



Harness racing at Rockingham Park in Salem, 1933. In advance of Rockingham Park's closing in 2016, the Society sought to acquire documents, photographs, and objects representative of the park's long history, the people involved in its establishment and operations, and its significant impact on the state.

ROCKINGHAM PARK: A RACING AND GAMBLING CAPITAL

When Rockingham Park in Salem announced that it would close permanently in 2016, the Society connected with staff at the park to ensure items of historical significance were preserved. Founded in 1906, Rockingham Park welcomed thousands to its thoroughbred horse racing, but, with betting illegal in the state, the race track soon sat idle. Periodically after 1906, the park hosted fairs and smaller races until 1933, when gambling was legalized and the park resumed thoroughbred racing.

Rockingham Park was owned by Louis "Lou" and Lutza Smith from 1933 through 1969, a period already well documented in the New Hampshire Historical Society's collection. In 1998 the Society microfilmed scrapbooks of newspaper clippings documenting the Smiths' ownership, as well as material up to 1984

when the track reopened following a devastating fire in 1981. Also at this time, the Society acquired photographs, promotional material, and financial and legal records and published an article in *Historical New Hampshire* about the economic and political impact of "The Rock," as the park was often called.

When knowledge of the park's closure became public, Society Director of Collections and Exhibitions Wes Balla contacted Rockingham staff to let them know of the Society's interest in preserving more of the park's history by adding to its Rockingham Park collection. In advance of the closing, Balla and Library Director Sarah Galligan visited the park to view items to be offered to the Society. As a result of this visit, Rockingham Park donated several photographs documenting different eras of the park's history,

(continued on page 6)

NEW HAMPSHIRE
HISTORICAL
 SOCIETY FOUNDED 1823

30 Park Street
 Concord, New Hampshire 03301

603-228-6688

nhhistory.org

Newsletter

Volume 54, No. 2
 Summer 2017

President

William H. Dunlap

Editors

Joan E. Desmarais
 Donna-Belle Garvin

Contributors

Wesley G. Balla
 Douglas R. Copeley
 Korrena Cowing
 Joan E. Desmarais
 Elizabeth Dubrulle
 Sarah E. Galligan
 Donna-Belle Garvin
 Stephanie G. McCusker
 Christopher J. Moore
 Wendy J. Olcott
 Judith B. Solberg

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



In June the Society's board of trustees voted to launch a new initiative called "The Democracy Project: Renewing History and Civics Education in New Hampshire Schools." The Democracy Project is the Society's response to growing concerns about Americans' decreasing knowledge of history and civics—a decline particularly apparent among student visitors to the Society. We brought this issue to the attention of Society members in our spring newsletter, and since then, we have continued to sound the alarm. We have recently published

an op-ed piece that ran in newspapers around the state and garnered additional coverage from New Hampshire Public Radio and WGBH.

The change at the elementary school level in the past few years has been dramatic, requiring the Society to alter education programs in response. We have even had to stop presenting a program called "New Hampshire at War" because most of the schoolchildren we are seeing now lack the requisite baseline knowledge to understand the program. The Society's education staff recounts that many students do not know what the American Revolution was or even that we fought the British. They cannot list in correct chronological order the American Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II. Hearing this was my canary-in-a-coal mine moment. I was aware that social studies education was not thriving, but it was truly alarming to see the consequences in such a stark manner.

There is widespread agreement on the reason for the decline: schools have significantly reduced class time for history and civics over the past decade or so, due in part to increasing demands from programs such as No Child Left Behind, the focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), and the imperative to teach to new mandatory tests. In some school districts the teaching of history/civics/social studies has been eliminated almost entirely. Additionally, in many cases newer classroom teachers have received less preparation in these subjects than in the past. The bottom line is a dramatic erosion in basic understanding of the principles of American democracy among our students.

This "history deficit" has consequences that go far beyond producing well-rounded students. All New Hampshire residents need a basic understanding of American history to be able to contextualize problems and keep them in perspective. They need an understanding of how our civic institutions work so they can become fully participating citizens and educated voters. In short, a poor understanding of American institutions and American history has ominous implications for American democracy and American civic values.

The Society is in an ideal position to help renew vibrant social studies instruction in New Hampshire schools. It has been a leader in history

education for many years. In the 1990s we produced the first-ever New Hampshire history curriculum for grades K-12. Each year the Society provides programs to between 10,000 and 15,000 Granite State students, mostly fourth graders (fourth grade being the year traditionally devoted to New Hampshire history). We also annually host a Colonial History Program for junior high and middle school students and an Advanced Placement Conference in U.S. History for high school students.

After consulting with organizations that share our concern, including New Hampshire Humanities, the New Hampshire Bar Association, and the New Hampshire Bar Foundation, we decided to initiate the Democracy Project. Some of these organizations will work as partners with us on various aspects of the project, which has three focus areas. The first is to update and reintroduce the New Hampshire history curriculum for elementary schools, which will be made available free of charge. This will also involve working with school districts throughout the state to ensure that all districts have pedagogically sound social studies criteria for elementary education. Second, we will offer expanded teacher training opportunities for classroom teachers to enhance their proficiency in the teaching of history, civics, and social studies. We will accomplish this primarily through summer seminars and workshops, as well as by working with the state's college programs in teacher certification. Finally, we will engage in advocacy at the state and local levels.

The area of advocacy is complex. We plan to work with the state's Department of Education and Board of Education in advancing this agenda. However, much of the authority over curriculum decisions resides at the local level, and it is from the local communities that the impetus for meaningful change will need to come. We plan to collaborate with the New Hampshire Bar Association, in a labor-intensive "retail" advocacy effort with SAUs (School Administrative Units) in communities across the state. Virtually every town or city in the state has among its community leaders a member of the Bar, and the Bar Association will recruit from these ranks individuals to personally undertake the advocacy effort in their communities on a voluntary basis.

We must designate time in our schools for history and civics as we've done for math and English. While workforce development is important, it will do little good to have a workforce if we have lost our republic. Because of New Hampshire's role in the presidential primary, our state holds a unique responsibility within the nation's political life, one that requires our citizens to be well-informed and knowledgeable about American ideals. Such a role confers an obligation to see that our students are properly educated in history and civics so that they, too, may one day contribute to the civic life of New Hampshire and the nation.

To accomplish this ambitious statewide initiative, the Society will hire new staff members dedicated to curriculum and content development, teacher training, and advocacy. We seek to raise \$1.2 million to underwrite the project's initial four years, and fundraising is already underway. The plan is to have staff in place and beginning work in early 2018. ■

Board of Trustees

Chair

Kurt M. Swenson
Hopkinton

Vice Chair

James L. Garvin
Pembroke

Treasurer

Michael R. Reopel
Hillsborough

Secretary

Kathleen A. Belko
New London

Q. David Bowers
Wolfeboro

Helen H. Frink
South Acworth

Howard Mansfield
Hancock

Margaret Marshall
Conway

Rebecca Weeks Sherrill More
*Lancaster
Providence, Rhode Island*

Paul C. Remus
Bedford

David B. Ruedig
Concord

Edward E. Shumaker
Concord

Marilyn Goodwin Soper
Newbury

David H. Souter
Hopkinton

Henry B. Stebbins
New Castle

David M. Sundman
Littleton

Joseph L. Taggart
Amherst

William W. Upton
Concord

William P. Veillette
Amherst

Bert R. Whittemore
Concord

Philip Zea
Norwich, Vermont

DOCUMENTING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF DANIEL WEBSTER



From the 1820s through the 1840s, Daniel Webster was one of the most popular American political leaders and orators. Since then, the Society has built a wide-ranging collection of objects and manuscripts documenting the life and career of the New Hampshire man known popularly as “The Defender of the Union.”

The Society has recently added two interesting objects intended to memorialize the great statesman. In 2016, Society Trustee David Sundman donated a medal designed and cast by the William B. Durgin Company of Concord, issued in commemoration of the erection in 1886 of the statue of Daniel Webster on the grounds of the New Hampshire State House. The statue was given to the state by Boston businessman Benjamin Pierce Cheney. A native of Hillsborough, Cheney made a fortune developing stage express companies, railroads, and banks. Having known and admired Webster, Cheney was inspired to create a fitting memorial to the state’s greatest citizen.

The second object recently acquired is a bas-relief panel carved in mahogany by New Hampshire artist Leo Malm in 1938, in which he captured a view of the Daniel Webster Birthplace in Franklin. Early this year, Society Trustee James Garvin and Editor Emerita Donna-Belle Garvin donated the carved panel—a rare survival of Depression-era New Hampshire craftsmanship—after discovering it on eBay. Malm, who was born in Sweden in 1878, studied at the South End Industrial School in Boston and served an apprenticeship with German-born woodcarvers. In 1911 Malm moved to Concord where he worked as a draftsman

and designer for the William B. Durgin Company. During the 1930s he was an instructor for both the Manchester Institute of Arts and Sciences and the League of New Hampshire Arts and Crafts and participated in the New Hampshire Art Project of the Works Projects Administration (WPA).

The Society not only collects objects but also works to preserve them for future generations.

Among the

Webster objects in the collection is a late-18th-century highchair used by Webster as a child. Webster is said to have given the chair to the aforementioned Benjamin Pierce Cheney, who, as a stage driver, had carried Webster as a passenger. Cheney’s grandson, George Bancroft Davis, donated the chair to the Society. The highchair’s splint seat, worn and broken from years of use, was cleaned and restored earlier this year at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center.



SOCIETY WELCOMES NEW AND RETURNING TRUSTEES

At the Society’s annual meeting in May, three new trustees were elected to the board and three returning trustees were elected for additional terms.

Helen H. Frink of South Acworth holds a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of New Hampshire and master’s and doctoral degrees in German from the University of Chicago. Currently professor emerita at Keene State College, she taught modern languages there until retiring in 2009. Helen is the author of numerous books and wrote an article about the Piscataqua Bridge for *Historical New Hampshire*, using the Society’s manuscripts. She grew up in Newington and is descended from both the bridge’s main caretaker and from families of Yankee whalers.



Rebecca (Becky) Weeks Sherrill More, who divides her time between Lancaster, New Hampshire, and Providence, Rhode Island, has had a prolific academic career and is the author of numerous articles and publications. She holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Virginia and a master’s and doctorate from Brown University. Becky previously served as director of Brown’s Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning; she is currently a lecturer in history at the Rhode Island School of Design and visiting scholar in history at Brown.



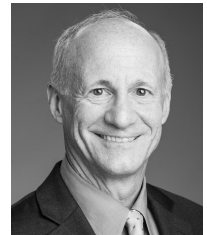
Brown University

Paul C. Remus of Bedford was first elected to the Society’s board in 2013. An intellectual property lawyer, Paul is a graduate of Yale and the University of Michigan Law School. As a Society trustee, he has provided valuable advice on intellectual property and trademark issues. Paul recently retired from the law firm of Devine Millimet.



Henry (Hank) B. Stebbins of New Castle is an attorney with the Manchester firm of Stebbins, Lazos, and Van Der Beken. A Manchester native, Hank graduated from the University of New Hampshire, studied at Oxford

University, and received his JD from Boston University Law School. He has been actively involved in the community, including service as a trustee of the University System of New Hampshire and the Manchester Boys and Girls Club.



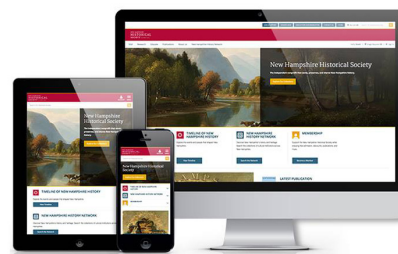
Kurt M. Swenson of Hopkinton is a longtime friend, having been a Society trustee from 2008 to 2016. While a trustee, Kurt was treasurer and chairman of the finance and governance committees. He also co-chaired the capital campaign steering committee. In that role he provided energetic leadership and brought in some of the campaign’s largest contributions. Kurt recently retired as chairman of Swenson Granite Company after a very successful business career. He is a graduate of Colby College and Boston College School of Law.



Joseph L. Taggart of Amherst graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in forest management and economics, and earned a master’s degree in forest economics from Yale University. He currently serves as executive vice president of LandVest, Inc. Joe is a trustee of the Amherst Land Trust and an ambassador to the American Independence Museum in Exeter. As a Society trustee, Joe serves on the development committee, helping to increase membership and strengthen relationships with current members and donors.



OPEN 24/7



nhhistory.org

ROCKINGHAM PARK (continued from page 1)

cartoons, event programs, and the trophy used to record winners in the New Hampshire Sweepstakes race, the first state-operated lottery in the United States.

With the acquisition of Rockingham Park materials over the course of two decades, the Society has helped document an important New Hampshire institution that shaped the economic landscape of the state. Now researchers can access the 110 years of Rockingham Park history through scrapbooks, photographs, and objects. Though the park no longer exists, its story lives on.

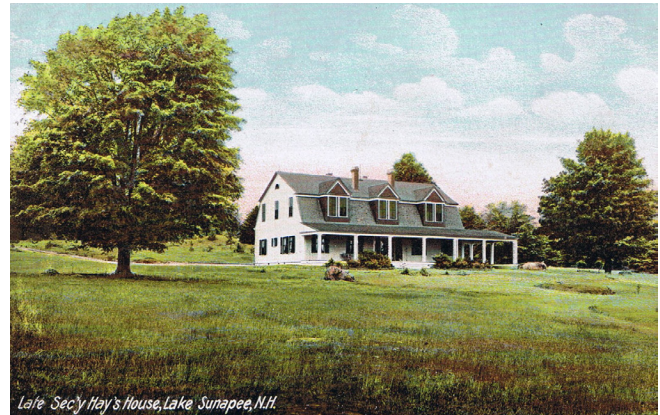


Above: Brass-plated trophy used for the New Hampshire Sweepstakes race from 1964 to 1967 and again from 1984 through 2002; made by ESCO Awards, Salem, 1964. The winning ticket was determined by the result of a horse race at Rockingham Park. The name of each year's winning horse was engraved on the trophy. New Hampshire Historical Society, gift of Rockingham Park.



Sterling silver New Hampshire Breeders' Association Rockingham Park pass, 1933. In conjunction with the gift of materials from Rockingham Park, the Society also purchased items acquired by a dealer at an auction following the park's closure, including this pass.

FALL 2017 PROGRAMS & EVENTS



Friday, September 22, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Member Tour: John Hay, The Fells, and Lake Sunapee

Join us for a special day at John Hay's historic New Hampshire estate, The Fells, overlooking scenic Lake Sunapee. Lincoln's private secretary during the Civil War and a respected diplomat and journalist, Hay used The Fells as a retreat in the late 1800s. This daylong excursion will include tours of the house and gardens, lunch, and a talk by historian Philip McFarland about his recently published book, *John Hay, Friend of Giants: The Man and Life Connecting Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, Henry James, and Theodore Roosevelt*. Society members \$100 per person; nonmembers \$150. Register online at Eventbrite.com (search for "The Fells Tour") or call 603-856-0621.

Saturday, September 30, 2 p.m. Collection Highlights Talk: Brown Paper Company

Beginning as a modest sawmill located on the Androscoggin River in Berlin, the Brown Paper Company would grow to become one of the largest and most advanced paper and pulp manufacturers in the world. In 2009 and 2010, Fraser Paper Company, the last remnant of Brown's Berlin operations, donated the company records to the New Hampshire Historical Society. Those records, which span the years 1871 to 1996, reveal the inner workings of a dynamic company that created the first research and development department in the industry and later survived two world wars and bankruptcy. This talk will be presented by Society volunteer John Rule, a retired engineer who has served as archivist for the Brown Company collection since 2010. Collection Highlights Talks are included in the price of admission to the Society.

Saturday, October 14, 1 to 4 p.m.**Workshop: Researching Veteran Ancestors**

David Allen Lambert of the New England Historic Genealogical Society will provide tools, tips, and strategies for researching veteran ancestors who served in the American Civil War, World War I, and World War II. Registration information will be mailed to Society members in September.

Saturday, October 21, 2 p.m.**Lecture: Old Man of the Mountain**

On May 3, 2003, the Old Man of the Mountain disintegrated and fell into Franconia Notch, resulting in the loss of an important national landmark, long the basis for the State of New Hampshire's official emblem. For nearly 200 years people pondered how the rock profile formed and remained in place, strove to secure and preserve it, and attempted to explain its natural and unmistakably "human" profile.



Old Man of the Mountain by Edward Hill (1843–1923), oil on canvas, 1879. New Hampshire Historical Society, gift of Ida Farr Miller.

In this lecture, geologist Brian Fowler, former president of the Mount Washington Observatory, traces the Old Man's geologic and human history between the discovery of the phenomenon in 1805 and its disappearance in 2003. This program is included in the price of admission to the Society.

Saturday, November 4, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.**Workshop: Local History NH!**

Presented in conjunction with the Association of Historical Societies of New Hampshire, this daylong workshop will cover such issues as managing collections, working collaboratively with other local historical societies, using social media, and fundraising. Registration information will be mailed to local historical societies and libraries in September.

Saturday, November 11, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.**Exhibition: *Making the World Safe for Democracy: Posters of the Great War in New Hampshire***

A new exhibition of World War I posters, drawn from the Society's collections, explores the use of this popular art form to shape public opinion and mobilize American citizens to fight a distant war. With powerful images and a few well-chosen words, these posters urged people to purchase liberty bonds; conserve food and raw materials; extend aid to those who suffered the war's devastation; and enlist in the army, navy, and Red Cross. They also shaped people's views about American ideals and defined a new patriotism that would characterize the American spirit for decades to come. The exhibit will be on view until October 2019.

Saturday, November 11, 2 p.m.**Lecture: *New Hampshire at War***

Covering all major conflicts that have affected the Granite State from the colonial period to the present, this lecture focuses on New Hampshire's contributions to the war efforts and famous residents who participated in the conflicts. Delivered by Sue Kelly, one of the Society's museum educators, the 45-minute lecture will be followed by a guided tour of the Citizen Soldier section of the *Discovering New Hampshire* exhibition. This lecture is included in the price of admission to the Society.

Guided Gallery Tours

Saturdays at 2 and 3 p.m.: September 9, October 14, and November 11

Fridays at noon: September 15, October 20, and November 17

Enjoy a guided tour of the Society's Park Street building and exhibitions in a 45-minute tour led by a member of the Society's education or volunteer docent staff. Included in the price of admission, the tour is appropriate for visitors of all ages. Availability is on a first-come, first-served basis, and tours are capped at 12 people.

Admission to the New Hampshire Historical Society is \$7 for adults. Children ages 18 and under and members of the New Hampshire Historical Society are admitted free of charge. Full-time students and active military personnel and their families also are admitted free of charge with a valid ID.

NEW HAMPSHIRE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY FOUNDED 1823

30 Park Street
Concord, NH 03301-6384
nhhistory.org

Nonprofit
Organization
US POSTAGE
PAID
CONCORD, NH
PERMIT #280

The independent nonprofit that saves, preserves, and shares New Hampshire history.



Fourth-grade students on a field trip to the Society participate in a program about how everyday life in New Hampshire has changed over time. The Society aims to renew history and civics education in New Hampshire schools through a new initiative called the Democracy Project. Learn about the project in Society President Bill Dunlap's report on page 2.