

# NEWSLETTER

Holderness Historical Society

Winter 2023

Volume XXXV



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## A Walk To The Past On Mt. Prospect Road



Trail map of the area, late 1930s.  
*Courtesy New England Ski Museum.*

Walking on Mt. Prospect Road has been a passion for many of us living around here. It is a road that existed in the charter map when Holderness was founded in 1761. Apart from the hustle and bustle of Holderness School campus grounds, the quite country road with houses dispersed on both sides goes up to the hill and when the black top ends, the name of this road becomes Pulsifer Road. It was named after Joseph Pulsifer, a cabinet maker from Ipswich, Mass. who bought "Pulsifer Hill" from Samuel Livermore. He married Mary Brown in 1769 and moved up here the same year. They had eleven children.

It is a quiet road. However when one studies the

1860 map, it tells another story of a close-knit community who knew each other well. There were marriages among neighbors such as Jane Ellison who married James Connell and her sister, Florilla married Moody Mudgett. These were families that lived to left and right of Ellison's homestead. The Elm Schoolhouse was another example of how families on this stretch of the road grouped together to start a schoolhouse. Nathaniel Burleigh who lived up the street from Jesse and John Mudgett first built the school and the Mudgett brothers did extra carpentry work to maintain the school building. The deed was kept by their neighbor, Sam Kimball who lived across from the schoolhouse and later it was passed on to Moody Mudgett.

The Elm School (a.k.a District 1 on the 1860 map) ran two terms a year in 1867: Fall and Winter. The length of the term: 7-12 weeks. It had one teacher, Miss A.B. Smith; she also taught in District 3 that year. There were 11 students in attendance in 1867, but in 1881 when Miss Mary E. Nutting was the teacher, she had 18 in the summer term of 11 weeks and 16 students in the Fall term that ran for 9 weeks. The Elm School continued to be in session until 1949-1950 when the Holderness Central School became the school for all children to attend. Some of my neighbors still can recall the days when they attended this schoolhouse. They have some good stories to tell.

Unlike families living quietly on Mt. Prospect Road these days, families back then put their land to commercial use. Cattle ranching, apple orchards, sawmills come to mind. Maple-sugaring was common then and it was known that John E. Ellison built a cider-press machine powered by oxen back in 1850. The machinery is now owned by the Merrill family and the machine still works! For more details on a Mt. Prospect farmer, see the 1894 diary of Frank Ellison published in the Fall 2012 historical society newsletter at

[www.holdernesshistoricalsociety.org](http://www.holdernesshistoricalsociety.org).

Mt. Prospect Road however was more than just a farming community; it was also a tourist destination when the railroad came to Plymouth in the 1850s. Pemigewasset House in Plymouth turned Mt. Prospect into a tourist destination by first building a carriage road up Mt. Prospect. The carriage road opened with a gala celebration in 1859. There were locked gates to which the hotel manager had the keys. Families living on this stretch of the road would have



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Continued on page 3



## The President's Corner

This summer we were open for visitors on Saturdays from 10 to noon from June 18<sup>th</sup> through September 10<sup>th</sup> and by appointment.

Two special exhibits presented this summer in the museum were: **Art and Memorabilia of Helen Nicolay** (The paintings are on loan compliments of Patty Sue Salvador.) and a **Dugout Canoe** which was discovered in Veerie Cove in 1939. The dugout became part of our collection in 2018 donated to HHS by the Shelburne Museum, Shelbourne, VT.

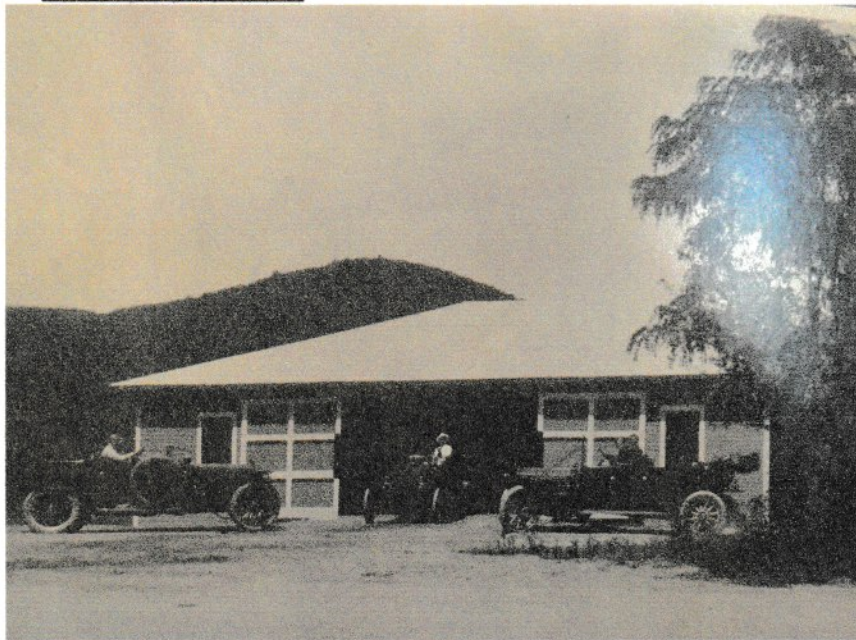
Two well attended programs were presented this year: *Colonial Stories: The Tangled Lives of Native Americans and English Settlers* and *Heroes and Homecomings: Norman Rockwell and World War II*. On June 4<sup>th</sup> we hosted members of the Nulhegan Band of Coosuk Abenaki Nation who presented a day of cultural sharing: basket-making, birch-lined sap boiling pots, a birch bark canoe, flute-making, tools, storytelling, drumming, and fashioning a dugout canoe out of a pine log, presently on display behind the building. Hundreds of people enjoyed this day!

Cataloging of our books and pamphlets in our research/library area to make researching families, cemeteries, camps, and other historical events and places simpler continues. Please check our website: [www.holdernesshistoricalsociety.org](http://www.holdernesshistoricalsociety.org) for programs, exhibits, museum hours, etc.

Your continued support by way of membership dues and contributions helps preserve our town's history and maintain our building and exhibits. If you have not yet renewed your membership, please use the enclosed envelope to do so. We hope that more of our members will become more active in the historical society. We always welcome your ideas, help, and suggestions. Please contact me, or any other member of the board, if you can help or for more information.

Linda Foerderer  
[FPLinda@aol.com](mailto:FPLinda@aol.com)

## Then and Now



Guy Davidson's Cadillac Dealership 1913



Squam Lakes Automotive Services 2022-23

## . Gifts to the HHS Museum

- A colonial style desk for our office - from Anne Foerderer Grasso
- A State Tree Quilt made by Holderness Central School 4<sup>th</sup> Grade of 2007-8
- Assorted papers including the '73 flood, '87 Apple Festival cookbook, and early Master plans from Dick and Carolyn Calley's collection given by Luann Martin
- An HHS return address stamp from Bill Judkins
- A DAR collection of records regarding local families including Livermores and Trinity Church Yard; a folder of Ashland and Holderness tinted postcards, both from the Plymouth Historical Society
- An antique square table with cooper feet - from Linda Foerderer
- A T-shirt issued by Kip and Joe's Boat Livery in 1955 and a photo of the Oriole c. 1940 from Mike Long.



seen large wagons each drawn by four horses carrying hotel guests up and down the road.

According to Moses Foster Sweetser's guidebook, *The White Mountains: A Handbook for Travelers* published in 1876, "After entering the mountain-road at a gateway, the ascent is found to be easy and gradual for about 1.5 miles. The view is obtained from a crowning ledge...most of the summit is clear and is used for pasturage." The tourists at that time would have a panoramic view of the White Mountains to the north and the Squam Range and Squam Lake to the east which the author described in two-page detail with pencil sketches of what he had seen at the summit. To the southeast, he wrote that "it is a noble view of Lake Winnepesaukee, its blue sheet broken by hundreds of islands and promontories..." One hiker recently commented on an online chat that, "it's remarkable that 'Mt. Wachuset' in Massachusetts could once be seen from this summit." Hikers still climb Mt. Prospect, even though the view from the summit is not as clear as it used to be.

Mt Prospect Rd. was well used by hotel guests and hikers but in the 1930s, it was also used by skiers. Fred Pabst, Jr. (of the famous Pabst Brewery in Milwaukee), a pioneer developer in recreational skiing at that time, decided to start his own ski areas in the U.S. after he enjoyed skiing in Europe. He knew that in order for his business to succeed, the ski area had to be accessible by train as he noted that mountain roads then were, in his words, "either next impassable or nonexistent." He noted that ski slopes not only had to be in an area with snow but also accommodations for skiers to stay nearby. After examining maps of all kinds, he chose Intervale and Plymouth, NH as the "first" ski slopes where ski trains could bring skiers from Boston and New York City.

From Plymouth where the Boston and Maine train would stop, he would transport the skiers to "his" Huckins Hill ski area on the lower slopes of Mt. Prospect. (See trail map courtesy of the New England Ski Museum.) The ski area operated from 1938-1941. After World War II, Holderness School skiers who knew it as Sonny O'Donnell's or Cartwrights' would use the trails for practice. The hillside, now returned to woods, is owned by Shelagh Connelly and Marty Riehs.

In his interview with Arthur Zich of the magazine, *Sports Illustrated* (Nov. 19, 1962, Pabst said, (I was selling something people didn't understand. The hard-back Yankees didn't trust me, a Midwesterner, either." Mr. Pabst claimed that he cleared his own timber, blasted his own rocks, did his own surveying, profiling, trucking, hauling, bulldozing, gully-filling and even designed his own lifts. He said, "it was hard work, building a place to ski in those days." At Huckins Hill, "I blasted the face off the hill with a little gas-driven jackhammer. Today, the big equipment's available; a million-dollar installation can go up in a year. Look at them all: more areas than fleas on a dog's back, right?" He also designed his 1800' J-bar (hook tow) which served a 350' drop in Huckins Hill/Plymouth. His enthusiasm on developing recreational skiing didn't stop here. By 1937, he had opened five more Pabst lifts in Vermont, two more in New York State, two in Michigan and one in Minnesota. By the 1940s, he decided to focus on one place for he claimed that "there weren't enough skiers...and the hills I'd built were strung out too far apart to supervise properly." Mr. Pabst then opened Bromley Ski Mt. in Vermont and removed the J-bar in Huckins Hill.

Today, when one walks up Mt. Prospect Road and attempts to locate Huckins Hill Road according to the placement of the 1860 map and even on Google word map, one won't even know where it is as it is paved over and has become a private property. However, old timers like Dean Huckins who still lives here know about this ski slope started by Fred Pabst, because the remnants of the ski fence can still be found on his land. Old timers would tell you that the Carriage Road still exists, but the gates are gone; they would even add that there's a "Miser's Cave" up there. Intimations like these bring up the allure of this road and who knows what we will discover next?

For much more on the history of skiing, see the books written by retired PSU professor John B.Allen, His most recent publication is *Traveling the Old Ski Tracks of New England* published by the University of Massachusetts Press in November 2022.

Stacey G. H. Yap

*Keep up the Good Work!*

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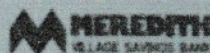
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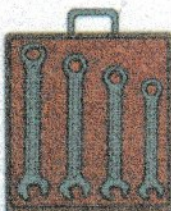


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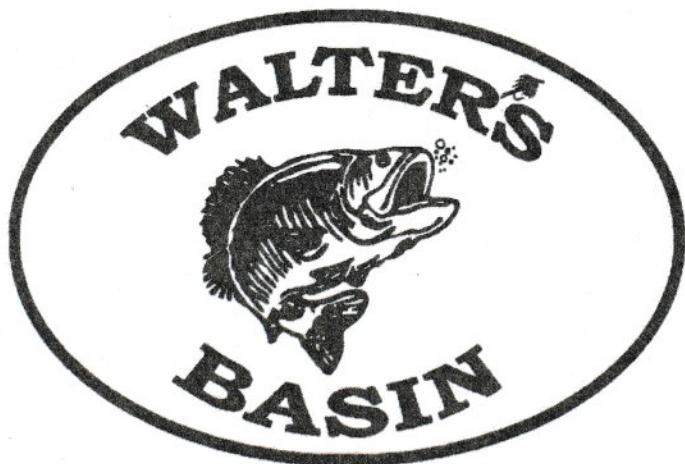
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**Pictured: The Holderness Inn, Holderness, NH  
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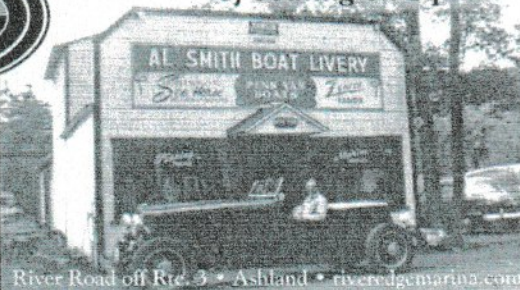
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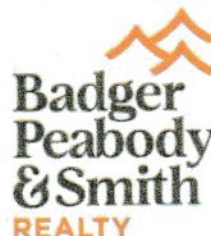
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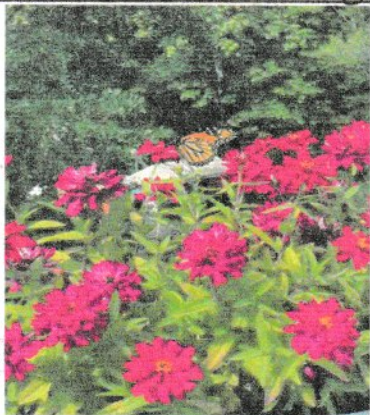


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## Flowers on the Bridge



Thanks to those who donated to our *Flowers on the Bridge* project which benefit's the entire town and its visitors. The purple and yellow pansies chosen by Jane Huntoon and Bonnie Hunt kept blooming right through the weekend of October 7.

## Treasurer's Report

We have had only the usual maintenance expenses this year. Because of generous members and donors, we have been able to cover them. Special thanks to the Town and to the anonymous donor from Bose, Inc. Thanks to donors to the scholarship in honor of Eleanor Mardin, retired fire chief, which will be given to another area high school student next year.

## Milton Graton Through the Ages

An article from the 1970 fall edition of *Forest Notes* magazine has just surfaced telling of Milton S. Graton's constructing, restoring and saving wooden covered bridges throughout New England and beyond. He worked with historical groups, state and federal transportation departments, municipalities and timber providers from way out west in completing his many projects. His special skills have been passed down to his heirs with the belief that, properly taken care of, wood will outlast steel bridges.

Tink Taylor

## Membership Report

If you have not yet renewed your membership, please return the enclosed envelope with a check payable to the Holderness Historical Society.

Individual membership is \$15 and family is \$25. Your membership money is important to the financial day to day running of the Society.

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## In Memoriam

**Bill Dunnell**, an annual contributor, had been spending summers in Holderness much of his life. Retired from teaching English at the Brooks School, he could be seen daily making his way to the post office from the home he shared with his brother Jake. Their father had piloted the mailboat the summer he returned from serving in WWI.

**Beverly Ann Baker Smith**, a member of a family with roots in early Holderness. With her daughter Susan, she bought the Black Horse Motel and turned it into the Cottage Place.

**John Nielsen**, brother of our board member Patty Sue Salvador, and a seventh generation descendent of William and Susanna Shepard Piper, the first settlers of Holderness in 1763.

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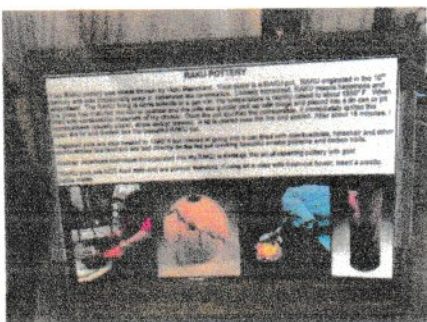
Children learning pottery making using clay.



Pottery display



Burning log to form a dugout canoe.



On June 4<sup>th</sup> members of the  
**Nulhegan Band of Coosuk  
Abenaki Nation** visited

Holderness. They presented a day  
of cultural sharing demonstrating  
basket-making, birch-lined sap  
boiling pots, a birch bark canoe,  
pottery, flute-making tools,  
storytelling, drumming and  
fashioning a dugout canoe from a  
350 pound white pine log, which is  
on display behind our building.  
Hundreds of people enjoyed the  
day!

