

Laconia Historical & Museum Society

The Historian

Summer, 2017



Preserving the history & culture of Laconia, NH
www.LaconiaHistory.org

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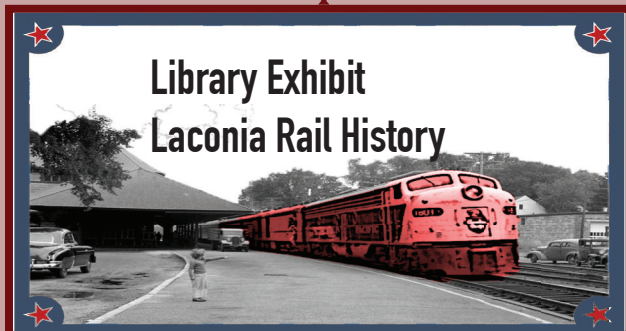
Howard Bacon

Mary B. Orton

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Upcoming Events

June 21 - September 21



August 19, 2017



Greetings from the President

Hello LHMS members. It's been well over a year since our last newsletter. Thanks to Johanna Halperin for making this one possible. Lots of great things have been going on over the past year. Our monthly lectures have been going well. I hope that those of you that can't make it to the meetings will have a chance to watch them on LRPA TV.

Our Executive Director, Pat Tierney, has a group of dedicated volunteers to help him work with our collections at our building on Water Street. Pat with the help of Johanna Halperin and historian Warren Huse have been doing a wonderful job on our quarterly exhibits at the Laconia Public Library. Make sure to come by and visit. Without the Library's support the exhibits would not be possible.

I wanted to let you know about something exciting happening in the city of Laconia. Last year I formed a non-profit called "Celebrate Laconia" to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the city which takes place in 2018. This summer on August 19, 2017 we will be celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Laconia Passenger Station with a day of entertainment, train rides, vendors, pig roast, children's activities and FUN!! Hope to see many of you there.

Finally, if you have not yet renewed your membership, please do. If you know of anyone who would like to be a member please let them know about us. We are only as strong as our members. Also, if you are interested in volunteering please get in touch with our Executive Director.

Pam. Clark



Show your support by becoming a Member or renewing your membership of the Laconia Historical and Museum Society. When you become a member of LHMS, you join a group of people dedicated to preserving and interpreting the rich history and culture of Laconia, NH.

Members will enjoy upcoming events and updates on work with artifacts, free admission to all programs and exhibit openings, and discounts on special workshops.

Yearly memberships start at just \$15 for individuals. A \$25 Silver Membership gets your name published in our newsletters as well as access to our genealogy site. Additional membership levels are welcomed at \$50 Gold and \$100 Platinum levels.

CONTACT US Laconia Historical & Museum Society, PO Box 1126, Laconia, NH 03247.

Call 603.527-1278 or email lhmspl@metrocast.net with questions



At the Laconia Historical and Museum Society, we frequently hear questions about local family history that may or may not be in our files. More often than not, we can locate 19th and 20th century artifacts, photos, or information pertaining to many Laconia families. Opening a portal to the past for those with this interest can be immensely satisfying and the work never ends.

Recently, descendants of two 18th century families who settled in what became our city, contacted our Society. We recognize the significant deeds and achievements of these early settlers. 9,000 years of Indian nations and tribes that preceded also merit mention. The legacy of how our community evolved is a true measure of their labors. These subsequent connections with generations of families continue to be remarkable in their scope and the educational opportunities they afford.


Our summer exhibit lends that spirit to celebration. From June until September, the upstairs gallery at the Laconia Public Library will feature Laconia Railroad History. As we honor the 125th anniversary of the Passenger Station and our City Charter, join us as we also highlight the Laconia Car Company and the Laconia Street Railway from days gone by.

Students of all ages continue to be our best audience. Learn about the people and events that shaped our downtown railroad growth and eventual decline. As always, in partnership with the Library, our exhibits and programs are free to the public and we invite you to attend.

Coming in September, please note that the History of Opechee Park begins our year-end exhibition. Laconia families can recall generations of frolic, sport, and recreation at this beautiful facility. The early days of the trotting track and fairgrounds will begin the journey to the 21st century appeal of our unique inner city park.

Laconia rediscovery and celebration welcomes you.

Pat Tierney



WHEN YOU REMEMBER THE LACONIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM SOCIETY THROUGH PLANNED GIVING, YOU CAN SAVE ON GIFT AND ESTATE TAXES, INCOME AND CAPITAL GAINS TAXES.

As a 501(C) (3) nonprofit, LHMS depends upon the goodwill of members and friends to help sustain its programs and Laconia's Past.



Find us on FACEBOOK!

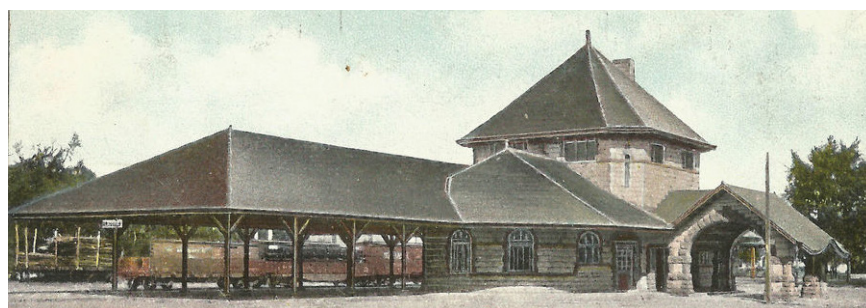
Stay up to date with all LHMS programs and events!

The Laconia Historical and Museum Society will open The Laconia Railroad History Exhibit at the Laconia Public Library on Wednesday June 21. The Open House will be held in the upper gallery and begin at 6 p.m. As always the event is free and open to the public.

There was a time when railroad traffic through Laconia was unceasing and intense. The Laconia Car Company and evolving local tourist trade demanded additional downtown track with overall service being paramount. Southbound trains had to wait at the Laconia station for northbound trains to pass. Hundreds of tourists would emerge from the cars into a station guiding them on to city streets, restaurants, stores, and hotels. Vendors offered an array of information and refreshment. The smells and sounds of industrial vibrancy filled the air. Taxicabs and carriages waited for their fares as whistles blew signaling the next all aboard to parting throngs.



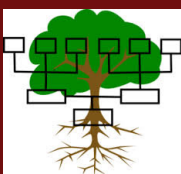
Since the 1840's, local families have watched their sons and daughters go off to war from those platforms. Election campaigns and their candidates often arrived in town with their supporters in tow. Veterans Square and the nearby



Library lawn frequently filled to capacity. Endless freight trains wound their way through the city loaded with goods destined for other markets. New folks and big city entrepreneurs came to Laconia with dynamic plans aimed at transforming the region with dreams of an

industrial haven down river from grand hotels and a spectacular lake. Laconia was a tried and true destination. Let the record show that it was a bustling municipality gleaming with civic pride.

The 1892 passenger station still stands. 125 years later, the building remains a local monument to the grit and determination of a small town. A year after the Grand Opening, Laconia received a City Charter and almost doubled in size with the addition of Lakeport as Ward 6. Countless stories began and ended at the passenger station.



Did you know? The LHMS genealogy website is available as a membership benefit to our silver, gold and platinum members. Check it out!



In Memoriam

PETER S. KARAGIANIS, a resident of the city for 71 years, former city councilor, chair of the Belknap County Convention and four-term New Hampshire state representative, died, May 14, 2016. His family was from the small mountainside village of Georgitsi, 20 miles west of Sparta, Greece, which is located in the New England-like province of Laconia. Born in Somerville, Mass., to Soterios and Maria (Vinius) Karagianis, he grew up in the Central Square area of Cambridge, graduating from Cambridge Rindge and Latin School and took Harvard University extension classes at night. He came to Laconia in 1945, where he owned and operated the Laconia Spa. In addition, he started at age 68, Happy Jack's Cigar, Pipe & Tobacco Shop and continued working there until he retired at age 95. He made countless community contributions over the years, worked tirelessly to preserve the clean waters of central New Hampshire's lakes and championed the effort to save Laconia's Belknap Mill from the wrecking ball, serving as the "Save the Mill Society's" first president from 1971 to 1978. He put Laconia's Greek Orthodox Church on solid financial footing, serving as president from 1986 to 2002. A dedicated member of the Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce, he served as president in the 1950s, and worked to enhance Laconia's Motorcycle Week. In 1985 he was dubbed "Mr. Laconia" by Edwin Chertok, the then-Chamber president. He was a 70-year member of the Laconia Kiwanis Club, where in the 1950s he led the Laconia High School Key Club as a councilor. He was a Mason for more than 70 years, and in 1975 he was honored as a 33rd degree mason. Family members include his wife of 57 years, Lydia Ann Karagianis of Laconia, his son S. Peter Karagianis of Gilford; three grandchildren, Nicole, Evan and Christian Karagianis all of Gilford. He was predeceased by his daughter, Anthie Karagianis-Jones and four brothers, Perry, John, Fred and Greg Karagianis.

MARY M. VANDERNOOT, 77, died, Sept. 25, 2016, at the Genesis Nursing Facility in Lebanon. Born in Laconia, to Mary (Way) and Randolph Morrison, she attended Laconia schools and during her school years was involved in the Glee Club, athletic clubs, and band, where she played the French horn. Her beauty and poise earned her first place in a beauty contest her sophomore year, as well as the attentions of a short-order cook at the Weirs Beach Howard Johnson's where she worked. After graduation from LHS, Mary attended UNH but left in 1959 to marry her husband, the former short-order cook and by then Johns Hopkins University graduate, Norman C. VanderNoot. They were married for 43 years until Norman's death in 2002. During the ensuing years, as she gave birth to two sons and two daughters she never lost sight of her

education goals, eventually graduating from NHTI in 1985. After earning her degree, she worked in law offices and real estate offices and became a Notary and Justice of the Peace. In the 1980s, she accepted a position with the NH State Department of Education, working for 10 years to further promote the value of education mostly in relation to special education grants, before her retirement from the workforce in the 1990s. In the late 1990s she became involved with the Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation, establishing the Mary L. Morrison Memorial scholarship after the death of her mother, and later, after the death of her husband, the Norman C. and Mary M. VanderNoot Award. Through the years Mary became more involved with the LRSF first in reviewing and selecting for the family awards, then expanding to broader application review duties, and finally serving as a member of the board and helping to organize and run the annual charity spelling bee. Family members include sons Matthew and, Christopher and daughters Jennifer VanderNoot and Stacy McNulty, grandchildren and great-grandchildren; a brother, Randy Morrison, a sister-in-law, Betty Morrison, nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by a sister, Medora, a brother, Zane, a nephew David, and a niece Bettina.

DAVID RICHARD DECKER, 79, died Jan. 11, 2017. Born in Chicago to Elmer John Decker Jr. and Beatrice (Doer) Decker, he later lived in Methuen, Mass., and Salem, N.H., where he attended Woodbury High School. He then attended the University of New Hampshire and Boston College Law School. Admitted to the New Hampshire Bar in 1963, he practiced law in Laconia until 1990. Later he was a paralegal for 23 years at the Boyle law office in Plymouth. Active for years as chairman of the Laconia Republican Committee, he also served as city solicitor, Belknap County attorney and moderator of the Gilford School District. In addition to various other civic and professional positions, he was Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 143 for 17 years and general chairman of the Parish Activities Committee of the Congregational Church of Laconia (UCC) for 10 years, during which time he loved organizing the annual Hazel Duke Thanksgiving Dinner. For the past several years, he gave more than 50 speeches all over New England on various topics, including his favorite, Civil War General George Thomas. In this connection, Dave spoke before the Laconia Historical and Museum Society several times. Family members include three children, Kimberly (Decker) Knight of Billerica, Mass., Douglas Decker of Rochester and Keith Decker of Manchester, three step-daughters, Tammy (MacQuarrie) Emond of Gilford, Donna (MacQuarrie) Abrams of Deadwood, S.D., Brenda (MacQuarrie) Anderson of Reno, Nev.,

Book for commemoration of Laconia's 125th anniversary in preparation

Local history writer Warren D. Huse is hard at work on a coffee-table book of photos and text in commemoration of Laconia's 125th anniversary as a city, which will be celebrated in 2018. The book, sponsored by *The Laconia Daily Sun* and printed by Pediment Publishing Co., is due out in December of this year, in time for the holidays.

Orders are being accepted now. Go to Laconia125.PictorialBook.com on line, or contact *The Laconia Daily Sun*, 1127 Union Ave., Laconia, NH 03246. (603-737-2020)

A \$15 discount is given on advance orders for the \$44.95 book and multiple copies may be shipped for one shipping and handling fee. (The S&H fee may be avoided by picking up your pre-ordered copies at the Sun offices on Union Avenue. See Laconia125.PictorialBook.com for details.)



Memoriam continued

three stepchildren, Gilbert Pidgeon of Gilford, Donald Pidgeon of Dover and Danielle (Pidgeon) LaFond of Gilford, six grandchildren and 11 step-grandchildren. He was predeceased by two wives, Gloria (Ladd) Decker and Susan (Norz) Decker, a brother, half-brother and a sister.

RUSSELL CLARK ORTON, 94, died, February 12, 2017 at the Taylor Community. Born in Boston to Harriet and Dr. Leon Orton of Ashland (N.H.). Russ attended Ashland Public Schools and graduated in 1940 from Holderness School. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from UNH in 1948 and an MBA from the Harvard School of Business in 1953. He served his country during WWII as part of the 351st Infantry Division which fought in Italy. He was awarded a Silver Star for valor in combat after he led his troops to the successful capture of 119 German soldiers. After the fighting ended, he was part of a group of soldiers assigned to escort German soldiers who had been captured by Allied Forces back to their homeland. In 1954, Russ married Janet Ballou of Wellesley, Mass. They settled in Laconia where Russ worked for Scott & Williams and later for the Acme Staple Company. Russ subsequently led New England Industrial Resource Development, where he combined his engineering and business backgrounds to help New England-based inventors acquire patents, develop business plans, and secure venture capital funding. He was a long-time Boy Scout leader, chaired the Belknap County Republican Party, served as a Laconia police commissioner, and as a trustee of the Lakes Region General Hospital. During retirement, he became an honorary director of the Squam Lakes Conservation Society, an honorary trustee of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, as well as being actively involved with the Squam Lakes Association and Canterbury Shaker Village. He continued to ski well into his 70s and was known for his long daily walks which he insisted on taking no matter the weather. Over the course of their long and happy 40-year marriage Russ and Mary Jewett Orton traveled the globe including trips to South Africa, the Galapagos Islands, China, Europe, and many parts

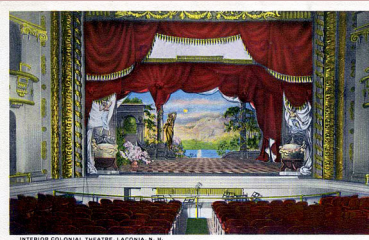
of the United States. Other family members include four children, Leslie Orton-Mahar of Williamstown, Mass., Piper Orton of Auburndale, Mass., Janet Chase Orton of Brighton, Mass., and Clark Orton of Belmont, two step-children, Samantha Jewett of Gilford and Ellen Jewett of Bainbridge Island, Wash., and seven grandchildren. Russ was predeceased by his first wife Janet (Ballou) Orton in 1972.

ELIZABETH M. GILBERT, 93, died, March 30, 2017, at the Peabody Home in Franklin. Born in Laconia, the daughter of Arkino and Evon (Guay) Russillo, she attended St. John's School and finished her high school years in Laconia. She married Rene J. Gilbert, on June 21, 1941, and together they raised eight children. She was a member of the Ladies Guild and the Catholic Daughters of America. Elizabeth also worked as a bookkeeper for her husband's business, Rene J. Gilbert Builder/Contractor, for many years. In addition, she hosted a Sewing Club and she volunteered as a Den Mother for the Cub Scouts. Family members include her husband, Rene, of 75 years; a son, David Gilbert of Laconia; five daughters: Lorraine Sanborn of Gilford; Cheryl Allen of New Brunswick, Canada; Carolyn Kinsman of Seattle, Wash., Ruth Fecteau and Ellen Giguere, both of Laconia; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren, many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by a daughter, Patricia Allen, a son, John Gilbert, a brother, Lorenzo Russillo and a sister, Evelyn Daigneault.

JOHN J. MILLAR, 89, died, May 2, 2017. Growing up in Plymouth, he was a patent engineer with Scott & Williams in Laconia and used those skills to start a business, Salyn Industries, manufacturing newborn baby hats for hospital maternity wards. (Some years ago, John presented both the Belknap Mill and our society each an operating W.D. Huse & Sons circular knitting machine which had been in use for many years, first at the Belknap Mill and later at Salyn Industries.) John also enjoyed a career in real estate with Coldwell Banker for many years. He was an accomplished woodworker and avid sailor with a lifelong membership

Memoriam continued

in the Winnepesaukee Yacht Club. An alumnus of the University of New Hampshire, he was a member of the UNH ski team, later on the Gunstock ski patrol and loved both downhill and cross country skiing. He served on the Diaconate and many committees at the Congregational Church of Laconia. Family members include his wife Evelyn (Westover) of 65 years, his daughters Lynn Richards of Gilford and Sally Reilly of Wakefield, Mass., and grandchildren Casey Richards of Bow, Jillian Richards of Somerville Mass., and Matthew Reilly of Wakefield Mass., a sister, Elizabeth Howard of Laconia, a sister-in-law Barbara Millar of Kittery Maine, and many nieces and nephews.



The Society's offices are housed in the Laconia Public Library, in the heart of downtown Laconia. LHMS conducts monthly programs and airs current and past programs on a widely watched local cable-access television station, Lakes Region Public Access, Channel 25 of MetroCast Cablevision.

Changing exhibitions in the Laconia Public Library interpret both local history and American cultural themes to thousands of patrons annually. Special events accompany most exhibits.

THE LACONIA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM SOCIETY APPRECIATES THE SUPPORT OF ITS MEMBERS!

Many thanks to all of our members! As a non-profit organization, the Laconia Historical & Museum Society relies on memberships and community donations. Your support helps provide the community with information, programming, and exhibitions that pertain to historic preservation. Our calendar year 2016 participants are listed below. Please join our growing 2017 Society roster in the near future.

Corporate Members

Decorative Interiors
Half Moon Hotel
Laconia Daily Sun
Laconia Police Department

Laconia Public Library
Kramer & Hall Goldsmiths
Misiaszek Turpin, PLLC

Pike Industries
Pitman's Freight Room
Rist-Frost Shumway Engineering
Water Street Cafe

Platinum Members

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Deborah Frawley Drake
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Edward Engler
Mary Jane Hoey
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Douglas Stone
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John & Pat Weeks

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