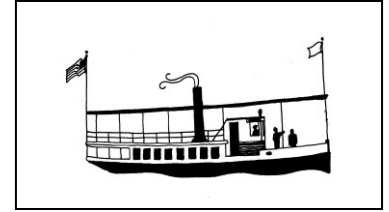


Sunapee Echoes

Sunapee, New Hampshire Historical Society, Inc.
P. O. Box 501, Sunapee, NH 03782
sunapeehistoricalsociety.org
e-mail: sunapeehistory@gmail.com
603-763-9872
Summer 2022



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Summer is certainly speeding along. The Museum is humming, thanks to our crew of local docents!

We have enjoyed two of our three scheduled history cruises. Our weather luck held with rain on both days clearing before cruise time into lovely, cool evenings. We'll host one more cruise on August 15th at 5 pm. There are still a few spots available on that one, so let us know soon either via email at SunapeeHistory@gmail.com or by phone at 603.763.9872 if you'd like to come along.

Barbara Chalmers led off our summer program series with presentation of her newly published Volume 3 of Sunapee's Historic Buildings and Places—a magnum opus that weaves together many threads of Sunapee history. She described the resources used in her research and the many hours devoted to the project and highlighted some of the properties in Volume 3. Thank you, Barbara!

The second in the series featured **Howard Sargent with Dave Flint and Bill Latva** reminiscing about the hey days of fishing in Lake Sunapee. Thanks to them, too!

Next up will be our exploration of the life and accomplishments of show producer **Ned Wayburn**, both in New York and here in Sunapee. See below for details and enjoy the article on page 2 about Ned and his friends.

Continuing the theme of entertainment, we'll finish the summer season on August 18th with **Bruce Cronin** talking about his careers as magician (beginning at age 12!) and filmmaker, skiing and tennis instructor.

Our **annual meeting** is coming up on August 18th, at 6:30 just prior to Bruce Cronin's program. As usual, we will review the year's accomplishments and elect board members.

Our officers will all stand for reelection for 2 years:

President: Becky Rylander
Vice President: Barbara Chalmers
Secretary: Lucy Mueller
Treasurer: Lela Emery

Volunteer Coordinator and director for another 2 years:

Lois Gould

And new directors for 3-year terms:

Heidi Unger
Jim McGraw

Nomination of a third director in a 1-year term is pending.

Our great thanks go to departing board members Gail Bosse, Carolyne Gatesy, and Patricia Halpin for all they have done!

Looking ahead to fall, we're planning a **cemetery walk** on Saturday afternoon, October 8th. (The rain date is October 9th.) You'll want to join us at Eastman Cemetery on North Road to meet 5 of Sunapee's early movers and shakers. Stay tuned for more details and please let us know if you'd like to help with the event! We'll need actors, tour guides, costumes, parking attendants, and more.

Carolyne Gatesy has been leading a group that has been working hard to plan our **50th anniversary celebration** next year with a grand event (among others) at the Livery. Please let us know if you'd like to help. And thanks to our sponsors who have already sent in donations!

Thanks to Meagan Reed and Sunapee Middle High School, we have fleshed out our collection of yearbooks. We're still missing 1952's. Does anyone have one?

Enjoy the rest of summer!

Becky Fitts Rylander

SUMMER PROGRAM SERIES

Wayburn perfected the art of stage dancing in the early 20th century, produced the Ziegfeld Follies and other shows, including several at the Lake Sunapee Yacht Club in the 1930's. We will explore his career and life in Sunapee.



Thurs, Aug 4th @ 7 pm
Sunapee Historical Society Museum
(Sunapee Harbor)

Presented by



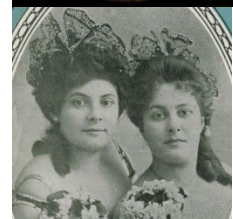
~ FREE ~
(donations appreciated)

For more info 603•763•9872 or
SunapeeHistoricalSociety.org

Did you know?.....

New Hampshire has long provided a haven for artists of all types—sculptors, authors, painters, actors, dancers. Some groups are formally known—the Cornish Colony and the MacDowell Colony, for instance. But did you know that Sunapee had its own collection of characters who came from New York, loved Sunapee, and contributed much to the life of our community? Here are a few, all of whom were contemporaries and knew each other:

Billy B. Van (1870-1950) was a vaudevillian who arrived in George's Mills in 1897 for his health. In 1902 he purchased a farm on Prospect Hill (now the Prospect Hill Antiques property) and by 1915, he had begun making silent movies, inspired native son Lee Collins to go into show business, tried to change the town's name to Van Harbor, built the Van Harbor Casino, and became a dairy farmer—all while continuing his career in New York. You can imagine George's Mills with all sorts of flamboyant actors and actresses in town! Those included the Beaumont Sisters, the younger of whom—Rose—he married and later divorced. What wasn't so well known at the time was his habit of sending food anonymously to needy families in town. In 1920, after failing to convince the town to change its name, he moved to Newport, cows and all. By then he had given up on making movies, but he led a similarly active and philanthropic life there and, in the process, gave that town its appellation "The Sunshine Town." For more on the contributions of Van to this area, see *Billy B. Van: Newport's Sunshine Peddler* by Jayna Hooper, available at the Newport Historical Society.



Cecil Lean (1878-1935) & **Cleo Mayfield** (1898-1954) were a married couple who won national fame performing in comedy skits on stage and radio. They were associated with the Ziegfeld Follies and other productions, often on tour. They first show up in the local paper, the *Argus*, in June of 1916. By 1918, Cecil and Cleo had purchased a cottage in George's Mills that they named "MayLean" and Verto Collins was busy building a large boathouse on the property. That building remains and is now the Georges Mills Boat Club (next door to the Goodhue Marina).



Over the years until Cecil's sudden death in 1935, they were integral to the summer scene here. For several years beginning in 1930, Cecil wrote a column for the weekly *Argus* titled "Listen to This" in which he reported on events in New York and Sunapee friends he had seen or heard from including Ned Wayburn and Congressman Tilson. In 1932, Cecil and Cleo presented a "revue-concert" of selections from musical comedies in their repertoire. The proceeds from that performance at the Newport Opera House benefitted the

Crippled Children's Fund of the Newport Rotary Club. Also that year, they participated in a comedy murder mystery staged at the Yacht Club. Although Cecil Lean died in New York City, he is buried in Newport's Pine Grove Cemetery—a testament to his love of the Sunapee area.

Ned Wayburn (1874-1942) is credited with developing the art of American stage dancing while producing the Ziegfeld Follies and other shows as well as running dancing schools in New York and Chicago. He came to Sunapee in 1924, and over the next 15 years, participated in summertime life here in many ways, including directing two or three shows staged by the younger members at the Lake Sunapee Yacht Club—shows that contributed to shoring up yacht club finances in those depression years. In a program to be presented at our Museum on August 4th at 7 pm, we will explore Ned's career and all his contributions to the life of this community. We may even demonstrate his "Footloose Strut."



In Memoriam. We were saddened to learn of the passing of **Lee Salonen**. Lee spent many of his years in Massachusetts, but some of us remember his boyhood summers and early adult years on his Finnish aunt and uncle's farm on Trow Hill and enjoyed being reacquainted after he returned to Sunapee in retirement. He served as one of our loyal docents for many years.



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And when ordering from Amazon, please use the **smile.amazon.com** website and list the Sunapee, NH Historical Society as your chosen charity. Thanks!



We're glad to accept your membership renewal or donations at any time!

2022 MEMBERSHIP – RENEWALS – CONTRIBUTIONS

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- Send future newsletters by e-mail
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Thank you!

Sunapee Echoes

Sunapee Historical Society
PO Box 501
Sunapee, NH 03782

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