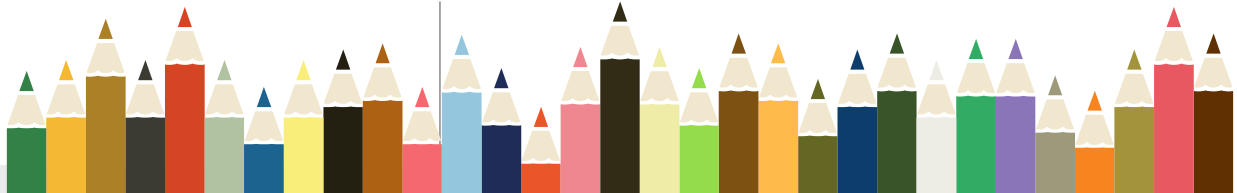


SHS NEWS

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In memoriam

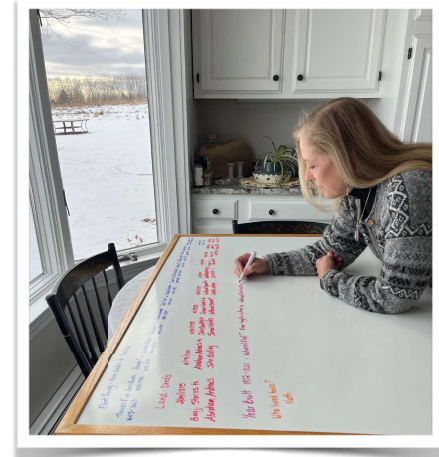
L. Ron Sislane, 93, science teacher, researcher and sports enthusiast, passed away at his home in Sweden on August 31, 2024. He was predeceased by his wife, Carol (Heers) Sislane, with whom he had five children: Linda, Bob, Virginia, Penny and Scott. Ron served in the Air Force, worked for the Atomic Energy Commission, and bought a marina on Lake Winnepesaukee. Returning to NH from a trip to Boston in 1969, he stopped in Sweden to ask for directions and discovered 199 Lovell Rd., the home that would be his family's haven for 55 years.

“A Howling Wilderness”

New trustee delves into Flint farm history

by Rebecca Buyers,
Sweden Historical
Society Trustee

In a recent interview with Susan Danielson, the newest Sweden Historical Society (SHS) trustee, she shared her research and growing enthusiasm for studying the past. We met in the white farmhouse on the Flint farm's 50-acre property that straddles Route 93 on Plummer Mountain, which Susan and her husband, Rod, purchased in 2020. (It's house #9 in SHS's book, *Living, Learning, and Worshipping: Buildings of Sweden, Maine 1813 -1913.*)



To keep track of the Flint family, Susan creates multi-colored lists on a big white board.

I had assumed that buying the Flint farm was what spurred Susan's interest in local history. But she said no, it was being asked to serve as a docent for an historic house tour in Bridgton. “That’s when I realized how much I didn’t know,” she said. She looked up the house’s history at the online Registry of Deeds and read materials the Bridgton Historical

His heirs donated items of historic value to the SHS before putting the property up for sale. Below is a well-preserved storage barrel and a gavel believed to have been used by Judge Calvin Powers who had the house built for his family in 1806.



A graveside memorial service for Ron will be held in the spring. For details visit lordfuneral-home.com



Holiday Lights

Thanks to Doug Porter for decorating the SHS schoolhouse for the town's Lighting of the Evergreen celebration.



Society (BHS) provided on the tour. There she learned how instrumental land grants were in populating rural areas.

Moody Bridges, for whom Bridgton is named, was one of the “go-getters,” she said, who pushed for passage of Massachusetts’ land grant law. The law promised settlers 100 acres if they cleared 12 and built a log cabin and a barn,. According to BHS director Mike Davis, there was a bonus if you had children. Prior to 1768, land speculators bought and sold woodlots on paper. Many deed holders never set foot on their land, holding it as an investment until a town was established and they could sell it for more. The land grant law curbed this practice by putting a limit of seven years on how long you could own land without settling it. The “proprietors,” mostly wealthy friends of Moody Bridges, investors in the town, could take back the deeds of unsettled land.

Bridgton’s first settler, Captain Benjamin Kimball, migrated north from Ipswich, Susan’s hometown. She read the 1904 Bridgton Town Register to learn more. Captain Kimball was hired to “get on location by July 10, 1768, build a convenient house for the entertainment of travelers by September

10th, keep a store of goods, and also build a sailboat of two tons’ burden with which he should hold himself in readiness to carry passengers and goods between the ‘carrying place’ in Pearsontown (now Standish) and the head of Long Pond for a term of six years.”

For this service, one “right of land” comprising about 435 acres, was conveyed to him by the first deed drawn up by the proprietors, bearing the date of April 6, 1768. By then, Kimball had established a store, boarding house and pub” on the shores of Long Pond (now Long Lake).



“You get a feeling about these people when you’re reading about them.” Susan says..

After this foray into early New England history, Susan focused her research on the Flint family genealogy, traced through Ancestry.com, and the farm’s previous tenants.

To keep things straight, she has made multi-colored lists on a big white board. The 29 former Flint farm residents include Towers, Flints, Putnams and Bennetts, families who she says were “thick as thieves” both in Salem and in Bridgton. From the time Nathaniel Flint built the house until Albert Lee Flint sold it to Frank Zint in 1950, 27 of the 29 residents were descendants of the Hon. Thomas Flint of Salem or married to one.

“One was both,” she noted, with a twinkle in her eye.

Several Flint families lived in Sweden in different places. SHS trustee Kay Lyman says townspeople may remember Martha Flint whose family lived on another Flint Farm (not extant now) on Rt 93 about half a mile south of the Sweden Church.

Determined to learn when her house was built, and by whom, Susan returned to the Registry of Deeds. The first land deed for lot 32 was from Benjamin Stearns to Abraham Andrews, who married Esther Stearns, Benjamin’s sister. According to The Genealogy and Memoirs of Isaac Stearns and his Descendants, this marriage did not end well for Esther:

*“Capt. Abraham Andrews was born Sept. 6, 1747, in Ipswich, Mass.; a cooper by trade; served several terms of enlistment in the Revolutionary War and sank all his means in Continental money. After the war he removed, with his family, to Maine and settled on a free lot of land containing 100 acres. His wife, Esther (Stearns) Andrews, came to her death from hardships and privations endured in that new country, while trying to raise her family. She had been well-bred, and it was a terrible change to leave her comfortable, prosperous home and go to a **howling wilderness.**”*

When the Danielsons purchased the farm in 2020, the house was listed as being built in 1812. But it wasn't until 1847 that John Flint bought the house and put it directly into a Flint's name for the first time. As all but two people who have lived on the farm were either of Flint descent or married to a Flint, she looked for a family connection between the Stearns and the Flints and discovered that Mary Stearns (1689-1763) married Nathaniel Flint (1694-1760) in 1720. This Nathaniel was

the eldest son of George Flint, from whom all the Flints of Sweden descend. Nathaniel's brother, Ebenezer, and his wife, Tabitha, gave birth to Captain John Flint, who purchased land in Bridgton for his son James, who became one of the first residents of Bridgton. James married and raised eight children, including Nathaniel, in the house built above across Long Lake, which can be seen from the Flint farmhouse.

Susan thinks Nathaniel Flint built a small log cabin or a part of the current house in or around 1809-1812. Supporting that theory, in July of 1817, Nathaniel bought lot 27, the site of the Goodman farm across the road and in that deed he was listed as “Nathaniel Flint of Sweden”.

Through SHS President Nils Johnson, Susan met a living Flint descendant, John Foster of South Paris, the nephew of the last Flint to live on the farm. John and his sister, Rae Foster Pierce, of Falmouth, are children of Rosemary



Flint Foster, whose sister lived on the Flint farm. John and Rae and her husband, attended the December SHS meeting and donated the Flint Family History from Wales to America to the Society. Thomas Flint (1603-1663) emigrated from Wales in 1635 and initially settled in Salem, MA. After reading the two-volume hardcover genealogy cover to cover, Susan was delighted to learn her findings were confirmed by the book.

As a SHS trustee, Susan says she looks forward to cataloguing archives and artifacts using the Society’s PastPerfect software. Digitization, she believes, will make Sweden’s collections more accessible to researchers and other historical societies in the region.

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Summer Intern Wanted

SHS is offering a \$2,500 part-time summer internship to qualified college students or rising high school seniors. The 8-week internship begins in June. Applications are due April 21, 2025. For more information, visit this SHS webpage:

<https://shorturl.at/b1tct>

Save the Dates Sweden Days - August 7-9

Thursday: Hike & KPEPA annual meeting
Friday: Historic House Tour & Talent Show
Saturday: Sweden Days activities & Contradance

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!

The next SHS newsletter will be digital. To subscribe, scan this QR code with your phone and fill out the form with your email address. Thanks!



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