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A historical trip through Ashland: DVD showcases classic landmarks around the town

By Theresa Freeman / Daily News Staff Friday, December 16, 2005 - Updated: 04:16 AM EST

ASHLAND -- Images of wooden buildings downtown, Crosti's Grove nightclub and "the father of electric time" Henry Warren meeting Albert Einstein in 1935 can now be easily shared for generations.

Design shop Art By Herring this summer worked with the Historical Society to produce "Rediscover Historic Ashland," a DVD compilation of photographs and narration about the town from its founding in 1846 through the early 1900s. Sales of the DVD, available since June, have picked up as people shop for holiday gifts, said Linda Herring, who runs Art By Herring with her husband Dave.

"It's based on going down the street, a walking tour of Ashland," said Dave.

The video, available in DVD and VHS formats, costs \$21, and half of the proceeds are given to the Historical Society. It combines photos, maps, music and narration by society volunteer Kay Powers.

"It's a good way of saying things because photographs eventually fade." said Powers, the society's former curator. "My aim when I was putting things together was to show Ashland as it was."

The Herrings said they did not write a word-for-word script, but rather selected photos with Powers, who turns 83 next month, and let her speak from memory about them.

"I wanted it so people of an older generation would recognize something," said Powers. "There's a lot of little things that might prick people's memories."

Photos show standards like the original Town Hall and Main Street, and long-gone structures like the Baptist church with its tall white steeple, formerly located on Summer Street where the American Legion now stands.

"It burned in a spectacular fire," said Powers. "About all they had time to save was the Bible from the altar."

On the DVD, Powers discusses Crosti's Grove nightclub which stood at what is now the parking lot for Burnham's Supper Ho Pleasant Street. the club, popular during World War II, was run by Helen and Hugo Giargiari, she said.

Also included are images from early Boston Marathons -- Ashland was the original starting point -and Henry Warren, credited with being the first to mass-produce electric clocks.

Art By Herring began producing similar DVDs that collect memories for families and businesses in 2003. Linda and Dave had created a DVD for their family their previous Christmas.

"We said, 'Why not make this a part of our business?'" said Linda.

The idea for the DVD came about at one of the first planning meetings for Rediscover Ashland, a townwide festival showcasing businesses, organizations and residents first held in June, Linda said.

Husband and wife Kay and Frank Powers got involved, and then "one thing lead to another," said Linda. "It was an idea that just bloomed."

To order "Rediscover Historic Ashland," call 508-881-7213 or e-mail linda@artbyherring.com.

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Helen Glargiari sings at the Crosti's Grove nightclub on Pleasant Street in Ashland. (Contributed photo)

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