

Keene Valley Library oral history project reaches 100th story mark

'Stories of Who We Are' continues to draw unique stories about life and times in Keene

By Kim Dedam
STAFF WRITER

KEENE VALLEY | Oratory and tradition in Keene and Keene Valley topped the 100th story mark in September.

The online audio story collection, "Adirondack Community: Capturing, Retaining, and Communicating the Stories of Who We Are," launched last spring in an effort to chronicle experience, life and times.

The stories project is a multi-year local history project that uses an online platform at Memria.org to capture memories and first-person accounts of events from people who experienced them.

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Storyteller Hilary Papineau (center) attended the Keene Valley Library event with her mother, Barbara Papineau, and her son, Evren Vanderbles. Papineau grew up in Keene, and recorded a story about the 13 years she spent as a student at Keene Central School.

Photo/Olivia Dwyer

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The project will eventually reach high school history class time at Keene Central School.

"Since the project launch, more than 100 volunteer storytellers have recorded 125 three- to five-minute stories," library spokeswoman Olivia Dwyer told the Sun.

A gathering at the library in mid-September marked the milestone.

"We are preserving individual and community stories before they are lost," Keene Valley Library Director Karen Glass said of their effort.

"This project can bring us closer and help us stick together through tough times."

Stories will continue to be recorded and added to the oral history database, Dwyer said.

"The entire collection is available to hear at myadirondackstory.org, where stories are sorted into eight categories -- the most popular of which are Outdoor Activities, People, and Catastrophes. This website also hosts the 'My Adirondack Story' podcast archive."

Project lead Jerry Huntley, who coordinated funding outreach and program coordination, said the project's success is centered in community voices and the stories they share.

"The enthusiasm and generosity has created a valuable community resource," Huntley said.

Photographs accompany individual recollections, providing added resources for the library's collection of historical images. Events in the collection range from recent

Huntley and Bethany Garretson via email: myadirondackstory@gmail.com.

The project, "Adirondack Community: Capturing, Retaining, and Communicating



Jerry Huntley, at left, and story collection assistant Bethany Garretson at Keene Valley Library celebrated the 100th story mark in the library's oral history collection: Adirondack Community: Capturing, Retaining, and Sharing the Stories of Who We Are.

Photo/Olivia Dwyer

events, such as the Keene Valley landslide and the history of the famed Red Barn, to stories of life and work in Keene.

Keene residents and visitors to these hamlets interested in sharing memories about their life's experience, travels and memories here can reach program leaders Jerry

the Stories of Who We Are," was founded with grant funds from Humanities New York and support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Glenn and Carol Pearsall Adirondack Foundation, the Northern New York Library Network and community supporters using Memria.org. ■