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NEWS FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

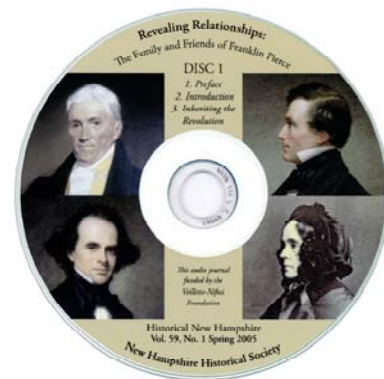
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FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON FRANKLIN PIERCE, NEW HAMPSHIRE'S ONLY U.S. PRESIDENT, NOW AVAILABLE ON AUDIO CD

CONCORD, NH—In recognition of Presidents' Day, the New Hampshire Historical Society is releasing an audio program exploring some of the most influential personal relationships in the life of Franklin Pierce, the nation's fourteenth president. The audio recordings are available to purchase on CD or to download for free from the Society's Web site, nhhistory.org.



Revealing Relationships: The Family and Friends of Franklin Pierce appeared originally as a special issue of *Historical New Hampshire*, the only statewide history journal. The audio edition of *Revealing Relationships* is part of an initiative to share the contents of the Society's journal with a larger audience by producing it in a user-friendly audio format as well as in print.

Together the three essays recorded help provide a new level of understanding of what has been described—because of Pierce's role in the build-up to the Civil War—as “one of the most controversial, yet perhaps one of the most important, presidencies in United States history.” Featuring insightful studies of some of the closest friends and relatives of New Hampshire's only U.S. president, *Revealing Relationships* enriches our understanding of the much-criticized president's values, heritage, and convictions, as well as of the conflicts and tensions he felt.

The audio version of *Revealing Relationships*, narrated by John Walters and produced by Jody Petersen of Cliff House Audio, has been made possible with generous support from the Veillette-Nifosi Foundation.

In the first of three articles, Wesley Balla, director of collections and exhibitions at the New Hampshire Historical Society, demonstrates the origins of the president's uncompromising commitment to the Constitution and to the Union through a study of his father, Revolutionary veteran Benjamin Pierce, and of the latter's lifelong devotion to the "glorious principles of independence."

Next, Peter Wallner, the Society's library director and the author of a recent two-volume biography of Pierce, examines Pierce's sharply diverging relationships with two close friends from his Bowdoin College days—writer Nathaniel Hawthorne and abolitionist John Parker Hale. While Pierce's friendship with Hawthorne deepened, lasting a lifetime, Pierce and Hale eventually parted ways over the divisive slavery issue.

Finally, Jane Walter Venzke, Dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies at Franklin Pierce College, together with Craig Paul Venzke, D.P.T., provide the reader a more detailed picture than available previously of the family and social context within which Pierce's wife, Jane Means Appleton, grew up and lived. Knowledge of Jane's background and of the customs of her era is critical to a better understanding of the Pierces' White House years, especially of the impact of the couple's tragic loss of their only surviving child in a railway accident shortly before the inauguration.

Founded in 1823, the New Hampshire Historical Society is the independent nonprofit that saves, preserves, and shares New Hampshire history. The Society has published the journal *Historical New Hampshire* since 1944. Each issue contains a variety of articles about a past that enriches and informs our lives today, as well as reviews of recent books of state and local interest. *Historical New Hampshire* is a benefit of membership in the New Hampshire Historical Society. To obtain *Revealing Relationships* in any format or to become a member, visit online at nhhistory.org or call 603-228-6688.

Illustration: Audio CD, *Revealing Relationships: The Family and Friends of Franklin Pierce*, from top left: *Benjamin Pierce*, oil on canvas by Henry Willard, c. 1835; *Franklin Pierce*, oil on canvas by George P. A. Healy, 1853; *Jane Means Appleton Pierce*, photograph by John Adams Whipple, 1853; *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, oil on canvas by George P. A. Healy, 1852. New Hampshire Historical Society.

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