
HENNIKER HISTORIAN

JULY 2020 NUMBER 80

NEWSLETTER OF THE HENNIKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Henniker Historical Society Board 2019-20

President: Kristen MacLean

Vice President: Diane Carpenter

Treasurer: Ron Taylor

Secretary/Newsletter: Ellen Reed

Members

Susan Adams, Deb Dow, Susan Fetzer

Marc McMurphy, Yolande Nicknair, Martha Taylor

ANNUAL MEETING AND RAILROAD TALK CANCELED

PLEASE VOTE

Due to the Coronavirus and need for social distancing, the Henniker Historical Society and Museum annual meeting has been canceled this year, however, it is necessary to vote in the new slate of officers. We are asking all our members to take a few minutes and vote to approve these hard-working people who are striving to keep Henniker's history alive. We hope to reschedule the talk on Henniker's railroad history at a later date.

To approve the following slate of officers (you may also write in a candidate), please email us your vote by **August 15th** at:

hennikerhistoricalsociety@tds.net

You may also detach the list below and mail your vote to:

**Henniker Historical Society
P.O. Box 674
Henniker, NH 03242**

Proposed 2020-21 Slate of Officers for the Henniker Historical Society and Museum

**President: Marc McMurphy
Vice President: Ellen Reed
Secretary: Susan Fetzer
Treasurer: Ron Taylor**


THANKS FOR VOTING!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

You will learn while reading the contents of this newsletter, that the HHS Board has decided to cancel the Annual meeting that was rescheduled to August 13th. We are obligated in our By-laws to elect officers annually. This year, members are being asked to vote remotely for the slate of outstanding candidates (and volunteers!). We have tried to allow for a variety of voting preferences. Please take a moment to send in your response. Happily, I will continue to be a part of the HHS board. During this pandemic, I have found that I have increased the amount of time I spend at the society. Time moves on and, in its wake, it leaves history which needs to be added to all the documentation that was created before me.

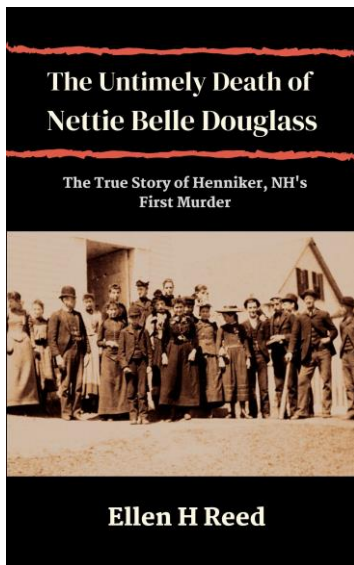
Many thanks to Susan Adams for her efforts with the MUSE group over the past year in planning the railroad program. It pains me to see all the hard work "derailed". Everyone is looking forward to another date with guest speaker, Dale Russell.

Stay well ~ Kristen



Many Thanks to Kristen for all her hard work as President over the past few years. Her unflagging energy has been an inspiration to us all in our efforts to reorganize and digitize our data and artifacts!

NEW PUBLICATION AVAILABLE AT THE HENNIKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM



In the early hours of August 15, 1894, the peaceful village of Henniker, NH was shaken to its core by news of a horrific murder – the first in its 126-year history.

Fitz Courser, owner of the local livery stable was abruptly awakened by the eerie sound of a horse and carriage rattling through his yard then disappearing into the foggy night. Lantern in hand, Courser stumbled outside and to his horror, discovered the bloodstained body of 14-yr-old Nettie Douglass. She had been shot three times in the head, and the suspected killer, her 21-yr-old beau, Arthur McLean, was nowhere to be found. What happened on that moonlit ride that drove Arthur to murder his young sweetheart? Only McLean knew, and he wasn't talking.

This is the true story of that fateful night.

Autographed copies are available at the Henniker Historical Society with a portion of the sales going to support the Society.
(also available at amazon.com)



VISIT US ON THE WEB:

www.hennikerhistory.org

email: hennikerhistoricalsociety@tds.net

Facebook

VISIT US AT ACADEMY HALL

51 Maple St

Henniker, NH 03242

603-428-6267

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Monthly board meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month at 9:00 am in Academy Hall. Members and prospective members are invited to attend. **(Currently being held via Zoom)**

MEMBERSHIP

Your membership expiration is noted on your mailing label. If yours is about to expire please renew to continue to receive the newsletter and support us as we preserve Henniker history.

To renew, send \$5.00 per person (checks can be made out to Henniker Historical Society) along with your name and address to:

Henniker Historical Society
PO Box 674
Henniker, NH 03242



We Need



Your Vote

Items from the Museum Henniker Versatile Saw



Thank you to the *Richard Brzowski* family of New Gloucester, Maine, who donated a Versatile Saw that had been used by his father, John, a carpenter in Antrim, to build the family home in 1950. The saw was manufactured in Henniker by a company founded in 1948, as the Henniker Machine Co., by Merle R. Patenaude, Sr., who designed the sliding-arbor table saw. The saw was advertised as having 16 different features of the saw that 'does everything'. Production ceased in the early 1990's.



Railroading in Henniker

Although the Annual Meeting of the HHS was canceled and railroading enthusiast Dale Russell will not be able to present "History of the Railroad Lines Around Henniker", you can still learn about the extensive railroad enterprise that resulted in the growth of Henniker in the 1800's. In 1889, 10,500 pairs of Henniker made slippers were shipped in one day by rail! HHS has provided a display in the Henniker Town Hall on railroading



New Display Case for the HHS Museum

Thank you to the *Henniker Community School* for donating a ten-foot-long, wood and glass display case. Once used to house trophies, it has been placed in our museum to display future exhibits.



The Henniker Men Who Gave Their Lives in WWII



Douglass Rush



Dexter Woodman



George Hall

Recently, two memorial road signs have been refurbished here in Henniker. One is located on Rush Rd. and the other on Hall Ave. Have you ever wondered where those road names came from? Or who Woodman Park was named for? Here is a brief history of the three Henniker men who lost their lives during World War II.

Albert and Pearl Rush relocated with their two sons from Berlin, in northern Coos County New Hampshire to Henniker shortly after 1910 to a farm off Flanders Road. Later they would move to a small white house in town off Pleasant Street where on August 20, 1920, their third son, Douglass (with two esses) was born. Growing up, Douglass would become good friends with George "Bill" Hall and Dexter "Deckie" Woodman who had moved to Henniker as children.

Douglass, Deckie and Bill enlisted together in the Army Air Corps on September 30, 1940. The Air Corps would become the US Air Force the following year. After three weeks of basic training in New York, the three were sent to Camp Nichols in the Philippines. Camp Nichols, located south of Manila on the island of Luzon, had been established by the US Army in 1919 and was the base for the Philippine Air Force. Deckie remained at Nichols while Douglass and Bill went north to Clark Field. One day after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese began bombing the Philippines. Dexter Woodman died December 13 when the Administration Building at Nichols was bombed. Rush and Hall were captured during the Japanese invasion and occupation of the island of Corregidor in May 1942 and withstood the 60 mile Bataan March north to POW camps. Douglass Rush died at Camp 1 Cabanatuan Prison Camp on June 15, 1942. George Rush died December 1, 1942 at an unknown location.

In March 1947, the town voted to change the name of Pleasant Street to Rush Road in honor of Douglass Rush. High Street was changed to Hall Avenue in honor of George Hall. Woodman Park, in front of the Town Hall, was named in honor of Dexter Woodman. The bodies of Douglass and Deckie were located and returned to Henniker and buried with full military honors on October 17, 1948.

In Henniker, two historical markers were erected to remind us of the sacrifice of these two Henniker POWs. This summer the Henniker Beautification Alliance, part of the Henniker Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the Henniker Historical Society had the markers removed and refurbished by Bill Lustig of Sign-O-Rama after nearly 75 years.



Woodman Park

CORRECTIONS IN OUR LAST NEWSLETTER

- ✓ The HHS appreciates the careful eye of HHS member Mark Schweitzer who pointed out the error in our last newsletter article on the Noyes Block. The Preston Block, east of the Noyes Block held a “grocery and general merchandise store on the first floor, and on the second floor, Jesse Webster, tailor and Reuben Gregg, harness maker” (Cogswell, 1980). After the fire of 1893 the Preston Brothers were quick to rebuild, and the store became a member of the IGA chain. In addition to owning the Preston Block, after the fire in 1893 the Preston Brothers purchased the Noyes property (known as the cellar hole).
- ✓ Also, the individual in the photo pointing out the corner entry of the Towle Building was Ryan, (not Kevin) Towle.



The Henniker Historical Society is the preserver of artifacts, historic documents, photographs, books and oral and written histories related to Henniker. We accept photos provided they have been identified. Artifacts are accepted as room permits. Historic documents can include letters to or from Henniker residents or documents related to organizations or groups. Think of HHS when you don't know what to do with the old photo album or bundles of letters you find when cleaning out grandmother's attic!



YOUR VOTE IS IMPORTANT!

Henniker Historian

**Henniker Historical Society
PO Box 674
Henniker, NH 03242**

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HISTORIC HOUSE SIGNS COMING SOON!

Have you ever driven through towns in New Hampshire and noticed the attractive date plaques displayed on many historic homes? Well, now is your chance to get one of your very own! We will soon be offering homeowners the opportunity to purchase a lovely 9x12" plaque, featuring the year of construction, that can be proudly displayed on your house. Watch for more information coming soon!



DON'T FORGET TO VOTE FOR NEXT YEAR'S OFFICERS!