

The Hillsborough Historical Society

Hillsborough Heritage Museum

Current Exhibits, May 2017

Several of our current displays tell stories about *little known* natives and citizens of Hillsborough and how they have contributed to or helped change the course of the history of the United States. Photography is permitted. Please be sure to sign our guest book. Thank you for visiting our museum.

“A Voyage of Discovery”

Horace Holden, Franklin Pierce, Rosalie Hunt, Leslie Kincaid

In this exhibit we describe and interpret how citizens from Hillsborough and Deering played a role of some sort – big and small – in the United States’ becoming a world power stretching from the east and west coasts to the shores of China and Japan. We begin the story at Hillsborough’s founding and with its earliest settlers in the mid 18th century.

We then move along to the tale of **Horace Holden**. Born in Hillsborough in 1810, he wished to earn some money to help his widowed mother. He figured that whaling would be a good source of income, so in July, 1831 he made his way to New Bedford, Massachusetts and signed on as a crewman on the whaling ship “Mentor”. Shortly after reaching the Pacific, the “Mentor” encountered a fierce storm and was wrecked upon a reef in Polynesia. Holden and other crewmembers were enslaved by natives of the Palau chain of islands. Rescued in 1835, he returned to Boston where he wrote a famous and well received account of the shipwreck and his experiences entitled *Holden’s Narrative*. The book, which predates *Moby Dick*, remains an excellent example of early American shipwreck literature. Holden later travelled to the Sandwich Islands (now Hawaii, our 50th state) and eventually became one of the early American settlers in Oregon.

Hillsborough’s **Franklin Pierce**, 14th President of the United States from 1853-1857, is unfortunately not widely known for his accomplishments regarding U.S. expansion and trade. Born in Hillsborough in 1804, and a former state legislator, member of Congress, and U.S. Senator, this Mexican War veteran planned to encourage the nation’s growth as a world power. To a certain extent he succeeded. His administration was responsible for several treaties which promoted American trade with foreign nations including Great Britain, Canada, and Japan. The treaty that opened trade with Japan would be the most famous. President Pierce promoted and fully supported Commodore Perry’s famous naval expedition to Japan. This changed the course of American, Japanese, and world history.

Next we find ourselves in the 20th century. **Rosalie Hunt** grew up in Hillsborough in the years prior to World War 2, graduating from the grammar school in 1931 and high school in 1935. **Leslie Kincaid** grew up just over the town line in Deering. He also graduated from the grammar school in 1931. He eventually went on to join the navy and see the world. Initially he did so as a bluejacket on board the battleship “New Mexico”. He became interested in aviation. He became a member of the crew of the famous carrier “Enterprise” and served in the Pacific where he served as the U.S.A. was drawn into World War 2. He and Rosalie were married in Hillsborough in 1943. His navy memorabilia and her WW2 era scrapbooks help tell the story of life in Hillsborough before, during, and after the conflict and how hundreds of Hillsborough’s citizens, in their own way, and like people across the country, helped shape the outcome of the war.

Also included in the exhibit is a replica of sorts of Hillsborough’s wartime airplane spotter shack which gave a number of citizens a chance to help with the war effort. We also remember the story of the famous and lamented “Four Chaplains”, one of whom, the Reverend Clark V. Poling, had strong ties to Deering.

“A Century of Tools”

On display in this exhibit you can find dozens of tools of the sort used by American farmers, carpenters, and skilled craftsmen from the early 19th through the early 20th centuries. This exhibit features tools from the “Mr. and Mrs. David Post Jones, Sr. Early American Tool Collection”. This collection was donated to the society in 2015.

Hillsboro’s Mrs. Beach

A woman in a man’s world, Amy Beach – a native of Henniker – became a world renowned classical pianist and composer of classical music. A member of the MacDowell Colony in Peterboro, she resided in Hillsborough for a number of years. Mrs. Beach continued to compose throughout her life. She organized “Beach Clubs” which promoted musical appreciation and learning. Her name is inscribed on the Hatch Shell in Boston among those of other composers.

School Exhibits

Two exhibits related to Hillsborough’s history, prepared by students and teachers at Hillsboro-Deering Elementary School, are proudly presented for your perusal during your visit!