

Please join us at the Catamount Hill Association's 2022 Annual Meeting

Saturday, August 13, 2022
First Baptist Church of Colrain
81 Foundry Village Rd., Colrain, MA 01340
1 pm EDT in person and via Zoom



The Catamount Hill Association was formally organized in 1875 to honor our ancestors. Quinquennials are held every five years. Celebrate 147 years with us!

Program

- Welcome from the Association President
- Business Meeting with reports from the Officers and Board Members
- Program – **Dr. Ammon Davenport**

Current Officers

President	Sonya Hamdan
Vice President	Dorothy Giffin
Clerk	Linda Wagner
Treasurer	Diantha Wholey
Historian	Prentice Crosier
Board	Sarah Davenport Richard King Susan Samoriski Ellen Shaw

How to Access the Meeting Using Zoom

If you are receiving this newsletter by mail, please email us at catamounthill1875@gmail.com with your contact information so we can send you the link or the phone number and password to log onto the meeting.

"Open Wide!": Dr. Ammon Davenport

Our speaker will be Paul Marino, the Program Director of the Northern Berkshire Community Television Corporation. He lives in North Adams where he is a local historian, a tour guide, and a photographer.



Paul Marino will speak about **Dr. Ammon Davenport** (1827-1911) who grew up at Meadow Place on Catamount Hill and attended the log schoolhouse there. He followed two brothers to New York where they all took up the fast-developing science of dentistry. In Paul Marino's presentation, "Open Wide!", we will learn

about the practice Dr. Davenport established in North Adams, the mansion he acquired, business buildings he built, as well as aspects of his family life.

The Historic Site on Catamount Hill

It is with great pleasure that the Catamount Hill Association recently accepted a gift of land on Catamount from the Mary Lyon Foundation. The land, originally intended to be given to the Catamount Hill Association, has been held in trust for the Association until they received official 501(c)(3) non-profit status from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

For generations this historically significant property was in the Davenport family. It was part of Paul Davenport's 300-acre farm which was deeded to him in 1793 and is the site where Paul and Amasa Shippee raised the first American flag over a schoolhouse in May of 1812. Tom Davenport, great-great grandson of Paul, deeded the land to the Mary Lyon Foundation in 1997.



The stone monument and stately flagpole commemorate the 1812 protest of the unlawful impressment of American seamen by the British Royal Navy. The forcible seizure of American men in the late 18th century was the catalyst for the War of 1812.

In an article from the Greenfield Gazette and Courier dated November 28, 1903, reference is made to the two-acre parcel of land on Catamount owned by Freeman L. Davenport which he retained when he sold his last pasture and timber lot to the Marcey and Donelson Lumber Company. It was his intent that the land ultimately belong to the Catamount Hill Association which was established in 1875 as a place-based organization to forever unify the original Catamount Hill settlers and their families.

*To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source,
a tree without a root.*

--Ancient Chinese Proverb

A Violin Mystery

Old newspaper accounts reveal that music was often included in Quinquennial Reunions -- human voice, fife and drum, brass band, and violin. In 1900, Maud Purrington (1872-1915) performed several selections on an organ which must have been transported to the meeting place near the dens by horse and wagon.

The 13th Quinquennial Reunion at Hillside Park in 1935 had 250 attendees. The *North Adams Transcript* reported: "Following a basket lunch at noon there was music by the Shippee orchestra of six pieces and selections by Harry P. Shippee of Ashfield, a noted old-time fiddler and a descendant of the Shippee family of Catamount hill fame."

Descendants of Paul Davenport (1766-1832), the flag-raiser of 1812, have a strong sense of history and for generations have preserved diaries, letters, documents, and artifacts. When Paul's great-great-granddaughter, Florence Davenport Reynolds (1919-2006), sold her Aunt Louise's home in Shelburne Falls, the old violin pictured here with its decorated case was noticed among the contents by the realtor, Patrick Shippee.



After the house sold, Mrs. Reynolds gave the violin to Mr. Shippee, but she could not explain its presence among other items of Catamount history. Could this be the fiddle played not only at Catamount Quinquennials, but at concerts and dances all around New England?

When Harry Shippee (1861-1938) died, the *Transcript* reported "ASHFIELD FIDDLER LEAVES ALL TO SON". This wasn't quite true -- a bracelet and a watch were left to a granddaughter, but no mention was made of his violin. What happened to it is still a mystery. Could it be that his violin and this one are the same instrument? The research continues...

Catamount Hill

*My friend, have you heard of Catamount,
One of Colrain's hills,
Where the pines grow tall, and the maple trees
And ancient memories sigh in the breeze,
And the bluebird trills?*

*It is the top of a mountain high,
And in a hollow there
Amid old black rocks and granite ledges
With here and there some wild rose hedges
There's a lake and lilacs fair.*

*It was once the home of wild things;
The catamount and the bear
Shared the wilderness home land
With a small pioneer band
Who built their houses with care.*

*Still in a clearing, nearly grown
Back to the forest of yore
The stones of a cellar place
Garlanded with Queen Anne's lace
Prove a home that is no more*

*My friend, if you go to Catamount,
Go with a heart full of joy
To remember the olden times—
Perhaps you'll hear the schoolhouse chimes
Or the laugh of a little boy!*

-- Louise Bowen O'Brien
July, 1985 *Voices*

Catamount Hill Publications make great family gifts

	<i>A Sketch of the Origin & Growth of the CHA of Colrain, MA</i> \$20.00 137 pgs		<i>The Puzzle of Catamount Hill</i> \$8.00 46 pgs
	<i>The First Schoolhouse Flag</i> \$6.00 19 pgs		<i>The Toad and The Eagle - A Catamount Tale</i> \$7.00 31 pgs
	<i>Where the Schoolhouse Flag First Floated</i> \$7.00 23 pgs		<i>The Young Housekeepers' Companion</i> \$6.00 39 pgs

(includes shipping -- see more details on our website)
Request publications by mail or email
catamounthill1875@gmail.com

Toni's Bequest



It is with great appreciation that the Association accepts the generous bequest from the estate of Toni Manning. These funds will support our future endeavors to preserve the memories of the Hill.

Tax-deductible donations will help support our mailings, website, meeting expenses and future activities.

Checks may be made out to:

Catamount Hill Association
P.O. Box 8
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370

The Catamount Hill Association is a non-profit 501(c)(3) public charity organization.

Visit our website:

www.catamounthillassociation.org

Find us on:

[Facebook at CatamountHillAssociation,Inc.](https://www.facebook.com/CatamountHillAssociation,Inc.)