Mt. Massaemet Shadows

A QUARTERLY PUBLISHED BY THE SHELBURNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Fall 2026

Annual Meeting

Please join us on Sunday October 25, 2026, at 1:00 PM for the annual meeting of the Society to be held at Fellowship Hall in Shelburne Center. Light refreshments will be available.

The meeting will be preceded with a presentation by Terry Dun titled "**Bridge Street: the first 150 Years and beyond**; *A photographic journey of its buildings and businesses.*"

AGENDA

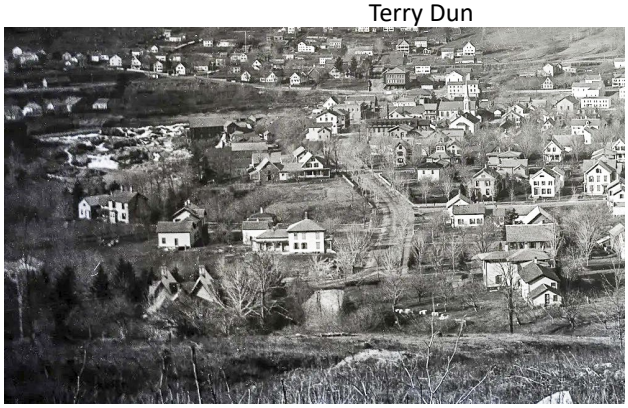
1. Welcome and opening by the President
2. Presentation by Terry Dun

Break for Refreshments

3. Secretary's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Discussion and vote on budget for 2027
6. Discussion and vote on annual dues
7. Nomination and vote on officers
8. Other business

Society Officers

President	Jerry Hoyt
Vice-President	Graham Warder
Treasurer	Marcia Tetrault
Secretary	Prudence Wholey
Trustees	Jim Wholey
	Terry Dun



Bridge Street
Ca 1875

President's Message

The trustees of the Shelburne Historical Society are committed to the purpose to the Society. The purpose of the Shelburne Historical Society, in part, is "to preserve any and all records, documents, and relics of historical interest... and to maintain a historical library, for the education of present and future generations. Our commitment to this purpose increasingly is becoming a burden. This is because of a shortage of staff and a lack of volunteers. At present, there are only 6 trustees and one paid employee. Despite the shortage of trustees and volunteers, the Society maintains its mission and endeavors to reach its goals. Two trustees alternate weekends to ensure that the Arms Museum is open every Saturday. Another trustee and employee expand the number of articles entered in past perfect and enlarge the number of offerings on our website. Another trustee oversees and maintains the Arms building. The two other trustees are fulfilling their obligations of office as treasurer and secretary.

Progress is being made in some areas. Our newsletter, the Mt. Massaemet Shadows, has been revied and another issue is expected early this fall. It will be emailed. Thus, email addresses are needed. Mahalia Dean, who is responsible for many of the museum's exhibits, recently created an exhibit on the semi-quincentennial of the Declaration of Independence. Kudos also need to be extended to Graham Warder for painting the floors and walls of the basement's agricultural room and adjoining room, a much needed and herculean task. On August 1, our Society hosted the Hilltown Trail History meeting. This is a meeting of local historical societies that discuss problems and exchange ideas for speakers and exbibits. Finally, I need to remind members that the Society's annual meeting will be held at Fellowship Hall on October 25th, 1PM. Terry Dun will give a photographic presentation on the historical changes to Bridge Street. Refreshments will be provided. We hope to see you there.

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Carl Nilman
1920

Advances in technology have a lasting impact on society as well as on individuals. Such is the case with Carl Nilman. Born in New York in 1902, he was the son of Charles and Ada Nilman, immigrants from Sweden. Early in the 1900's, the Nilman family settled in Buckland, residing at 11 State Street. Carl attended Arms Academy where he was an active participant in school life. He excelled in sports especially football and basketball. He also held a leadership role as the editor-in-chief of the school's newspaper. Graduating from Arms Academy in 1920, Carl took various jobs, including working at the Atwater & Kent radio store in Shelburne falls. In the later 1920's, he briefly worked as a sound engineer for Warner's Brothers in Cuba, Japan and Mexico.

During Carl's formative years, the film industry made significant progress. This progress depended on advances in photography. The time for exposure fell from over 1 hour to one-one thousand of a second. Edward Muybridge made significant advances in "series photography". In the 1870's. he installed 12 cameras along the Sacramento raceway. He sought to prove that all hoofs of a galloping horse briefly left the ground. This became known as the "suspension phase". Leland Sandford, then governor of California and a noted horse breeder, financed the experiment. He bet on the possibility of the existence of the suspension phase. Muybridge's photography proved its existence, and Stanford won the bet. Further developments have advanced the movie industry. In 1896, Thomas Edison perfected the movie projector. Three years later George Eastman began to manufacture celluloid films. These inventions made possible the rise of the nickelodeon. Known as "dream palaces" these theaters increased from a handful in 1904 to about 10.000 in 1908. By 1916, there were over 21,000 movie theaters in the United States.

A "dream palace" existed in Shelburne falls early as 1907. In that year, Clarence Ward opened a movie theater in the Odd Fellows Hall. About a decade later, William Mills purchased the business. He, in turn, sold the movie theater to Carl Nilman on September 1, 1930. Nilman converted the movies to talkies, and in 1935, moved his business to Memorial Hall. In the much larger space, he replaced the wooden chairs with cushioned seats. This movie theater remains in use today. He then expanded his movie business to Dalton, Wilmington and Manchester VT, and Hinsdale, NH. In the late 1940's and early 1950's, he also opened drive-in movie theaters in Northfield and Charlemont.

Later in life, Carl turned his attention to other avenues of profit. especially in real estate. At some time, he purchased the Wood block in Shelburne Falls. In the early 1940's he purchased the Franklin Forestry along with its 40 acres. It was located along route 2 in an area known as the Frost Flats. Improvements to route 2 between Greenfield and Shelburne in the early 1950's also prompted Carl to build the present-day Mobile gas station.

By the time of his death, Carl Nilman had amassed a sizeable fortune. Much of his fortune went to what became known as the Carl H. Nilman Scholarship Trust Fund. The Nilman Fund made it possible for many Mohawk graduates to attend college. Indirectly, advances in technology made possible the Nilman Scholarship Trust Fund.



Scott's Bridge
Ashworth Collection

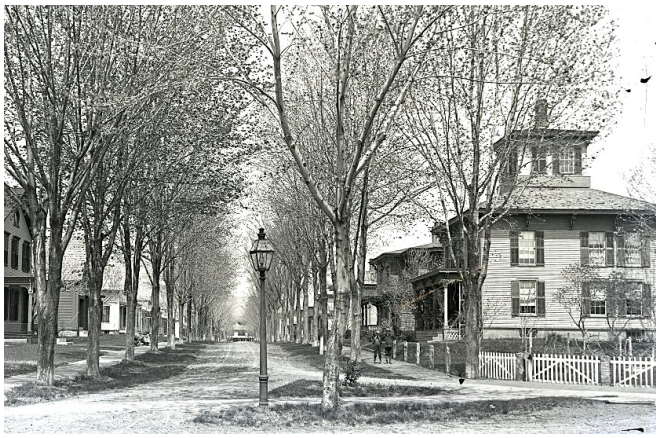
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Collections Update

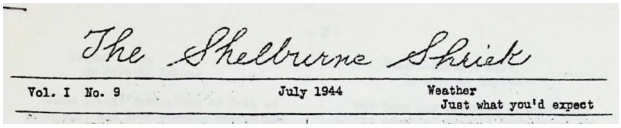
Hello all, happy fall! As we look to conclude our 2026 season on October 31st, I'd like to look back at the season we have enjoyed these last months. Personal highlights include Joe Judd's talk about Hill Cemetery and the opening reception of my exhibit about Lt. Col. David Wells. I also enjoyed walking Greenfield Recorder reporter Johnny Depin through the exhibit, leading to his excellent article published on August 24th. With my first exhibit under my belt, I am excited to create more featured exhibits in the future.

In mid-September I look forward to representing SHS at a national level conference in Rhode Island, getting all sorts of Collections and Curation ideas to bring back home. I am particularly interested in seminars and outdoor walks geared towards using cemeteries as historical sites. Piggybacking off Joe Judd's talk, I am interested in using Hill Cemetery as a test case for guided or independent cemetery walking tours.

What's next, you ask? I have begun the (likely years-long) project of collecting the history of every house in Shelburne. That's right, every house! Whether you live in the village or the Center, I would love to create a history of your house. Remember, even if you have a new build, the story of that build is also history! The top question I get asked when people learn I work at the historical society is "I live at x address, what is the history of my house?" I am very excited to one day have a resource to hand people in answer to this question. This is where you come in! If you would like to share anything about a house in town, yours or otherwise, please reach out to me at: collections@shelburnehistoricalsocietyma.org



High Street looking west from Bridge



"**The Shelburne Shriek**" newsletter was for our servicemen serving during WW-II. An interesting topic appeared in this issue.

Mail-in Voting

You will be proud to know that your State was one of the first to make it possible for those in the armed forces to vote at the election next November.

Under our Massachusetts law, voting by mail has been made easy for any man or woman in any branch of the Army or Navy, or persons serving in the Merchant Marine, the American Red Cross, The Society of Friends, The Woman's Auxiliary Service Pilots or the United Service Organizations and attached to and serving with such armed forces, if they have the usual qualifications for voting.

Postal card forms will be issued by the Army and Navy all over the world to be used as applications for ballots.....



World War II Bond Rally
Bridge Street

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A Friend

There is not in all our language,
Though we reach from end to end,
Word of truer, deeper meaning
Than the simple one of "friend."
Yet how often we abuse it,
And how hard it is to know,
Whether one we've loved and trusted
Will remain a friend or no.
Thus the heart is always seeking
For the one who will not prove
Recreant to all our trusting,
But return us love for love.
We need one in whom the shadow
Of a doubt can ne'er arise —
One we know will under stand us
Just by looking in our eyes.
One to whom the heart turns ever
As the flowers to the sun,
One who shares our joys and sorrows.,
Pardons all the wrongs we've done.
Knows the hopes that we have cherished.
Knows our aims for future years,
Knows our sins for which repentance
Has been bought with bitter tears.
Oft the ties the world deem nearest
Cannot give us such a friend;
Oft some heart turns, the dearest
Seems a stranger to life's end.
But alas! the deepest sorrow
That our heart can ever know,
May by that same friend be given,
Who has proved our bitterest foe.
So our faith grows ever weaker,
Till we say and think it true,
What is life, when friends betray us,
What is left for us to do?
"Life is real, life is earnest,"
Rings the old heart thrilling strain.
Many duties still are left us,
Life's sweet flowers may bloom again.

VIVIAN MARLOWE
Arms Student October 1887

Editor's Note

The Editor

Welcome to the all-digital copy of the "Shadows". We hope you enjoy this issue. We encourage feedback and content suggestions. Just send them along to our gmail "info" account (see below) attention the "Editor" and we will do our best to meet your request.



Ashworth Photo

Camp Group
Sadawga



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