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Robb Strycharz, a historical video producer, sits with a video image of Hadley, part of his latest project with

Open Space/ Historic Video Survey at his home in Amherst.

# Hadley history in 3-D

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HADLEY — To document the past, historians have traditionally relied on static forms of recordkeeping: paintings and drawings, photographs, paper documents, and physical recreations.

But members of the town's Historical Commission have turned to Robb Strycharz, an Amherst video producer and photographer, to get a more fluid view of Hadley history — a "video survey" of the town in which every street, every house, and virtually every field and landmark has been chronicled on film.

"This is a real slice in time," said commission Chairman Al Kulas. "It's a way of preserving an exact moment in the town's history — someone who looks at this film 50 years from now will have a very clear

picture of what Hadley looked like toward the end of the 20th century."

And Strycharz, 43, has also filmed his 20-hour survey of Hadley in stereoscopic imaging with a technique known as the Pulfrich Effect. By wearing specially shaded glasses, viewers can see the film in three-dimensional images that Strycharz and Kulas say provide much more historical detail.

"Stereo photography gives you much more presence, a much fuller environment," said Strycharz, who learned the technique about five years ago. "You can look at a house and see the exact style of molding that's used, or get a much truer idea of the color of the paint that's been used."

Strycharz, who runs a video business from his home called Chronos (Greek for 'time') Historical Services, says he's become interested in filming

towns because too much history is being lost to the rush of development.

"It troubles me greatly that history is just passing by," he said. "We don't have a real good tradition in this country of preserving our past or chronicling it, although there's probably been more of an effort to do that in New England. What the (video) survey represents is a proactive attempt to capture a visual image of the town."

## A marriage made

Strycharz hooked up with the Hadley Historical Commission in February after notifying historical panels in about a dozen area towns about his service. It turned out the Hadley group had grant money available for cataloging the town's open spaces and streets and had not been happy with its previous efforts to do the

work.

"We'd been working on this for a number of years, but it was mostly along the lines of taking photographs and writing a narrative," said Kulas. "Doing this on video seemed like a much more complete way of documenting the town."

After showing commission members a demo film, Strycharz spent a good chunk of March and April driving slowly around town, his video camera mounted on a side window as he filmed Hadley street by street, sometimes having to retrace his path when the lighting wasn't right or other technical difficulties arose.

"I called the police department before I got started, just so they'd be able to answer calls from anyone who wondered who the guy in the yellow car was," he said with a