

Gilford Historical Society
June 26, 2008

Gilford's Historical Society invites all to come to the Gilford Village Bandstand on July 7th to listen to the 12th NHV Regiment Serenade Band as they recreate the sights and sounds of mid-19th century America, performing music of the Civil War played on period instruments. Bring your lawn chairs or a blanket, this is music that can be enjoyed by the whole family, with plenty of room to move around and visit with your friends and neighbors while you wait for the music to begin. You may want to start your evening with strawberry shortcake, the strawberries are freshly picked here in New Hampshire and the whipped cream comes from the McDonald farm (you may have bought their farm fresh products at local farm markets). It will be available at 6:30 and the band will start playing at 7:00. In case of rain, it will move across the street to the Meetinghouse. We are grateful to the Pardoe Fund for sponsoring this program; it is free to all those who attend.

“The band was formed in 1999 by musicians from New Hampshire who wanted to combine their love of history and music. Since that time, members of the band have been able to find and have restored some rare brass musical instruments dating back to the 1850's, including over-the-shoulder, bell front, and upright saxhorns and keyed brass horns. In addition to these original brass instruments of the period, music played by the band comes from regimental band books of the Civil War from groups and units including the 3rd and 4th New Hampshire regiments, the Manchester Cornet Band, the 25th Massachusetts regiment, Squires Cornet Band and the 26th North Carolina Regiment Band.” We will be able to hear the music as it sounded originally. I am told that if the same music was played on the newer instruments of today, that the sound would be quite different. The instruments of the Civil War era had a more “mellow” sound.

“The music performed by the band includes waltzes, polkas, gallops, quicksteps, and love songs of the time, with such titles as *Dixie's Land*, *Lorena*, *Slumber Polka*, *Colonel Meeker's Quickstep*, *Tenting Tonight on the Old Camp Ground*, and the *Port Royal Gallop*.” We are fortunate that the music has survived, thanks to the original N.H. Band Books being donated to the Manchester Historical Society and to the N.H. Historical Society.

Besides the music and the sound being authentic, the members will be attired in dress of the Civil War. Although the clothes are new, they are authentic in every detail (even that which is not visible must be true to the period).

The 12th NHV Regiment Serenade Band was originally raised here in Belknap County and was nicknamed the “Mountaineers” because the members were so tall. They accompanied the 12th N.H. Regiment (from Belknap County, a book on this Regiment is available for sale at Gilford's Thompson-Ames Historical Society), to serve their country during the Civil War.

“Concert programs include commentary on the instruments and the many roles bands performed during the war including providing entertainment for the troops, playing for the wounded in hospitals, serenading the officers at night, and providing music for various military functions.” During battles, members often served as medics. As the war progressed and became more costly, there was no money to pay band members and the policy of “no money for tooters, only for shooters” prevailed. This is when many officers started to pay to keep their band intact and have the bands play for their entertainment in the evenings.

“Musicians from the 12th NHV Band have played at battlefield events, concerts, and reenactments such as Spotsylvania, Cedar Creek, Antietam, and Gettysburg, along with events at Arlington National Cemetery and the Library of Congress.” They combined with the Baltimore Federal City Brass Band to play on Remembrance Day to commemorate the Gettysburg Address at Gettysburg, for a wreath laying ceremony at the Gettysburg Cemetery. They were there in July for the reenactment of the Battle of Gettysburg.

The Gilford Historical Society is pleased to be able to offer this unique musical program at the Village Bandstand in the center of Gilford village. There is plenty of parking, so bring your lawn chair or blanket, (and your appetite if you wish to partake of our freshly picked strawberries and farm fresh whipped cream combined for a delicious strawberry shortcake).

For information concerning Gilford’s Historical Society, go to www.gilfordhistoricalsociety.org or e-mail at thoames@worldpath.net or call 527-9009.