

## Jennie D. Blake School "OUR Story" Presentation October 8, 2015



Carol Asher and Lucy Natkiel were at the school to "roll out" the history project with the staff and students. This project is a cooperative project between the Hill Historical Society and the students and staff of the Jennie Blake School,

There was a brief introduction of the importance of stories and how each person added his/her own story to the collective history of a place.

This project honors the legacy of John P. Chandler.



The historical panels (housed at the HHS Meeting House) had been on display in the school cafeteria since the beginning of school. The students were challenged with a new question every day—they had to search the photos and narratives on those panels to find some answers. It was obvious from the response of many of the students that they had delved into discovering things about our town. (One student was amazed that Hill was once a "resort".)

The panels tell of the settling of New Chester along the shore of the Pemigewasset River—a story similar to many towns in New England. Renamed Hill, this town made its true mark in history when its people banded together to move the whole town to a planned community up on higher ground after the government built the flood-control dam in Franklin.



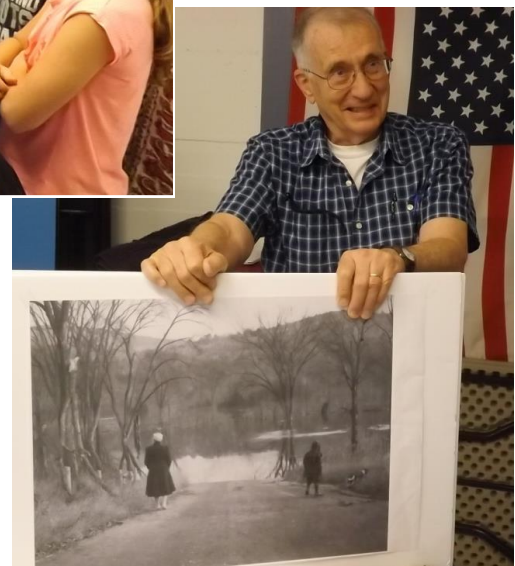
Hank Amsden was our special guest for this morning. He is the son of Ed Amsden, who was one of the leaders in town to encourage the townspeople to work together to move the town to higher ground.

“Uncle Hank” showed some enlarged photos and told the students about his experiences as a child moving to the “new” village.



After telling part of his story, ‘Uncle Hank’ was surrounded by a bunch of the older students who peppered him with more questions.

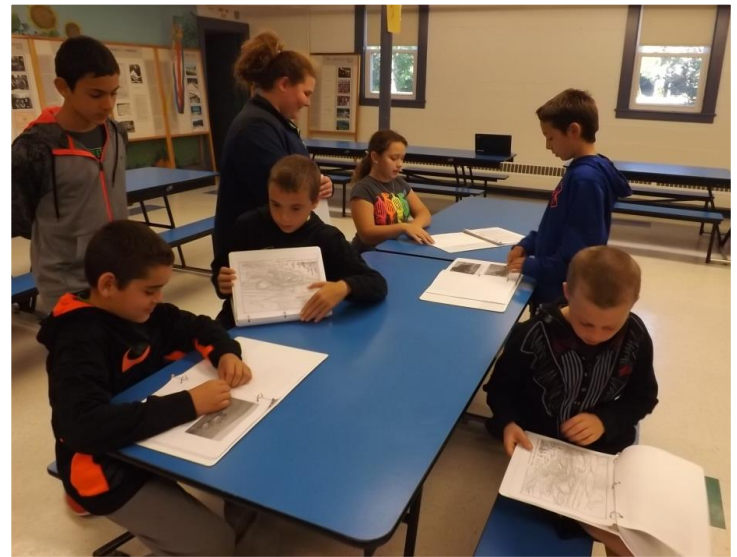
One of the large photos that “Uncle Hank” shared was this one of him as a boy looking at the lake that had swallowed his boyhood home during a large storm in the mid-1940s. (The good news was that the flood-control dam was doing its job!)





Each student (K-6<sup>th</sup> grade) received a personal copy of "OUR Story". This notebook contains the photos and stories from the historical panels and will be added to during the course of this project.

The students couldn't wait to open these books, look at the photos and read the stories for themselves. Many of the younger students were juggling their notebooks, trying to read them as they walked back to class. These sixth-graders settled at one of the tables to explore their "tomes".



As "Uncle Hank" pointed out where his new house was in the "New Hill Village", Zack realized that that's the house he lives in now.

Many thanks to JDB principal, Jay Lewis (shown here with Hank).

He and the teachers have enthusiastically embraced this idea of cooperating with the HHS to learn more about our special town.

