



# Fall 2016

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## COMING EVENTS

### November 10th

Monthly meeting at  
6:00pm, Prescott  
Oil, 122 Airport Rd.,  
Concord, NH

### December 4th

Our Annual Christmas Party will be held on December 4th at Tads Place, 149 East side Drive in Concord.

It will be a pot luck lunch starting at 1:00.

A good time to reflect on the year's activities

## President's Message

Since the 1970's we, Carol and I as a family, have been involved with the Concord Coach Society and the succeeding organization, the Abbot-Downing Historical Society. As President, it is an honor and a privilege to be able to work with both non-members and the Society members interested in the Abbot-Downing Concord Coach.

Thanks to all who were able to participate, we were able to raise \$100,000 in 2016 and obtain six Abbot-Downing vehicles. Fortunately, the City of Concord bought the seventh vehicle, the Shattuck Wagon, for \$75,000. Our next major project is the construction of an Abbot-Downing museum in Concord, in partnership with the City of Concord. Stay tuned as the planning proceeds over next few years.

The Society is fortunate in receiving a recent donation of a small milk/ice sleigh built by Huntley and McDonald. In 1894 they had a workshop at 22 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH. The sleigh will be maintained, but not restored, and thus will remain in its present condition.

To promote the varying interests of our members, three committees have been established. Communication relates to the website, newsletter, Facebook, and publicity. The Docent committee will enhance member knowledge of Abbot-Downing and the history and manufacturing of vehicles. The Education committee already is creating programs for 4th graders in various schools so that young students will hear about Abbot-Downing and the role it played in the 1800s and later.

Our monthly meetings have been well attended by both the directors and interested members. We urge you to appear and provide input as we strive to maintain a vibrant and growing Society.

With best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving!

Merwyn Bagan

*The Crawford House Mountain Wagon at the Prescott Open House*



# Prescott Oil Open House

The annual open house at Johnny Prescott Oil Company in Concord was held this year on June 11th. The Society transported our two coaches as well as the six Abbot-Downing vehicles which were purchased last year with our fund raising effort to the event. These were in addition to the two coaches that Tom Prescott has in his museum and the *Shattuck* barge that the City of Concord purchased. It was one of the largest assemblies of Abbot-Downing vehicles anywhere in the world - and right here in Concord! The attendance was estimated to be near one thousand and the people were really thrilled to see so much of Concord's history on display.

We had a good turnout of our members to greet the public and answer questions about the vehicles. Events like this go a long way towards raising awareness in Concord and the surrounding area of how important Abbot & Downing was to the economy and how far they spread Concord's fame across the globe. It went all the way from Concord to places as far away as South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific in America.

Tom had parked his trucks outside so that all the vehicles could be on display inside in case of rain. We did move our two coaches outside for the event which acted as attention getters for the arriving public. Eventually, it did start to rain and we moved everything back inside. Having the big garage area was a real blessing as it allowed the event to go on in spite of the weather!



*Society Members at the Open House*

*L to R in the back row: Bruce Donovan, Peter James, Ken Wheeling, Pat Maimone, Merwyn Bagan, Cindy Prescott, Tom Prescott, Dottie Brown, Brian Erickson, Margaret Marshall, Sut Marshall, Marily Wilson, Carol Bagan*

*Front Row: Cynthia Maimone, Nancy Donovan, Robin Briscoe, Ginny Green*

*Vehicles on Display inside the Prescott Oil Garage*

*Front to rear: The three spring utility wagon, the Roof Seat Break, The "Dartmouth" hotel coach #VII, and the "mail coach" #XIV*





# The Hopkinton Fair

Our biggest public event of the year is the Hopkinton State Fair held on Labor Day Weekend. A big thank you to those who helped getting the barn ready for visitors and who worked during the fair. Our two extra displays, one in front of the barn and one in the Grange Building, both won awards. This year we had a big addition to our collection, the six new Abbot-downing vehicles purchased last year. This meant that there had to be some serious reorganizing of the barn/museum to fit everything in. Several of the vehicles that were on the ground level were hoisted up to the loft area to make more space. The weather cooperated and each day, we were able to put the two coaches and the “Dynamite Wagon” out in front of the barn. This made room in the main aisle and drew a lot of visitors to our display. We also had the little coach that Dave Hubbard built outside for children’s photographs. This was very popular.

Inside we had the workroom displays with Maria Putnam’s area, the carpenter shop, and the blacksmith shop. The gift shop had a nice collection of books related to coaches, horse drawn vehicles and the West. There also were postcards, the beautiful Hancock Glass sun catchers, and some very nice pen and ink prints in three sizes. Any of these would make nice Christmas gifts. This is one of our main sources of income and we did really well with sales this year.



*The display in front of the barn created by Marsha Evans and Esther Crowley*

*The “Grange” exhibit created by Dottie Brown and Sheila Knight*





## More Fair Pictures



*Visitors in the barn  
checking out the vehicles*

*Another view of the barn  
down the center aisle*



*Verna James selling raffle tickets for the gift  
basket donated by Robin Briscoe. The  
Crawford House Mountain Wagon and the  
Roof Seat Break in the background*



*Visitors checking out the "Dartmouth  
Coach". Note the "Stagecoach Ladder"  
propped up on the coach. This was how  
passengers climbed into the rear seat  
and onto the top of the coach.*





## A New Sleigh Added to the Collection

Back in the spring we were contacted by Debra Thum about a sleigh that she was interested in possibly donating to the Society. Merwyn Bagan and Brian Erickson met with her to check it out. It turned out not to be Abbot-Downing, but rather a “milk sleigh” built by “Huntley & McDonald” another horse drawn vehicle manufacturer in Concord. Having vehicles by other Concord manufacturers helps to show that Concord was a major center for this industry. After Ken Wheeling did an appraisal for the donor, Merwyn and Brian picked it up and transported it to the barn where it will be displayed. The intent is to show it as it was received - minus the cobwebs. The sleigh is versatile as the seats are removable to permit carrying more cargo, or with two seats in place, more passengers.



*The Huntley and McDonald “Milk Sleigh” made in Concord. So called as they were used to carry milk cans to the train depot in winter.*



*Ken Wheeling going over some documents with the Thums, donors of the “Milk Sleigh”.*



*The maker’s tag. It reads “Huntley & McDonald, Concord, N.H.”*

## More Models for Our Display

In September we (Peter & Verna James) received a surprise package in the mail. It was a large box that came from an address in Pennsylvania. We did not remember ordering anything and so made a guess that it might have something to do with our member, Randy Lee, who lives in San Francisco. Upon opening the box, we found a super high quality stage coach model, done on the scale of 1 inch to the foot. The detail is really great and it will make a wonderful addition to our collection of coach models, many of which were donated by Randy in the past. A couple of days later another box came and the next day another. One box contained a large model surrey with the fringe on top and a horse drawn New York City Omnibus was in the other. The omnibus model is based on a 1983 1 cent US postage stamp.

A big thank you to Randy!!

*The Stagecoach model built by Julio Simon from Binghamton, NY. A generous gift from Randy Lee of San Francisco. It is about 18 inches long.*



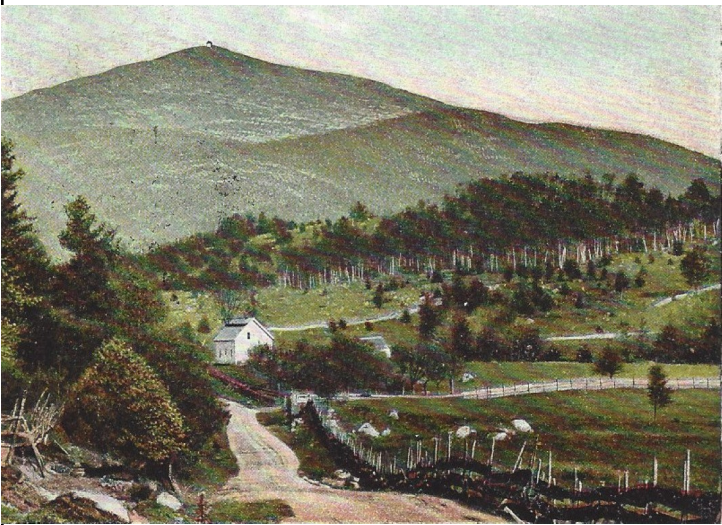
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*The Madison Ave. Omnibus and the US 1cent Postage stamp that was the inspiration for the model, another donation from Randy Lee*



## Coach XIV Door Paintings

While doing some research for something else, I got to wondering about the door paintings on the yellow coach, number XIV, that was a donation by the late Jean Fernandez from Conway, New Hampshire. The paintings on coach XIV were done by Barbara Rowse at the time that Barbara and her husband Ed restored the coach in the 1980s. I had always suspected that the riparian scene was of the Saco river which flows through Conway and that the mountain scene might be Mt. Monadnock. There was some question on the Mt. Monadnock possibility because that mountain is “bald” as a result of a forest fire two centuries ago. An internet search came up with the source of the mountain scene. It is taken from a vintage postcard from around 1900 depicting Mt Kearsage North which is in the North Conway area. The door painting is an exact reproduction of the card. That left the location of the Saco River scene to be sleuthed out. Scenes like this were very popular with “The White Mountain Artists”. The original was painted by Benjamin Champney in 1874 and is presently in the collection of the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord.



*The postcard above and  
the door painting on the right*



*The door painting on the left and the original  
Benjamin Champney painting above*

## **Granite Bank Group Visit**

On October 4th we opened the barn for a special event. John Pratt from the Granite Bank had attended the open house at Tom Prescott's in June and inquired about having some coaches on display for a bank event in October. The event was a get together for members of the bank's Community Advisory Committee. This committee is made up of people from the various communities in which the bank has branches. There were about forty from the bank attending. Eight members from our Society turned out to welcome the group. Again, the weather cooperated and we were able to clear the center aisle and make room for refreshment tables and seating for a presentation by Peter James, "Abbot & Downing and the Concord Coach". Mr. Pratt served as host for the bank group and in his remarks made several comments supporting our efforts to get a new museum in Concord. This was very encouraging. Several of the attendees showed a lot of interest and hopefully will join the Society and become active. This kind of support is very important as we move forward. Hopefully we can do more of this type of event in the future.

## **More Donations**

Long time life members, Ed and Marge Cowles, have donated several items to the Society to add to our Abbot & Downing artifacts. Included were a collection of miniature horse drawn vehicles, some posters advertising Society events in the past, and a stenciled wooden Concord Coach information sign with Edwin Burgum's (John Burgum's son) name stenciled on the back. All of these items will be great additions to our new museum.

## **Christmas Get Together**

The Christmas get together this year will be held at Tad's Place on Sunday, December 4th, beginning at 1:00 PM. Tad's Place is the community center for Heritage Heights and is located at 149 East Side Drive in Concord. It is located just off Heritage Heights Road, the main entrance to the campus. Turn onto Heritage Heights Road and take the very first right into the parking lot.

We will begin with a pot luck meal and followed by a very short business meeting and discussion of the year's activities. There will plenty of time to fellowship and enjoy the afternoon together.

## **Newsletter Input & Facebook**

If you have any ideas for articles for the newsletter or want to write an article, it would be most welcome. Also, we really need someone to become the Facebook page editor.

*Peter James*

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