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Bernice Barnett

Bernice Barnett has lived in Halifax all her life. While raising two children as a self-proclaimed full-time housewife, she put in 30 years writing for local newspapers: the Brattleboro Reformer, Deerfield Valley News, Green Mountain Courier. Currently she writes for the Cracker Barrel in Wilmington.

Tucked into the green hills of Southern Vermont, on the Massachusetts border, is the small town of Halifax. It has been my lifelong home. My ancestry, through Elisha Pratt, dates back to one of the first settlers of the town. I'm a sixth-generation descendant.

My favorite pastimes are studying local area history, genealogy, hiking and writing, all of which I have done quite extensively. My hiking experiences inspired me to co-author, with my sister, Bertell Woods, our first book, *Roads in the Wilderness*, which is in its third printing and is available at local stores and bookstores. Some people use it as a hiking guide. It's a combination history of the first two east-west roads in Southern Vermont and my hiking experiences finding them. It is the quiet solitude of Halifax, with its small family and public cemeteries along with its many back roads, that allows me to enjoy my leisure time.

Today, Halifax is a small town; in the early 1800s, it was a booming community with a variety of industries, such as potasheries, tanneries and sawmills. However, lumbering and farming are still being done today. I grew up on a farm owned by Moses Learnard, my great, great, great-maternal grandfather, who married Elisha Pratt's daughter, Sally. The ownership of this farm had been passed down through the generations to my mother, Mary Learnard, who married Archie Burnett.

A strong community spirit prevails in Halifax. During the summer months, activities include a community breakfast and suppers and the annual fireman's auction and clambake held the first Saturday of July and August, respectively. The Halifax Historical Society Museum is open every Saturday from 2 to 4 p.m. beginning Memorial Day.

I have traveled quite extensively in the United States. However, Halifax will always be my home. As the old saying goes, "You can take the girl out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the girl." This definitely applies to me.



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Born in Controversy
History of Halifax, Vermont



Bernice Barnett has co-authored and published two books: *Roads in the Wilderness* in 1992 and *Green Mountain Reflections* in 1995. She's on the writing committee for the Halifax History project, of which book one, *Born in Controversy, History of Halifax, Vermont*, is now available. B. B. Woods and Bernice Barnett's book *Roads in the Wilderness* has been reprinted for the third time. It is a history of the first two east-west roads in Southern Vermont, and is used as a hiking guide for others. The book is available at local bookstores, various gift shops and through Itty-bitty Publishing at 802-368-2848 or email info@ittybittypublishing.com. Visit halifaxvthistory.org for details on the Halifax History project.



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