

Volume 40, Issue 1
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Vision

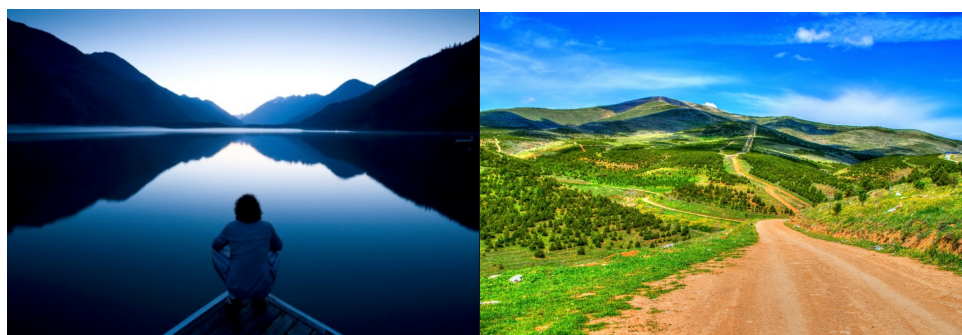


A cultural asset that provides access and gives meaning to the power of history by safeguarding, sharing and displaying stories of our past.

Heritage is the Heart & Soul of a Community

In mid-March, the Franconia Area Heritage Council board carved out a weekend to engage in an off-site meeting to set direction for our organization moving forward. After three long years of precautions, interruptions in our meeting schedules and existing in a state of suspension, we felt we needed to regroup and re-orient ourselves. What service should we and could we provide for our friends, neighbors and visitors? How should we do this in a way that is unique to the Franconia area, authentically reflecting our roots, our ethos and our unique place in the world? What are priorities and next steps?

Before we met as a group, we conducted research to understand what people feel is special about Franconia. The purpose of this research was to understand better the unique and compelling essence of the Franconia Area community. As caretakers of this area's heritage, this was an important first step for us to understand how the events and lessons of the past made a lasting difference. Here's what we learned:



POTENTIAL FOUND IN NATURE: Franconia's identity is rooted in the natural world. This sense of place is also associated with opportunities for reflection and solitude, with feelings of peace and potential co-existing.



FRANCONIA'S HERITAGE IS ONE OF TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY.

Of note, when asked about Franconia's heritage, themes of struggle and choice emerge. The two photos above were chosen as being expressive of how Franconia's heritage is interpreted. Transitions and a sense of change mark Franconia's heritage from its earliest settling to its iron mining beginnings, to tourism and the grand hotel era, to education, to skiing and ski racing all marking the turning points in the town's history. Franconia has had many lives, but there is an enduring thread of triumphing over conditions and of achieving success on one's own terms.

This insight led us to articulate a set of beliefs that will guide us forward:

- Heritage represents the heart and soul of our community; it is our collective DNA;
- Knowledge of the past is necessary for full engagement in the present and is key to a fulfilling future;
- We are stewards of Franconia's past—responsible for caretaking and safeguarding the artifacts, objects and memories of Franconia;
- It is our duty to share our heritage in a way that captivates and inspires awe so that it is always memorable, never lost;
- We embody the collaborative ethos and diverse perspectives that helped define colonial New England.

Our Museum: Farmhouse and Barns



One of our priorities is to preserve and repair the museum building. This traditional New England farmhouse requires upkeep, and we have begun plastering walls and ceilings, replacing doors blown off in the winter winds, and ensuring proper air circulation throughout. Our biggest expense, which we share with many of you, is heating oil. Our building committee has been hard at work getting the building ready to open and will continue to make repairs moving forward. **If you have architecture, construction or restoration interests, please join our growing corps of volunteers who are working to preserve and maintain this old house.**

THE FARMHOUSE HERITAGE: Our museum is lodged in a traditional New England Farmhouse, a multi-utility 1878 building in the quintessentially New England style of a connected “Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn” structure, pictured above in 1932 after being purchased four years earlier by Elwyn and Elizabeth Nelson. The Nelsons planted spruce trees in the front and named her “Spruce Hedges”. The Nelsons had been farming on the top of Coal hill since 1896 and this purchase was their move into “downtown” Franconia. The Franconia Area Heritage Council has been caring for the building interior and its contents since 1998.

Our Collection: Artifacts, Objects, Ephemera, Photos and Family Histories

We have nearly 10,000 items in our collection, many of them on display; much as they would have been a century ago. There is a living room, music room/parlor, nursery, bedroom, kitchen, summer kitchen, and barn that help provide context by enabling visitors to experience these artifacts *in situ*.



Museum (from left to right): music room/parlor, kitchen, children's clothing, aprons, Dow Academy baseball uniforms, Lafayette Grange photos

Over the next year, we will be going through each room in the house and refreshing the displays and signage. The recreation room in the barn (skiing and winter sports) and the back barn (farming and harvesting tools and equipment) have been refreshed. Plans are in the works to transform space on the second floor into a research/reading room and office after the plaster work is completed.

Our exhibit “CT BODWELL, THE FATHER OF THE FLUME: His Photographic Legacy” is on display through the end of the year, curated and organized by local resident Kevin Johnson, and supplemented with a biography provided by Eileen T. and Greg Ball, descendants of CT Bodwell. Kevin has placed some of the Bodwell photos taken in Franconia Notch, almost a century ago, side-by-side with photos taken last year. The beauty of the area remains, a testament to the legions of residents and neighbors who have championed the preservation of our natural resources for generations.



Noel Quinton (collector) and Kevin Johnson (Exhibit Curator) at opening of exhibit, postage stamps featuring CT Bodwell's photo of the Old Man of the Mountain, Bodwell children

Other exhibits include a pop-up extension of the “Enduring Presence: The Old Man of the Mountains” exhibit, that opened at the Museum of the White Mountains in Plymouth on June 3, 2023, as well as an exhibit built around turn of the century quilt squares found in a local attic. These squares feature the embroidered names of the quilters and taken together are a beautiful example of how our history and heritage gets recorded.

Social Media: Where Were You When the Old Man Fell?

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the rainy night of May 3, 2003, when the Old Man of the Mountains fell from his perch. We interviewed people who worked in or around Franconia Notch and shared their recollections of that day. These posts were seen and shared widely with over 1,000 people engaging with us, sharing their personal recollections of that time and forwarding our post to their friends and family. Below are some examples of these recollections:

“Driving back from Philadelphia going over the George Washington Bridge and heard it on the radio.”

“I was living in Littleton. We were sitting in the living room when a friend burst through the front door and told us. My grandfather was part of the logging crew to cut the trails on Cannon and I grew up under the Old Man’s shadow. I still look up for him every time I drive through the notch. I (heart) My Old Man.”

“I was still living in MI. People out there couldn’t understand why I was so upset and crying. Even my children, who were young when we moved, were upset.”

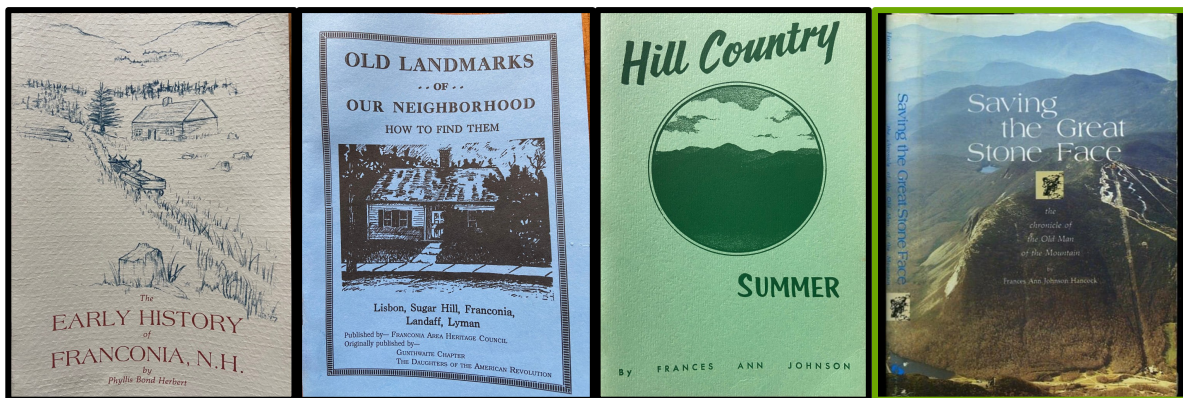
“At the Peabody Base Lodge helping to set up the prom for Profile High School.”

“At my son’s mountain bike race in the Southern California mountains. Mom called and told me and we cried on the phone together mourning our Old Man.”

“My wife and I were volunteering in the Greenleaf hut on Lafayette the night it came down. We heard the noise but had no idea it was that!”

Museum Bookstore: Now available on line

This winter we upgraded and added content to our website. We included a museum bookstore where a few of our books are for sale.



Included are the original publications of “Saving the Great Stone Face” by Frances Ann Johnson Hancock, in addition to her Summer and Autumn editions of “Hill Country” poems. We have a book “Old Landmarks of Our Neighborhood”, originally published by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1938, and reprinted in 1995 by the Franconia Area Heritage Council. “The Early History of Franconia, NH”, by Phyllis Bond Herbert is also available here, where she traces the history of Franconia from its initial land grant in 1764 through the eventual settling in 1773. Visit us on-line at <https://www.franconiaareaheritage.org/shop>. Prices include shipping.

Speakers and Education: Speaker Series

This past year, we arranged a trial run of a speaker series so that we could stay in touch with many of you during the winter months when our museum building is closed. We had about thirty attendees for the speaker at our Annual Meeting (in person) and twenty on-line attendees for the remaining two events. We had three speakers, funded through grants made possible from NH Humanities. Our speakers were:



"George Washington and Lafayette, at Valley Forge" by John Dunsmore 1907, a quintessential New England covered barn, and "June Skies" by Maxfield Parrish, 1940

- **Alan Hoffman "Lafayette and Human Rights"**. Lafayette's first foray into human rights work was during the American Revolution which he saw as a cause important to all people. He continued to promote universal natural rights throughout his life. During the French Revolution he drafted "the Rights of Man and the Citizen" and later supported other revolutions in Europe and South America as well as causes designed to deliver human rights to the oppressed. In particular, the abolition of slavery engaged Lafayette continuously, from the American Revolution and his return tour of the United States until his death in 1834. Lafayette said: "I would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America, if I could have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of slavery."
- **Thomas Hubka "Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England"**. Through architecture unique to northern New England, this illustrated talk focuses on several case studies that show how farmers converted their typical separate house and barns into connected farmsteads. Thomas Hubka's research in his award-winning book, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England*, demonstrates that average farmers were, in fact, motivated by competition with farmers in other regions of America, who had better soils and growing seasons and fewer rocks to clear. The connected farmstead organization, housing equal parts mixed-farming and home-industry, was one of the collective responses to the competitive threat.
- **Jane Oneail "Granite State Gallery: New Hampshire Art and Artists through the Years"**. New Hampshire has attracted and inspired artists since the colonial era. What is distinctive about the art made here? This program will consider works by itinerant and folk painters, landscape artists drawn to the state's scenic vistas, and modern artists that adopted bold styles to depict everyday life in the Granite State. Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Childe Hassam, and Maxfield Parrish are some of the artists discussed in this program.

NH Humanities is a terrific organization with a range of speaker/presentation topics from "Indigenous Culture" to "Technology & Society" and lots in between. The plan is to schedule these programs as on-line presentations during the winter months as a way to keep in touch with our community. We'd love to hear from you if you are interested in this program, or hear from local businesses who might host us for in-person

presentations. Please reach out to us at info@franconiaareaheritage.org if you have suggestions for future topics or thoughts on in-person vs. on-line presentations.

2023: Our 250 Year Anniversary of Settling

This summer marked the 250th anniversary of Franconia's Settling. The Town of Franconia planned an expanded Old Home Day(s) celebration on the weekend beginning July 7, 2023. The settling of Franconia, however, was not without controversy. The original charter for Franconia was granted by King George III and his representative, the "trusty and well-beloved Benning Wentworth" on February 14, 1764 to Jesse Searle and others. This grant, referred to as a "New Plantation" of Franconia included what is present day Franconia and Lincoln.

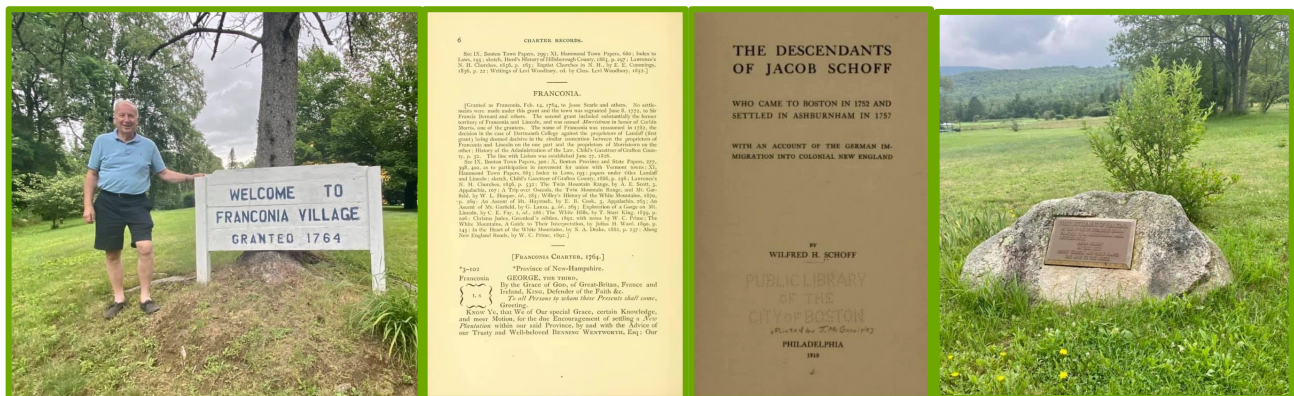
SETTLERS EXPERIENCED SETBACKS

In securing land grants, settlers--upon settling--were required to clear land, harvest trees for the king's navy and conduct a census. Would-be settlers had a difficult time making their way up here. Their stories report weather delays and rumored skirmishes with native American groups sent south from Canada to keep northward expansion in check. The French settlers in Canada encouraged their friends, the members of the St. Francis tribe, known today as Abenaki, to discourage a new wave of settlers.

COLONIAL REAL ESTATE SPECULATORS ARRIVE: A SECOND LAND GRANT

None of the anticipated settling had happened so a second grant was made on June 8, 1772 to Sir Francis Bernard and others who called this settlement "Morristown" after Captain Corbin Morris, one of the grantees. Jacob Schoff, Philip Grapes, and Philip Verbeck made their way up the Connecticut River Valley with the intent of settling Morristown. German settlers from Ashburnham, Massachusetts, they came north looking for land they could settle and turn a profit on. These colonial real estate speculators were "a law unto themselves as far as land claims went, and made their pitches where they pleased, settling with proprietors later" (SOURCE: "The Descendants of Jacob Schoff"). In 1773 Morristown was settled on the present day Easton Valley Road, near the Coppermine Trail where Jacob Schoff was able to take and report the census. Jacob Schoff, his wife Elizabeth Darrow (Devereaux?), their family of eight children and son-in-law, Philip Grapes, were recorded.

The Grapes settled near the Franconia Inn and a third settlement was on Lafayette Road.



Franconia was granted in 1764, but not settled until 1773. Above is FAHC Board Treasurer Phil Krill at Franconia's southern border on "Three Mile Hill", the original land grant from Governor Wentworth, a family history of the Schoffs, the first settlers in 1773, and a marker on Easton Valley Road commemorating the first settlement.

By 1777, Jacob Schoff had sold his property and headed north to Northumberland before building a home in Maidstone, which is now in Vermont. Why? Likely this was because the Franconia land grantees of 1764 filed a lawsuit against the Morristown land grantees of 1772, demanding the name and grants reflect the original granting. The original grantees won and the settlement was renamed Franconia.

It's possible Schoff bought and settled the land in 1773 that an original proprietor had no right to sell him. We read an account of these settlers, smarting from their Franconia experience, using physical means of securing land and settlements in their new towns. Two years ago, we found that while the town had celebrated its 200th anniversary in 1972, that date was off by a year. 1773 was the actual date of a 'boots on the ground' settlement.

THIS SUMMER, WE CELEBRATED OUR 250th ANNIVERSARY OF SETTLING, OUR SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL.

On Friday, July 7, we commemorated and celebrated our 250th anniversary with a Swing Dance. This featured The Tall Granite Big Band, an 18 piece band with vocalists, starting at 4:30 pm at the Lafayette Regional School. They performed two 45 minute sets, with an intermission between. On Saturday, July 8 the museum was open with books available for sale as well. The Heritage Council also built and entered a float in the Old Home Day Parade. "Ring of Fire" is a 1/6th scale model of Franconia's Iron Furnace, complete with a smoking stack! The original octagonal stone stack that is visible on the far bank of the Gale River is all that remains of a 200-year-old iron smelter shown on an 1805 map of Franconia. Our float won "Most Creative" as decided by the judges.



Cemetery Tour and FAHC Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Franconia Area Heritage Council will take place on Wednesday, November 15th, 2023 at the Franconia Inn.



Jayne O'Connor, Franconia Cemetery Trustee, in character as the wife of Zebedee Applebee, will lead a tour of the Willow Cemetery (Easton Road, on left before the Franconia Inn tennis courts) at 5:00 PM, prior to the meeting. Sometime after 1774, Zebedee Applebee acquired the property upon which the Franconia Inn now stands, and erected a homestead.

A selection of heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served - some passed and some on tables. Cash bar will be available. Cost will be \$45.00 per person. Checks should be made out to Franconia Area Heritage Council and mailed to P.O. Box 169, Franconia, NH 03580, to be received no later than November 8th.

Cemetery Tour 5:00 PM to 5:45 PM
Cocktail Hour 5:45 PM to 6:30 PM
Annual Meeting 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM

Photo courtesy of Lorna Colquhoun

Membership and Donations:

Please consider adding your name to our membership and/or donating to the Franconia Area Heritage Council. As many of you who live in the area are aware, the cost for heating oil is quite high and as we're only open for a few months a year, there are months when our expenses are higher than our income. We need your help keeping the building heated throughout the winter and in repairing and maintaining the building from the usual wear and tear that come with living in a full four-season location. Our priority lies in protecting and preserving the objects, artifacts and ephemera that have been donated to the museum so that we can continue to share these stories today and for future generations as well.

Membership is \$25/year.

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Franconia Area Heritage Council

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