

CROYDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020

I doubt anyone will disagree with me that 2020 has been a challenging year for all of us. With Covid 19 flu pandemic as the daily topic for 9 months, how that effected our school attendance, church attendance, employment and work layoffs, travel plans, and all out gatherings, big and small, has been difficult on our mental state of mind as well as our routines. The 2019/2020 winter weather wasn't

too bad, leading into an early spring and a very hot summer. Some homes in town had their water wells get very low or even not able to draw from them at all. The Sugar River and streams were but a trickle. Then an unseasonable fall with continued really warm days, an early snowfall in November, then again unseasonable weather in December until a doozy of a snow storm on the Thursday before Christmas. Croydon made national news with the most snowfall that day, record 44 inches.

It was light and fluffy thankfully, easier to move but way too much to be able to put it anywhere! So okay, white Christmas for all, nope, one week from this record snowfall, was Christmas day and

it rained all day, taking most of the snow and causing some high water flooding issues as the result. Then to end this year, or rather to begin 2021, again rain, though New Years eve was anything but like past years, most events continuing as virtual.

So 'virtual', that was the word of the year. 'Zoom' - no not as the dictionary defines it; to make a continuous low-pitched buzzing or humming sound (so, that's what I've been doing) or rapidly moving toward or away from a photographic subject, but a computer program allowing virtual meetings, events, and classroom teaching to the kids in their homes possible. Schools closed early spring, kids finishing studies sitting at home with parents now also having to be home, juggling work routine or not being able to go to work as the result, church closed for several months, facemasks the new norm, and 6' apart distancing requirement from everyone, everywhere. Restaurants closed, hair and nail salons closed, large crowd events

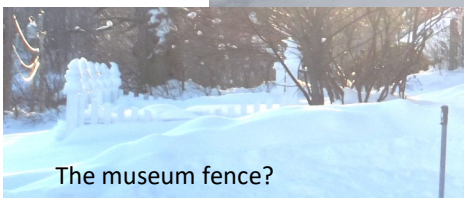


canceled, even medical and nursing facilities closing the doors to visitation to prevent spread of this Covid 19 worldwide flu, and it was peaking at years end! So many lives lost, and so much fear daily of what next.

Quietly, we continued with some **annual maintenance**. The most noticeable are the repairs to the fence in front of the museum. Dave Benoit worked throughout last winter turning out new finials for the posts, we cut and then painted the replacement pieces off site, while Dave removed what had to be, and then installed them in the summer, and with a thorough new coat of paint, completed the fence so beautifully. Thank you Dave for your generous contribution.



It is beautiful though



The museum fence?



No yard sale donations today

CROYDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020 (cont.)

For Memorial Day the **Croydon Village School kids did the annual walk to the East Village Cemetery**, brought by parents as school wasn't in session and cast the memorial wreath in the river. They started at the cemetery to place flags on the veteran markers in family groups. It was remarkable how many parents and kids came to do this annual event, so memorable for all.



Croydon Village School kids and teachers did come for a tour of the museum in September, all masked and always very interested and asked a lot of questions. We studied the earliest maps of town, talked about how families made their gifts to share and entertained with parlor games. They went away with a "coin trick" learned and If your child hasn't shared this for you yet, ask them about how many coins is your guess when they perform this for you.

Memory walkway bricks...We weren't able to get the memory brick walkway laid yet, but we did get the railing in with help from Mike Walsh. We've had more bricks ordered and delivered and hope more of you will want your brick to be added to the next order. Order cards are available at the Coniston store or the town office, or we can mail you some.



Orders are still being taken, you can get cards to place orders also by download from our website, croydonhistoricalsociety.org.

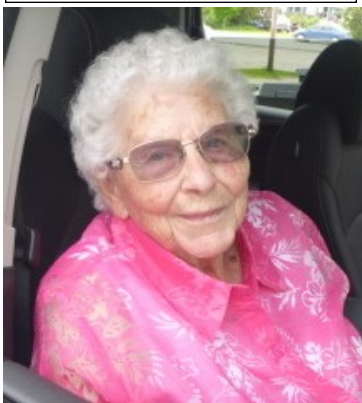


Ornaments we had made for 2019, the Buffalo of Corbin Park are still available. We didn't make a 2020 ornament, but have several from past years still available at the museum, town office and Coniston store. The **New England Inheritance** book is still for sale, either are \$10 each. The book is a great historic read about Croydon families.



The foliage this year was spectacular. A late Monarch butterfly was very happy to find some blooms in Croydon to help him on his way.

Croydon's oldest resident, Bea Smith, 101 this year.



Pink clouds in the fall sky made you wonder at the beauty around us in our little town.



CROYDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020 (cont.)

Veterans Day dinner in November event wasn't canceled, but we didn't have a program. Instead we prepared 'to go' meals with curbside pick up. Or delivery to some. A small group of us did the prep, cooking and packaging for two days to keep with the protocols of Covid, with our menu of strictly ham, macaroni, beans, roll and cupcake. We prepared 77 full meals, a busy group indeed. With sadness we have to say that Clayton Phillips and Ned Shinn passed this year. The Croydon oldest veteran is Harry Newcomb, and usually we get to recognize all of our attending veterans at the event. Instead, we inserted cards made by the school kids and the following bio into the food bags to share:



Military Service of Harry Newcomb, US Army 1952-1954, US Army Reserves 1954-1960



In 1949, Harry Newcomb moved to Croydon, NH with his brother and his parents. They added on to their home after it was relocated to its current location on Pine Hill Rd. from a lot on "Top Hill". This homestead became Rocky Bound Farm, adjacent to Rocky Bound Pond.

In 1952, Harry was drafted by the Selective Service Friends and Neighbors System. His experience began in a long line at Fort Devens. Men were told to step forward if their names were called. Those that stepped forward were enrolled in the Marines. The rest, including Harry, went into the Army. Harry was then bused to Fort Eustis in Newport News, VA where he trained for 6-8 weeks to work on railroads.

Harry was originally ordered to go to Korea, but because of an infection that developed in his neck caused by gun powder, Harry spent 30 days in a hospital. While admitted, Harry noticed that one of his medics had a Newport Argus newspaper in his pocket. This gentleman was from Newport, NH. He and his new friend, Jim had long talks during his stay and remained in touch over the years.

Once recovered from his infection, Harry had orders to report to Alaska to work on the railroad. His journey to Alaska began by being bused to Logan Airport where he took a flight to Fort Lawton in Seattle, WA. Unfortunately, his luggage was transported on another plane and temporarily lost. After he and many other soldiers caught up with their bags, Harry boarded the SS Fredrick Funston, one of the Liberty Fleet ships. These ships were built in a hurry through the Emergency Shipbuilding program during World War II to transport troops. The ships were not riveted, but welded. While on board Harry slept on the top of a stack of 3 bunks. He said his nose was 6" away from a steam pipe.

After a 3-day journey, Harry arrived at Port Whittier and stayed at Elmendorf Air Force Base, an old base with Quonset huts and barracks with novelty siding and no insulation. After two months there, Harry and his company were transferred 3 miles away to a new base, Fort Richardson, which had a coal burning power plant with underground steam pipes providing heat to the barracks.

CROYDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020 (cont.)

Harry began working as a Brakeman on the Army Railroad, which hauled freight and building materials, sometimes 50-75 cars over a 12-hour shift. During one cold winter Harry was still wearing leather boots. He would warm his feet up next to the engine. A First Sergeant asked a Warrant Officer to give Harry his "Mickey Mouse boots", which were insulated and warm. Temperatures got as low as -50 degrees at times.

Two months before Harry left Alaska, there was a devastating fire which destroyed Port Whittier. Harry met a gentleman named Zimmerman, staying at Fort Richardson, who was a deep sea diver, there to help rebuild the port. The harbor was 90' deep and the divers had to go down underwater and cut the wooden pylons with 2-man cross cut saws. A daunting task.

Harry was very impressed by the many Totem Poles that he saw in the villages. Alaskan Indians would carve in their family's history. He wishes he had taken pictures of them.

Harry speaks of his time in Alaska as "the longest and best vacation I ever had". His last year in the service he had some time to hunt moose and go fishing. In 1985, Harry enjoyed going back to Alaska on a cruise with his wife, Meme, whom he married in 1956.

The Croydon Fire Department has made use of this down time of rentals at their building to do work on



an addition, new windows with plans for doing the hall, and some landscaping. Looking good. We donated a Gulbrandsen upright piano, in memory of Jim Britton, to be played by future renters and attendees by those able to play tunes for their guests.



Donations and the hard work of the fundraising efforts by our members and volunteers make it possible to maintain this historic gem of a building for our community. **Thank you all so very, very much.**

I close this year's letter with an appeal for more volunteers. If you would like to come join us, stop in on a Thursday afternoon, usually Barb and Anastasia are in the office or send an email through our website, croydonhistoricalsociety.org. The book club will hopefully be going in the new year, and the yard sale in June. Maybe even Community Day at Camp Coniston if there are volunteers to make it possible.

Regards

Jane Dearden, CHS, Pres.

Cover Pictures: LET IT SNOW, and boy did it. Dec. 18, 2020

Following page: Croydon boundary change 1808 and 1809