

# Dublin Historical Society

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Newsletter No. 67 – July 2006

## WILLIAM LATHROP BAUHAN

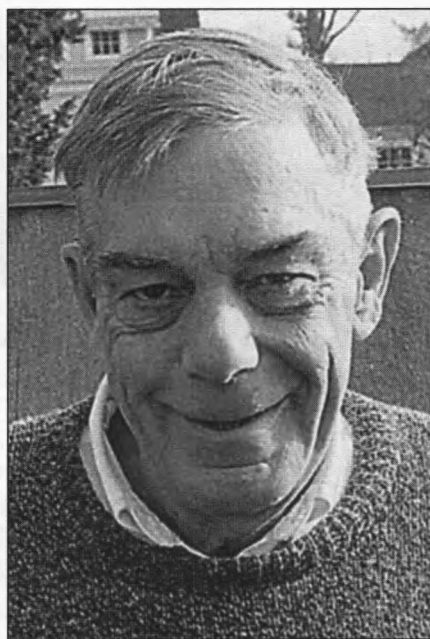
1929-2006

**W**e record with particular sadness the passing of William Bauhan, an honorary member – as well as a re-Founding Father – of our Society. Bill was instrumental in the revival of the Historical Society in 1986 and served as its President for its fledgling year.

Among Bill's many interests were architecture and buildings, an interest he came by naturally as the son of a prominent architect. After moving to Dublin in 1972, he put this interest and knowledge to the service of the Town. In 1976, as a member of the Conservation Commission and with the support of Nancy Perkins as Chairman, Bill undertook a survey of Dublin buildings. The original survey took the form of a questionnaire to homeowners, asking about the date of the house, previous owners, and any special design or historical features. The owners, by and large, knew very little about their houses, or had very little interest, and Bill wound up filling up many of the forms himself.

This modest beginning grew into a complex nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, embracing two historic districts – Lake and Village – and 156 individual buildings. Started as Dublin's way of marking the nation's bi-centennial, the project became involved in the Great Dublin By-Pass Controversy, leading a functionary at the N.H. Department of Transportation to remark that Dublin and Harrisville were the most thoroughly researched towns in the state.

The National Register nomination involved a number of people doing research under Bill's direction, including his friend Will Morgan, an architectural historian,



*William L. Bauhan, 1999*  
Courtesy of the Monadnock Ledger.

who was largely responsible for the technical descriptions. After seven years' work, the nomination was accepted by the Department of the Interior in 1983.

Another interest was genealogy. He was, as someone said, a walking study-book, and could reel off the sometimes tangled relationships of any family in Dublin. (He was also an authority on the genealogies of European royalty, and dealt with insomnia by reciting the Kings of France – backwards.)

With so much architectural and genealogical information at his fingertips, Bill succeeded Hildreth Allison as Dublin's "Mr. History". He became the authority of first and last resort for anyone trying to identify a Dublin building, or place a Dublin name.

Bill played an important part in the revival of the Historical Society in 1986. For years the 1841 Schoolhouse had

been used as a sort of town attic. The old collections of the original Historical Society of the 1920s and 30s were there, but it had been long assumed (wrongly, as it turned out) that the building belonged to the Town, which had been treating it as a storehouse for inconvenient property, such as the two Town hearses. There were any number of keys to the building floating around town, and there was evidence of things having quietly disappeared.

In the fall of 1985 I had started organizing the Town's archives, which led to the discovery that at least a

my brother and I were considered too young to go the funeral, so we were sent to the farm for a week—Libbet and Rolf's, on Covered Bridge Road, near Bowman's Hill. That's when we first heard the tales of the Bauhan boys (you may know the story: a man from New York was looking for the Bauhan farm, and so he asked the New Hope police chief if he knew where the Bauhans lived. And Chief Maxwell replied: Do they have three boys? Troublemakers? One a redhead?) We repaid their hospitality by dropping a match in the gas tank of an old tractor in the barn. Libbet flew from the house with a broom and extinguished the fire just in time. We had the feeling that she had done this sort of thing before.

Some years later when a high school friend and I embarked on a college tour of New England, Libbet gave me Bill's coordinates in Peterborough, saying: Call him; he'd love to see you. Sure enough, he put us up for the night. We were welcomed and treated to an evening of New Hampshire politics and tales from early New Hope and Solebury (Bill delighted in relaying family lore, like how the rattletrap Bauhan car was named the Eyesore by school founder Doc Washburn, ... or the aunt who phoned during the infamous Orson Wells radio broadcast to warn the Bauhans that the Martians had landed in nearby Grovers Mills). I was hooked: I wanted more stories, and to be a part of that wonderful family. That was in 1961.

In both Noone House in Peterborough and Home James in Dublin, Liz and Bill Bauhan ran what might be called a salon. The tone was set by a comfortable house, filled with paintings by one of America's best landscape painters (who happened to be Bill's grandfather), mountains of books, a sophisticated garden, and a menagerie of cats and dogs, most of them rescued or refugees—the Bauhan home was a hospice that would make St Francis proud.

The whole ambience was tremendously appealing, exciting even, like visiting Emerson in 19th-century Concord or hanging out at Shakespeare & Company in Paris in the 1920s. You never knew with whom you

would share a meal: a poet, a writer, a preservationist, a bagpiper, a relative from Colorado, a classmate from Turkey—any and all were welcome, particularly if they partook of the life of the academy, the studio, or the spirit ... Time spent at the Bauhans was better than any classroom—and a lot more fun ... It almost always meant an impromptu exploratory trip—to the top of Newt Tolman's mountain, to a contra dance or Monadnock Music in a meetinghouse, and certainly to scope out an historic house where some bygone literary light had once summered.

Bill Bauhan served on a few committees, ran a few political campaigns, and he was the first president of the Dublin Historical Society. But he was not an organization man; he worked best as a catalyst. Both Peterborough and Dublin are far better places for Bill's work to save their architectural patrimony. Bill spearheaded the huge National Register nomination of Dublin in the face of a threatened new Route 101. Yet before that he had worked hard to educate 'Our Town' on its special heritage (I still treasure the bookends



William Bauhan, Publisher, 1999  
Courtesy of the Monadnock Ledger. (Photo by Andy Kollmorgen)

that Bill made from the newel post of the Spaulding-Gatto house, torn down in 1971. Lemonade from lemons.)

The ideas emanated from a special command center—*Bill's kitchen table*. There, with a view of the garden, amidst dangerously teetering stacks of newspapers, cookbooks and biographies of English monarchs, Bill mobilized the forces of civilization. If there was anyone who exemplified the phrase, "Think globally, act locally", it was Bill Bauhan. (How many of you know that he was fluent in Russian? Or that he wrote his Princeton thesis on town planning in early Keene?) His mind embraced the world, but his field of action was at the foot of Mount Monadnock.

Bill did have a "real office" where he published his books and, the hope was, he would earn the wherewithal to support the important business of his life, which was friendship, family, and not least of all Dublin. One does not usually associate the term money with Bill Bauhan, yet the publishing business was remarkably successful in the ultimate meaning of the craft.



century's worth of Town records were gathering insects and mildew in the old schoolhouse. In addition, I found Historical Society papers, such as records of the Dublin Militia and the Grange, as well as pictures and posters. Given the conditions at the building, all these paper goods were well on the way to becoming either nesting material or *papier maché*.

A rescue operation was clearly needed. The difficulty was how to get control of stuff that belonged to a defunct historical society. I consulted Bill – the obvious person – and we puzzled over the problem for some time. Here was a collection of papers and objects, some of considerable interest and value, which belonged to an entity that had been dead for forty years. We knew that there had been an effort at revival in the early 1960's – an effort which lasted for a couple of meetings – but there were no visible remnants of an organization that could transmit a clear title. It looked as though the only hope was by way of a petition to the Probate Court.

Then Bill found the solution. Rummaging in the old schoolmaster's desk, he came across a list of people who had bought life memberships (for \$10 each) during the brief 1960 revival. Most of them, of course, were dead, but Bill found the names of eight living persons, and we reckoned that they constituted the Historical Society. Two of them, Luette Eaton and Elizabeth Weis, were in Dublin. Bill persuaded them to call a meeting and to

solicit proxies from the other surviving life members, so that they could elect a new slate of officers. This was done, with Bill as first President. Twenty years later the organization continues in good health – not the least of Bill's legacies to the Town of Dublin.

Among his legacies to the Society was the design of our letterhead. As a publisher of fine books he had great knowledge, as well as great taste, in matters of typography and layout. He found the lithograph of the 1841 Schoolhouse and adapted it as the Society's logo. We still use his design for correspondence and as a heading for these newsletters.

A personal note. I first met Bill at a party in Peterborough, before he moved to Dublin. The hostess said, "You two guys must know each other, since you were college classmates." I pasted on my social smile and prepared to lie manfully, when Bill looked me straight in the eye and said, "Never saw you in my life before." Needless to say, I liked him immediately, and continued to like him for the next forty-odd years.

The Society extends its condolences to Bill's son, Patrick, and his daughter, Sarah, who took wonderful care of him in the last phase of his life.

The Society will miss him as mentor and friend. I shall miss him, too.

–J.W.H.

## IN MEMORIAM

Bill Bauhan is not, alas, the only loss to the Society this year. We note with sorrow the passing of two other valued members.

**Helen Wilmerding Bastedo** was a life member of the Society, one of the eight whose votes made possible our revival in 1986. Although as a life member she needn't have paid dues, she remained a consistent and generous contributor until her death in May.

The Society's condolences go to her son, P. Russell Bastedo (our President) and daughter, Cecily.

**Mary van Rensselaer McKee** served as a trustee of the Society from 1987 to 1990. She was the donor of the sign at the 1841 Schoolhouse, and of the swags of bunting which decorate the building on special days.

Mary had a special interest in the archives, having herself organized the records of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and we profited from her advice and encouragement.

The Society's sympathy goes to her husband, Julien McKee.

## WILLIAM L. BAUHAN

*Eulogy delivered at the Dublin Community Church  
by William Morgan, March 19, 2006*

If Bill were coming to this memorial service today, no doubt he would be late. He would still be wandering his kitchen, patting his shirt to make sure he had cigarettes, looking for his keys, searching for his dime store glasses. As Keen James, a Solebury classmate and Princeton roommate – and one of Bill's authors – noted: There is Eastern Standard Time and then there is Bauhan time. And now it is time to remember our friend.

WILLIAM LATHROP BAUHAN .... WILLIAM L. BAUHAN ... WILLIAM BAUHAN ... WLB ... BILL BAUHAN ... BILL ... MISTER B ... and, perhaps we can add, The Dublin Sage. ....

My association with Bill and his remarkable family goes back a ways. My parents and Bill's parents were friends in Princeton. My dad taught Bill English at the Hun School; Bill's Uncle Judie taught me history at the Solebury School.

But my first real initiation into the Family Bauhan was fifty-some years ago when a grandparent died and



Bill Bauhan lectures to the Historical Society on historic houses, 1997. Dublin Historical Society. (Photo by Henry A. Campbell)

Beginning with very limited resources and wanting to do only a certain kind of book, Bill made it work: he was editor, designer, warehouse manager and publicity department. A one-man publishing outfit doesn't make any economic sense—unless you want total control of the product. Richard R. Smith, Noone House, and William L. Bauhan, have not, to my knowledge, ever produced an unattractive book. Year after year, Bill increased our knowledge of New England history, saved or revived worthy artists' reputations, and gave us decent poetry—all while unswervingly adhering to a standard of quality. This was no mean achievement.

But his heart was in the kitchen with Liz and friends, especially young people. I have never known anyone who worked in so solitary a profession who was so energized by children and young adults. How many young people did Bill mentor, give advice to, provide a haven for over the decades? He was happiest when surrounded by kids of any age. Our own daughter, now an architect (as Bill could and perhaps should have been) wrote upon hearing of Bill's passing: "I'll never forget his intellect, his wonderful schleppy walk and raspy laugh, and his great sense of humor. Nor his house,

Liz, the garden ... He is one of those figures that looms large in my childhood memory."

All who knew and worked with Bill—and were beneficiaries of his laughter and wisdom—also recall that he could be exasperating. He had very strong ideas, that he more often than not forgot to communicate to those around him. For all his gregariousness, he was incredibly self-focused, living inside his head. This did not always make life easy for Liz, Packy, and Sarah, or his extended family. He did things on his own terms. For example, no amount of pleading or reasoning was going to dislodge Bill from the James house in Dublin—it was his Eden, his castle, and his identity until the end.

Almost thirty years ago, Bill published a collection of poems by Chesham poet, Nathan Comfort Starr. *Long Yesterday* is almost a chapbook—a beautiful letterpress work of only 300 copies. As I cannot think of a way to properly close

an oration to that most beloved and complicated of men, let me read a short poem from that book, so typical of Bill's publishing artistry.

TO A PORCUPINE ON BEING DISLODGED  
FROM AN APPLE TREE

Strange prickly beast!  
What stolen feast  
Can compensate for nervous harrying  
Out of your apple tree?  
Unless it be  
That by the very act of tarrying  
You prove a saw not well ignored:  
The quill is mightier than the sword.

**Professor William Morgan**, author of the foregoing eulogy, will speak on his work with Bill Bauhan on the Dublin National Register nomination at our summer meeting, which will be on Friday, July 28th, at the Tuller/Loftis barn.

For further information call 563-8956.

## C R E D I T S

This issue of the Dublin Historical Society Newsletter was edited by John Harris.

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