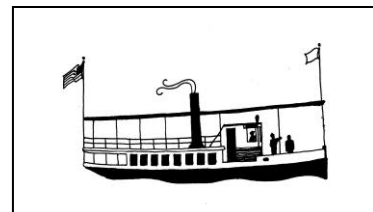


Sunapee Echoes

Sunapee, New Hampshire Historical Society, Inc.
P. O. Box 501, Sunapee, NH 03782
sunapeehistoricalsociety.org
e-mail: sunapeehistory@gmail.com
603-763-9872
Summer 2026



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

As usual, the summer is moving quickly. By the end of last week, we finished our series of programs on Sunapee and New Hampshire during the American Revolution—our contribution to the grand USA250 celebration.

We had a terrific history cruise in early July with fine weather yet again. Some of our guests said they thought it was the best one yet! Now the boat is just about full for our second cruise covering the same part of the lakeshore—Gardner Bay to Georges Mills and Herrick Cove. That's coming up on 3 August.

Annual Meeting. Once again, it's time for our annual meeting. We'll gather at the museum at 6:30 on 6 August to hold a short business meeting, re-electing 4 officers and 1 director and changing some verbiage in our by-laws to avoid offending anyone followed by a review of accomplishments and acquisitions from the last year. As a non-profit, we take our responsibility to hold an annual meeting of the membership seriously, and we hope you'll come. It's your chance to review the whole picture of all we do and ask questions.

Standing for re-election:

Becky Rylander, president for 2 years
Barbara Chalmers, vice-president for 2 years
Kathy Springsteen, Secretary for 2 years
Lela Emery, Treasurer for 2 years
John Dietel, Director for 3 years

Proposed By-law changes:

Article V. Duties of Officers. Remove all pronouns, substituting the titles of the offices being discussed.

Ernest Harold Baynes—New Hampshire's own Dr. Doolittle! Mary Kronenwetter will join us at 7 pm on 6 August following our annual meeting to discuss the work of Baynes, a self-taught naturalist at nearby Corbin Park who helped rescue the American Bison from extinction and more. She'll illustrate her talk with archival photos from the Plainfield Historical Society's collection. This program is sponsored by our friends at New Hampshire Humanities.

Billy B. Van: early silent movie producer. In our spring issue, we told you about the astounding discovery in Japan of a silent movie filmed in about 1919 by vaudevillian Billy

B. Van, who came to Georges Mills about 1900 and moved on to Newport about 1920. *Van-ar-chy* stars none other than Billy himself and takes place in many spots in this area. The film has now been restored, and a score for live accompaniment has been written. Watch for more news about plans for a gala premier of the movie on 1 November at 2 pm at the Newport Opera House. We'll let you know where to buy tickets.



Helping out! If you like what we do to make Sunapee's rich history accessible to our community and visitors and would like to be part of that, please consider seriously ways you might help and let us know. Our most pressing need is always for greeters at the museum, but there are many other ways you could contribute.

Greeters. The museum can only be open as often as it is with help from a team of volunteers. Each shift is only 2 ½ hours, you don't need to know a lot of Sunapee history, and free training is available anytime. You'll have fun chatting with visitors from around the world and will learn a lot! The season runs for another 2 ½ months, so you haven't lost your chance!

--Programs. What do you know about Sunapee that you'd like to impart?

--Nominations. Do you know others who might bring us new ideas and fresh energy?

--Maintenance. Do you have skills that you could apply to caring for our buildings?

--Fundraising and acquisitions. Do you enjoy ferreting out donations, either dollars or Sunapee treasures looking for a home?

And much more. Please remember that as an all-volunteer organization, we need lots of assistance to avoid burn-out and ensure continuity with the next generation. Is it your time to help? Thanks!

--Becky

Did you know?.....

Our Sunapee Archives building is now 100 years old! We will be forever grateful that we were able to buy the building to house the more fragile items in the historical collection. Thanks go to our donors and to the Sunapee community who made it clear that they wanted the building to remain in place following the library's move to new larger headquarters up the road in 2014. For many years it served nobly as our town's library. We thought you might like to learn more about the archives building's early history.

The Sunapee Public Library was founded in 1892 with the help of a donation from the State of \$230.40 augmented by \$50 from the Town. It was located in a store at the corner of Main Street and High Street, and its holding grew year-by-year for several decades. Along the way, generous patrons—including, in 1903, both Secretary of State John Hay and George Dewey—assisted with donations. By 1905, the allocated space was growing tight, and talk began of acquiring a stand-alone library building. But many years passed before that dream was realized.

Martha Abbott served as a library trustee from 1909 until her death in 1918. When her estate was probated a year later, it turned out that she had bequeathed 3/5 of it—about \$10,900—to the town for the purpose of erecting a library building in memory of her husband, Almeron Abbott. The town added \$3,000, the Women's Village Improvement Society gave \$1,050, and Ellen Knowlton added \$2,500 in a bequest.

The Town purchased land from George and Ella Peabody in 1923 for construction of a library at the corner of Main Street and what is now Route 11. Included in the deal was the Peabody homestead which the town used first as a rental property and then dedicated funds from its sale to support the library. Other gifts have augmented that library fund ever since.

The building was designed by Architect Shiras Campbell and construction began in 1925. The Abbott Library opened for business on 1 June 1926, and the building served the town well, with the addition of the Mabel Davies (Librarian, 1958-1979) wing in 1986, until 2014, when the Abbott Library moved to its current location. Once the building was empty, the question became what to do with it. The townspeople made it clear that they could not imagine the town without that building, and we were very happy to agree. We signed a lease/purchase agreement with the town, completed a successful fund drive, and purchased the building in January 2019, agreeing that the exterior would remain the same. Since then, we have installed an updated HVAC system and put on a new roof. We enjoy working there in comfort winter and summer, and we are open there on Monday afternoons from 1:00-4:00 year-round. Other times, if Mondays don't fit your schedule, can be arranged by appointment..

Many of us fondly remember our childhood pilgrimages to the library, whether as summer residents or year-rounders, and the kind help of Mary Haven and/or Mabel Davies to find just the right books. We are proud to occupy it now as part of your historical society and hope you will visit to see the bits of Sunapee history on display there and relive your memories of the old library.



Looking for something to do?

Why not try out our self-guided walking tour of the Harbor area? You'll discover old and current photos of the historic buildings and places complete with information about them, all on your smart phone thanks to the *Sunapee Harbor Historical Walking Tour* on the Clio app!!

Or for gifts? Check out our store:

<https://sunapeehistoricalsociety.org/our-store>

Take a walk with us through the early stories of Sunapee Harbor



Download the CLIO app

and search under "Tours" by either Location or Title *Sunapee Harbor Historical Walking Tour* ~ Enjoy!



SunapeeHistoricalSociety.org
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- Follow the numbered pins on the map
- Enjoy the pictures of then and now
- Read the back story of Sunapee Harbor's historic buildings & places

Please thank these businesses for their support!

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SUNAPEE
★CRUISES★



We're glad to accept your membership renewal or donations at any time! Hearty thanks to all who have already donated!

2026 MEMBERSHIP – RENEWALS – CONTRIBUTIONS

NAME: _____

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TOWN, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

CHECK MEMBERSHIP TYPE:

☐ \$15 Individual ☐ \$25 Family ☐ \$50 Business ☐ \$100 Patron ☐ \$300 Sustainer

CONTRIBUTIONS:

☐ Donation \$ _____ ☐ I wish to remain anonymous

NEWSLETTER

☐ Send future newsletters by e-mail
☐ Send future newsletters by postal mail

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Sunapee Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 501
Sunapee, NH 03782

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Thank you!

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Sunapee Historical Society

PO Box 501

Sunapee, NH 03782

2025-2026 Board of Directors

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Sunapee Archives building early in its life as the Abbott Library, 1926