



The Nashua Historical Society

Preserving the Past for the Future

Issue No. 2 Fall 2021

www.nashuahistoricalsociety.org

Greetings to all!

Hoping all is well with everyone as we begin to prepare for another holiday season, which is already spawning commercials on TV and the Internet and ads in fliers and other publications.

Bottom line: No matter how hard we might try, there's no avoiding the groundswell of hype that one cannot ignore no matter how many blankets one tries to hide under.

I jest of course; aside from the onslaught courtesy of our good friends in the retail industry, there are in fact plenty of things to look forward to and enjoy come the holidays.

Here at the Society, meanwhile, we're keeping in place our mask mandate for the time being, a decision made at a recent board meeting in light of the new surge of cases and the occasional "break-through" cases -- that is, people who contract the virus despite being fully vaccinated.

On the infrastructure front (that of our property, not the national package), we've entered into a contract with a firm for the needed work on the foundation on the front of the Speare Museum facing Abbott Street. The contractor indicated he can finish the job by the time the snow flies, which of course is great news.

We've recently begun recording -- both audio and video -- the monthly meetings of the Board of Directors, using the Zoom technology. Thanks to Eileen and Barb, we've been tweaking the location of the laptop and the camera as well as microphone positions to maximize the quality of the recordings. Having recordings of the meetings

will also be a great help to our minutes-takers -- Secretary Jenn Pizzi and Assistant Secretary Alice Fisher -- who each month tackle the often tedious and time-consuming process of transcribing the meeting minutes for the report we are required to send to state officials. Please join me in a "hats-off" to Jenn and Alice for their dedication to an often-thankless job!

Beth, Eileen, Barb and Sarah -- and by extension, our officers -- have been encouraged by the number of volunteers who have been gradually starting to come in again. The decision to do so, and when, is up to each individual, of course, but despite the recent surge in cases, we are confident the steps we've taken and the guidelines we've put in place have made our buildings as safe as they can be.

Overall, we're starting to look at our list of events and programs that were put on hold due to the pandemic, and while no firm schedule has been drawn up, there's optimism we will be able to start making plans at the start of 2022 -- depending, of course, whether any unexpected pandemic-related issues suddenly surface.

As always, thanks to everyone for maintaining your membership through this unprecedented and uncertain -- not to mention frustrating -- period of time.

Best to all,
Dean Shalhoup
President

**Officers and Board of Directors
2019-2022**

Officers

Dean Shalhoup	President
Roland Fisher	1 st Vice President
Vacant	2 nd Vice President
Jeannine T. Levesque	Treasurer
Suzanne Smith	Assistant Treasurer
Jennifer Pizzi	Secretary
Alice Fisher	Assistant Secretary

Directors

Barbara Bankeroff	Magnus Pardoe
Marie Fisher	Megan Pardoe
Janice Fronko	Dennis Parker
Robert Garneau	Kathy Peterson
Paula Lochhead	William Ross
Ken Mayo	Peter Vincent
Scott McPhie	

Staff

Beth McCarthy	Curator
Eileen Herring	Administrative Assistant
Sarah Jauris	Collection Technician

YouTube

There are now 27 videos on our YouTube channel. We have had a good response from people who have watched them.

The most popular program is “Myth Busting Lizzie Borden.” To view the programs, just type The Nashua Historical Society into the YouTube search bar.



Lizzie Borden, the accused, and her counsel, Ex-Governor Robinson drawn on the spot by B. West Clinedinst 1893 Library of Congress <https://lccn.loc.gov/99403183>

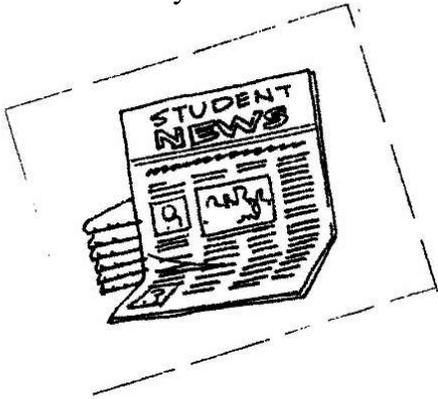
Welcome Sarah!

The Nashua Historical Society has been privileged to welcome Sarah Jauris as a Collection Technician! Sarah began volunteering with the Society when she was in high school. She has now graduated from Boston College with her master’s degree in Early American History and Archival Management. As well as working at the Society, she is continuing her education by working on a certificate of Museum Studies at the Harvard Extension School. Sarah is a wonderful addition to the Society.



Sunset Times – Miss O'Brien's 4th Grade Newsletter

Recently, we received several donations from the Reynolds family. The donation included a copy of the Sunset Times from Miss O'Brien's 4th grade class dated April 3, 1998. There were many interesting articles about studying long division, the geography bee that had been held, and who the Most Responsible Student was for the month. The article that really caught our attention was an article about the recent field trip to The Nashua Historical Society.



THE NASHUA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By Patrick Reynolds

The Nashua Historical Society located on 5 Abbot Street next to Daniel Abbot's house was the highlight of Miss O'Brien's class field trip. On the way there we saw the Hunt Memorial Building designed by Ralph Adams Cram. When we passed Deschenes Oval everyone said we passed it because everyone thought the Nashua Historical Society was in Deschenes Oval. I guess we were wrong.

From the outside the building looked small, but on the inside it was huge. There were three levels. On the the first floor there was a library that we went into. It had dates, paintings, hoop skirts and more. Next we went downstairs and I think everyone will agree with me that the Gillis Hand Tub was the big attraction. When we went to the top floor I was amazed to see my dad's picture in a book! I guess he's ancient. There were two big attractions up there, the musket from Cross and Blanchard and the French medal of honor. I think everybody loved the Nashua Historical Society, because we just finished the Nashua unit. We are now moving on to the New Hampshire unit.

CARES Act/SHARP Grant Received

In 2020 The Nashua Historical Society received a grant from the CARES Act through New Hampshire Humanities. This grant allowed us to update our website and allowed us to improve our audiovisual equipment so that additional seating can be used in multiple rooms when our programs resume.

This fall the Society received a SHARP grant through New Hampshire Humanities. This additional grant

will allow us to have all the programs that were recorded on VCR tapes and audio tapes converted to MP4s so they can be added to our YouTube channel. Additionally, we will be able to acquire more equipment for remote presentations in the future. It will also allow us to add audiovisual equipment to the Abbot-Spalding House which will allow more information to be given to visitors to the house.

Improvements inside and outside of the museums

New Furnace

The Abbot-Spalding House will be warm and toasty from now on as the furnace was replaced. Outside the gas lines were replaced under Abbott Street.

(before and after photos)



New Transformer

When you pull in the parking lot of the Speare Museum, you will notice a brand-new transformer. At the beginning of summer, a tree stump on an adjoining property was pulled up. Unfortunately, one of the roots was wrapped around the power line for the museum. You can guess what comes next – no power. Eversource was able to hook up temporary power for several months until the new transformer was able to be installed in October. It is nice to have the work done before winter.

In Memoriam

Our thoughts go out to the family of Joyce Morhmann. Joyce was a longtime Life Member. Her presence will be missed.

Scholarship Reception



A reception was held for the 2021 Edmund M. Keefe Memorial Scholarship Award winner, Chloe Craig! Chloe is a 2021 graduate from Nashua High School, North. Chloe's guidance counselor characterized her as "a very empathetic young woman with a sense of drive and commitment not often found in high school students." Chloe is attending Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina where she is studying architecture. We know Chloe will do great things.

Shaw's Give Back Where it Counts Bag

We are so excited to share that The Nashua Historical Society is participating in Shaw's Giving Bag Program for **December 2021**. This program is designed to make it easy for customers of Shaw's stores to contribute to their local community while supporting the environment.

This ongoing opportunity can be taken advantage of at the Shaw's store located at **213 Daniel Webster Highway, Nashua**. Simply purchase a \$2.50 reusable GIVE BACK WHERE IT COUNTS Bag, follow the instructions on the attached Giving Tag, and we will receive a \$1 donation!

This is a great way to support the environment and fund-raise for our museums. To learn more about this program, please visit shaws.bags4mycause.com.



Louis LaRose, Apothecary

by Deborah A. Carl

I started writing about Louis LaRose because there was a good picture of him on the Nashua Historical Society's web page and I wanted to bring some of our history to life. As my research progressed, I discovered he was my 4th cousin six times removed. (Our common ancestor is my 9th great-grandfather. Small world.)



This interior photo of the LaRose Apothecary with all its bottles and canisters gives us some insight into how complex the preparation of medicinal compounds must have been. Louis S. LaRose was the owner-druggist who operated the business at 101 West Pearl Street from 1887 to 1896. Photo colorized using feature at MyHeritage.

Louis LaRose came to New Hampshire around 1869 where he met a fellow Canadian, Zenaide Provencher, in Manchester and they married in 1872. The earliest record for him in Nashua is 1886 when he becomes a citizen of the United States and takes his Oath of Allegiance, but his obituary says he arrived around 1882. He finally shows up in the 1887 Nashua Directory as La Rose Louis E., apothecary, 101 Pearl, house Chestnut. In the 1900 census, he is listed as a widower.

Louis was very successful. He started with the one drug store on 101 Pearl Street and went on to open another four stores around town which he sold before he retired. He was popular and often his activities appeared in the Nashua Telegraph such as his trips to Canada and France.

However, he also had his business challenges. In 1889, his friend Victor Lussier, who had acted as a

character witness for his Naturalization, sued him for breach of contract claiming Louis had sold him the Pearl Street drug store. The case was tried before the New Hampshire Supreme Court in Nashua and Louis must have prevailed because the 1891 Nashua Directory lists him as having shops at 101 West Pearl Street and 60 Canal Street and Lussier still only had the one drug store at 141 Main Street.

Another time, Louis found himself accused of selling liquor on Sunday. The blue laws enacted in 1883 limited sales to milk, bread, medicines, and other necessities on Sunday. Louis was able to convince the court that the liquor was for medicinal purposes. The blue laws were in effect but unenforced until they were repealed in 2010.



The shop is now a hair salon. Photo by John Carl November 2021

And then there was the time he poisoned himself. It didn't make front page news, and it didn't effect his business, but it was a scary time. "Mr. L. E. LaRose, the Pearl [S]treet druggist, is a large and corpulent man. For some time past he has been taking a medicine known as anti-fat." It was in an unmarked bottle and a clerk had moved it and accidentally put a similar, also unmarked bottle in its place. LaRose took his medicine before he went to lunch and when he got back, "It occurred to him that the medicine he had taken tickled his throat, and possibly was not anti-fat." Turns out he'd taken belladonna. The doctor was called and prescribed an antidote. Louis took the first dose and continued to wait on customers and

LaRose continued from page 6

skipped the next dose of the antidote. At 6 pm a friend stopped by and found Louis having convulsions and “crazed.” The doctor told the friend to keep Louis moving so more friends came and stayed with Louis all night and when he lost consciousness, they

rolled him, shook him, and “carried him about the hall” until morning when he “came to himself.”

Twenty-nine years later, he died so it probably wasn't belladonna poisoning. He was survived by four brothers and a sister. No children are mentioned, nor is his wife. He died in Nashua and his body was sent to Verchera, Quebec where he was probably buried near his parents.



West Pearl Street 1885 Photo colorized at MyHeritage.



95-105 West Pearl is a three story building constructed about 1853 and contains 9 commercial units and one apartment. Louis LaRose's Apothecary Shop was in unit 101 in 1887. Photo by John Carl Nov 2021

Fritz Weatherbee tells the story of Nashua and Dunstable

In May 2021, Fritz Weatherbee visited Nashua to tell the story about the history of Nashua and Dunstable. Fortunately for us, to tell the story he chose to stand at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument with the Abbot-Spalding House Museum and the side of the Florence H. Speare Memorial Museum in the background. If you would like to watch the story, the link is: <https://www.wmur.com/article/fritz-wetherbee-dunstable/36351536>



Nashua Historical Society

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Museums Reopened

The Nashua Historical Society continues to monitor the Covid-19 situation in New Hampshire and adjust as needed. Currently, the Speare Museum and the Abbot-Spalding House Museum have returned to pre-Covid hours of operation. The Speare Museum is open for self-guided tours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. An appointment can be made with the staff if a different day and time is needed. The Abbot-Spalding House is open by appointment only.

The Nashua Historical Society office continues to be open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

