THE OLD STONE WALL

E-Newsletter of the NH Division of Historical Resources

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May is Preservation Month: Take a Hike!

At the NHDHR, we're always excited to find new ways to get people to enjoy the state's special historic places. For **May is Preservation Month** this year, we're encouraging folks to get out and visit New Hampshire's fire towers, which not only are historic structures in their own right but are also part of the state's long tradition of fire fighting.

Throughout May, follow the NHDHR's Twitter account, @NHDHR_SHPO, to learn about New Hampshire's fire tower history and to see some of the towers you can visit. The Division is also encouraging everyone who visits a historic fire tower to share their images on social media and include the hashtag **#MyNewHampshire.**

Fire tower fans can also post pictures of themselves at the towers on **My New Hampshire**, the NHDHR's photosharing website that showcases favorite historic places across the state. **My New Hampshire** is smartphone-friendly and can be accessed from the NHDHR's website, nh.gov/nhdhr.

New Hampshire's first fire tower was built in Croydon around 1907. Early fire towers could be as simple as a platform built in a tree, but as the need for more stable structures increased, engineered wooden towers were built. They were replaced by steel towers that are still standing across the state today. These towers are topped by "cabs" that offer 360 degree views.

Many existing New Hampshire fire towers were built in the 1920s and 1930s, when forest fires were frequently started by train embers or smoking materials. Watchmen often lived in cabins near the base of a tower and would telephone for help if they saw smoke nearby.

There are 15 state-owned fire towers in New Hampshire, from as far north as Magalloway Mountain in Pittsburg through the Great North Woods and south into the Monadnock, Lake and Merrimack Valley regions. Many are accessible by auto roads and others present challenging hikes through rough terrain.

Anyone visiting five or more towers is eligible to receive a Tower Quest patch through the **NH Division of Forests and Lands,** which, like the NHDHR, is part of the **NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**. A map is available on Forests & Lands' website nhdfl.org, under "Exploring Our Forests, Fire Towers."

[left-right] An early NH fire tower - YIKES!; the steel towers you can visit today became the standard in the 1920s.

NHDHR on NHPR: Director Muzzey to appear on "The Exchange"

NHDHR Director and State Historic Preservation Officer Elizabeth Muzzey will be hitting the airwaves as part of **May is Preservation Month**, so mark your calendars!

New Hampshire Public Radio's daily call-in show *The Exchange* will be in the Lakes Region for a special appearance at the historic Belknap Mill in Laconia on Friday evening, May 11. Host Laura Knoy will lead a discussion before a live audience, focusing on the challenges - and opportunities - that come with preserving New Hampshire's historical and cultural sites.

Other guests include:

- Jennifer Goodman - Executive Director of the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance
- Jared Guilmett - Vice President of the Board of Directors, Belknap Mill Society
- Justin Slattery - Executive Director, Belknap Economic Development Council

Attendees may be able to ask questions at the event. Questions and comments may also be submitted in advance to:exchange@nhpr.org.

Doors open at 5:45 p.m. and the program will be recorded from 6:30-7:30. The event is free but advance registration is required.

The show is being recorded live and will air at a date to be determined.

nhpr NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC RADIO

Employees of the Dearborn Brothers Tannery at Livermore Falls, ca. 1875.

SCRAP field school returns to Livermore Falls - REGISTER TODAY!

The NHDHR's 2018 summer archaeology field school will return to a site that has been used by generations of occupants from two distinct cultures.

Located in "the Hollow" at Livermore Falls, the field school will focus on a foundation identified from the site's 19th century mill history and will also study recently discovered intact features from what may be a Native American

occupation.

Coordinated through the NHDHR's New Hampshire State Conservation and Rescue Archaeology Program (SCRAP), the field school will conform to archaeology standards set by the National Park Service. David Trubey, archaeologist with the NHDHR, will direct fieldwork and instruction.

Participants will have hands-on experience in data recovery techniques, artifact identification and excavation documentation.

Sessions take place July 9-20 and July 23-Aug. 3. There is no fee to participate as a volunteer; however, a $40 donation to defray the cost of supplies and instructional materials is suggested. Graduate and undergraduate credit through Plymouth State University is available. Volunteers receive the same instruction as credit students.

Advance registration for each field school is required by June 4. For more information and to register, visit nh.gov/nhdhr/SCRAP.htm and click on "Upcoming Events & Opportunities," then "SCRAP Field School 2018" or contact the NHDHR at 603-271-2813.
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NHDHR Moose Plate grant project updates

You're used to us telling you when our NHDHR Conservation License Plate Program grant rounds open. We figure it's time to give an update on some projects that received funding in 2017. Such great work - and so important!

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse has a new wood shingle roof, a project that used funds from Moose Plates, LCHIP and local dollars.

Work was completed on Center Harbor's Town House, including regrading, setting piers on concrete footings and installing a vapor barrier. This was the second NHDHR Moose Plate grant for the building.

The Town of Goshen reroofed its Grange Hall, finishing up before snow fell this past winter.

The Office Building at Benson Park - you may have visited when it was Benson's Wild Animal Park - received necessary sill repairs, drainage improvements and siding repairs.

You can learn more about how Moose Plates support New Hampshire's cultural heritage at mooseplate.com.

"City Mouse" and "Country Mouse" properties named to National Register of Historic Places

New Hampshire's historical properties are diverse and the NHDHR is proud to announce two that were recently honored with placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built in Concord's South End in 1888 when coal gas was a major source of light and heat, the red brick **Concord Gas Light Company Gasholder House**'s distinguishing features include Italianate architectural details, a large conical roof, octagonal wood cupola with single round-headed four-over-four windows on each wall and a prominent copper weathervane. A 120,000 cubic foot wrought-iron gasholder is located inside. Its sheet metal bell was designed to raise and lower on eight iron rails as gas entered and left the building; any gas escaping the bell would vent through the cupola. Currently, the bell is empty and below grade, forming a floor.

Gasholder buildings played a significant role in the growth of American cities and were visual reminders of urban progress. The adoption of natural gas ended coal gas production. Coal gas was last produced at this site on August 13, 1953 and the Gasholder House has remained empty since.

The Gasholder House, a well-loved landmark, is currently in precarious condition: a tree fell on it during a 2013 storm, piercing the north roof slope and adjacent wall cornice; several slate shingles are missing and the cupola is tilting. The building has been stabilized but not repaired.

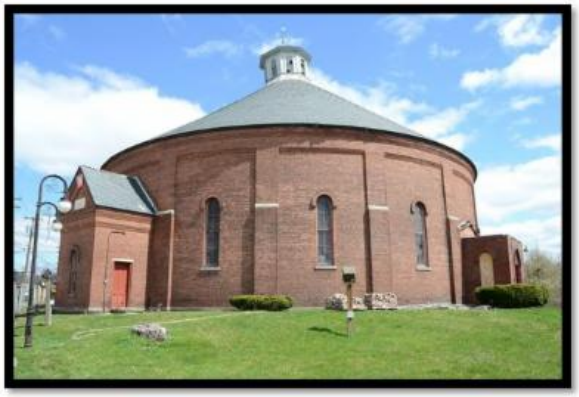
Farmington's First Congregational Church was built in 1875. The town's only Gothic Revival building, it stands out for its distinctive arched windows and doorways, fourteen buttresses with angled capstones, steep gabled roof and 9 x 5-foot arched stained glass window above the vestibule entrance. The church's 120-foot corner belfry houses the town clock and 1915 Henry Wilson Memorial bell. The clock has five-foot clock faces on all four sides, each located above recessed wooden louvered arched openings.

Inside, the church's hallway walls are stained bead-board wainscot, with darker stained molded chair rails and textured plaster above. The sanctuary's trussed ceiling was originally stenciled but pressed tin was added early in the 20th century.

Eight of First Congregational Church's stained glass windows were painted using the Grisaille technique, which uses black or gray enamel paint to trace tin stencils on glass, with the paint then becoming part of the glass itself. They are well-preserved examples of early American stained glass production, installed prior to Louis Comfort Tiffany embarking on his own renowned glass-making career.

Among other benefits, listing to the National Register in New Hampshire makes applicable property owners eligible for grants such as the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program or LCHIP (lchip.org) and the Conservation License Plate Program (nh.gov/nhdhr/grants/moose).

For more information on the National Register program in New Hampshire, visit nh.gov/nhdhr and click on "Programs" or contact Peter Michaud at the NHDHR, 603-271-3583.



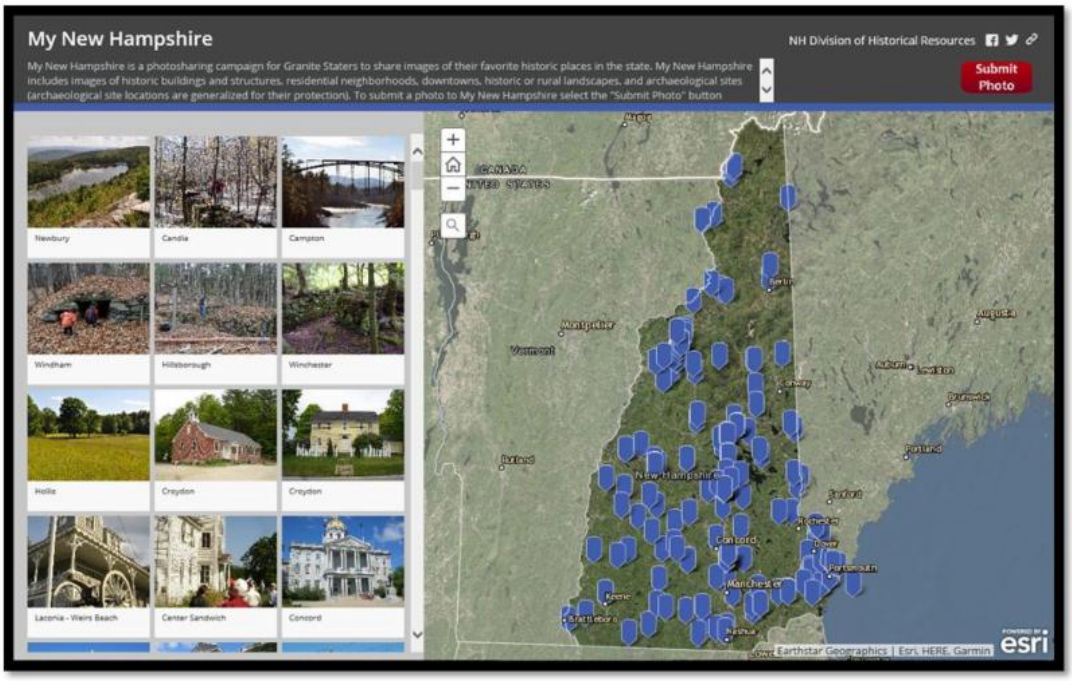
[left-right] Concord's Gas Holder House; detail from one of the Farmington First Congregational Church's Grisaille windows.

Great Spring activity: Add your favorite historic places to "My

New Hampshire"

When we introduced our My New Hampshire online map in 2015, we were hoping it would become a place that people would go to show off the historic places they like best.

And, boy, has it ever! There are currently more than 190 historic posts that cover the state from Clarksville all the way to Hinsdale and out to sea at the Isles of Shoals. You'll find mill buildings, stone bridges, cemeteries, farms, landscapes and other historic places that give New Hampshire its unique character.



***My New Hampshire** makes it easy to view and post your favorite historic places in the Granite State.*

Adding new sites to **My New Hampshire** is easy - and GIS capabilities make it even easier to map the exact spot of your favorite place.

As you head out to explore the state in the coming months, be sure to bring your camera or phone and share the beauty of our historic places by adding them to **My New Hampshire**!

Historic Preservation isn't just a New Hampshire thing

Historic preservation, by its nature, is hyper-local. But like nature, historic preservation abhors a vacuum. It's important to work with partners who can help.

Founded in 1983, the National Association of Preservation Commissions helps historic commissions discuss mutual problems, provides technical support and manages an information network that local

commissions can use to accomplish their preservation objectives. Its education and training programs include the Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP), a biennial conference and a quarterly publication, the Alliance Review. In New Hampshire, Amherst, Exeter and Keene have participated in CAMP training.

NAPC also serves as an advocate at federal, state and local levels of government to promote policies and programs that support preservation commission efforts.

On Wednesdays during **May is Preservation Month**, NAPC is offering several webinars at no cost to members. Learn more at https://napcommissions.org/preservation-month-webinar-series.

NHDHR's Laura Black helps a future preservationist choose her favorite barn at the Farm & Forest Expo.

NHDHR exhibits and presentations a big hit at winter shows

At the NHDHR, we love helping people and communities achieve their historic preservation goals. But we also love getting out there and hearing from folks from all walks of life, answering their questions and finding out about projects that interest them.

This winter, we had displays at both the Farm & Forest Expo and the Old House & Barn Expo, and staff members also gave presentations at each.

It's an honor – and inspiring – to be part of New Hampshire's preservation community!

Stay involved in historic preservation

Between issues of *The Old Stone Wall*, you can remain active in New Hampshire's preservation community. Good places to start are your local community's historic and preservation organizations, the NH History Network and the NH Preservation Alliance website.

The lead photo for this edition of* The Old Stone Wall *is a detail of the Oak Hill Fire Tower in Loudon and was submitted to "My New Hampshire" by Moxie.

NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Working together to preserve and celebrate New Hampshire's irreplaceable historic resources through education, stewardship and protection.

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