

IN THE modern world of varied and rapid transport, signs are so ubiquitous in everyday life that we seldom think much about them. However, signs of differing formats have been used for about 20,000 years and a study of signage can be used to illustrate the history and development of business, technology, and social institutions over thousands of years. ...

TODAY our cities, our roadsides, and our lives are filled with signs. This is true because they have proven to be the most effective and efficient method of advertising and of imparting many types of information to the public. From the earliest petroglyphs to the advertising signs of ancient Greece and Rome, to today's huge, animated, and brightly lit electronic signs of New York's Times Square, signs have served to inform humans for thousands of years. They have become so commonplace in our lives that we rarely think about them. The next time you drive down the highway, pause to consider the countless times and the many ways that signs have informed your own life.

—Alan F. Rumrill

Signs of the times



An Exhibit at the
Historical Society of Cheshire County
246 Main Street
Keene, New Hampshire 03431

November 1, 2023 – April 19, 2024

THE ALDRICH
FURNITURE CO.
KEENE, N.H.

Marlow's
CAFE

Bradford
Inn



LEMPSTER. 5 M.
NEWPORT. 15 M.
CLAREMONT. 17 M.

KINGSBURY
TOYS

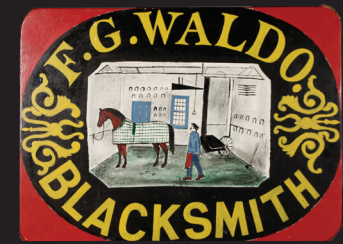
DR. A.C. JOHNSTON

A.W. HOPKINS MD

HOTEL ELLIS

HOTEL
SILVERDALE

CAMP FOR RENT



FRUIT HILL FARM
Tea Room

GURNEYS
BEVERAGE
For Health
GINGER ALE
ORANGEADE
BIRCH
CHERRY
COCA COLA
WHISKEY
HIRES
STRAWBERRY
GRAPE
SHAM ROCK
LEMON & LIME

DEMONSTRATION
OF
WRIGHTS
SILVER CREAM

C. BRIDGMAN

REDUCE THE GAS TAX

THOMPSON BRIDGE 1832



OVER NIGHT
GUESTS



THE
DUBLIN INN
OPEN ALL YEAR

GOODRICH
CONCORD
Cheshire Co. Auto Club
TIRES



THIS FARM
FOR SALE
OR EXCHANGE FOR
VILLAGE PROPERTY



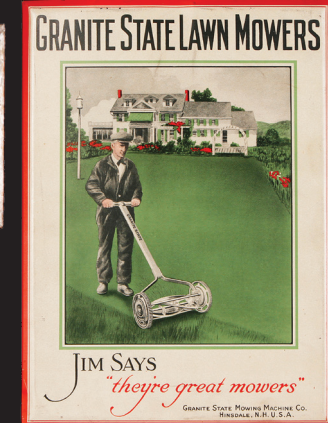
Welcome to
SWANZEY
Incorporated 1753

SPEAKER ST
CADY ST

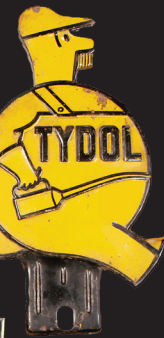


BRATTLEBORO 5 Ms.
SPOFFORD LAKE 4 1/2
CHESTERFIELD 3
KEENE 16

WARD No. 1
1841.



JAFFREY



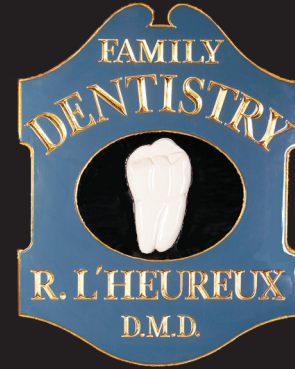
THE HOLBROOK
GROCERY COMPANY
IGA
SUPPLY DEPOT



MINNIOWA
TEA HOUSE

THIS FARM IS RAISING
ONE OR MORE
ACRES OF CEREALS
TO HELP WIN THE WAR
CHESHIRE CO. FARM BUREAU

KEENE, NH
VIA FERRY. 19 M.



JAFFREY
RINDGE

KEENE
SIGN
WORX

STAGE ENTRANCE.

POST OFFICE • STODDARD, N.H.

SHARON
RINDGE

DUBLIN. 5 1/2 Ms.
PETERBORO
EAST-JAFFREY. 2 Ms.

STODDARD
1412 FEET
ABOVE OCEAN

BRYANT ROAD

SHRINE OF
Our Lady of the Snows
DUBLIN, N.H.
east Day Mass
Sunrise 7:00pm

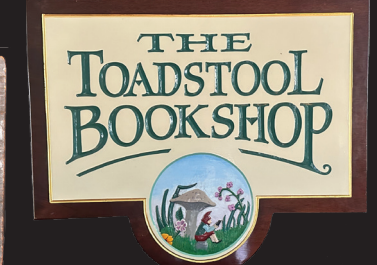


NO FISHING
OR
TRESPASSING
ON THIS PROPERTY
Mrs. Frederick Brewster
Dublin, N. H.

ROAD
CLOSED
PER ORDER SELECTMEN
DUBLIN, N. H.

AUTOMOBILISTS
THIS ROAD IS NARROW
AND DANGEROUS
SELECTMEN OF DUBLIN, N. H.

NO ICE ON THIS POND
UNTIL AFTER ICE IS HARVESTED. ANY PERSON
FOUND TRESPASSING, CUTTING WHEELS, THROWING STONES
OR IN ANY WAY INJURING THE ICE WILL BE
PUNISHED TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW.
CITY ICE CO. 1st Annual Prop.



Plant Sale
Garden Accessories
benefit of
Monadnock Reservation
Miss Cann's Tea House
Jaffrey
September 21st
11-4 Standard Time

Extract from the Public Laws of
New Hampshire
CHAPTER 330, SECTION 41: "If any person who enters upon or crosses a railroad at
any private way which is closed by gates or bars neglects to securely close them, he shall
forfeit the dollar for each offense and shall be liable for any damage that shall be
occasioned by such neglect."
BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD
IMPORTANT NOTICE
This is the Federal Crossing and the gates or bars must be kept closed. NO SIGNALS ARE
GIVEN BY APPROACHING TRAINS.
TRESPASSERS ARE FORBIDDEN TO ENTER OR CROSS HERE
Any person using the crossing must close the gates or bars securely, and for failure so to do
will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Signs of the Times

*Communicating Information
over the Years in the Monadnock Region*

An Exhibit at the
Historical Society of Cheshire County





The Ark in Jaffrey at the foot of Mt. Monadnock. It still stands. When built by Joe Cutter, townspeople said it was so big—bigger than the Meetinghouse—that it was 'Joe Cutter's Ark.'

Signs of the Times

*Communicating Information
over the Years in the Monadnock Region*

An Exhibit at the
Historical Society of Cheshire County



Keene, New Hampshire:
Historical Society of Cheshire County
2023

*Dedicated to those who made the signs in the past
and continue to make them today.*

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Frontispiece: Signboard of The Ark, 1808. Jaffrey Historical Society.

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Preface

THIS EXHIBIT—*Signs of the Times*—has been a long time coming.

The Historical Society of Cheshire County has accumulated an array of signs over the years. They've arrived, often unexpected, from members and collectors; from sign painters; from business owners going out of business or retiring; from town officials; and no doubt from dump-pickers with a keen eye.

Signs tell stories about where we've been and where we're going, and certainly about changes in taste and demand and lifestyle.

The Society is pleased to host this exhibit and wishes to express its gratitude to those societies and individuals who loaned the signs on display. Nearly every local historical society has a sign or two in its collection. 🍷



SIGNS GALORE

A sign collection on
Turnpike Road, Jaffrey.

Acknowledgments

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Marlow Historical Society (Maria Baril)

Alan F. Rumrill

Stoddard Historical Society (Alan F. Rumrill)

Swanzey Historical Society (Ed Read)

Walt's Signs (Walt Hautanen)



Introduction

By Alan F. Rumrill, *Executive Director*, Historical Society of
Cheshire County

DURING the year 1827 a young Keene furniture apprentice carved a five-foot tall wooden eagle for the owner of a large hotel on Keene's Main Street. The business had recently been renamed Eagle Hotel and 18-year-old Amos Holbrook's handcrafted eagle was placed atop a large painted signpost in front of the hotel. The gilded eagle served to catch the attention of travelers and draw them to the hotel.

A growing number of turnpikes resulted in an increase in long-distance travelers through Keene and the owners of local inns and hotels wanted to ensure that their public houses were clearly visible and appealing. Travelers of the early 19th century expected inn signs to be adorned with various picturesque motifs. The United States had just passed the 50th anniversary of its independence and the American Eagle, the symbol of the nation, was one of the most common motifs. Eagle Hotel owner Stephen Harrington took his on-street advertising one step further—creating a three-dimensional eagle to announce his business to the public. This large wooden eagle is one of region's oldest surviving business 'signs.'

In the modern world of varied and rapid transport, signs are so ubiquitous in everyday life that we seldom think much about them. However, signs of differing formats have been used for about 20,000 years and a study of signage can be used to illustrate the history and development of business, technology, and social institutions over thousands of years.

Before discussing the history of signs in general and in the Monadnock region specifically, it is useful to share a definition of what a sign is. A sign is a notice that is publicly

THE EAGLE HOTEL

You can just make out the Eagle on its signpost on the far left in front of the chimney of the building behind. The same eagle today stands in the Historical Society of Cheshire County's headquarters at 246 Main Street, Keene. (Color added.) HSCC collection.

displayed giving information or instructions in a written or symbolic form. In short, signs are used for communicating information.

The earliest European settlers along the Connecticut River in what are now the villages of North Walpole, NH, and Bellows Falls, VT, were intrigued by depictions of human faces carved into rocks along the banks of the river. Although their age is unknown, these petroglyphs were created by Native Americans, sometime between 300 and 13,000 years ago. These carvings were created to impart information, either to those who made them and their immediate families or to others who might travel along the river.

Historians suggest that cave paintings dating back to the Paleolithic Era and carvings such as those at Bellows Falls should be considered as the earliest signs. Cave dwellers were communicating information graphically when they created visual images on the walls of caves as early as 18,000 B.C. It has been suggested that these people were communicating what type of game was in a region and where it might be found. The simple but artistic Bellows Falls petroglyphs may be the region's earliest 'signs.'

The modern visual signage that we are familiar with today was first developed around 5,000 years ago. Prior to that time, most traders traveled from place to place. Trade fairs were later held at specific locations and then tradesmen began to stay in a fixed location and customers had to travel to them to buy their products. Traders installed signage to inform the public what their shops had to offer.

These shopkeepers used specific insignia or symbols to identify their products or services. Few people could read at that time and symbols communicated exactly what one could expect to find in the shop. This type of advertising signage was used in ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt.

The use of symbols on retail advertising signs remains commonplace today. Examples are the use of a painted or carved shoe on a cobbler's shop, a carved pocket watch hanging outside of a clock or jewelry store, and a mortar and pestle on an apothecary. Some symbols have become specifically associated with the types of business they advertise, such as three balls on a pawnbroker's shop.

The red, white, and blue striped

This barber's pole stood outside Stan Wilson's shop on River Street in downtown Jaffrey for many years. c. 1960s, Jaffrey, NH Metal, Glass, 10 x 27.25 in On loan courtesy Jaffrey Historical Society.

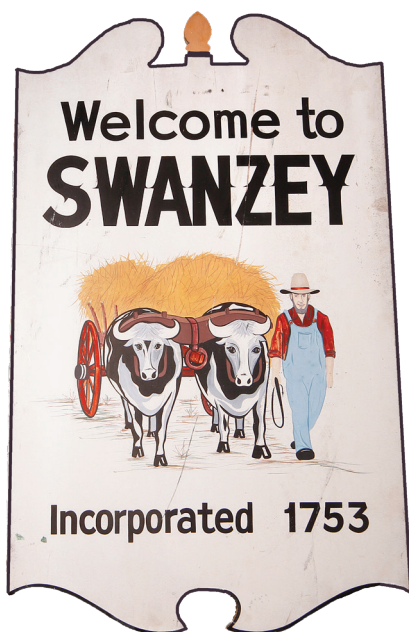


barber's pole may be the most familiar to us today. Hundreds of years ago barbers did more than cut hair. They were known as barber-surgeons because they also performed medical related responsibilities, such as pulling teeth and carrying out minor surgery. One common medical practice at the time was bloodletting. It was believed that having too much blood in some areas of the body could lead to or exacerbate disease. Consequently, blood was often 'let out' to improve one's health. Barbers had patients grip a pole in their hand to make their veins stand out more, so they were easier to find for bloodletting. Following the bloodletting, the flow of blood was staunched with a white cloth.

Historians record that these blood-stained cloths were then wrapped around the pole and hung outside the shop to dry. The bloody cloths blowing in the breeze or wrapping around the pole informed others that a barber-surgeon operated the shop. The red and white striped pole became a symbol used to inform customers of the location of a barbershop. Today's rotating red, white, and blue barber poles that are used to advertise barbershops originated with the barber-surgeons of the Middle Ages.

Most people are very familiar with commercial advertising signs, but there are several other categories of signage. These include wayfinding, informational, warning, regulatory, greeting, and memorial signs. Wayfinding signs offer directions on where and when to go to a certain location. An example of these is roadside signs giving town names along with mileage and directions. Street signs and house numbers are examples of informational signs. Warning signs include such messages as 'Railroad Crossing' or 'Thin Ice.' Many street signs fall into the regulatory category, such as 'Stop' or 'Yield' signs. Traffic lights also fall into the same category. The 'Welcome to Swanzey' sign in this exhibit catalog is an example of a greeting sign. Memorial signs carry very specific messages that memorialize people, places, or events.

The advent of modern signage gave rise to the sign maker's profession. In the 14th century the king of England enacted laws that required nobility to post their lands with their family name or coat of arms and stipulated that all taverns had to have clear markings indicating that they served as ale houses. Professional sign makers opened



This town welcome sign includes a painting of Swanzey's rural ambassadors, Buck and Ike, who appeared annually in the town's revival of the play 'The Old Homestead.' The play was written by famed playwright Denman Thompson of West Swanzey and debuted in 1886. c. 2000, Swanzey, NH Wood, 36.25 x 59.5 in On loan courtesy Swanzey Historical Museum.

shops to offer their skills to the plethora of noblemen and tavernkeepers throughout England. Sign makers worked mostly in wood and used a variety of hand tools, paint, and paintbrushes to create their signboards.

The sign making process changed very little from the 14th to the 19th century. Many artists worked as sign makers, resulting in signs that were true works of art. This was especially true of tavern signs which were often embellished with wonderful paintings and calligraphy. The tradition was brought to America by European settlers in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The use of new sign making materials affected the profession in the 19th and 20th centuries. Metal began to be used for signs and sign makers developed metalworking skills. It was the introduction of electricity, plastic, and computerization to the sign industry that truly transformed the profession, however.

The first electrical sign was installed in 1882 in England. The use of electric lights to illuminate signs quickly expanded around the world. The use of neon gas to create light was developed in the early 1900s. Less than two decades later neon signs were in use in cities across the United States. Despite the impressive and versatile nature of neon signs, a new electrical invention changed the industry once again a decade later—the fluorescent tube. These were even more versatile as they could be created in almost any shape, and they offered more colors than neon. America's electric sign industry mushroomed during the 1920s. The industry took in \$18 million in 1929.

The introduction of paper signs expanded with the advent of inexpensive printing processes in the 1940s. Business owners could update their advertising message quickly and easily with changeable paper signs. By the 1960s inexpensive plastic signs began to flood the market. They were easy to make and resistant to changes in the weather. Today most signs used in the United States are made of plastic.

One additional technological development has impacted the world of the sign maker in recent years. Craftsmen who entered the business 25 or 30 years ago often designed their products on paper and then used saws, glue, chisels, and paint to create artistic signs for local business owners. Today many of those same sign makers use computers to design and create their merchandise.

N. Hunt's Tavern was located in Squantum in the far southeastern corner of Jaffrey on the main road before the Third NH Turnpike was built. c. early 1800s, Jaffrey, NH Wood, 28.75 x 54.5 in

J. Cutter's Inn stood beside the Meetinghouse. It was so popular that there was talk of moving the Meetinghouse to make more room for the tavern. It came to nothing. Both buildings survive as private residences. c. early 1800s, Jaffrey, NH Wood, 25.25 x 42 in On loan courtesy of the Jaffrey Public Library.



Computers have also allowed for the development and rapid expansion in the use of digital signs. More than 3,000 sign companies now operate in the United States, creating billions of dollars' worth of signs each year.

Historic tavern signs, which helped to launch the modern sign industry, have been the subject of several essays due to their impact on business, art, culture, and collecting. Tavern signs may have resulted in the first sign ordinances. The elaborate nature of these low-hanging signboards and the increase in street traffic in larger towns and cities meant that these signs could be hazardous to people in the streets. European countries started to regulate the size and placement of exterior signs in the 1760s. The regulation of tavern signs does not seem to have been included in early New Hampshire laws, however.

Early American inns and taverns were operated in houses that looked much like residences throughout the community. Exterior signage was necessary to distinguish these 'public houses' from the private homes along the roadsides. Tavern signs from the 1700s typically featured relatively simple artwork. As the 19th century progressed,

however, the artwork on these signs became much more sophisticated, making them an object of desire for early antique collectors and museum curators. Consequently, hundreds of tavern signs survive in museum collections today.

Tavern sign designs included simple square or rectangular panels, vertical signboards with carved pediments

and skirts at the top and bottom, and the iconic post-and-rails design. This design consisted of two vertical posts and two horizontal rails that framed a vertical signboard. These signs often included a tavern name, date, and a painted image that might be quite simple or very elaborate. Jaffrey's 'N. Hunt's Tavern' sign and 'J. Cutter's Inn' sign are excellent local examples of classic tavern signs.

Commercial advertising signs have been in use for thousands of years and often come to mind first when we consider the history and impact of signage. Business signs from ancient to modern times were created for the same purpose—to attract the attention of potential customers. Business signs can advertise a specific business or a specific product, such as the 'C. Bridgman' dry goods store sign or the 'Kingsbury Toys' sign in this exhibit catalog.

The Industrial Revolution resulted in more products being available on the market and more competition

In 1840, 25-year old Charles Bridgman moved to Keene from New York state to recuperate from malarial fever. He found work in a general store and eventually earned enough to buy out the other owners. In 1845, Bridgman opened his own wholesale and retail grocery store. The store expanded enough to also include carpets, paints and wallpaper, becoming one of the largest stores in the state. By the 1860s, his business was split into two firms and he moved one into Bridgman's Block on Main Street. It remained in business in downtown Keene until 1929. 1850s-1880s, Keene, NH Wood, 84 x 12 in On loan courtesy HSCC.



between manufacturers and between retail establishments where these products were sold. The rise of the factory system, making use of large buildings with large machinery



and large numbers of employees, coincided with the development of the railroad in America. This combination of expanding output and inexpensive transportation meant that many of these products could be sold in nationwide or international markets.

Harry T. Kingsbury purchased the Wilkins Toy Company of Keene in 1894 and transformed it into a toy manufacturing giant into the mid-20th century. Using clockworks-style technology in his vehicles, Kingsbury's trains, fire trucks and other vehicles could be wound up and let go to drive across the room. During the 1930s the Kingsbury Toy Company created a display stand for retail stores that included an advertising sign. Toy cars could be wound up and driven around in circles by potential customers as a way of enticing them to buy. This 3-sided hanging sign was included in the store displays for Kingsbury toys c. 1915, Keene, NH Metal, 9 x 4 in HSCC collection courtesy of the Kingsbury Fund.



“Composed exclusively of the best and purest materials”, H.W. John’s asbestos liquid paint had been tested in all parts of the world by 1900. The company advertised that their paint held up to climatic changes, salt water atmosphere, and other trying exposures. Why asbestos? It was the only fire-proof paint on the market at the time and manufactured exclusively in New York. Those ads attracted the attention of Fred Marvin who sold this product in his store, located on the west side of Main Street in Alstead in the early 1900s. The H.W. John’s paint company offered these signs to distributors who could add their own store name to the sign board. c. 1900, Alstead, NH Wood, 30 x 47.75 in On loan courtesy Alstead Historical Society.

This expansion and competition forced manufacturers and retailers to use more and more signs to inform customers about their products or their sales outlets. Signs were posted on factories, on stores, and on roadsides to constantly encourage and remind consumers to purchase specific products. The ‘Gurnsey’s Beverages for Health’ sign in this exhibit catalog is a good example of this. This store sign could be used to advertise a Keene-made product in retail outlets wherever Gurnsey beverages were sold.

Manufacturers eventually began to offer exterior signage to retail stores that also included the name of the manufacturer’s product for all to see. Most people are familiar with the large Coca-Cola signs attached to country stores. These signs included the name of the store along with a large advertisement for Coca-Cola, which presumably one could purchase inside the store. This catalog contains an early example of this type of dual advertising sign. The wooden sign for ‘F. J. Marvin’s’ store in Alstead also included a large ad for a product that Marvin sold —‘H. W. Johns’ Asbestos Liquid Paint.’

The expansion of the railroad system and the introduction of the automobile resulted in millions of consumers who were traveling farther from home. Businessmen wanted to attract the attention of these travelers to their products, and the use of signs increased exponentially. When improved rail and auto technology resulted in faster trains and cars, advertising signs became larger so that speeding excursionists would not miss their message. Improved rail lines and highways also resulted in the introduction of billboards—large roadside signs used to advertise products, businesses, attractions, and many other topics.

Railroads and automobiles had a much larger impact on the nation’s landscape than an explosion in the number of advertising signs, however. Regulatory, informational, and directional signs began to fill roadsides and rail rights-of-way. These were essential to offer instructions and maintain safety. Regulatory signs, providing instructions such as ‘Stop,’ ‘Merge,’ and ‘Speed Limit 55,’ were necessary to maintain order and safety on the highways. Informational and directional signs offered information that included place names, mileage, directions, route numbers, and much more.

The mushrooming number of exterior signs soon required some regulations of its own and sign ordinances were established in cities across the United States. The City of Keene, for example, implemented its first sign code in 1947. By 1957 the code contained 35 sections and filled 14 pages of the city ordinances. The regulations addressed such issues as permitting, inspection, design, safety, lighting, location, and offered specific guidelines for ten separate categories of signage.

Today our cities, our roadsides, and our lives are filled with signs. This is true because they have proven to be the most effective and efficient method of advertising and of imparting many types of information to the public. From the earliest petroglyphs to the advertising signs of ancient Greece and Rome, to today's huge, animated, and brightly lit electronic signs of New York's Times Square, signs have served to inform humans for thousands of years. They have become so commonplace in our lives that we rarely think about them. The next time you drive down the highway, pause to consider the countless times and the many ways that signs have informed your own life. 🍷



The ancient petroglyphs along the Connecticut River in Bellows Falls, Vermont.
Source: Pbergstrom, Wikimedia.



The Monadnock Sportsman's Club was established in Peterborough, probably before 1900. It promoted and protected hunting and fishing in the Peterborough area. It also maintained the Wapack Trail from Barrett Mountain to North Pack Monadnock.

c. 1900, painted pine. In the collection of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

A Sign Taxonomy

By Robert B. Stephenson, *Jaffrey Historical Society*

WHEN I started thinking about signs as I planned this catalog, the first thing I did, of course, was scour the Internet to see what's been said about signs over the years. Surprisingly, I found very little. I would have thought a few Ph.D. dissertations would have focused on signs or at least some serious journal or scholarly articles.

Not much luck, so I set out to come up with a SIGN TAXONOMY relying mostly on observation and common sense. I then sought out a few nearby examples and commandeered a few from the Internet. The signs appearing in the pages below are arranged by one or more of these classifications.

1. **DIRECTIONAL** *Signs that indicate direction to a specific place, typically a town or a facility.*
2. **LOCATIONAL / IDENTIFICATIONAL** *Signs that tell you where you are, a place or a facility.*
3. **INFORMATIONAL** *Signs that impart information about a place or a facility.*
4. **ADVERTISING** *Signs that identify a business or a service.*
5. **WARNINGS** *Signs that warn about danger or prohibit action.*
6. **MEMORIAL / COMMEMORATIVE** *Signs that memorialize something or someone.*
7. **ADVOCACY** *Signs that espouse a point of view.*

Such signs as these can be further classified by type:

1. **FREE-STANDING** *On a one or more posts.*
2. **ATTACHED** *Attached to a building.*
3. **MOBILE** *On vehicles of all kinds: Cars, Trucks, Airplanes.*
4. **AERIAL** *Up in the air: Skywriting, Banners, Goodyear Blimp.*
5. **PROJECTED** *Visible at night on a structure.*

And also by material:

1. **WOOD.** 2. **STONE.** 3. **METAL.** 4. **PAPER.** 5. **Plastic.** 6. **Fabric.**

And in some other ways:

1. **ELECTRONIC** 2. **Electrical / Illuminated.** 3. **ANIMATED.** 4. **MOVING.**

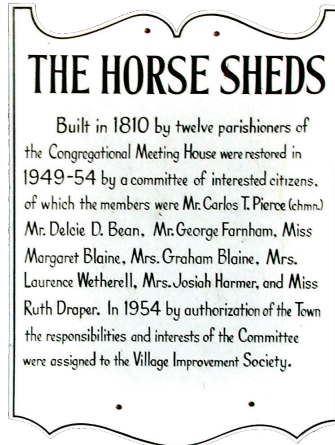
1
DIRECTIONAL




2
LOCATIONAL




3
INFORMATIONAL

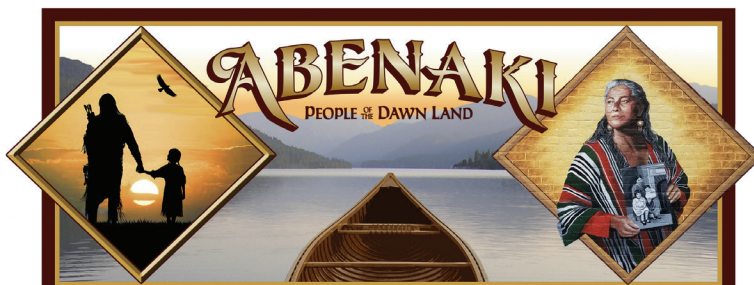
4
ADVERTISING




5
WARNINGS




6
MEMORIAL

7
ADVOCACY


The Signs of the Times

THE signs in this exhibit are drawn from a variety of sources, mostly local historical societies and sign makers in the Monadnock Region. (See the Acknowledgments.)

They are arranged in this catalog in no particular order but the taxonomy of each is symbolized.

The sign maker and date, if known, the original location, material, dimensions (horizontal x vertical in inches), and loaner are given, followed by a short write-up.

Nearly all the included signs are historic in the sense of originating in the past but similar signs still exist ‘in the wild,’ so to speak. Notice them as you walk or drive by.

The signs of today tell us a lot about a community just as those from the past indicate how life was lived by those who came before. 🐾



Directional signs attached to the Town Elm in downtown Jaffrey. (Note the leaping horse motif which is still used today.) The present-day bandstand sits about where this earlier version stood. The Granite State Hotel, which later burned down, looms in the background. From Jaffrey Then and Now.



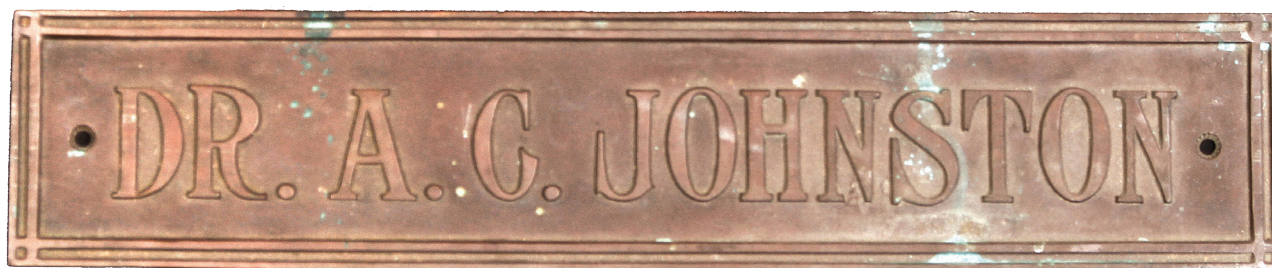
1. ALDRICH FURNITURE \$

1910s, Keene, NH

Metal, 22 x 17 in

HSCC collection courtesy of the Lynch family, 2019.31.1

Harry N. Aldrich opened his own furniture store in Keene in 1907 after working in other stores locally for years. As was often done by many furniture store owners at the turn of the 20th century, Aldrich moonlighted as an undertaker as well. The business was sold to Charles N. Quimby in 1919 who ran it as the Quimby Furniture Company.



2. DR. A. C. JOHNSTON \$

c. 1940, Keene, NH

Metal, 13.25 x 4.75 in

HSCC collection courtesy Thyra Johnston, 1989.29

Albert C. Johnston moved with his family to Keene, NH, in 1940 to become the city's first radiologist at Elliot Hospital. After *Reader's Digest* published an article about the Johnstons in 1948, it became known that the family was African American and passing as white. One year later Louis de Rousemont created a Hollywood film entitled 'Lost Boundaries' on the same subject. Dr. Johnston moved his radiology business to his home on Washington Street in Keene, where this sign hung until Albert and Thyra Johnston retired to Hawaii in 1966.



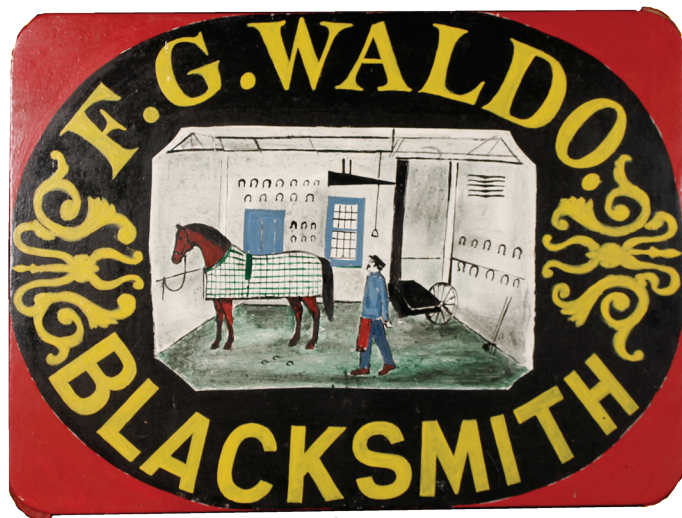
3. STODDARD POST OFFICE ?

c. 1925, Stoddard, NH

Wood, 71.25 x 12 in

On loan courtesy of Stoddard Historical Society

William Stewart built his general store in the Mill Village of Stoddard in the 1920s. Although there was another store in the village, having the post office in this building brought additional traffic to the store. Charles and Mary Lou Eaton purchased the store in 1951. As Eaton's General Store it offered gasoline, groceries, general supplies, and continued to house the town post office. The Eaton family operated the store for about half a century.



4. F. G. WALDO BLACKSMITH \$

J. E. Pelkey, c.1950s, Marlborough, NH
Wood, 23.75 x 17.5 in

HSCC collection courtesy of William Prigge, 2021.85.1

Reproduction wooden business sign for 'F. G. Waldo Blacksmith.' The original blacksmith sign hung outside of Frederick Gilman Waldo's shop in Marlborough, NH, in the 1890s. Waldo did repair work for many local residents into the 1910s. His father had also been a blacksmith, working in Marlow, Chesterfield, Keene, and Avon, NY. At some point during the 1950s, J. E. Pelkey reproduced the trade sign.



5. A.W. HOPKINS, MD \$

c.1910s, Swanzey, NH

Wood, 36 x 6 in

On loan courtesy Swanzey Historical Society

Born in Lyndon, Vermont, Arthur W. Hopkins graduated from Dartmouth College's medical program in 1899. For over 40 years, Dr. Hopkins worked as a doctor in the town of Swanzey. In 1944, he published a book about his experiences as a rural New Hampshire doctor entitled *Pep, Pills, and Politics*.



6. HOTEL ELLIS \$

1930s-1950s, Keene, NH

Metal, Glass, 49.5 x 10.5 in

HSCC collection

Built in 1830, the building located at 109-121 Main Street in Keene had a long history of hotel service. First operated as the Workingmen's Hotel, the building also housed Whitney's Hotel, Emerald House, The Union House (1860), American House, City Hotel, and finally the Ellis Hotel beginning in the early 1900s. It advertised unexcelled home cooking and 60 guest rooms. The Ellis Hotel building was eventually torn down in the 1970s.



7. REDUCE THE GAS TAX 

1920s-1930s, American
 Metal, 12 x 3 in
 HSCC collection courtesy of Joe
 Driscoll, 2012.92.1

An embossed license plate topper.



8. FRUIT HILL FARM TEA ROOM 

1920s, Dublin, NH
 Wood, 45 x 17.5 in
 On loan courtesy Dublin Historical Society

Mrs. Winnie Leonard ran a bakery from her home in Dublin and sold bread and doughnuts to stores in Peterborough and Jaffrey. She mailed her 'Winnie' whole wheat health breads to customers throughout the United States.



9. BON TON RESTAURANT 

c.1950. Keene, NH
 Wood, 48 x 92 in
 HSCC collection courtesy of the Booras family, 2002.4.1

For over 40 years, the Bon Ton Restaurant was a favorite dining spot in the Keene community at 45-47 Main Street. The Bon Ton opened in 1917 and, in the early 1920s, it was acquired by Greek immigrant John A. Booras who ran it until the late 1950s.



11. HOTEL SILVERDALE \$

Early 20th century, Chesterfield, NH

Wood, 116.5 x 25 in

On loan courtesy Chesterfield Historical Society

Advancements in transportation in the late 19th century, sparked a tourism industry in the Monadnock region. Spofford Lake became a destination for those looking to escape fast-paced city life. The Hotel Silverdale opened in 1895 with 250 guest rooms. It was in operation until 1919 when it was dismantled; the wood was used to construct several summer cabins along the lake.



10. MARLOW'S CAFE \$

1990s, Marlow, NH

Wood, 51 x 33 in

On loan courtesy Marlow Historical Society

Marlow's Cafe, which advertised on its tee-shirts that it was "conveniently located in the middle of nowhere," operated under various owners in the 1990s and 2000s. It was located in the building at the end of Old Newport Road that is now part of the Marlow Mini-Storage. Pizza was a popular item on the Cafe's menu; advertisements often pointed out that it was "no more than a 20 minute drive to get a cold pizza home!"

12. BRADFORD INN \$ 📍

1930s, Keene, NH

Wood, 34.5 x 25.25 in

HSCC collection courtesy of Sally Frechette, 84.4.1

Located at 70 Bradford Road in Keene, the Bradford Inn was originally built as a home by sea captain Daniel Bradford prior to 1808. It became known for its nautical themed wood carvings on the interior and exterior. Harry Colony bought the house in 1896. Later his son and daughter-in-law, Alfred T. and Beatrice (Booth) Colony ran the house as a tearoom and guest house in the 1930s, known as the Bradford Inn. By 1935, Mrs. Colony had also opened the Keene Summer Theater on the property, having been an early actress for Fox Movie Company herself. The Inn was in operation until it sold in 1964.



13. SAWYER TAVERN \$

Late 19th-early 20th century, Keene, NH
Wood, 32.5 x 24 in

*HSCC collection courtesy of Brian
Cartwright, 2021.109.1*

The Sawyer Tavern is a historic building still located at 63 Arch Street in Keene. Originally built in the early 1800s, it served as a tavern, an inn, and a restaurant for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. The building is now a private residence.

**14. LAKE SPOFFORD CAMP FOR RENT \$**

Early 20th century, Chesterfield, NH
Wood, 63.25 x 15.75 in

On loan courtesy Chesterfield Historical Society

Vacationing became a regular pastime for more Americans in the late 1800s. Advances in transportation helped to bring families from larger cities into more rural areas like the Monadnock region of New Hampshire. Popular vacations for city folk at the turn of the 20th century included staying on country farms, resort hotels, or in cabins. Many local residents invested in the construction of small cabins to rent out to tourists, especially along lakefronts.

**15. TICKET OFFICE ?**

1930s, Keene, NH
Wood, 30 x 6 in

HSCC collection, xx.502

This sign directed customers to the ticket office of the Boston and Maine Railroad in Keene, located in the 1911 passenger depot on Railroad Square.



16. OVERNIGHT GUESTS \$

1910s-1920s, Alstead, NH

Wood, Metal, 36 x 31 in

On loan courtesy Alstead Historical Society

This sign was displayed at the former Cold River Hotel on Mechanic Street in Alstead. In 1917, Marshall and Florence Currier purchased the property and for years operated the Riverside Tea Room out of the hotel. They installed electricity and bathrooms and continued to receive overnight guests for many years.

17. KEENE



Imperial Enamel Co. Ltd New York, early 1900s, Keene, NH

Wood, Metal, 40 x 13.5 in

HSCC collection, xx.324

The sign that hung at the Keene railroad depot in downtown to alert railway passengers as to which city they were stopping in.



18. JAFFREY



Imperial Enamel Co. Ltd New York, early 1900s, Jaffrey, NH

Metal, 52 x 14.5 in

On loan courtesy Jaffrey Historical Society

Sign that hung at the East Jaffrey railroad depot to alert railway passengers as to which city they were stopping in. The word 'East' was cut from the front of the sign when it became part of Jaffrey proper.

19. LAKE WARREN HOUSE \$

1870s-1910s, Alstead, NH

Wood, 30 x 54.5 in

On loan courtesy Alstead Historical Society

The Lake Warren House was originally the home of Levi Warren and is located north of the Lake Warren dam in Alstead. From 1870 until 1917, Gardner and Ella Banks operated the home as a boarding house for summer travelers, renting flat-bottom row boats and providing a dance pavilion for entertainment.

20. AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL LITTLE WORLD SERIES \$

1963, Keene, NH

Wood, 23.25 x 23.25 in

HSCC collection courtesy of Frank Underwood, 2023.75.1

In the summer of 1963, Keene hosted the national finals of the American Legion Little World Series. A crowd of 23,000 spectators came out to watch the event, including baseball legend Ted Williams. The Historical Society's collection contains memorabilia of this event including baseball bats and photographs.



21. STAGE ENTRANCE 

1910s, Keene, NH

Wood, 56 x 9.75 in

HSCC collection, xx.325

In the early-to-mid 20th century, Keene's city hall boasted a large auditorium with a stage. Many plays, concerts, trade shows and meetings were held in the auditorium. It finally closed in 1954 and was removed when the building was renovated in 1960.





23. GRANITE STATE LAWN MOWERS \$

1920s-1930s, Keene, NH

Metal, 8 x 11 in

HSCC purchase, 1987.26.1

In the 1860s, Newhall & Stebbins machine shop in Hinsdale began to manufacture Granite State Mowing Machines. These horse-drawn mowers soon became very popular and they were produced in Hinsdale for the next 100 years. Advertisements emphasized the design of the field mowers as ideal for the rocky, sloping fields of New England. By 1870, the company averaged over 500 mowers a year and sold them for about \$86 each. Hand-push mowers were added in the 1880s as the company grew in popularity nation-wide. By the 1950s, the firm was making hand and power lawn mowers that were shipped to all parts of the world. The company last appeared in business directories in the 1960s, thus ending more than a century of manufacture for Hinsdale's Granite State Mowers.

24. THOMPSON BRIDGE ?

20th century, Swanzey, NH

Wood, 56 x 7.25 in

On loan courtesy Swanzey Historical Museum

Also known as the West Swanzey bridge, Thompson Bridge is named in honor of famous West Swanzey resident, Denman Thompson (1833-1911). Thompson was an actor who wrote and starred in a four-act play 'The Old Homestead' in 1880. The bridge was originally built across the Ashuelot River in 1832 by carpenter and millwright Zadoc Lovell Taft (1786-1867).

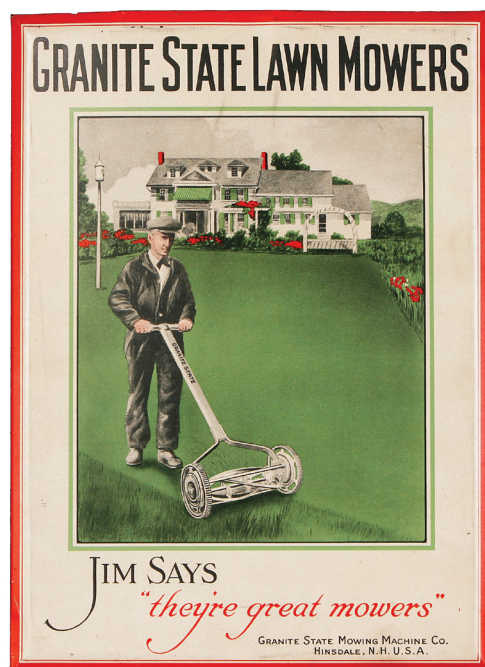
22. DUBLIN INN \$

c.1915, Dublin, NH

Wood, 69.75 x 48 in

On loan courtesy Dublin Historical Society

Located atop Pierce Road is Moses Greenwood's 1787 farmhouse. The building was first used as an Inn when it was purchased by several Dublin residents in 1921 and called the Dublin Inn Club. When Anna Yoss purchased the property in 1962, her renovations to the inn included the construction of a year-round restaurant. According to Tom Hyman's history of *Dublin, Village on a Hill*: "Those who were privileged to dine there in the 1960s never forgot the magnificent dinners and the culinary genius of Mrs. Yoss." Dublin Inn closed in 1969. Today, the building operates as Avenues Recovery Center.



25. CHESHIRE AUTO CLUB, GOODRICH TIRES \$

Early-to-mid 20th century, Keene, NH
Metal, 18 x 12 in

HSCC collection courtesy of Ruth Wye, 1996.5.5

By the year 1908, the city of Keene boasted 76 registered automobiles and 10 motorcycles. At the time, the speed limit was set at eight miles per hour and Keene was about to host New Hampshire's first motor vehicle show. The Cheshire County Automobile Association was formed in 1908. In its first year, the association grew to 50 members, accounting for the majority of automobile owners in Cheshire County.



26. THIS FARM FOR SALE \$

c.1900, Cheshire County, NH
Wood, 25.25 x 12 in

HSCC collection courtesy Edwin & Sharron Smith, 2016.9.1

Some historians have dubbed the abandonment of New England hill farms at the turn of the 20th century as the 'Exodus.' Several factors combined to convince farmers to search for better opportunities elsewhere. The opening of the Erie Canal in

the 1820s, the construction of thousands of miles of railroad lines, and less rocky farmland elsewhere were a few of the reasons. The exodus became a flood of farm families leaving the hills after the Civil War. Some local towns were soon the site of hundreds of abandoned farmhouses.



27. MONADNOCK REGION ASSOCIATION \$

Mid-20th century, Monadnock Region, NH
Wood, 26 x 26 in

HSCC collection

In 1933, a group of business leaders founded the Monadnock Region Association as a way of promoting recreation, small industry, and agriculture in the region while preserving, "the ancient charm of our villages and countryside." The organization, based in Peterborough, published promotional materials that sought to brand the region as a year-round vacation destination. Taglines included: 'Summer Home and Winter Playground of New England' and 'The Monadnock Region: Land of New Hampshire Charm' The Association disbanded in 1984 after 51 years.



28. HOLBROOK GROCERY / IGA \$

c.1940s, Keene, NH

Metal, 24 x 24 in

HSCC collection courtesy of employees of Holbrook Grocery/Wetterau Foods, 2001.30.1

George W. Holbrook opened a grocery store on Main Street in Keene in 1871. By 1880 Holbrook's Grocery was operating both a retail and a wholesale grocery business. During the 1890s the retail and wholesale operations were separated and the Holbrook Grocery Company quickly became the largest wholesale grocery firm in New Hampshire, shipping products throughout the state and beyond. Its 'Monadnock Brand' name was used on a wide variety of Holbrook products—from coffee, peanut butter, pickles and prunes to mints, flour and sweet peas. The company also operated a number of retail stores, including an IGA store in Keene. By 1959, the company had moved its warehouse to Holbrook Street.



29. LEMPSTER- NEWPORT- CLAREMONT

1870s-1920s, Marlow, NH

Wood, 44 x 16.75 in

On loan courtesy Marlow Historical Society



30. AVENA NERVE FOOD \$

c.1887, Keene, NH

Wood, Glass, 7 x 4.5 in

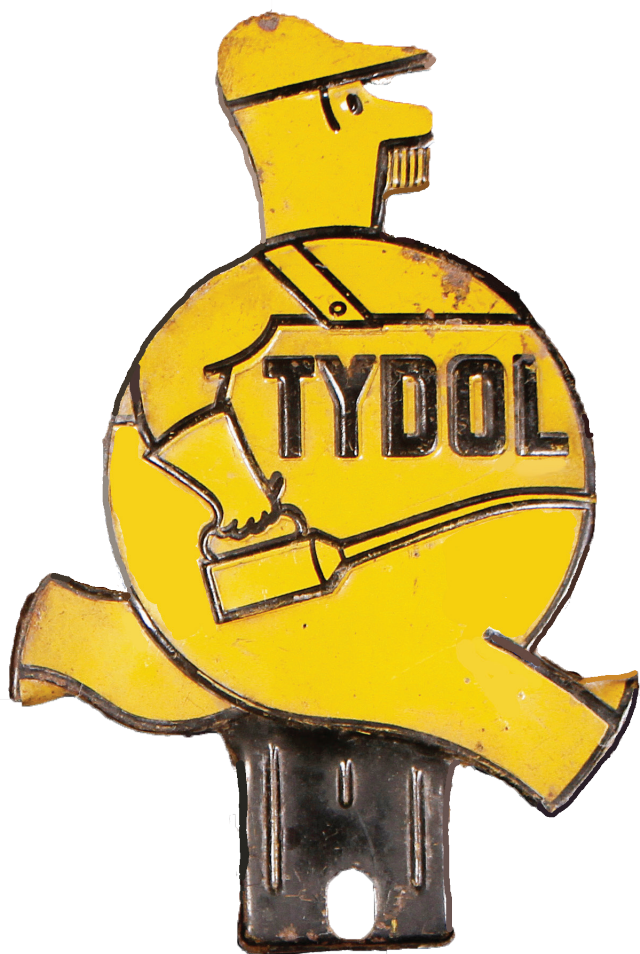
HSCC collection, 2002.11.1

Advertised as a 'tonic and restorative beverage' Avena Nerve Food was first manufactured on Davis Street in Keene in March 1887. Local spectators toured the factory to see the new machinery in action. Barley oats were mixed with the extract of other cereals, then bottled and corked, to create a non-alcoholic tonic that was sure to cure any nervous diseases. In its first year, the company expected to make 36,000 bottles of its nerve food for public consumption.



31. BRATTLEBORO-SPOFFORD LAKE-
CHESTERFIELD-KEENE

1870s-1920s, Chesterfield, NH
Wood, 36 x 25.75 in
*On loan courtesy Chesterfield
Historical Society*



32. TYDOL MAN \$

1920s-1930s, Keene, NH
Metal, 4.5 x 6.75 in
HSCC collection courtesy Cal Frink, 1998.53.1

Tidewater Oil Company (rendered as 'Tide Water Oil Company' from 1887 to 1936) was a major petroleum refining company during the early 20th century. Tidewater was sold many times during its existence. The company entered the gasoline market and by 1920 was selling gasoline, oil and other products on the East Coast of the United States under its 'Tydol' brand. The company hired famed American cartoonist Otto Soglow of New York to design a promotional character, Tydol Man. This version of Tydol Man was used as a car bumper attachment, and was distributed by Calvin Frink at his West Street Tydol gas station.

33. RED CROSS MOTOR CORPS ?

1910s, Keene, NH
Metal, 12.5 x 10.5 in
HSCC collection courtesy Ed Jarvis, 2021.64.1

During World War I, Red Cross workers mounted motor corps signs to their cars. This sign, used by the Keene Red Cross, was discovered in a local building and donated to the Historical Society.





34. GURNSEY'S BEVERAGES \$

1930s-1940s, Keene, NH

Metal, 8.5 x 19 in

HSCC collection courtesy Eleanor Blake, 2011.49.1

Thirty-three year old Norris G. Gurnsey moved to Keene in 1859. He purchased restaurant privileges at the Keene Railroad Depot, feeding hungry travelers. Gurnsey soon owned three eateries and had partnered with three of his sons. During the 1880s, they began specializing in their own brands of crackers and soft drinks. By 1895, the family built Gurnsey Block at 16 Church Street and opened the N.G. Gurnsey Company restaurant where they sold their products. The soft drink bottling business soon overtook the restaurant operation and the company focused solely on bottling a variety of sodas, including Coca Cola. In its final years, the company was a wholesale distributor of beer, Canada Dry soda, tobacco products and candy.

35. FARM RAISING ONE OR MORE ACRES...

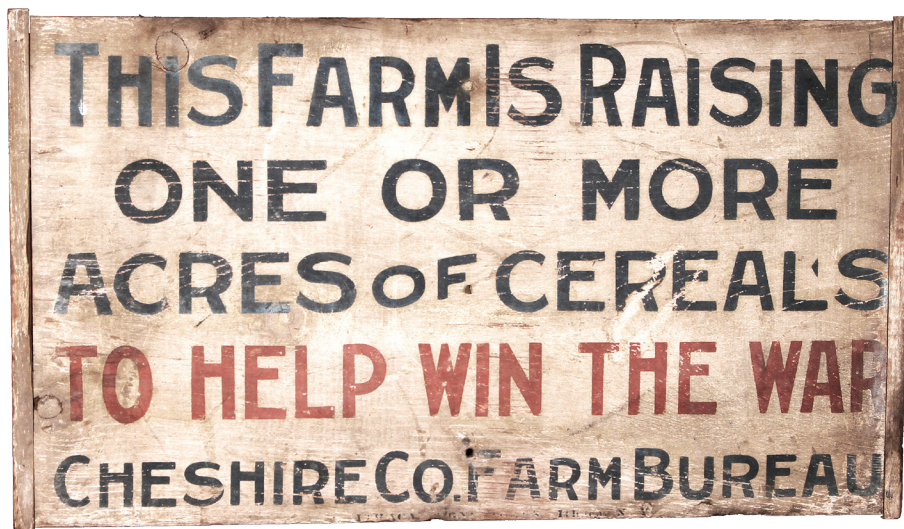
1917-1918, Hinsdale, NH

Wood, 24 x 14 in

HSCC collection courtesy of Edwin & Sharron Smith, 2016.9.1

When the New Hampshire Farm Bureau was established in

1916, there were approximately 20,000 farms in operation across the state. Cheshire County's Bureau had already been in operation for two years at the time. During World War I, many European countries faced a food deficit, prompting President Herbert Hoover to launch a campaign of support in 1917. Farmers across the US were encouraged to grow crops such as wheat to send to Europe as a way of supporting the country's Allies. Farms in Cheshire County proudly posted signs that showcased their efforts to win the war by growing cereals.



36. WARD No. 1

1841, Dublin, NH

Wood, 33.5 x 13.25 in

On loan courtesy Dublin Historical Society

Schoolhouse sign for the school located in Ward I in Dublin in the year 1841.

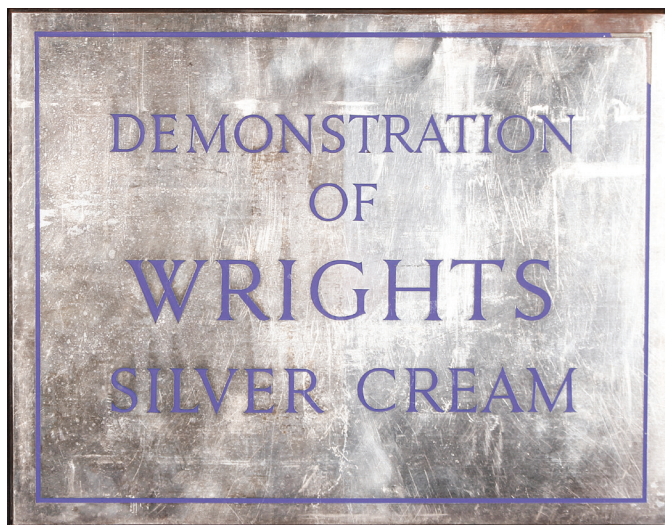
37. WRIGHT'S SILVER CREAM \$

1920s-1970s, Keene, NH

Metal, 14 x 11 in

HSCC collection courtesy J.A.Wright & Co.

John Artemas Wright founded his silver polish firm in a back room of Keene's Eagle Hotel in 1873. J.A. Wright & Co. manufactured fine metal polishes in Keene until 2006. Weiman Products of Gurnee, Illinois, continue to produce Wright metal polishes today. The history of the company illustrates the curiosity, ingenuity and hard work of company founder J. A. Wright. He not only built a nationally known silver polish business from a bog full of 'unusual dirt,' but he also patented several inventions and was involved in the formation of other Keene businesses. J.A. Wright and his descendants operated and expanded the Silver Cream business for five generations.

**38. SPEAKER ST, CADY ST, COBB ST**

1980s, Keene, NH

Metal, 24 x 6 in

HSCC collection

In the neighborhood west of Island Street in Keene, there once resided a baseball field. In about 1913, the ball field gave way to urban pressures. A Rhode Island company constructed houses in a development called Homestead Villa. At the time, the Boston Red Sox were very popular locally for having won the World Series in 1903 and 1912. They would go on to win the series in 1915, 1916, and 1918. As six new streets were built in Keene, they were given the names of Red Sox players including: pitcher Smoky Joe Wood, catcher Hick Cady, shortstop Heinie Wagner, and outfielders, Tris Speaker and Harry Hooper. Strangely, a sixth street in the neighborhood is named for Ty Cobb, the feisty member of the Detroit Tigers.

39. SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF SNOWS 

1905, Dublin, NH

Wood, 46.5 x 36 in

On loan courtesy Dublin Historical Society

Dublin's Catholic church, Shrine of Our Lady of Snows, was constructed in 1905 through efforts of several prominent—and Protestant—summer residents: Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Louis Cabot, Daniel Catlin, Franklin MacVeagh and George B. Leighton. Irish Catholic domestic servants had been finding it difficult to commit to a summer's worth of work without the ability to attend weekly mass. From 1905 and into the 1930s, Our Lady of the Snows provided summer Sunday services. The Great Depression of the 1930s, however, ended the era of domestic servants in Dublin.

40. 1412 FEET ABOVE OCEAN ? 

Early 1900s, Stoddard, NH

Wood, 38.25 x 16 in

On loan courtesy Stoddard Historical Society

This sign hung at the Central House Hotel in Stoddard Center at the turn of the 20th century. It was built by Jonathan Sanderson in 1833 and Isaac Duncan was its first proprietor. It remained a town landmark into the early 1900s. The hotel fell into disrepair by the mid-20th century and was razed in 1952. The bar, benches, and much of the woodwork from the taproom of the hotel were incorporated into the Spouter Tavern at Mystic Seaport Museum. The sign indicating the hotel's location above sea level was placed on the wall of the hotel to inform visitors about the lofty height of the Stoddard hills.

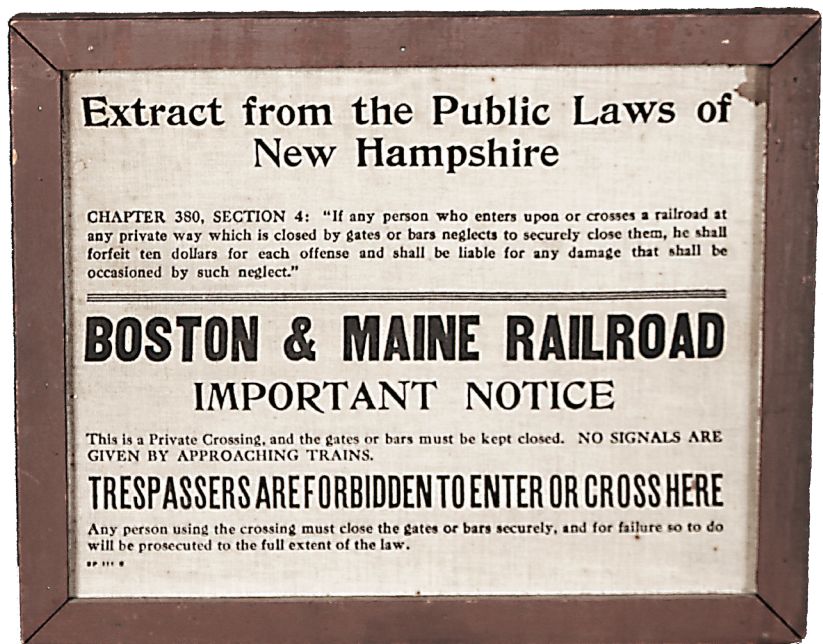
41. BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD 

1951, Keene, NH

Wood, Linen, 14.5 x 11.75 in

HSCC collection courtesy Suzanne Whittemore, 2002.2.1

In 1951, the NH State Legislature passed RSA 380:4 indicating that railroad crossing gates located across private roads must be left down and secure. If someone crosses the B&M rail line without putting the gate back down, they could be fined \$10.



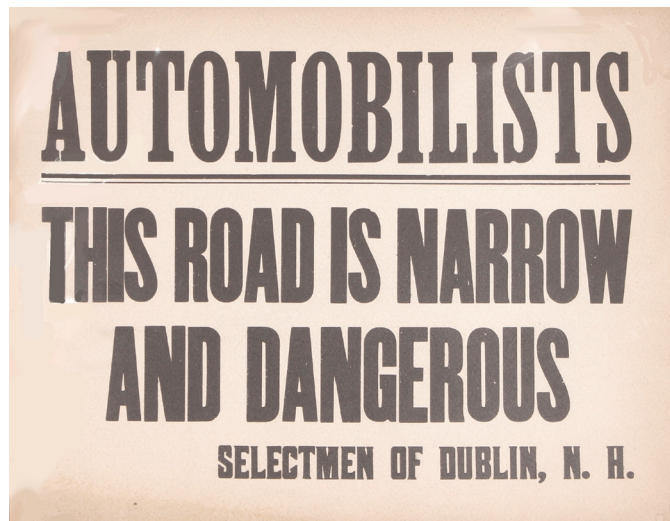
42. **AUTOMOBILISTS. THIS ROAD IS NARROW AND DANGEROUS** 

1940s-1950s, Dublin, NH

Paper, 14.25 x 11 in

On loan courtesy Dublin Historical Society

Prior to the 1960s, cars lacked safety features such as seat belts to keep passengers from being injured or killed. As the technology advanced to allow for faster automobiles, road signs that warned drivers of impending dangerous conditions became more frequent.



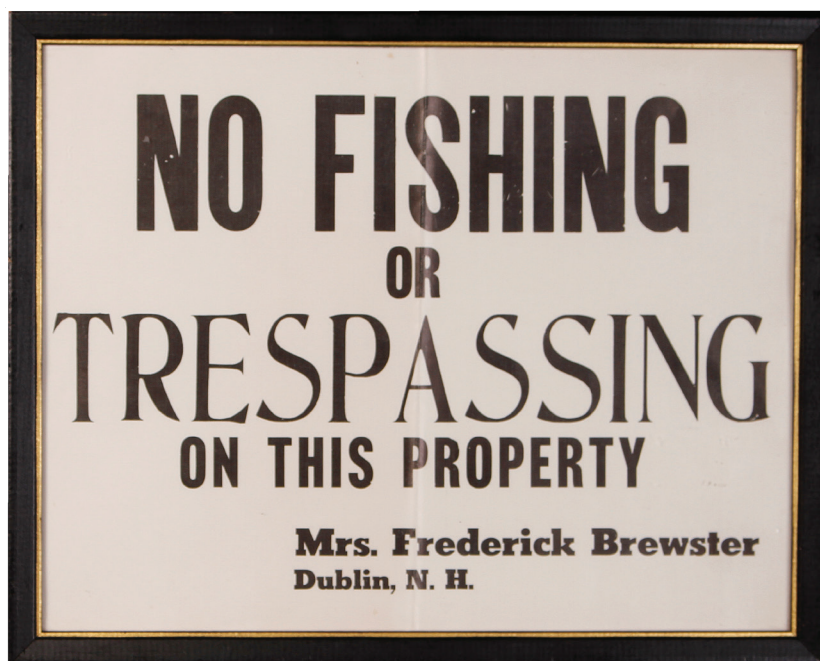
43. **MINNIOWA TEA HOUSE** 

c.1920, Stoddard, NH

Wood, 34.75 x 16 in

On loan courtesy Alan F. Rumrill

“Put a thoroughly modern woman into the driver’s seat of a Ford, ban alcohol, build good roads that spiral out of major cities into the scenic countryside, and you have a perfect recipe for the twentieth century tea room movement” (bostonteapartyship.com). Tea rooms and tea houses became very popular in the early 20th century throughout Cheshire County. Automobiles brought more travelers to rural towns like Stoddard and the popularity of the temperance movement in this region made tea rooms desirable.



44. **NO FISHING OR TRESPASSING** 

1940s-1950s, Dublin, NH

Paper, 15 x 12 in

On loan courtesy Dublin Historical Society



45. **THE ARK** \$

c.1900s, Jaffrey, NH
Wood, 36 x 24.25 in

On loan courtesy Jaffrey Historical Society

The Ark, on the lower slopes of Monadnock, was built in 1808 by Joe Cutter. In 1873 Joel Poole bought the property, by then in disrepair, and soon afterwards he and his wife began to take in summer visitors. It had many successful years as a popular hostelry. It was sold to the Monadnock Bible Conference in 1966. It continues today as Camp Monadnock, a religious retreat. The Ark's sign is double-sided: A winter view on one side, summer on the other. Note the ark!



46. **ELM CITY BREWING CO.**

1995-2000, Keene, NH \$
Wood, 38.5 x 7.5 in

On loan courtesy Keene Signworx

In 1995, Elm City Brewing Company became Keene's first modern brew pub and only the fifth in New Hampshire, bringing American brewing traditions lost to prohibition back to the region. In addition to its craft brews, the company also has a restaurant in the Colony Mill Complex along West Street in Keene. Co-founder Deb Rivest became the sole owner in 2003 and retired in 2022. Elm City is still in operation today.

47. **BAGEL WORKS** \$

Keene Signworx, 1990s, Keene, NH /
Brattleboro, VT

Wood, 37 x 28.25 in

On loan courtesy Keene Signworx

Richard F. French II opened the Vermont Bagel Works in Manchester, VT in 1988. As the company grew in the 1990s, he expanded the business to include multiple stores in NH, VT, MA and NY. A bagel production plant was established in Keene to supply his restaurants. It was in operation until 2002. By 2010, the company had re-branded itself as a bagel cafe, using the name The Works. It's still in operation on Main Street in Keene, and at other locations, today.



48. THE ORIBE SHOP \$

c. 1960s, Jaffrey, NH
Wood, 38.25 x 45 in

On loan courtesy Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society

The Oribe Barn was a popular and well-known tea room and gift shop in the Jaffrey Center village. It opened in the 1910s, overseen by Alice M. Cann. The tea room closed in the late 1960s but the gift shop continued to operate until 1980. Its last proprietor was Ruth Stevenson who lived in the connected house. Following its closure it accommodated several other uses including, for a few years, the Jaffrey Center Post Office. It's now a private residence.



49. PLANT SALE & GARDEN ACCESSORIES \$

1920s, Jaffrey, NH
Wood, Paper, 21.25 x 27.75 in

On loan courtesy Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society

In the late 1920s, local residents gathered at The Oribe to raise funds to purchase and preserve land on Mount Monadnock. Many had become concerned about the development and deforestation occurring at the mountain. The tea house served as a space to organize a land conservation effort.



50. DUBLIN- PETERBOROUGH- EAST JAFFREY

c. 1870s, Jaffrey, NH
Wood, 38 x 13.75 in
On loan courtesy Jaffrey Historical Society

This sign incorporates what is likely the earliest version of the 'leaping horse,' a design motif still used today.

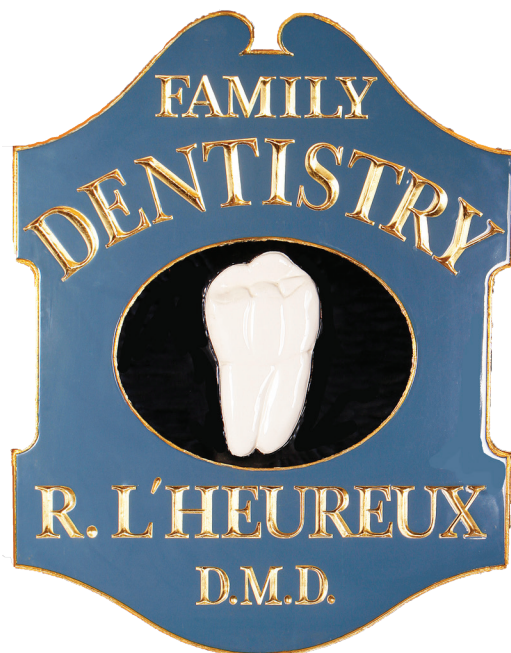
51. **FAMILY DENTISTRY. R. L'HEUREUX, DMD** \$

1990s, Keene, NH

Keene Signworx, Wood, 24 x 30.5 in

On loan courtesy Keene Signworx

For over 40 years, Dr. Roland A. L'Heureux had a dental practice in Keene. His office began at 23 West Street in 1961 and eventually moved to 340 West Street, where it remained until 2005. Note the carved tooth, harkening back to the era when symbols were used to advertise different types of businesses.



52. **JAFFREY-RINDGE** 🐾

c. 1960s, Jaffrey

Wood, 31.75 x 11.25 in

On loan courtesy Jaffrey Historical Society

53. **SHARON-RINDGE** 🐾

c. 1900s, Jaffrey

Wood, 28.75 x 11.75 in

On loan courtesy Jaffrey Historical Society

54. **BRONZE RING** \$

1908-1914, Keene, NH / Boston, MA

Metal, diameter 6 in

HSCC collection courtesy of James and Helen Graves, 1984.69.1

This trade sign hung in the window of Boston's 10-story shopping emporium, 'R. H. Stearns' during the early 1900s. Made in the shape of a bronze ring, the trade sign acted as an advertisement for Newburyport Silver Company of Keene, NH. Active from 1904 to 1914, the company produced sterling silver products, such as flatware and candlesticks, as well as other goods for the New England market.





55. KEENE, N.H. VIA FERRY 
19.M

Turn of the 20th century, Vermont
Wood, 32.5 x 11.75 in
On loan courtesy Jay Blanchard

Ferries were once common on the Connecticut River, carrying passengers, wagons and produce between New Hampshire and Vermont. Throughout

the 19th century, however, more and more bridges were built across the river and ferries began to disappear. Some ferries operated well into the 20th century.

56. BRYANT ROAD 

Walt Hautanen, late 20th century, Jaffrey, NH
Wood, 43 x 11.75 in

On loan courtesy Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society

The historic district in Jaffrey is known for its distinctive set of painted wooden street signs. Bryant Road is one of the oldest roads in town. Once called 'Peterborough Road,' it was laid out in 1778 and extended from the Meetinghouse, past John Briant's House, to Thorndike Pond Road. Bryant Road was altered slightly over the years and received a name change for some time. But in 1966, the Town restored its name to 'Bryant.' The Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society (est. 1906) made it its mission to improve the look of the village street signs with hand-painted wooden ones.

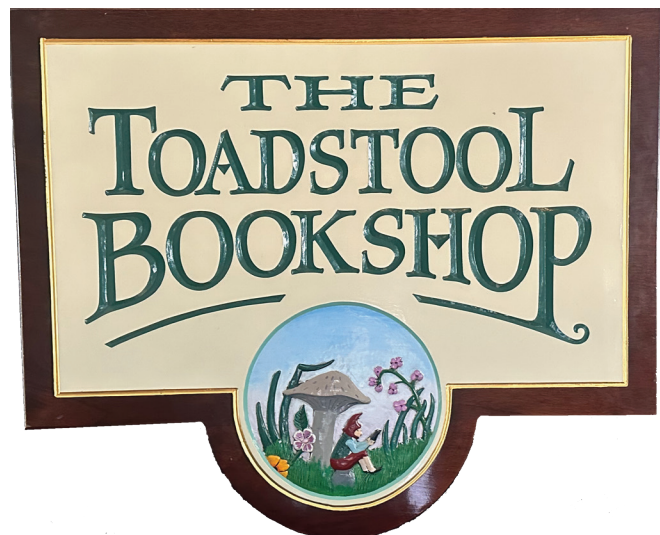


57. THE TOADSTOOL BOOKSHOP 

Keene Signworx, c.1990, Keene, NH
Wood, 36 x 32.75 in

On loan courtesy Keene Signworx

In 1983, the former Faulkner & Colony textile mill building in downtown Keene was transformed into a mini-mall featuring shops and a food court, anchored by a large bookstore, The Toadstool. Keene Signworx constructed the sign which hung in the hallway outside of the store, within the Colony Mill Marketplace. This was the second location for the business; the original Toadstool Bookstore was opened in Peterborough by Willard Williams and his family in 1972 and is still open. Keene's Toadstool remained in the mall until 2016 when it was moved into its current location on Emerald Street in Keene.

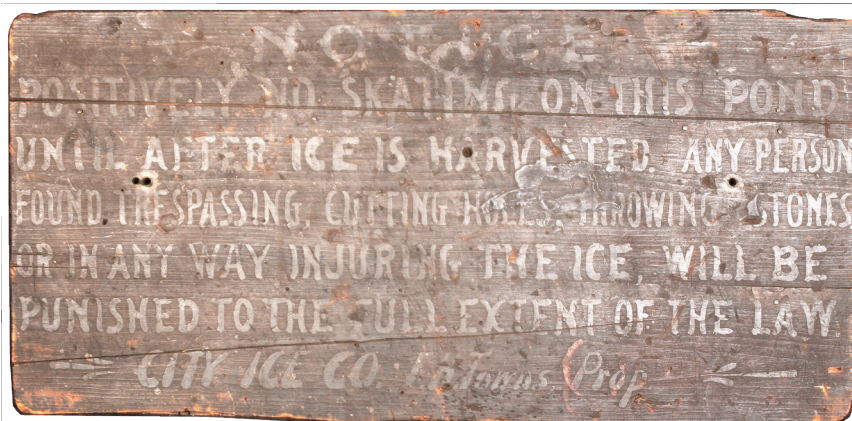


58. NOTICE: POSITIVELY NO SKATING ON THIS POND



1880s-1910s, Keene
Wood, 47.25 x 23 in
HSCC collection, xx.323

In 1884 Fred Towns established the City Ice Company in Keene, NH. Ice was cut on both Elm Street and at the reservoir at Robin Hood Park. It was then sold to residents for their ice boxes in the days prior to electric refrigeration. Thousands of tons of ice were cut and sold each year. This sign provided a warning to those seeking to use the company's ice for recreational purposes such as ice skating or ice fishing. "Notice. Positively no skating on this pond until after ice is harvested. Any person found trespassing, cutting holes, throwing stones, or in any way injuring the ice, will be punished to the full extent of the law. City Ice Co., F. H. Towns, Prop."



59. ROAD CLOSED



1940s-1950s, Dublin, NH
Paper, 14 x 11 in
On loan courtesy Dublin Historical Society

60. KEENE SIGNWORX \$

Keene Signworx, 1990s, Keene, NH
Wood, 20.75 x 30.5 in
On loan courtesy Keene Signworx

Peter Poannessa's Keene Signworx has grown into one of the country's top specialists in carved and sandblasted dimensional signs. Established in 1985, Keene Signworx started by doing hand-carved and hand-painted signs using traditional methods and tools. Over time, the company incorporated modern technology including computer design systems, film cutting plotters, and a CNC router with 3D modeling and machining software. Keene Signworx is located in Swanzey today.





61. **WALLDOGS. MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR** \$

Keene Signworx, 2019, Keene, NH

Wood, 21 x 74 in

On loan courtesy Keene Signworx

In 2019, over 200 Walldogs artists from around the world descended on Keene, NH, to paint 16 historically themed murals across its cityscape. The Walldogs is an internationally renowned organization of sign and mural artists. Each year they select one city, painting a series of murals in one 3-5 day festival. The murals share a community's local history and harken back to the wall-painted advertisements of the 19th and 20th century. As a Magical History Tour, the Historical Society of Cheshire County now offers guided tours of the murals.





62. ACME GOLDBERG \$

Keene Signworx, 2017, Keene, NH

Wood, 21 x 70 in

On loan courtesy Keene Signworx

In 2017, Peter Poanessa of Keene Signworx in Swanzey entered and won an international sign/sculpture competition in Orlando, Florida. The challenge: make a sign/sculpture 2' X 2' X 6' tall that could be displayed on the crate that it was shipped in. The theme was to honor the work of Rube Goldberg—American cartoonist, sculptor, author, engineer, and inventor. Goldberg is best known for his popular cartoons depicting complicated gadgets performing simple tasks in indirect, convoluted ways. The sign sculpture is built from items found in local junk shops.

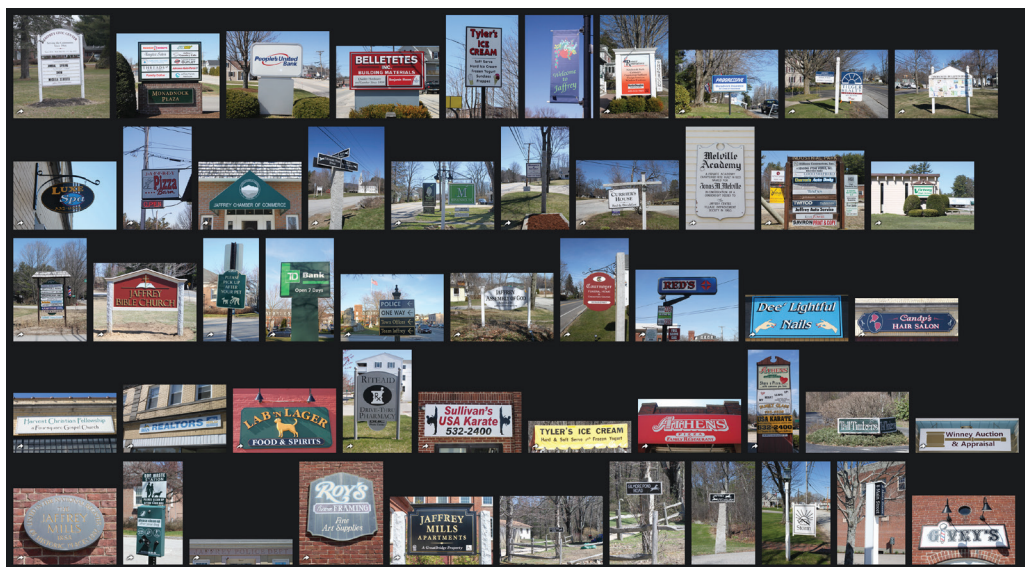
An Afterword

LOCAL historical societies in the Monadnock Region might consider documenting their local signs as a useful and relevant project that can be regularly done by almost any member. All that is needed is a camera—phone or otherwise—and a bit of time to wander around the town and take some pictures of the signage that’s all around us.

I’ve done this off and on for many years in Jaffrey and have found that a lot can be discerned about a community by doing so: the opening and closing of businesses, the changes in design and materials used in signage, the trends in lifestyle.

Perhaps there’s one member of your society who would like to take on such a project: a few hours a year. Or maybe several members could do this together and have fun doing so. Put the photos up on your society’s website, arrange the images by type, record the date and location of the photo. All easy things to do.

After a few years or decades you would end up with a visual record of how your town has changed over time—for the better or not. 🍷



Historical Society of Cheshire County

History

Founded in 1927, it is the only county-wide historical society in New Hampshire, serving 23 towns.

Mission

To collect, preserve and communicate the history of Cheshire County.

To implement this mission, the Society is committed to:

- Share and interpret the materials of Cheshire County history with all who are interested in the region's past and present.
- Serve as a regional studies center encompassing archive, artifact and manuscript research collections, the Wyman Tavern period house, public information, and educational programs.
- Cooperate with local and state historical and educational institutions to form a partnership in regional historical education.
- Prepare and sponsor educational exhibits and publications.

Governance and Administration

The Board of Trustees consists of 18 members representing towns across Cheshire County. There are six staff members and 135 volunteers.

Physical Facilities

The headquarters are in an 1870 Italianate structure with an exhibit hall, a research library, permanent exhibit space, a museum store, several offices, a warming kitchen, climate-controlled storage space for the Society's collections, and houses the Jonathan Daniels Center for Social Responsibility.

The Historical Society owns and operates the Wyman Tavern (built in 1762) as a period house museum and living history venue.

The Historical Society the 1839 brick Bruder House adjacent to the Wyman Tavern functions as a welcome center and educational venue.

Historical Collections

The Historical Society is one of New Hampshire's most important research centers for regional history and genealogy, housing one of the state's most extensive collections of primary sources.

The Historical Society has collected more than 300,000 items for historical research and educational use.

Strengths of the artifact collection include 18th and 19th century furniture and accessories, New Hampshire made glass and pottery, Kingsbury toys, regional art, and southwest New Hampshire Civil War artifacts. Strengths of the archival collections include 18th and 19th century Cheshire County newspapers, hundreds of regional maps, 20,000 Cheshire County photographs, and 425 record and manuscript groups of original documents. Topics that are well represented in the manuscript collection include the Civil War, women's history, religious history, business history, and agricultural history.

Audience Served

The Historical Society has 575 members. Last year 13,200 people attended public programs and events. The Historical Society offers over 150 programs per year including school tours, teacher workshops, living history events, festivals, walking tours, summer camps, exhibits, films, lectures, and even 'pop up museums.'

Some Past Exhibits***Hello Mother, Hello Father***

A History of Summer Camps in the
Monadnock Region.

May 26 – September 2, 2023

<https://hsccnh.org/hello-mother-hello-father-an-exhibit-on-the-history-of-summer-camps>

Two Conversations with Sharon Myers & Erika Radich.

The show expresses two vivid and colorful conversations between friends during the COVID-19 pandemic, manifested through their art.

February 10 – April 22, 2023

<https://hsccnh.org/2023/10/05/two-conversations>

Finding Home in New Hampshire

A multi-venue exhibition featuring New Hampshire's cultural diversity through the lens of Becky Field.

September 9 – December 16, 2022

<https://hsccnh.org/2023/03/07/finding-home-in-nh>

Nature & Humanity in the Monadnock Region

How have humans impacted and interacted with nature in the Monadnock Region, past and present?

June – August 26, 2022

<https://hsccnh.org/2023/03/07/nature-and-humanity-in-the-monadnock-region>

New Hampshire Now

A Photographic Diary of Life in the Granite State.

October 1, 2021 – May 20, 2022

<https://hsccnh.org/2022/05/24/nh-now>

The Ghost Army

Combat Con-Artists of WWII.

<https://hsccnh.org/2021/10/01/the-ghost-army>

June 4 – September 2, 2021

<https://hsccnh.org/2022/05/24/nh-now>

Dartmouth College Exhibit

Marking the 250th anniversary of the first meeting of the Trustees of Dartmouth College, which was held at the Wyman Tavern in Keene.

October 15, 2020 – February 15, 2021

<https://hsccnh.org/2021/10/01/dartmouth-college-exhibit>

Identity and Race in 1940s Keene

The story of a radiologist who, after years living as a white person in New Hampshire, including in Keene, tries to join the military during World War II but is rejected after being designated an African-American.

January – April 2019

<https://hsccnh.org/2020/04/06/identity-and-race>

Regenerating Fragments

A show of quilts by fiber artist Anne Francisco

November 2, 2018 – January 2019

<https://hsccnh.org/2020/04/06/regenerating-fragments>

All Around Monadnock

Over 50 artists submitted artworks to celebrate the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Monadnock region of New Hampshire.

June – September 2018

<https://hsccnh.org/2020/04/06/all-around-monadnock>

Marketing Monadnock

Illustrating the role Mount Monadnock has had throughout the region and beyond.

February 9 – May 5, 2018

<https://hsccnh.org/2020/04/06/marketing-monadnock>

Historical Society of Cheshire County
246 Main Street, Keene, NH 03431
(603) 352-1895

<https://hsccnh.org> info@hsccnh.org

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Page 8	<i>Pbergstrom, Wikimedia</i>
Page 9	<i>Robert B. Stephenson</i>
Page II	<i>Various including from online sources</i>
Image I	<i>Robert B. Stephenson</i>
2-16	<i>Steve Hooper</i>
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19-31	<i>Steve Hooper</i>
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35-36	<i>Steve Hooper</i>
37	<i>Robert B. Stephenson</i>
38-44	<i>Steve Hooper</i>
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46	<i>Steve Hooper</i>
47	<i>Robert B. Stephenson</i>
48-53	<i>Steve Hooper</i>
54	<i>Robert B. Stephenson</i>
55-56	<i>Steve Hooper</i>
57	<i>Robert B. Stephenson</i>
58-60	<i>Steve Hooper</i>
61	<i>Robert B. Stephenson and online sources</i>
62	<i>Steve Hooper</i>
Page 35	<i>Robert B. Stephenson</i>

Bibliography

Hazen, Edward, *Popular Technology or, Professions and Trades*. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1842). See Vol II, pp 129-33. <https://archive.org/details/populartechnolog00haze/page/n7/mode/2up>

Schoelwer, Susan P., ed., *Lions & Eagles & Bulls: Early American Tavern & Inn Signs from the Connecticut Historical Society*. (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 2000).

Various websites include some information on signage through the years. Here are a few to explore:

- <https://www.bartush.com/history/a-brief-history-of-modern-signage>
- <https://medium.com/@flaviu.mirc/signage-through-the-ages-9e5e8bc06d25>
- <https://www.rolanddga.com/blog/2021/05/26/history-of-signs-infographic>
- <https://www.degemmill.com/history-traffic-signs>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signage>
- <https://connecticuthistory.org/tavern-signs-mark-changes-in-travel-innkeeping-and-artistic-practice>
- <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-25-signs.pdf>

Colophon

THIS CATALOG was designed and produced by Robert B. Stephenson on an iMAC using primarily INDESIGN and PHOTOSHOP applications.

Among the type faces employed were: ITC GALLIARD PRO (*text*), ATHELAS (*titles & text*), GILL SANS (*captions*), AVENIR NEXT (*initials*), ZAPINO and ITC ZAPF DINGBATS.

