundred and fourteen (4414), unfortunately, a few volunteers have slipped under the radar. Our total would have been higher.

This month is the beginning of our new fiscal year and we are welcoming two (2) adults and one (1) junior volunteer.

I would personally like to thank all our volunteers for the great job you are all doing at our museums.

Respectfully submitted: Margaret Garneau

## Refreshments Report 2023-2024

Once again our refreshment committee has been complimented by many members and guests for the delicious spread we have served after our programs this past year. Several of our members have brought scrumptious goodies to the table. Thank you all.

Some of our committee members also helped the office with many mailings. We hope to continue to do well in 2024-25.

Respectfully submitted: Margaret Garneau, Judy Hemenway, Mary Jauris, Mary Kirkwood, Sue Smith, Lorna Stickney and Jean Wells.



*Jean and Judy help with a mailing*

## Membership Report 2023 - 2024

Adult	66
Family	39 ( x2 for membership #)
Student	5
Life	53
Museums, Lib. & Comp	78

Total Number of Memberships 241 with 280 members

52 members attended the Membership and Volunteer luncheon held in March 2024.

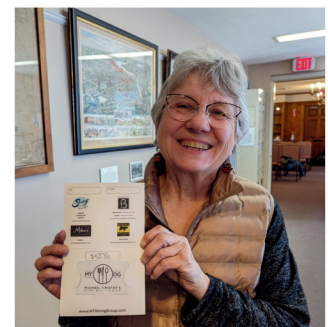
Trish Klee, Beth McCarthy, and Mary Foran have reconvened the Membership Committee. A membership letter based on best practices was sent to current members for renewals. An outreach letter to Lifetime members and a new membership campaign are under development.

Several promotional mini-membership drives were held at events and throughout February, March, and early April. Special thanks to Patricia Klee for her generous donations of \$50 gift certificates used as an enticement to renew or start a new membership. We saw an increase during the times of the promotions and the winners were pleased too!

One new addition to our membership renewal envelope was a stamped message "Additional donations will support our WWII Exhibit and Oral History Project." To date an additional \$250 has been contributed.

New membership fees were approved and take effect May 1, 2024. Adult Membership \$30, Family Membership for two people \$50, Lifetime Membership \$300, and Student Membership remains \$5. Thank you, your membership demonstrates an active commitment to preserving Nashua's rich history.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Foran  
Administrative Assistant



*Lucky winner of our membership drive*





*Balloting for elections prepped*



*DAR Historic Preservation Award recipients: Paula Lochhead and Janice Fronko*



## Property and Grounds 2023 - 2024

When I bought an old house in Nashua's north end in 1999 my neighbor said the only thing that works in an older home is the owner!

### FLORENCE HYDE SPEARE MEMORIAL MUSEUM

2023-24 was a good year for improvements/repairs and completion of our addition to Speare Museum, including a handicap ramp roof structure and shed roof over all HVAC units. Inspections have been completed and comply with city code and Historic District Commission guidelines.

Crisp Contracting was hired to repair and patch the parking lot. Four large holes were repaired. This work will extend the life of the parking lot area for a few more years.

Crisp Contracting investigated the ongoing issue of water in the Speare Museum basement after heavy rain with strong wind. Based on their findings, drainage piping was added underground connecting the Society's storm drains which bring water from the gutters and the grounds away from the museum.

Plastering and painting in the Speare Museum's main stairwell was completed.

This coming year we are tracking down some water intrusion in front of the Speare Building. There is some settlement in the northeast corner of the 2-story brick building near the parking lot. The Speare Museum was built in the 1970s and may require some brick re-pointing or waterproofing to create a better barrier against the elements.

### ABBOT-SPALDING HOUSE

The Abbott Spalding house is also seeing some signs of age and required maintenance.

Roland Fisher explored the much-needed repair of shutters on the Abbot-Spalding House. Estimates have been obtained. This project will need to be funded through a grant or a fundraiser. If anyone would like to help, please reach out to Roland, Dean, or the office.

In the summer of 2023, a wire barricade was removed and replaced with state-of-the-art materials that prevent critters from entering the building. The area has been painted and it looks good. Critter control relocated the squirrels.

We are still tracking water leakage from an upstairs bedroom. The roofing contractor thinks the flat roof is good and points a finger at the closed chimney. We did do a small repair on the chimney last fall but that didn't stop water from entering. This week I have another contractor (Viking Roofing, Hollis, NH) out to evaluate the roof and chimney. The goal is to determine the source of the leak. Last year we had an estimate to repair all chimneys from Admiral Roofing/Inc. for 10k plus; however, he couldn't fit us into his fall schedule.

### OTHER

This winter didn't require much plowing or shoveling, however, when needed the service was well done by St. Laurent Property Maintenance. The Society has contracted with St. Laurent for three-season lawn care as well. They coordinate with the company providing fertilization, Southern NH Lawn Care.

Thank you to new member and volunteer Susan Lavoie who donated a lovely planting for the urn in front of the Abbot-Spalding House.

Thank you to Roland Fisher who has performed numerous handyman repairs. For example, he did a terrific job repairing the dining room table in the Speare Museum. He cleaned and repaired the brass around the front entrance to the Abbot-Spalding House. When something needs to be mounted or relocated for exhibition or the kitchen or office, Roland comes to the rescue!

Thank you to Margaret and Bob Garneau, as well as Roland Fisher, who helped decorate our properties, especially for the holidays. By request, the lights in the Abbot-Spalding House were left up for a bit longer this year; they highlight our treasured Abbot-Spalding House beautifully.

Projects not mentioned above, but needed for the future include:

- \*Painting and repairs to the wood siding at the front entrance, including work on the columns
- \*Repairs to four chimneys on the Abbot-Spalding House
- \*Paint (stain kill) in two bedrooms in the Abbot-Spalding House
- \*Abbot-Spalding House back patio repairs
- \*Further investigations and decisions on the fountain that are needed for the operation

Respectfully submitted,  
Dennis Parker



## Education Committee 2023 - 2024

The Education Committee has been in a period of growth this year. We worked, for many months, under the umbrella of the Futures Committee to explore a very broad scope of topics for the Society. Recently, we committed to a more focused project list looking at how the Nashua Historical Society can be an even more active source of learning for all ages and with a particular interest in including the youth of our community. To that end, we have accomplished and are examining a broad list I'd like to share a bit of with you tonight:

First, all society members interested in being part of the Education Committee are welcome to join us. There are so many paths we can pursue on behalf of the Society. Many hands are needed. We would welcome your help.

Now, highlights for this year and a scholarship presentation: We now have a new crossword puzzle and three iterations of a scavenger hunt for our two museums. We started with one hunt for each of the museums, but the Family Fridays highlighting the Florence Speare Museum Scavenger Hunt prompted us to add a 2nd version for our repeat visitors. There is a love of the search in all ages, as we have used these during adult meeting breaks and with children with great success.

The scavenger hunt was also used during our Posh Pink Tea Party on March 3rd. The Tea was a sold-out event with ladies of all ages. We encouraged the young and collectors to bring their fashion dolls for a special presentation of the history of Barbie given by Sarah Jauris. We spoke of the history of tea with an interactive round and paid tribute to the strong women of New Hampshire honoring National Women's History Month. Tea, treats, raffles, and crafting rounded out our afternoon. We hope to offer this event again next year and we are looking for interested committee members.

The Society was approached by Zachary Campbell of Scout Troop 272 here in Nashua for an Eagle Award Project. I met with Zach and his father to discuss the possibilities. Zachary is now putting together his proposal. We look forward to working with him in the coming months.

### Officers 2024 - 2025

President: Dean Shalhoup  
1st Vice President: Roland Fisher  
2nd Vice President: Magnus Pardoe  
Secretary: Megan Pardoe  
Assistant Treasurer: Suzanne Smith  
Acting Treasurer: Suzanne Smith  
Assistant Secretary: Paula Lochhead

### Directors 2024 - 2025

Pam Anderson	Margaret Garneau	Mary Kirkwood
Barbara Bankeroff	Alicia Gregg	Roger Lochhead
Barbara Blake	Matty Gregg	Penny Pardoe
Jeremy Frazier	Maggie Harper	William Ross
		Peter Vincent

### Staff

Beth McCarthy, Curator  
Sarah Jauris, Collection Technician  
Mary Foran, Administrative Assistant

Another aspect of the Education Committee is the overseeing of the annual scholarship given to a local high school senior attending college in the fall. This year, back in December, our President, Dean Shalhoup received a letter from Pat Thurber with a generous donation to the Nashua Historical Society to be used in his honor for our scholarship program. In the letter, Pat writes to Dean saying, "I believe you are truly *our Nashua Historian* and have contributed by your writings and research and activities, in continuing our knowledge of this special community." This donation has been invested to grow and, hopefully, sustain our scholarship program for years to come. We are so very grateful for this gift.

The Committee looks forward each year to the springtime gathering of scholarship applications. This year, with the help of Beth McCarthy and Mary Foran, 25 applications were carefully reviewed from students in the three Nashua high schools. It is always difficult to narrow an outstanding field and indeed, this is what we had to do. Some of you will recognize our award recipient as she worked as a guide during the cemetery tours. She showed us that day her abundant interest in history and energy! I am pleased to share that our 2024 Nashua Historical Society Scholarship will be awarded to Caitlyn Mamos of Nashua High North. Caitlyn's recommendation for our scholarship was written by her teacher, Paul Menard. Mr. Menard did not use a form letter. He writes, "I can honestly say that in 28 years of teaching I have never had another student like Caitlyn Mamos. By this I mean many students are confident, but Caitlyn is humble. Many students are mature and intelligent, Caitlyn is wise. Many students have plans but Caitlyn has the drive, knowledge, skills, and desire to see her plans come to fruition with a serious dedication to herself, her family, and her peers. Through these past years Caitlyn has demonstrated her qualities as a student, an artist, an athlete, and as a person at Nashua High North." Mr. Menard's recommendation continues in like manner.

Caitlyn, we understand you plan on becoming an education major. Your students will be very fortunate to have you as their teacher!

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Kirkwood, Education Committee Chair



*2024 Edmund M. Keefe Memorial Scholarship Award winner  
Caitlyn Mamos with her family, Beth, Dean, Mary Kirkwood*



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## Beth McCarthy, Curator, Celebrates 30+ Years at The Nashua Historical Society

**Q: What were some of the most challenging issues or incidents you faced as a Curator?**

On my first day working at the Nashua Historical Society, I entered The Florence H. Speare Museum to find every room and space within the Museum filled with boxes floor to ceiling in need of being sorted, put away, or their contents needing to be incorporated into a new exhibit. A small group of volunteers came in and were working on unpacking and sorting these boxes which movers had recently returned from a rented storage facility to the Museum after the completion of a lengthy extensive Museum renovation. The Museum was scheduled to open to the public in four months and with the support and assistance of numerous volunteers it all came together within the timeframe and the Museum re-opened to the membership and public.

The Abbot-Spalding House Museum as an older structure began to show its years. A restoration intervention process became a necessity. This required the House Museum to close to the public for four and a half years as a series of preservation experts worked on various portions of the house including, repairing windows with old glass, repairing and refinishing floor boards, stripping the lead paint off the exterior, re-building and supporting the back porch, electric, plumbing upgrades, balustrade repairs, ensuring that the apartment was a livable space are some aspects of the restoration work completed. With the assistance of a collection conservator and an architectural preservation expert, a plan was developed and followed. Numerous volunteers pitched in and assisted with cleaning and packing up the contents of the House Museum. We had too many to count moving item parties as nothing left the House Museum during the restoration process. Instead the contents were moved by volunteers and up and down and from one side of the House Museum to the other over and over again. The results are breathless as The Abbot-Spalding House is a museum for all to be very proud of and the visiting public continues to express positive reactions when they tour the museum.

**Q. What was one memorable donation you remember?**

All of the collection donations accepted are special and bring benefit to The Historical Society in a variety of ways. One very memorable donation is a large collection of books that were owned by Daniel Abbot and his law partner. They are mostly early law books and not all of them are in the best condition but to have received items actually owned and used by Daniel Abbot, the father of Nashua and the prominent resident of our Abbot-Spalding House has always been a remarkable feat.

This particular donation came about through an individual who had these books stored in an old barn. He always intended to read the books and had the books moved from the barn to the garage at his house after learning that he had a terminal illness as a middle-aged man. The day Society representatives went to the garage to meet this donor, was a heavily rainy cold day. We brought the books back and spread them all out in the Historical Society's library to dry before inventorying them and archivally boxing them for posterity.

**Q. What was one of the strangest time you remember?**

Valentine's Day, 1996 started off as a great day. If had been a cold February and myself and two volunteers were working with the collection on the second floor. My now husband had a florist deliver a dozen red roses to me at the Florence Speare Museum around lunch time. Around 3:30 pm all three of us could hear strange noises coming from inside the walls, we honestly could not figure out what we were hearing until we went downstairs to the first floor and saw water running down the main staircase like a waterfall into the basement. It was literally coming through the wall behind a grandfather clock which is located in the on the right side of the front hallway. When we went downstairs was an unspeakable site, water was flowing down through the ceiling in the text tile collection storage room and rising up from the floor getting deeper. We quickly moved the textiles that we could out of the textile storage room, which were not too many items, the electricity went out. Once upstairs we called the fire department and the individual in charge of the Society's buildings. The firefighters were wonderful, they assisted with moving lots of items out of harms way.

Unfortunately, we ended up loosing the good portion of the ceiling in the textile collection storage room, it fell onto the collection, which was covered in plastic at the time which did offer some protection. What had happened was the pipe the leads to the outside spigot had frozen and burst inside the wall and a space that exists between the floor and ceiling between the basement and the first floor. The Historical Society ended up closing the Florence H. Speare Museum for six months as a water cleanup company came in, building repairs were made and textile conservators worked their magic. We were very fortunate to not have lost only two textile garments on that Valentine's Day. The Speare Museum persevered.

**Q. Please share a memorable moment with us?**

It is impossible to choose one memorable moment over another. The Nashua Historical Society has been and remains to be a magical organization consisting of historic grounds and two distinctly different Museums. On the very first day that I walked into the Abbot-Spalding House Museum, I was overcome with a sense of happiness and friendliness. Those feelings have never changed over the years. The Historical Society has a unique collection which is at times can be challenging to catalog and display. The collection has always been interesting and fun to work with. The Nashua Historical Society, volunteers and staff and all the various people you meet contribute to The Nashua Historical Society being a magical place.





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## Memories of

### My Life as a Mill Worker in Nashua, NH

by Alvina (Babe) Ancil

The Jackson Mill on Canal Street was where so many French Canadians worked. My mom was one of them, as well as my sisters Alice and Annette, my brother Paul, and my nephew were also working there, and I was no different.

I quit school and went to work, as so many other kids did, to help out the family.

My mom and I worked different shifts in the spinning room. I worked from 3 pm to 11 pm, and my mom worked from 11 pm to 7 am. My sister Alice was a weaver, and my brother Paul worked in the card room as well as one of my aunts. My sister Annette's room, I cannot remember the name of it. If you could not stand the heat, you were drenched in sweat and full of cotton by the end of the day. Your hair, nose, throat, and clothes were white with cotton. In the winter when my shift was done at 11 pm, the outside temperature could be 10 degrees or below, you would freeze and if you didn't wear a hat your hair would turn to ice.

My job was to watch the bobbins which took 4 hours for a bobbin to be filled. The thread could break and it was my job to retreat the bobbin, you had to react quickly to catch the bobbin because it would not stop spinning which was the hardest part of learning the job. If you were too slow, the bobbin would turn in your hand cause a burn. I very seldom had breaks or lunchtime. You were on the run. I had a wooden box that I placed my lunch on and kept it covered otherwise I would be eating a lot of cotton with my sandwich. When I passed my lunch, I would take a bite and keep on working, and that's the way it was done, on the run. It was hard, but I did my work and was happy to have a job.



*Nashua Manufacturing Company exhibit in the Florence H. Speare Memorial Museum*

Around 1951 or 1952 the mill closed. It was a very sad situation for all of more than a 1,000 workers. I found another job, it was a knitting shop at the end of Lock Street. It was very noisy just like the mill. You had to shout to speak in each other. We made trigger gloves for the Army. After working there 3 years it closed down and I had worked 5 years at the mill and 3 years at the knitting shop. I felt I was getting nowhere, so once again I was looking for a job. I went to a luggage shop on Canal Street which I worked for only one day, because of going to the bathroom before the bell rang. I was not going to work in a place that told you when you could relieve yourself. I went looking for another job.

I then went to Batesville Casket. My responsibility to the caskets with strong chemicals which made me sick and dizzy. I could not do that and get sick. My brother Paul worked 30 years at Batesville and it killed him. His system was full of lacquer and he died of colon cancer. Well here I go again looking for another job.

I went to the plastics, I met at the mill another women I worked with. She told me to leave this place, she said they told you to go on a break. I said yes, well while you're gone they are fixing you're machine to go much faster and she was so right when I got back it was hell to pay. Well out of a job again, this time I went to the shoe shop and I finely found an honest place and an honest boss. He was an angel, it was nice to work for an angel. I also worked at Sportwell Shoe, where we made army boots. It was a bad place. I like to work, over there we had a nice boss. My nephew David Pinet who was a Marine in Vietnam was unloading truck of boots from Sportwell Shoe, Nashua, NH. He was very surprised to see that and had his picture taken with a box and the truck.

I almost forgot that is where I met my husband at the shoe shop. We have been married for 62 happy years, and this is the best job I ever had of being a wife and mother. We had 3 wonderful children, 5 grandchildren, and 4 great grandchildren.

"It's a Wonderful Life," Amen.  
Freelance Writer – HaHa!  
Alvina (Babe) Ancil

Memories include the following businesses:

Jackson Mills  
Hitchcock & Curtis Knitting Shop  
Batesville Casket  
J.F. McElwain, Temple Street  
Nashua Plastics, near the river  
Sportwell Shoe Co.

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## Programs May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024

Over 30 programs were offered to the public this year between May 2023 and April 2024. Two programs stand out because of the leadership of their committee chairs. First, the sold-out **Posh Pink Tea Party** was chaired by Mary Kirkwood and brought in ten new memberships for our Society. Second, the cemetery tour **Notable Nashuans: Voices from the Past**, was chaired by Paula Lochhead and raised \$4,000. Both events were supported by a host of devoted volunteers, but the sheer number of hours the committee chairs gave to each event was astounding. While we name these two ladies, we know they would want everyone recognized who helped make this a banner year. This list is long, but it is important to report the extent to which the Nashua Historical Society is involved in providing programs to the public and undertaking publicity to support the Society, including the following:

On **Saturday, May 6, 2023**, at 3 pm, Author Andrew Noone presented his book *Bathsheba Spooner: A Revolutionary Murder Conspiracy*. The talk explored the saga of New England's most notorious crime of the American Revolution.

Speaker Linda Welters, Ph.D. from URI gave a poignant talk titled **"A History of Wedding Fashion"** on **Saturday, May 13, 2023**. In addition, the Abbot-Spalding House exhibit, titled *And the Bride Wore...A Showcase of 150 Years of Nashua Bridal Fashion Continues* curated by Paula Lochhead and Janice Fronko, was open from 1 – 4 pm.

On **Tuesday, May 16, 2023**, members, directors, and officers attended the Nashua Historical Society's **153rd Annual Mtg.**

The Nashua Historical Society participated in the **Volunteer Fair** held at the Nashua Public Library on **Thursday, May 18, 2023**. This event provided a great opportunity to talk to the public about how to get involved in volunteering at the Society.

**Saturday, May 20, 2023**, from 8 to noon, the Society hosted the ever-popular **Nashua Garden Club Annual Plant Sale**. Many members of the Garden Club also volunteer with our organization, and we've enjoyed a longstanding positive relationship between both groups.

**Saturday, June 24, 2023**, featured a 1:00 pm program by Elaine Isaak, aka E. C. Ambrose, a young adult and adult author. She gave a talk titled **"From Fashion to Fantasy."** The bridal exhibit was open at the Abbot-Spalding House from 1 – 4 pm.

**Thursday, June 29, 2023**, the 2023 recipients of the **Edmund M. Keefe Memorial Scholarship** were presented with their awards at a special reception. Special thanks to the Scholarship Committee and the Refreshments Committee.

At Clocktower Place on **August 10**, Dean Shalhoup and Paula Lochhead contributed to the kickoff of the celebration of the **200th Anniversary of the Nashua Manufacturing Company**. Then on **September 16**, in conjunction with a tour by Alan Manoian starting at Le Parc de Notre Renaissance Francais on Water Street in Downtown Nashua, Paula Lochhead opened the 1886 Gatehouse in Mine Falls Park. As part of the 200th Anniversary commemoration, both Abbot-Spalding House and the Speare Museums were open to the public.

**October 14th** was the date of the **Historical Societies Roundtable**, planned and hosted by the Nashua Historical Society. John Lastowka, President of The Merrimack Historical Society, wrote, "This roundtable event was one that Merrimack has been anticipating for months. The programs, speakers, facility, food, and hospitality were excellent. The time and effort to organize this roundtable event was a huge undertaking, but most of all, it was successful in bringing historical societies together to learn, share ideas, and make new friends." Well-received presentations were given by Barbara Bankeroff, Beth McCarthy, Sarah Jauris, Dean Shalhoup, Stacy Milbouer, Janice Fronko, Paula Lochhead, as well as Michael Haley Goldman and Dr. Christine Gustafson representing the NH Humanities. Mary Kirkwood assisted with facilities, surveys, and helped to welcome guests. 46 people from 19 historical societies with a combined 1,299 years of historical society representation attended this event. The Nashua Historical Society will be hosting the event again this year.

On **Tuesday, October 17, 2023**, over 65 attendees enjoyed high school history teacher Hailee Attorri's well-received talk titled **"Whispers of the Departed: Unveiling Local Gravestones and Their Symbolic Stories."** Her talk is available through the Society's YouTube channel.

Beginning at the front door of the Speare Museum and circling the Abbot-Spalding House, this year's **StoryWalk® book** was titled *Juneteenth for Mazie*, by Floyd Cooper. Many people stopped by to read the outdoor book; it was accessible 24 hrs. a day from June through October.

In celebration of **National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo)**, the Nashua Historical Society invited writers to be inspired by history and write! **Write at the Museum** was offered on **Saturday, November 18, 2023**. Rarely seen historic writing objects from the Society's collection were on display.

**Family History Month** was featured on the Society's Facebook page. Every few days genealogy, general information, and select stories were shared. Special thanks to top-notch volunteer researcher and genealogist Deborah Carl for her contributions.

In November, Jeremy Frazier, Sarah Jauris, Paula Lochhead, Beth McCarthy, and Dean Shalhoup represented the Nashua Historical Society at the **Nashua Public Library's Veterans Day Celebration**. World War II artifacts were featured at the Society's table to help promote the upcoming exhibit and documentary.

On **December 16**, Janice Fronko and Paula Lochhead were awarded the **Historic Preservation Recognition Award from the Matthew Thornton Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution** for their dedicated work with the Nashua Historical Society's textile collection. A reception followed in the Speare Library, followed by tours for the DAR members at 11 am and public tours of the bridal exhibit in the Abbot-Spalding House from 12 – 2 pm. This marked the closing of the expertly curated bridal exhibit in the Abbot-Spalding House. One to remember!

**A Stitch in Time Crafting Circle**, offered on various dates from **October 2023 to February 2024**, was an open time for crafters to enjoy each other's company in the Speare Museum Library.

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## Programs 2023 - 2024 continued

Charlie Annand from Milford presented “**New Hampshire’s Fab Four: The Hutchinson Family Singers**” on Saturday, **February 3, 2024**. This program hailed back to the 1840s when a musical group called The Hutchinson Family Singers experienced a meteoric rise to fame and had a lasting impact on the culture of America. Charlie is connected to an all-volunteer group determined to create a public memorial to the famous Hutchinson Family Singers. It was a fun surprise to hear musical guest Steve Blunt too! The Speare Museum opened early for self-guided tours and Hutchinson Family Singer songs were played throughout the exhibit areas.

On **February 16** from 5 – 8 pm, the public was invited to our **Family Friday: Scavenger Hunt Night**, a new idea developed to offer “all ages” evening hours to families and individuals along with a highlighted activity. Mary Kirkwood’s scavenger hunt proved popular and now a second version has been developed for use by any of our guests, including school groups. During the Friday night event some couples came before they went out for dinner in downtown Nashua and several families new to the area visited the Society for the first time. Family Friendly Friday was repeated on **April 26, 2024**.

Next year’s tea party is already being planned because the **Posh Pink Tea Party** was a grand success. It was held on **Sunday, March 3** from 1:15 - 3:30 pm. Tickets were required, and we sold all forty of them. The educational presentations by Mary Kirkwood and Sarah Jauris were fun and informative. Three courses of food, raffles, and crafts rounded out the afternoon of fun. A thoughtful anonymous donor from City Hall donated multiple new career-oriented Barbie dolls for a silent auction! Several attendees became members that day. They have been attending events regularly, as well as becoming trained volunteers...a Posh Pink Tea Party perk.

Sponsored by a grant from the **NH Humanities’ Humanities to Go! Speaker’s Bureau**, “**Granite Women: The Hidden Lives of NH Women as Seen in the Cemetery, 1674 – 1992**,” was offered on **Tuesday, March 19, 2024**. Expert speaker Glenn Knoblock highlighted many unique stories of New Hampshire women from the perspective of historic burial grounds and cemeteries located throughout the state. At this event, along with many others mentioned above, the refreshment committee offered a lovely spread of treats for all to enjoy.

On **Saturday, March 16**, fifty-two members and volunteers attended a **luncheon** held in their honor at the Florence H. Speare Memorial Museum. The player piano was fired-up and eleven other Society artifacts were shared from our archives. Our own history was our entertainment.

Opportunities for in-person cemetery tour ticket sales started on **Friday, April 5**, and **Saturday, April 6**, with evening hours, and a photo-loop in the Library of another cemetery called “**The Four Seasons of St. Francis Cemetery**.”

At the invitation of Ward 3 Alderman Trish Klee, on **Tuesday, April 23** at 7 pm, Dean Shalhoup, Beth McCarthy, John Sadd,

Jeremy Frazier, Sarah Jauris, Paula Lochhead, and Anna Sterns (aka Becky Fessenden), presented information about the Nashua Historical Society in the **Aldermanic Chambers**, and featured a **trailer promotion** of the **WWII Oral History Project** and a **teaser of the upcoming Notable Nashuans: Voices from the Past UU Church cemetery tour**. Thank you to Alderman Klee and the City for offering this opportunity.

The last event technically within the annual year which ends on April 30 was held on **Saturday, April 27, 2024**, from 11 am – 2 pm. **Come listen to our Player Piano!** was free to the public. Our player piano is popular with all ages. It brings a smile every time, especially to children. Again, this was designed to provide time for in-person ticket sales for the cemetery tour combined with a short activity and time to tour the Speare Museum.

We must add that on **Saturday, May 4, 2024: Notable Nashuans: Voices from the Past Cemetery Tour at Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua**, eighteen reenactors adorned in period attire told the stories of eighteen individuals interred in selected cemetery plots. There were two loops (A & B) and two times (1 pm and 3 pm) offered, as well as a themed t-shirt. Research and practice, ticket sales and publicity, volunteers and staff, worked together to make this event exciting for the participants and interesting for our 211 guests. Wow!

### Other publicity included:

Dean Shalhoup was featured on the **Mike Apfelberg Radio Show**. Paula Lochhead gave talks at **Langdon Place** and to **Rotary**, and Paula went **live on Facebook with Mike Apfelberg** to promote the Notable Nashuans cemetery tour. She also appeared on **The Gregg Show**, a Monday 7 am radio show with Alicia and Matty Gregg. Beth McCarthy, Mary Kirkwood, and Paula Lochhead represented the Nashua Historical Society at the **Sustainability Fair at the Nashua Public Library**.

WMUR’s Sean McDonald came to the Society to research in advance the **NH Chronicle’s feature story on Mine Falls Park**, which included interviews with Dean Shalhoup and Paula Lochhead. Jeremy Frazier, John Sadd, and Sarah Jauris shared a documentary preview at the **Hunt Community** to promote the upcoming WWII exhibit and documentary. **Facebook**: This year we’ve doubled our Facebook followers and have posted and shared events and historical information several times a week, including **Tuesday Trivia and Throwback Thursday** posts. Although there is a separate report submitted by Barbara Bankeroff about the Society’s webpage; it is the webpage; Facebook; other advertising (Patch, WMUR Community Calendar, the Telegraph, Patricia Klee’s Ward 3 newsletter to name a few); the quality of our programs; and other publicity which all work together to increase our visibility with the public. Each of us is important in this effort too. There is room to continue to grow and expand.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Foran, Administrative Assistant

**Note: this annual report summarizes activities of the past fiscal year. For current exhibits and programs, please go to our website or Facebook page. Also, there is a listing on the back of this newsletter.**

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# Nashua Historical Society

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5 ABBOTT STREET  
NASHUA, NH 03064-2119  
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[www.nashuahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.nashuahistoricalsociety.org)

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## Upcoming Programs:

## Additional information and events will be listed on the website

Sat. Aug 17, 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Abbot-Spalding House and Florence H. Speare Museum open

*Sat. Sept 7, 1:00 - 2:30 pm*

*Notable Nashuans with a Twist: Voices From the Past Cemetery Tour*

Sat. Sept 14, 8:00 - 10:00 am

Tree Planting, Andrew Morin, Regenerative Roots

Tues. Sept 24, 7:00 pm

“Heroes and Homecomings: Norman Rockwell,” by Jane O’Neil  
*made possible by the NH Humanities Speakers To Go! Series*

Sat. Oct 12, 11:00 - 2:00 pm

Abbot-Spalding House and Florence H. Speare Museum open

Sat. Oct 26, 8:45 - 3:00 pm

Historical Societies Roundtable

Sat. Nov 2, 9:30 - 3:00 pm

NaNoWriMo writing event

Tues. Nov 19, 7:00 pm

*At Home and Abroad: Nashua and WWII* documentary showing