



The library stacks area on the second floor of Park Street will be converted to exhibition gallery space. The collections now housed in the stacks will be relocated to new space-saving shelving units being installed in other areas of the Society's buildings.

## MAJOR FACILITIES CHANGES AT THE SOCIETY

As we celebrate our 200th birthday in 2023, the Society announces major changes to our facilities. In fact, work is even now underway.

One of the Society's long-term goals from the strategic plan written in 2011 was to create additional exhibition space in our iconic Park Street building. Due to other priorities and funding constraints this idea sat on the shelf until recently. Now, thanks to a very generous gift from Society members Linda and P. Andrews McLane, we have the funding to move forward on this goal. The plan is to convert the library stacks area on the second floor, which has never been open to the public, to publicly accessible exhibition space. This new gallery will mirror the existing second floor

main gallery, which now hosts the *Discovering New Hampshire* exhibition.

To make room for this change, the tens of thousands of books and other printed materials now housed in the stacks will be relocated. Approximately two-thirds of the items will be moved to the archives areas in the lower level at Park Street, and the balance will be relocated to the Hamel Center—our Eagle Square collections management facility. To increase storage capacity and help ensure the continued long-term preservation of the books and other printed materials, new state-of-the-art collections shelving units are being installed at both locations.

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NEW HAMPSHIRE  
**HISTORICAL**  
SOCIETY FOUNDED 1823

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William H. Dunlap

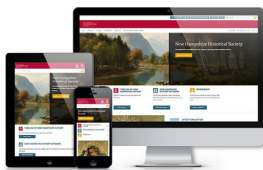
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Bill Dunlap

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is said that planting a tree is one of the most unselfish acts there can be. Unselfish because it is highly unlikely the individual doing the planting will live long enough to experience the shade and beauty of the fully mature tree. It is a generous act for posterity, to benefit those in the future then unknown to the planter. By the same standard, the actions in 1823 taken by the founders of the New Hampshire Historical Society were unselfish indeed.

The group (all men, reflecting the mores of the era, since corrected) was concerned about the preservation of the important documents being generated by our young, fast-growing state and nation. The news from some other states had been alarming: significant papers, often historically important ones, were being lost to fires or sometimes simply sloppy record-keeping. Also, they wanted to preserve the history of the young nation that was being made before their eyes.

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**We should be thankful for the foresight of the founders. I believe they would be pleased, 200 years later, by what they had started at Wildes's tavern. The tree they planted grew into a mighty oak.**

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A meeting was held on May 20, 1823, at Wildes's tavern in Portsmouth, for the purpose of organizing a historical society. (The location did not imply the 21 attendees were big partiers; taverns were the preferred venue for most meetings in that era. Although certainly a bit of rum might have been useful in lubricating the deliberations.) The timing was favorable because during that same spring the group's members were involved in planning for a celebration to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Anglo-European settlement in New Hampshire, in 1623. In the words of one of the key participants, John Farmer, this would be "a favorable time for the formation of a Historical Society. ... We cannot but hope there will be found active and willing minds to carry it into execution."

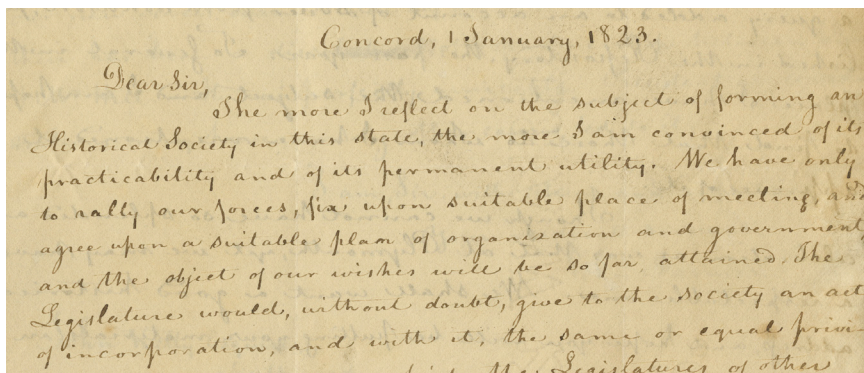
Who were these individuals? The assemblage was a "who's who" of the state at the time, including leaders from the legal, academic, publishing, and political realms. Along with the afore-mentioned John Farmer, today celebrated as the founder of American genealogy, there was William Plumer, a former governor and the Society's first president. Though highly accomplished and highly esteemed, Plumer was modest and unassuming. Among his many accomplishments, he was instrumental in the building of the state house in Concord, and was eulogized thusly: "his memorial is not a statue but the state house itself."

Ichabod Bartlett was a successful lawyer and politician, whose “brilliant flashes ... of wit, keen sarcasm, and pungent irony gave life and spirit to dry judicial discussions.” Hosea Hildreth, professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Phillips Exeter Academy, was an early advocate for the temperance movement and author of several books. Publisher and editor Jacob Moore was to become the first librarian of the new Society, and he, with Farmer, spearheaded the first volumes of the *Collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society*. Prior to the founding meeting, these two men published a periodical that aimed “to excite the attention of those versed in the unwritten history of our state to the formation of a society at the seat of government, embracing the general plan of the Historical Societies in Massachusetts and New York.”

Following the May 1823 organizing meeting, the New Hampshire Historical Society was incorporated in Concord. Its founding papers began, “The object of the New Hampshire Historical Society shall be to discover, procure, and preserve whatever may relate to the natural, civil, literary, and ecclesiastical history of the United States in general, and this State in particular.”

The founders put their money where their mouths were, putting up \$5 each for the initial membership dues (\$127 in today’s dollars). They began publishing and collecting soon thereafter. There had been a few misgivings expressed during the discussions preceding the founding; one participant had expressed skepticism that there would be enough material to collect, saying, “I have ... consulted some of my friends upon the expediency of forming such a society in the state. The prevailing opinion seems to be that there are not sufficient suitable materials among us to form it.” The 200 years since have demonstrated there had been no need to worry. The Society’s collection now numbers in the millions of documents, objects, and photographs.

We should be thankful for the foresight of the founders. I believe they would be pleased, 200 years later, by what they had started at Wildes’s tavern. The tree they planted grew into a mighty oak.



The first-known letter regarding the forming of the New Hampshire Historical Society, dated January 1823, was written by John Farmer, then of Concord, to John Kelly of Northwood. In it Farmer writes, “The more I reflect on the subject of forming an Historical Society in this state, the more I am convinced of its practicability and of its permanent utility. We have only to rally our forces. ...” New Hampshire Historical Society.

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## FACILITIES (continued from page 1)

The Hamel Center facility at Eagle Square (sometimes referred to as the Stone Warehouse) has been owned by the Society since 1990. Currently it is home to the majority of the Society's museum collections (three-dimensional objects) and curatorial staff offices. For the past seven years the top two floors have been leased to a commercial tenant. This arrangement provided welcome extra income but now, with the need for more space and the tenant coming to the end of its lease, the Society will make full use of the entire building once again. This newly available space will be converted to library and museum collections storage, as well as to work area for Society staff.

Researchers will continue to access the library collections from the beautiful reading room at Park Street. Staff are developing new procedures to ensure that collections stored offsite are retrieved in an efficient and timely manner. As much as possible, the library collections stored offsite will be those readily available to researchers in ways other than accessing the originals—including the Society's 800,000 pages of newspapers, which are available on microfilm.



All of these changes will mean that for the next year or so our Park Street building will be in a state of controlled turmoil, with short-term work stations for some staff members, a lot of temporary storage boxes, and construction crews or movers at work in various parts of the building. While a few areas normally open to the public may be closed for short periods, most will remain open to allow us to continue to welcome members, researchers, and visitors.

Of course, all this is happening during the Society's 200th anniversary year, when we have a full calendar of events taking place. The board of trustees and staff are up to the challenge of juggling all of this. And our eyes are on the ultimate prize: when these changes are complete, we will embark on the Society's third century with a new exhibition gallery at Park Street, improvements in staff work space, and expanded storage for our precious collections.

*Above:* New collections storage units were installed at Park Street in February. *Left:* Longtime Society colleague and renowned New Hampshire photographer Gary Samson has volunteered his services to document the original library stacks at Park Street before alterations are made to the space.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE DESK, ADMIRER FOR DECADES, ACQUIRED BY SOCIETY

Patience pays. Last year the New Hampshire Historical Society placed the winning bid at Sotheby's in New York City on a documented example of Concord cabinetwork that New Hampshire furniture enthusiasts have been aware of since at least the 1930s. In 1937, Paul H. Burroughs, author of the earliest known list of New Hampshire furniture makers, which appeared in the *American Collector* in June of that year, was the first to identify the fragmentary label on this secretary (or desk and bookcase) as that of Concord cabinetmaker George Whitefield Rogers.

Over the course of almost a century since the 1930s, the secretary has been part of several private decorative arts collections, including that of Robert W. Upton, who succeeded in bringing it back to Concord for a number of years. Thanks to the Society's Katharine Prentis Murphy endowment fund, established in 1983 for the acquisition and conservation of museum collections, this desk is now part of a permanent public collection in the city where it was made. In the intervening years, this much-admired piece was displayed at the Currier Museum of Art in 1964 and twice illustrated by the Society—both in its 1978 exhibition catalog, *Plain and Elegant, Rich and Common: Documented New Hampshire Furniture, 1750–1850*, and in its 1990 *Historical New Hampshire* issue, "Concord, New Hampshire: A Furniture-Making Capital." The secretary joins a bedstead and chest of drawers attributed to Rogers that are already within the Society collections.

George W. Rogers, part of whose original advertising label remains on this newly acquired sample of his work, was a 30-year-old cabinetmaker in 1800 when he came to Concord from Newburyport, following in the footsteps of Robert Choate, a fellow cabinetmaker from the same town. A few years earlier in 1796, Choate and his partner George Whitefield Martin were the first cabinetmakers to bring the new, inlay-rich Federal style to Concord from coastal Essex County.



Several features of the Rogers piece, including its overall form, the interlaced stringing on the frieze, the broken pilaster inlays at each end of the upper section, the light-colored blocked bands along the lower edge and above the pilasters, and the inverted, light-colored bellflower inlays, were popular in coastal Essex County and were brought north, up the Merrimack River Valley, by Rogers when he came to Concord. It is not surprising that Concord attracted cabinetmakers from this area, as the town that became the state capital was largely settled by people from the lower Merrimack Valley and long maintained family and business connections in that region. The Rogers secretary will help make this aspect of Concord's demographic and social history during the Federal period more concrete and meaningful to present and future generations.



This recently acquired mahogany-and-birch secretary, made and labeled by George Whitefield Rogers (1770–1847), in Concord between 1800 and 1810, is currently on view in the Society's exhibition *Discover New Hampshire*. Rogers is known to have advertised both "Secretaries" and "Ladies' Secretaries" in the *New Hampshire Patriot* in 1809. New Hampshire Historical Society purchase, Katharine Prentis Murphy Fund.

## SOCIETY TAKES GRANITE STATE STORIES ON THE ROAD

Oh, the stories we could tell! For such a small state, New Hampshire has a remarkable history, full of interesting people, creative inventions, daring adventures, and astounding beauty.

In honor of the New Hampshire Historical Society’s 200th anniversary, Society staffers are touring the state in 2023 and sharing a collection of six stories that capture the iconic spirit of New Hampshire. Each presentation includes three of these stories, paired with images from the Society’s collections. The audience gets to pick which stories they will hear as they choose their own adventures.

**Mount Washington**—Follow the journeys of those who braved the elements and tried to climb Mount Washington, sometimes risking their lives and fortunes.

**Revolutionary War flags**—Hear the story of the rare Revolutionary War flags that traveled to battle with the Second New Hampshire Regiment, then on to England after being taken by the British, and eventually back home to New Hampshire again.

**Concord coach**—Hit the road on a Concord coach and discover why it was one of the most consequential innovations of the 19th century.

**Battle of Gettysburg painting**—Explore the Battle of Gettysburg with a painting that traveled the country in the 1880s and gave many people their first glimpse of a Civil War battlefield.

**Chippa Granite**—Learn about the freckled-faced boy named Chippa Granite who promoted New Hampshire across the country.

**Benjamin Champney**—Visit with Benjamin Champney as he mentored a generation of artists who made the White Mountains famous the world over.

The Society is partnering with New Hampshire Humanities to offer Granite State Stories as part of the Humanities To Go program, which has been bringing storytellers to Granite State communities for decades. Visit [nhhumanities.org](http://nhhumanities.org) to book the Society’s program at your library, local historical society, club meeting, or other event.



## SPRING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

### **Lecture: Covered Bridges of New Hampshire Saturday, March 25, 2023, 2 p.m.**

Join author Kim Varney Chandler as she shares an overview of New Hampshire's covered bridges along with interesting facts she uncovered while researching her 2022 book, *Covered Bridges of New Hampshire*. Copies of the book will be available for purchase. Admission is free and no registration is required.

### **Spring Lecture Series: Carved in Granite: A Brief Overview of New Hampshire History Thursdays, April 13 to May 11, 2023, 6 p.m.**

Join Professor R. Stuart Wallace for a five-night lecture series that traces New Hampshire's history from the colonial era to the present. Explore the ways New Hampshire is a place like no other, from its unique system of government to the traditions that have shaped our way of life. This program is offered both in-person and as a live-stream event via Zoom. Admission is free for New Hampshire Historical Society members. Nonmembers are welcome to attend the series for a fee of \$50, which includes a one-year membership. Space is limited, and advance registration is required. Register online at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) (for either the in-person or virtual program) or call 603-228-6688.

### **Family Program: Redcoats and Rebels Saturday, April 15, 2023, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

*Sponsored by Concord Pediatric Dentistry*  
Reenact the American Revolution with a role-playing game at the New Hampshire Historical Society. Kids will immerse themselves in New Hampshire's fight for independence from Britain. Each child will assume the identity of a historical character and have to choose sides in the journey from colony to country. This program is geared for children ages 8 to 13, and they must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited, and advance registration by April 12 is required. There is no registration fee thanks to the generosity of Concord Pediatric Dentistry. Register online at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) or call 603-228-6688.

### **Collections Highlights Talk: General John Stark Saturday, April 15, 2023, 2 p.m.**

In honor of New Hampshire's John Stark Day, staff will share some of the Society's objects and documents related to the Revolutionary War hero. Admission is free for New Hampshire Historical Society members; \$7 for nonmembers. No registration required.

### **Music and Lecture: All Join Hands: Dudley Laufman and the New England Country Dance Tradition**

**Saturday, May 6, 2023, 2 p.m.**

Nationally recognized dance caller Dudley Laufman joins folk music historian Tom Curren to play songs and talk about contra dance traditions. Admission is free for New Hampshire Historical Society members; \$7 for nonmembers. No registration required.

### **Talk and Reception: "Laudable Purpose": The Founding of the New Hampshire Historical Society Sunday, May 21, 2023, 4:30 p.m.**

*Sponsored by Meredith Village Savings Bank*

Come back to Portsmouth, where it all started. Society President Bill Dunlap will speak about the Society's history, followed by a reception, at the Portsmouth Athenaeum. Space is limited for this members-only event, and advance registration is required. (Registration will begin in April.)

### **New Hampshire Historical Society Annual Meeting Saturday, June 10, 2023, 9:30 a.m.**

Celebrate the Society's 200th anniversary with a trip through its history and an update on its most recent activities and accomplishments. All members will receive an invitation via U.S. mail.

## 603 HISTORY HUNT

### NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

See New Hampshire in ways you never have before! Held during the month of July, the Society's 603 History Hunt is a statewide scavenger hunt that tests your knowledge of the Granite State and takes you on the road to complete a series of challenges. Visit the world's longest candy counter, locate a scene from the movie *Jumanji*, or find an 8,000-year-old summer camp—all located right here in the Granite State. Choose which challenges to accept based on your own interests and abilities, with hundreds of challenges to choose from. It's a great activity for families, friends, couples, or on your own, as people can participate as a team or as individuals. Prizes will be awarded in a variety of categories. Participation in the 603 History Hunt is free and open to the general public. This event is sponsored by Merrimack County Savings Bank.

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“Boiling sap,” detail from a stereograph by Kilburn Brothers, Littleton, NH, circa 1870, New Hampshire Historical Society. Many consider spring in New Hampshire to be the sweetest time of the year, when the sap of sugar maple trees is running and boiled to make syrup.