



# Winter 2010

## COMING EVENTS

- March 14th—Field trip to Elizabeth MacRury's—See article on page 5
- April 11—Meeting Is at Ann Miles' Carriage Barn In Newton, NH at 2:00 PM
- May 16—Annual meeting at Havenwood

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Concord Coach Society truly had it's wheels rolling in 2009. Visiting new places and meeting new folks was indeed a lot of fun for Society members. If the coach could talk, it would be eager to reminisce about the numerous events,

including almost being caught in a summer storm (4<sup>th</sup> of July, Hopkinton), being "held up" in a robbery (Single Action Shooters Event, Pelham) visiting old friends at the Hospital Days Parade (New London), the surprise visit to the Franklin Pierce Homestead in honor of our long-time member Dave Hubbard (Hillsborough). Also, being included in the wonderful display (Hopkinton State Fair) and the Audi Event (Concord), "the yard sale stop for fabric" (Warner Fall Foliage Festival) and more! The interest shown related to the Society's goals has certainly increased. The reception the Coach receives at each visit is al-

ways a combination of fascination, curiosity, and awe. The questions asked by viewers are very genuine. It's very obvious that the Society's goal to educate people in regards to the history of Abbot-Downing Co. and the role it played not only in New Hampshire history but transportation development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is very important. Sincere personal "thank you" to all members for all that they have done throughout the whole year. It is greatly appreciated. Our big event is the Hopkinton Fair, but that is only five days. It is the rest of the year when we are out meeting the public, showing the coach, participating in parades, and talking up the Society, its goals and mission that really bring our message to the public. The Concord Coach Society is definitely on a roll!




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**Remember to pay your dues in  
order to vote at the annual meeting**

## Bylaw Changes

*The bylaws  
have not been  
revised in  
several years*

Esther Crowley is heading up a group working on updating the bylaws. The bylaws have not been revised in several years and the Society itself has changed significantly since then. We need to make some changes which reflect our smaller, but more active number of members. One of the changes to be considered is a change to the section relating to the number of terms

an officer can serve consecutively. It is presently 2 years. This means that we are forcing willing officers out and struggling to find replacements. Another change would require two signatures on checks for more than \$499.99 and creating the ability for the president to make small purchases without prior authority. These are usually maintenance and emergency purchases

## A WINTER Greeting FROM COACH XIV

Hello!

Another busy year for me and the other vehicles at the Barn Museum. I went on the flat bed to many parades and events – and was awarded several prizes. A special outing for me was the opening of Audi Theater season in Concord where I showed off my new green canvas traveling cover given by the Bagan Foundation.



*Coach XIV with Its New  
Traveling Cover*

At the Hopkinton Fair members took me outside to be the “official greeter”. People took my photo and gave me many compliments – pretty good for being 163 years old!

Now the sleighs, wagons, and other vehicles and I are resting in our home that is so well cared for by the members of the Society. It’s so good to be cozy against the cold New Hampshire winter – and not outside in the snow and mud.

Thank you again for the loving care.

*Coach XIV (Sheila Knight)*



## THE STAGE STATION

### BY KEN WHEELING

Hi! For beginners, we hope to include this "column" as a regular feature of the Concord Coach Society News Letter. It will serve two purposes. The first is to familiarize members with the extant Concord Coaches around the country and abroad. The second is to explore the whereabouts of coaches which were once "on the radar" but for some reason have "disappeared." That disappearance could have happened for several reasons, e.g. a new paint job that makes linking old photographs with the "new" coach very difficult, or it has been destroyed in some manner, e.g. fire in a storage facility, or has disappeared in private hands by private treaty. Coaches have vanished in all these ways, and by others. In this regard, it is hoped that by pooling our knowledge, we can unravel some historical bits and pieces in stage-coach research.

Who is Ken Wheeling? It seems like I have been a member of the CCS forever, but I was a bit of a late comer. I have been a member for a long time, and seen the organization through good times and bad. The current officers and members are committed to keeping the society alive and increasing its presence. It is hoped that this column will spur the interests of those who admire and love the Concord Coach to retain their membership and further the aims of the group.

The DATA BASE? This is a long, complex story. These are some sketchy details for now. There have

been a number of people who have contributed a lot, a heck of a lot, to the corpus of knowledge we have about the coaches. Their names will become familiar to you as the story unfolds. Early researchers like Mildred Frizzell (OK), later zealots like Ed Rowse (NH) and Frank Newton (CA) and a host of curators, historians, and collectors all collected information waiting to be tapped. Or built upon. In my role as a writer for *The Carriage Journal*, the voice of the Carriage Association of America, I would occasionally receive letters about Concord Coaches. I had a small file on Concord Coaches and the Abbot-Downing Company, but not enough to answer some of the intriguing questions posed to me. I began asking questions, eventually finding I had more questions than answers.

I began to run into problems. The books had contradictory information, the collected research of various people was in error, or incomplete, or mistaken. In short, things just didn't jibe right, consistently. SO.....I decided that I would go see the actual evidence for myself. Frank Newton, a retired aircraft engineer, instilled in me a golden rule: DON'T BELIEVE UNTIL YOU SEE IT YOURSELF!

Consequently, I compiled the INVENTORY of existing Concord Coaches. There are 158 coaches, with a few unlisted coaches or parts of coaches yet to be entered. You will learn of these problem coaches in due time. I have examined, photographed and recorded information on 137 of these coaches. The small plastic milk crate that held my initial file has grown to 9 file drawers, chock full of information and photo-

graphs. All of these records are kept in acid-free folders and on archival paper, etc. This record continues to grow, and I will use the term DATA BASE to refer to it in future conversations.

There is so much more to tell you about all this, but I think it is enough about me. Let's talk coaches!

We'll start with New Hampshire (I keep the count by states!).

There are 22 Concord Coaches in New Hampshire, some in museums, some in private hands, and some owned by commercial companies. Only California "owns" more coaches. With some of the NH coaches, many members are already familiar. As an exercise, try and make a list of all those in the state and tick off the ones you have seen. We will begin there the next time, maybe.

One word about procedure. I always speak of a coach BY THE NUMBER. This is the one thing that remains constant. Owners may change and location may change, but the coach number remains. That is not to say these are without difficulties – there are some problem numbers out there. At some point, I will write about the numbers, the numbering systems and the companies connected with them. Other lists produced by the society listed coaches by location and some are no longer at those places.

Until the stage arrives next time.....ciao! Ken

[You can write to Ken at P. O. Box 38, North Ferrisburgh, VT 05473 OR [wheeling@gmavt.net](mailto:wheeling@gmavt.net) ]

## ROBBIE MCLAUGHLIN AND THE MYSTERIOUS COACH BODY

One evening last spring, I was surfing the net and came across this request for information:

“Hi I have the coach part of a stagecoach and would like some information on it. I live in Bremen, Maine and I had this given to me 30 years ago and I would like to restore it but I am not sure if it would be the right thing to do. The coach is the Damariscotta and Bristol stage and I think it has been in Maine all the time it was in use. So any info would be great. Thanks Robbie

Posted by: Robbie Mclaughlin | [February 02, 2009 at 04:22 PM](#) “

Being the curious sort, I found Robbie’s address and sent him a letter explaining that I was a member of the Concord Coach Society and that we were interested in all things related to Concord Coaches. We exchanged a couple of letters and some phone calls and arranged for a trip to see his coach body and to meet him. Four of us traveled to Bremen, Maine, one Sunday early in June. After a good lunch at the famous Moody’s Diner in Waldoboro, we drove the ten miles or so down the peninsula to Robbie’s place in Bremen.



ROBBIE MCLAUGHLIN AND PETER JAMES AT THE BARN MUSEUM

He greeted us most graciously and showed us the coach body and a sleigh that had belonged to his grandmother which she had used for winter transportation. Unfortunately, the coach was not an Abbot and Downing, but a very interesting body similar to the sleigh coach that the Society owns that was made in Concord by Flanders and Hudson. Robbie’s coach



ROBBIE MCLAUGHLIN’S  
COACH BODY

body was probably part of a coach made in the local area, possibly in a city such as Bath. It was used on the line that ran from Damariscotta and Bristol, a distance of about 12 miles. The line might also have gone to Bremen. This would have been typical of the local stage coach lines that operated in the New England area.

We took lots of pictures and looked it over thoroughly and before we left, invited Robbie to come and see the Society’s collection when we are open during the Hopkinton Fair. Robbie took us up on the offer and along with his son and daughter, came to the fair.

*Peter James*

**A REVIEW OF THE BOOK "FOUR WHEELS  
AND TWENTY-FOUR LEGS"  
BY ELIZABETH BANKS MACRURY**

FOUR WHEELS AND TWENTY-FOUR LEGS -  
"Staging" and "the Concord Coach" Around the World

Mrs. Elizabeth (Beth) Banks MacRury, author, retired elementary school principal, is a pretty incredible lady. She has written 11 books on different local historical subjects. Many of the books were of the towns where she has lived. She says she loves to poke around and find interesting facts. She lives in Wakefield, New Hampshire and finished the last book, Four Wheels and Twenty-four Legs, about staging and the Concord Coach in 2007. She is 93 years old.

Some of books she has written are:

This is Fairfield (Conn) 1639-1940, (1960), Walker-Rackliff Co., New Haven, CT 270 pages.

More about the Hill-Greenfield Hill, (c. 1968), North Haven: Printed by City Printing Co., Hardback - over 200 pages.

Town Pounds of New England, 1979, Milton Mills, NH, 51 pages.

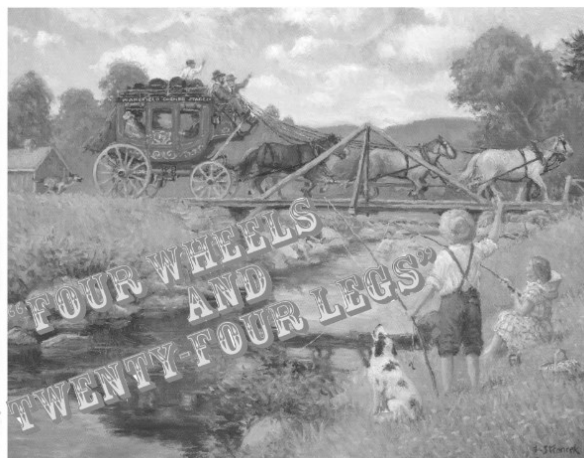
Footsteps of Pride to the Past - Wakefield, NH 1774-1974, (1987) published by Wilson's Printers, Sanford, Maine. 1,151 pages.

Four Wheels and Twenty-four Legs-Staging and the Concord Coach Around the World, privately published, 2007, Wakefield, NH. 206 pages.

This last book tells the story of the Concord Coach which provided transportation from the Atlantic to the Pacific from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and got its start in New Hampshire. Special emphasis is on Wakefield, NH, the author's home, a spot where six stage coach lines once regularly stopped.

We are fortunate that Mrs. MacRury took the time and had the interest in Concord stagecoaches to write *and* publish this book. It contains valuable information about the Concord Coach in history. She continually reminds the reader of the unique characteristics that made the Concord Stagecoach, the mass transportation of its time, special, such as the leather thorough braces and the egg shaped body. The coach was built for more comfort and to survive. It was said "Concord coaches don't break down - they wear out." The author takes detail to remind us of the high quality workmanship that Abbot and Downing expected. Although she praises the advanced comfort for the time, she also reminds us a trip of any distance in a stagecoach was anything but comfortable.

She promotes the book as a children's book but except for the simplicity of arranging her facts and her obvi-



"Staging" and "The Concord Coach" Around the World

By Elizabeth Banks MacRury

ous enthusiasm for the topic, this book is detailed and contains a lot of information. The age group she was targeting was middle school. It definitely has quality and information from youth to adult. She illustrates many facts and compares them with today's ways. This book goes into many aspects of the coach and coach days. She discusses the impact the gold rushes in the USA and in Australia had on the use of the coach. Once the railroad went cross country the coach was still used. The stage would meet the trains. The coach was now the tourist's conveyance from train to resort. Our White Mountains were a Mecca of tourism in the 20's and the coach was right there.

There are many fun facts and information that she bul-lets in different parts of the book to make reading it very charming. The book is also very well illustrated with archival photos, copies of sales receipts, tickets, information on prices "back in the day." It is not a book to easily read from cover to cover in one sitting, but is one to come back and pick up any section and read and enjoy.

Elizabeth Banks MacRury puts her heart into her work. She loves history and the story the Concord Coach has to tell and she makes it all fascinating with its bits and pieces. This all passes through her book and makes it a delightful book to own.

To purchase a book through the Society send \$40.00 (check made out to *Concord Coach Society*) with your name and address to Alice Pickett, 59 Penacook St, Concord, NH 03301. If you wish it to be mailed priority mail add another \$5.00.

*Alice Pickett-Hale*



## WELLS FARGO OWNER GETS EARLY START IN UPPER VALLEY

We often are pleased and a little proud to learn that a famous person "came from" our own area. This is the case of Henry Wells. Since I live in Lebanon, NH, Henry's birthplace of Thetford, VT, was not very far up the road and across the Connecticut River. Born in 1805 to a Presbyterian minister and wife, the family was caught up in the westward movement so he was not in VT very many years. He, himself, married twice and had four children.

In 1836 Wells became a freight agent on the Erie Canal and soon started his own business. In his own first express business, they competed with the US Post Office by carrying mail for fees less than charged by the government.

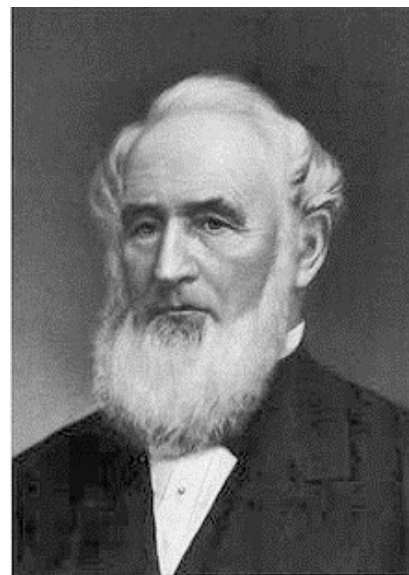
Numerous business ventures evolved over the years with Wells as a main owner/investor until 1850 the American

Express Co. was formed with Wells as president for 18 years. This company was working out of Aurora, NY which was his home until his death.

The familiar Wells Fargo name came into the picture when Wells organized Wells, Fargo and Company in 1852 and the American Express Co. was expanded to California. He was president of a bank and of a railroad at later times.

Also in 1868, Wells founded Wells College in Aurora with an endowment to make it one of the first women's colleges in the United States. Wells died in Scotland in 1878 and the body brought back to Aurora. More details of Well's illustrious life may be read on Wikipedia.

*Carolyn Grass*



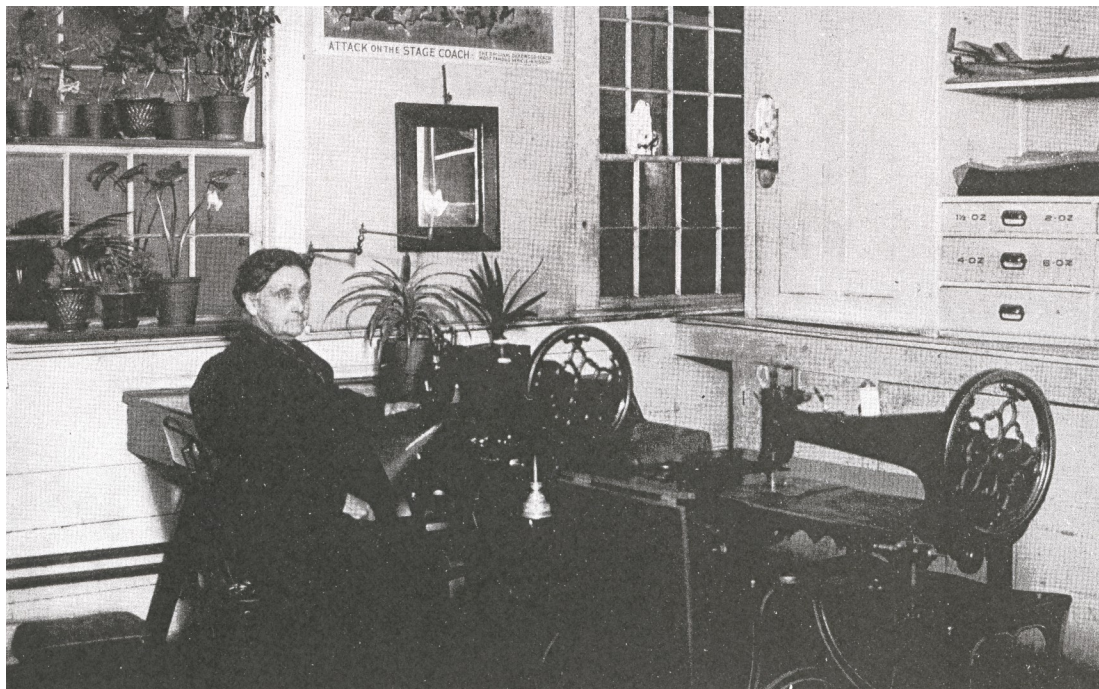
*Henry Wells  
1805-1878*

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### M A R I F . P U T N A M

A B B O T & D O W N I N G ' S O N L Y F E M A L E E M P L O Y E E F O R O V E R T H I R T Y Y E A R S

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This photograph has appeared in many publications, but this is the uncropped version showing her "personalized" work space. Take note of the flowers in the window and you can see just the bottom of a print entitled "Attack on the Stage Coach" When you look at the sewing machines, remember, they were foot treadle powered which is the reason for the huge balance wheels. She sewed heavy leathers and trimmings. Her legs must have been powerful! This is one of a collection of newspaper clippings that was in a scrapbook found by a friend of Sheila Knight's at a yard sale.

# ACTIVE NEW MEMBERS

## CHECKING OUT A CHILDHOOD MEMORY

This past summer we welcomed another new member, Carolyn Grass, of Lebanon, N.H. Carolyn's research into family genealogy has branched out into Concord Coach historical investigations. She has been searching the web on her own and has put together a large 3-ring binder of Concord Coach related information and pictures gleaned from her sleuthing. She is particularly hoping to find more information on the coaches of Littleton, N.H., her

hometown. Years ago behind the Littleton Community House was a small barn which held a Concord Coach thought to belong to Thayer's Hotel. As a young girl in the 40's, Carolyn remembers peeking through the boards of the barn to see that coach.

### *Where is it now?*



*New member, Carolyn Grass, looking over the offerings at our Barn/Museum gift shop*

## NEW MEMBERS SPREAD THE WORD



*Bruce and Nancee Donovan in Coach XIV at the New London Parade*

New members Bruce and Nancee Donovan from Concord, N.H. have become active in spreading the word on the mission and activities of the Concord Coach Society. They participated in several of our summer outings and this winter they are taking our message to Florida. They spend the winter in the Port Charlotte area where they organized and presented a program to the Port Charlotte New Hampshire group. It was a breakfast meeting at the local Moose hall. Nancee had prepared three charts showing our

activities and the coaches and carriages at the museum. Each attendee received a Concord Coach Society brochure that Nancee had printed. One of the fun activities of the program was the group singing of one of the Shaw Brothers songs, the "Ballad of the Concord Coach". When the Shaw Brothers were contacted to get permission to use their song, they indicated that next year they would like to come and lead the singing. Wouldn't we all like to be there for that?!!

## THE CONCORD COACH SOCIETY AND THE GREAT NOR'EASTER

One of the most successful events of this past summer was taking part in the activities of the Single Action Shooting Society's meet at the Fish and Game Club, Pelham, N.H., between July 23d & 26th. This meet was called "The Great Nor'easter" and their theme for the event was the Concord Stagecoach and the Overland Trail, which was the reason for our invitation. The SASS is a national organization of over 85,000 people from all walks of life

who enjoy dressing up like cowboys and cowgirls and spending their weekends at live ammunition shooting matches. The Concord Coach Society took part by displaying Coach XIV and educating shooters and visitors alike about our part in history. This group of people seemed especially interested and appreciative of what we have to offer. We were able to set up tables for a gift shop which, along with the coach were moved in and out of the barn several

times as it rained or was sunny. Just for fun, on Saturday morning they staged a "Great stagecoach Robbery" to help celebrate the National Day of The Cowboy. Our President, Brian Erickson, brought two of his beautiful black horses to pose in front of the coach, as the masked desperados attempted to hold it up. They were way outnumbered by the Sheriff and his posse. You never saw so many people having so much fun!



*Coach XIV Posing with Brian Erickson and his Beautiful Black Team of Horses in Front of The Pelham Fish and Game Club Building for the "Great Stagecoach Robbery"*

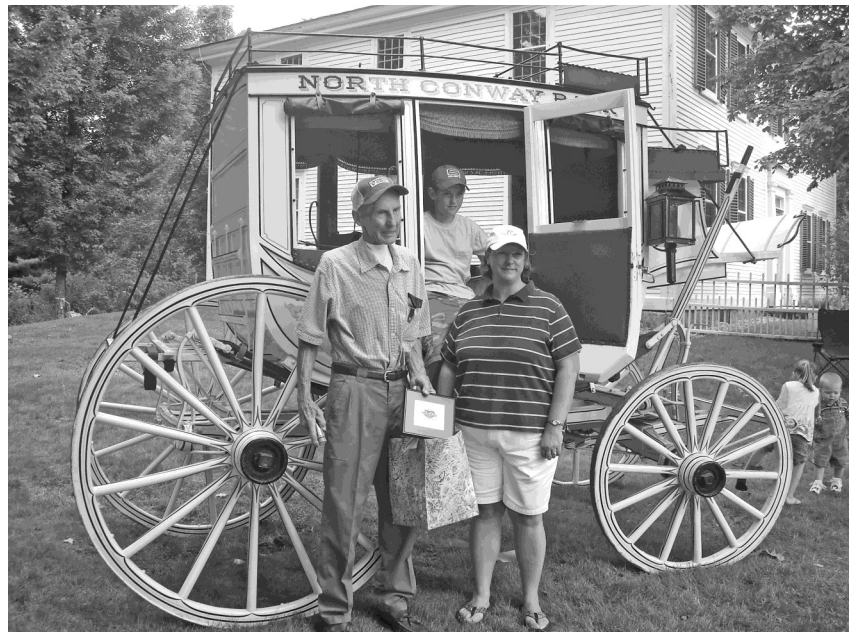


**LONGTIME PARTICIPANT IN CONCORD COACH SOCIETY ACTIVITIES , GEORGE EVANS, AWARDED HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP**



*Alice Pickett-Hale and Brian Erickson, Society president, present George Evans an Honorary Life Membership Certificate as George's sister, Marcia Evans, looks on. This took place at the August 10th, 2009 meeting at the Barn/Museum.*

*Dave Hubbard and his daughter and grandson at the "surprise" visit to the Franklin Pierce Homestead, August 23, 2009. Dave works tirelessly for the Society and has been one of its most active members.*



**The Coach at the Franklin Pierce Homestead, Hillsboro, NH**



MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY AT THE FRANKLIN  
PIERCE HOMESTEAD, HILLSBORO, NH  
AUGUST 23, 2009

2010 Annual Dues and Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, State \_\_\_\_\_, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Interest \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Individual \$15

Business \$50

Non-Profit organization \$25

Patron \$50

Life \$250

Please mail to: The Concord Coach Society, PO Box 4077, Concord, NH 03302-4077