

Gladys Adams, Historian (1910-2001)

This article about Gladys Adams appeared July 23, 1992 in *The Manchester Extra*, a weekly insert in *The Hartford Courant* after the closing of *The Manchester Herald* in 1991. Gladys's obituary says, "She retired as a statistical typist in 1971, working for Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturer, Manchester, and Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, East Hartford. She was Protestant by faith." She had three children, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Gladys Adams researched and wrote a history of Bridgewater, Vermont, and "Buckland, the North West Section of Manchester, Connecticut," published in 1995 and available on the website of the Manchester Historical Society at <http://www.manchesterhistory.org/reprints/BucklandBookGladysAdams.pdf> and 159 one- to two-page articles about people and places of Manchester, including George Finley, Thomas Burnham, Laurel Park, Apel's Opera House, trolleys, churches. Here is the 1992 article, transcribed by volunteer Maureen Hevey.

Of our past • A special report

Historian piecing together Buckland history

By DAVID LAMMEY

Correspondent

MANCHESTER – A historical society museum or town clerk's office is a good repository for historical materials and information. But it takes a historian to dig through the material and make sense of it.

Since there isn't much money in writing histories of small towns, it is up to private citizens to do the work. If no one does, much of a town's history will pass by forgotten, or lie in disorganized clumps here and there, as good as forgotten.

Gladys Adams of Main Street is one of those people. Since she moved to town eight years ago, she has spent much of her free time researching Manchester's history, writing a total of 32 "Looking Back" features for the former *Manchester Herald* on topics such as Highland Park and downtown hotelkeepers of long ago.

But the big project she has been working on for the past eight years is a history of the Buckland area. She hopes to finish by the end of the year, and perhaps publish a book.

It hasn't been easy.

"It's been nearly impossible to find something on Buckland," said Adams, who helps organize materials at the Manchester Historical Society on Mondays. "The historical society just doesn't have anything, and I've been with them for six years. They mostly have south-end material."

She has turned instead to old newspapers for the bulk of her research. In recent years, she could be found poring through old *Hartford Courant* newspapers at the State Library in Hartford two or three days a week. Nowadays, she tries to get there at least once a week.

"People say I've only lived in Manchester eight years - how do I know so much?" she said. "I read a lot."

She has other methods of learning about the town's history.

"I love maps," she said. She keeps a small pile of them on the floor in a corner of her home.

The Gladys Adams approach to history is straightforward.

"Just the facts," she said with a grin.

The writing she has done on her history is mostly that: a gathering of facts related to a common subject.

But the subjects of her research are usually not buildings, or political systems, or development trends. They are people.

"This is what has kept me going in my later years," Adams said of her hobby. "I think I was meant to write about Manchester history."

To assist in her research, Adams asks that anyone who has historical information or photographs relating to the Buckland area call her at 643-xxxx.



Webmaster's note: Gladys conducted research at the Connecticut State Library in Hartford, long before the library's archives were available on home computers. She used microfilm and actual copies of old newspapers. She also enjoyed the outdoors, and I had the opportunity to talk with her on hikes along the Hockanum River in Manchester. – Susan Barlow.