
Hudson Historical Society

Spring/Summer

2026

NH



Hills House Narrowly Escapes Destruction!

In the mid 1960's, the Hills House was vacant and became a target for vandals. Its abandonment led to extensive damage.

The Hudson Historical Society's recent completion of scanning the renovation minutes from 1967-1977 offers a fascinating glimpse into the dedication and community spirit that saved this architectural gem. The efforts involved countless hours of labor, generous donations from local businesses, and unwavering perseverance by the Society's members and local residents.

We owe these past members and local citizens an immense debt of gratitude for their vision and commitment, ensuring that the Hills House remains a cherished landmark for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. Their foresight has preserved not only a piece of history but also a source of inspiration and pride for the community.

Where it all started

The Hudson Fortnightly Club played a pivotal role in preserving the historic Alvirne Hills House. This group recognized the significance of the house and their efforts to restore this structure began with a vision to maintain its grandeur while making it accessible for future generations to appreciate and learn from. The timeline on the next page will illustrate key milestones in their perseverance to save this house.

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**Hudson NH
Historical Society**

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Timeline

1965 Feb 11:

Article in annual school warrant seeking permission to raze the then 75 year old Alvirne summer home. This action was dictated by the cost of insurance, maintenance, and no potential use. At the annual meeting this article was tabled.

1965 Oct 18:

Realizing the house, when and if restored, could be the answer to the space issues at the Hills Memorial Library, the Historical Committee of the Fortnightly Club went on record as favoring its restoration.

1966 Jan 25:

Organizational meeting of the Hudson Historical Society held in Town Building. Mrs. Emlen (Dot) Pitfield, President of Hudson Fortnightly Club, acted as temporary chairman. Within a short time the society was incorporated with a set of by-laws and officers to serve until annual meeting in May.

1966 May:

First Annual Meeting of Historical Society held at Town Hall.

1968 Feb:

Work continued on a lease to occupy and restore the house. The first, 2-year, lease was received.

Historical Society Organizes

HUDSON — The new Historical Society held its organizational meeting last night at the Municipal Building. Temporary chairman Mrs Helen Pitfield presided. Harold French presented articles of agreement and the society by-laws which were adopted with revision.

A slate of officers and board of directors were elected. They are as follows: president, Robert W. Hill; vice president, Mrs Sylvia Flemming; clerk, Mrs Paul Buxton; assistant clerk, Mrs Leonard Smith; treasurer, Mrs Clayton Smith and directors, Charles Pelkey, Dr John Quigley, Mrs Zoula Rowell, Mrs Frank Austin and Mrs Emlen Pitfield.

Memberships in this newly formed organization are being accepted by application to Mr Paul Buxton. It is expected that meetings will be scheduled in the near future. The annual meeting is called for the fourth Tuesday in May.

This February 18, 1966 Nashua Telegraph article discusses the "new" Hudson Historical Society" meeting.

Local citizen's dedication to transforming the historic house into a living museum is a testament to their unwavering commitment to preserving history.

During this period, the Hills House was considered the headquarters for the newly formed Hudson Historical Society and a "Cultural Center" that held classes and programs for the community.

It was decided to house caretakers at the house and the conversion of the servant's quarters on the second floor into an apartment for live-in caretakers by installing plumbing and heating, ensured that the caretakers could live comfortably while safeguarding the museum.

The caretakers, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Pecce, also worked tirelessly to renovate and repair all parts of the house and grounds.

The next page will show an excerpt from the 65 page report of the documentation, giving us a glimpse into the tremendous effort it took to bring this house to life by our wonderful community.



Oct 4, 1968 Boy Scouts working on the porch. Mrs. Zoula Rowell (right) directs the activities. Photo from the Nashua Telegraph



Restoration of Hills House Under Way

Members of the Hudson Historical Society staged a painting session as part of their efforts to restore the Hills House on Derry Road. Window trim was scraped and painted in preparation for the installation of storm windows. The resident caretakers, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Pecce, will spend their first winter in the historic house.

At right, society president Robert Hill is silhouetted against the sunlight while painting a second story window. In the left photo, Dr. Norwood H. Keeney Jr. does a balancing act on the slate roof to remove nails. His son, Woody, looks on from a safer location.

9-27-68

(Telegraphphotos-Muller)

REPORT OF HOUSE COMMITTEE
1967

In order to bring all the members up-to-date on the Hills House, I'd like to submit the following report of work done on the house since last Spring.

1. Since Spring, water has been installed. This required many hours of labor and repairs to the pipeline in the field which had been broken and otherwise damaged. Robert Smith donated much of his labor and a discount of 5% on materials. Cost amounted to \$155.97.

A previous estimate by others had been approximately \$300.00

2. Repairs to the roof which was leaking was done by Robert Hill and Fred Rowell at no charge.

3. Repairs were made several times to boards covering windows and doors, by Fred Rowell. Vandals had broken-in, necessitating the repairs. There was no charge for this work.

4. All electrical wiring and fixtures were checked, and put in working order. Repair of fixtures broken by vandals will be done by Rowell and Miller Inc. There was no charge for all of this work.

A previous estimate for this work was \$150.00.

5. Replacing glass in windows and doors by Gate City Glass \$289.20. The cost of labor would have been double, but Mr. Chabot of Gate City Glass agreed to cut cost in half, if we would take out the windows and replace them, also 10% would be taken off the cost of glass, for cash payment.

Last Sunday, Robert Hill, Clifton Rowell, Norwood Keeney, Charles Parker and Donald Spaulding took the windows out for Gate City Glass. They are to be picked up Monday.

At present, the glass has been replaced and the windows returned. Now they need to be put back as soon as possible to keep the water from freezing in the water pipes.

6. Robert Smith is at present installing heat. The present boiler was found to be in good condition, so it will be converted to oil.

An oil burner in good condition was donated by Zoula Rowell.

An almost new oil tank was donated by Greg Dearborn for the house. Work is progressing well and there should be heat within a week.

7. Robert Smith has checked the sewerage system and found it to be adequate with very little repair needed.

8. Charles Parker, Robert Hill and Fred Rowell spent quite some time cleaning-up after the last spell of vandalism. Rubbish was carted to the dump.

9. A new line and poles were installed from the Street to the house by the Public Service, at no cost to the Society.

**Member Profile: Ashling Dion
Vice President 2025-2026**



My name is Ash, and I've been a Hudson resident for seven years. My love of history began when I was a child growing up in Lowell, in an old house full of character and stories. Living there sparked my curiosity about the past and the lives that came before us.

As I got older, I attended UMass Lowell, where my interest in historic buildings and preservation only deepened. When I met fellow member Leona and learned more about the group, I knew I wanted to be part of such a fun, passionate community of history lovers.

What I value most about the society is the opportunity to give back to the community I care so much about.

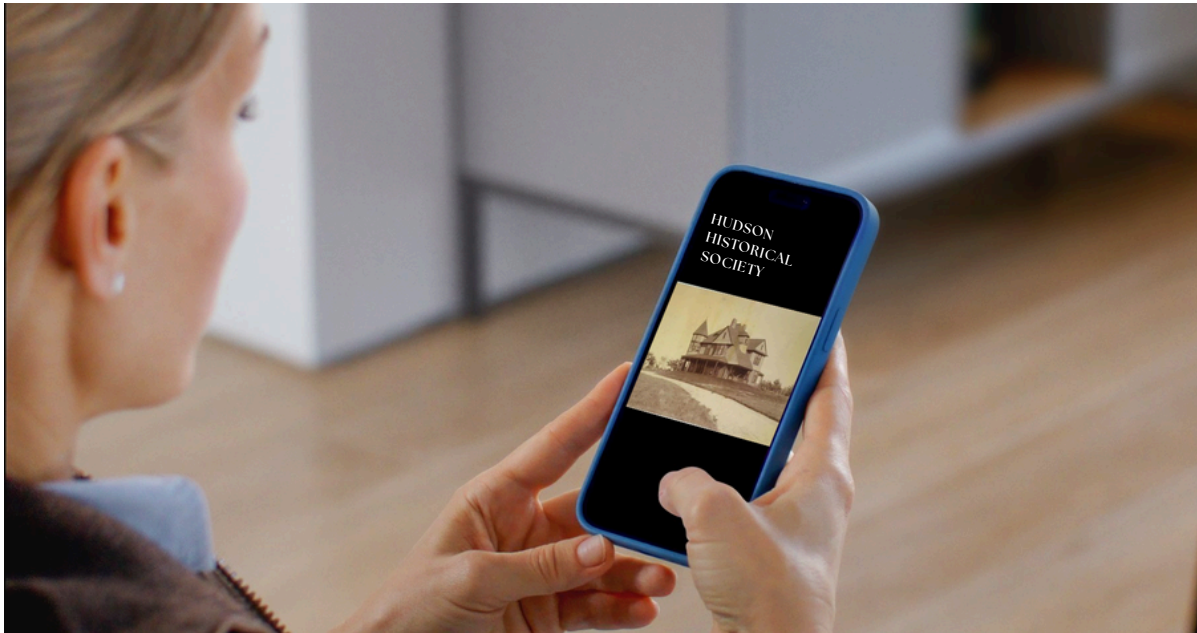
Tea Party!

One of our recent events was a Tea Party at the Hills House. We had such a great time and plan to have more in the future. Announcements will be sent to members via email for first choice and then posted on Facebook!



Remember to check our social media frequently (see page 6) to stay up to date with all the latest happenings. We look forward to seeing you at our events and sharing these wonderful experiences with you. It pays to become a member! Members will receive emails of all upcoming events before they are posted on Social Media!

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