

THE FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM



Newsletter

JANUARY 2019

A Collaborative Issue with the New Boston Historical Society

Whenever the museum is open to visitors we always seem to get some guests who have an affiliation with the historic group in one of our neighboring towns. We also enjoy visiting their historic collections and noting similarities and differences. During a recent visit to the New Boston Historical Society a discussion arose comparing some of the artifacts we have in common. So that is the focus of this newsletter. 2018 was their 50th anniversary while it was our 4th (we've got some work to do). While they are a bit envious of our timber frame building, I was flat out jealous that their building has heat. So what do we have in our collection at the Fracestown Heritage Museum that is similar to that at the New Boston Historical Society collection at the Wason Memorial Building (the town's old library across from the Dodge Store)? This newsletter will present a side by side comparison of a few exhibits we have in common.

Most of the old New England towns have some history of a significant fire. All have fire departments that have evolved over the years as has the apparatus. The Fracestown collection includes our Hunneman Hand Tub (our first fire truck).



The Hunneman #383 hand tub has served two fire departments over the centuries. It was originally purchased new in 1850 by the Ellsworth, Maine Fire Department. As Ellsworth grew into a city their needs increased and they purchased a larger pumper, trading in the #383. The #383 was sent back to Boston to be refurbished by the manufacturer who then sold it to Fracestown for \$450 plus \$2.45 shipping from Boston to Fracestown. It served Fracestown as the primary piece of fire apparatus for decades before being retired and once again restored to its current condition. It is on display complete with its accompanying hose wagon.

New Boston's "Constitution No. 2" or Hunneman #427 was built 14 months after the "Mount Crochet" and was New Boston's only fire engine from 1872 to 1924. In 1887 the entirety of downtown New Boston burned to the ground, including the Town Hall, two churches, the village school, and even the fire house. The hand tub was useless once its hose was pierced by burning embers



The beautifully restored Fracestown hand tub shows us what a fire engine looked like the day it left the Hunneman factory in 1850. The New Boston hand tub, on the other hand, represents a machine of the same vintage set up for 20th-century firemen's musters. Parts broken in competition have been welded and braced with an eye towards strength rather than beauty, and modern pressure gauges are mounted on the copper air chamber. New Boston's muscular fire fighters won several prizes in the 1960s and 70s.

Early settlers still needed to clean their clothes. New Boston was no exception and they have the washing machine to prove it. The Model 90 Aluminum Tub Electric.



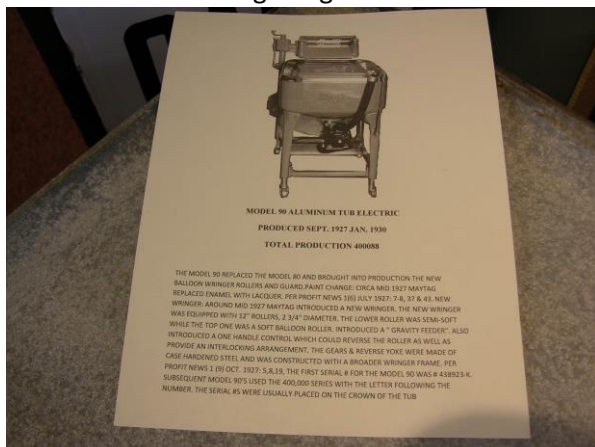
MAYTAG - Readers new washing machine may have 11 electronically-programmable wash cycles, but can it grind meat? Can it make butter? This 1927 Maytag Model 90 was powered by a General Electric motor, unless you had no electricity, in which case you ordered a Model 92, powered by a kick-start gasoline engine.

If you lift off the wringer mechanism, you can install an optional grinder attachment, good for meat, nuts, or fruit. Or you can replace the agitator in the 21-gallon cast-aluminum tub with an aluminum churn, to make butter or whipped cream.

Over half a million Model 90 and Model 92 Maytag washers were sold from 1927-1930.

There is a link at:

www.newbostonhistoricalsociety.com/washer.html to a video showing the gas motor in action.

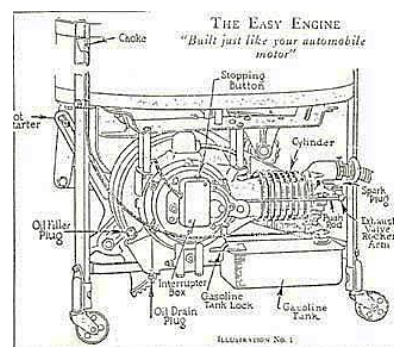


Franeestown too felt the need for clean clothes. The answer was the automatic washer manufactured by the Easy Washer Company in Syracuse, NY.



This Model "M" washer was one of the first electric washing machines there ever was – contrast this with the early wash board and wash bats taken with the soiled clothes down to the river to wash. The Easy features an all copper wash tub, steel frame, cast aluminum and brass parts and a Westinghouse electric motor. Also an open flame gas heater beneath. Lessened was the drudgery but there was still the opportunity to maim oneself by catching a finger or hand in the now mechanically rotating wringers, paddles, electric motor and belts. The hazard created by the open flame heating the water under the machine was surpassed only by the open electric motor also under the machine which, when gotten wet, created a severe electric shock hazard for the user.

Both the Franeestown and New Boston machines have electric motors and both had provisions to be used with a small gasoline motor – see unit on floor directly next to the New Boston washer photo and diagram of Easy Washer below.



Meet the Francestown eagle.



This is the original eagle from the top of the Town Hall tower. It was replaced many years ago with the fiberglass replica that currently graces the Town Hall tower. As the story goes, marksmen were in the habit of taking occasional shots at the bird which led to the wings breaking off. While the bird was repaired it was felt that it was no longer stable enough to withstand the weather.

A visitor once told us that an eagle looking over the left wing is a symbol of being at war, while an eagle looking over the right wing is a symbol of being at peace. Since both the original Town Hall eagle in the museum and the replica on the Town Hall are looking over the left wing, the visitor felt we must surely be at war with somebody.

Aside from their rather commanding appearances, both the Francestown eagle and the New Boston eagle share the common tragedy of having been brought down by a marksman's bullet.

Meet the New Boston eagle.

In October of 1961, Roland St. Onge was hunting rabbits along Bog Road between Goffstown and New Boston when a golden eagle swooped down and carried off his beagle pup in its talons. Roland took aim and managed to shoot the bird without hitting the dog. When he determined that he'd shot a rare golden eagle, after reference to his nature book, Roland called the local conservation officer, who took the bird but filed no charges, as Roland was protecting his property. The beagle recovered from its injuries, but was of no use as a hunting dog subsequent to this incident.



The eagle has a 6 ½ foot wingspan, measures 32 inches from head to tip of tail, and weighed about 12 pounds when alive. The "eagle with the beagle" is one of the museum exhibits that is most popular with schoolchildren, along with the bell on the fire engine.

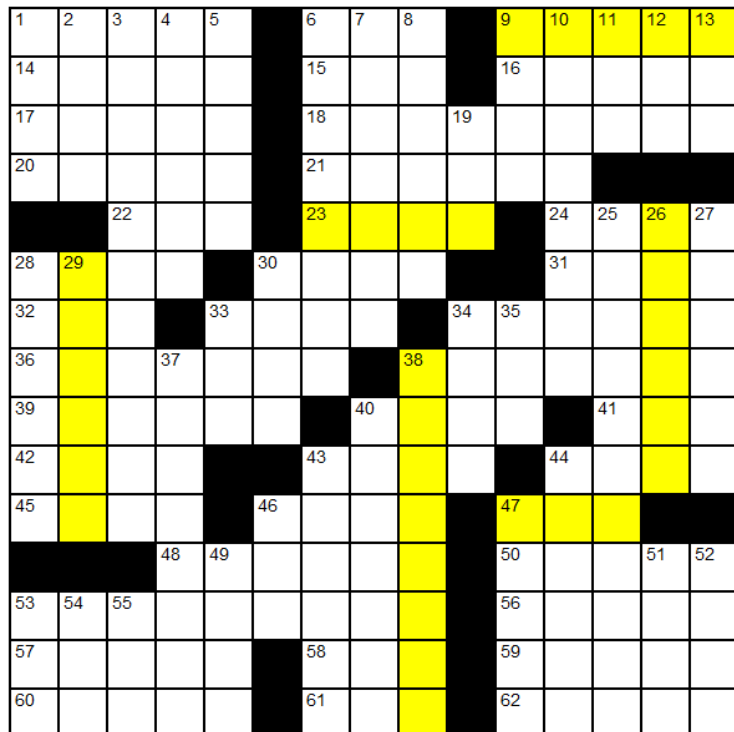
While the Francestown and New Boston collections have some similar exhibits they all have their own story. Both the FHM and the NBHS are dedicated to acquiring, preserving and making available to the public exhibits from our past. We are both volunteer organizations that serve as repositories for exhibits and information which we make available to the public.



Our thanks to the folks at the New Boston Historical Society for their assistance in the preparation of this joint newsletter. We hope it is enjoyed by the residents of both towns. Don't forget – visit our museums and connect with your heritage.

JANUARY THEME CROSSWORD

The January theme crossword contains words that relate to both the NBHS and FHM.



Theme words in yellow grid squares

Across

1. Reins in
6. Handle clumsily
9. American symbol
14. Wombs
15. Trick taker, often
16. At full speed
17. Heathen
18. Refits into place
20. Hole bung in top of a cask
21. A debator
22. Shorten, in a way
23. Puzzle theme entity - abbrv.
24. Doctrines
28. Has a mortgage
30. "Go ahead!"
31. Masterstroke
32. Amscrayed
33. Flock member
34. Contract provision
36. Blow away

38. One who lifts up
39. Battlefield shout
40. Strike against
41. Be busy
42. Believed
43. Soave, e.g.
44. Machine parts
45. European language
46. Mountain pool
47. Puzzle theme entity - abbr.
48. An equipment mover
50. Run out, as a subscription
53. Fanciful hope
56. Bar, at the bar
57. Dig, so to speak
58. Biochemistry abbr.
59. Agreeing (with)
60. Fertile soil
61. Immoral act, e.g.
62. Taste, e.g.

Down

1. Coffeehouse orders
2. Its motto is "Industry"
3. Military dress
4. Mercenaries
5. Strength
6. Distrusting of others
7. Biting
8. Scale reading
9. "___ on Down the Road"
10. New World
11. Long-jawed fish
12. On, as a lamp
13. "Star Trek" rank: Abbr.
19. Fraternity letters
25. English industrial city
26. Where to find old artifacts
27. Male sex cells
28. Substitute plant for spinach
29. Labor saver
30. Hamlet, e.g.
33. Big galoot
34. Dog command
35. Back talk
37. Those who put things in sequence
38. Maker of fire apparatus
40. Indian dish containing rice
43. Fishing gear
44. Modest
46. Toni Morrison's "___ Baby"
47. Boxer's bane
49. Horace volume
51. Princes, e.g.
52. Blunted blade
53. Amigo
54. Altar avowal



* Photo in masthead is Francetown soapstone being hauled through New Boston