

THE FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM



Newsletter

JULY 2021

THE REAWAKENING

REAWAKENING

In March of 2020, museums everywhere along with most other public venues closed their doors to visitors due to the pandemic. This was especially frustrating to us as the previous winter we had completed the build-out of the lower level of the Museum and were looking forward to showing off our new spaces to everyone.

On the positive side it gave us more time to try different configurations and set up the space so as to make the best use of the area and give visitors a clear view of the exhibits. So over this past year we got to work transforming the new space from this:



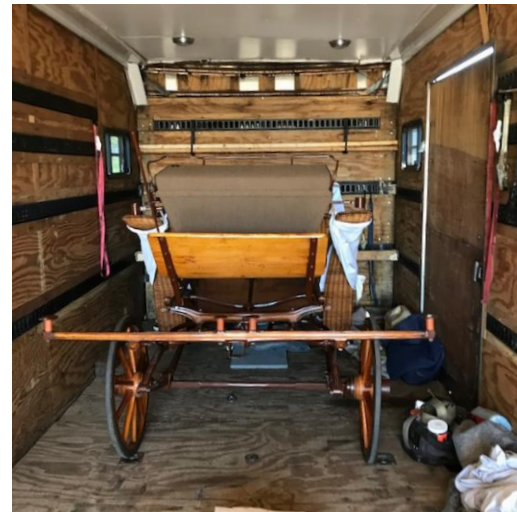
To this:



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A HOMECOMING . . .

Well it has been an interesting experience getting the vis-à-vis back to Francestown. Shown here being loaded into the transport.



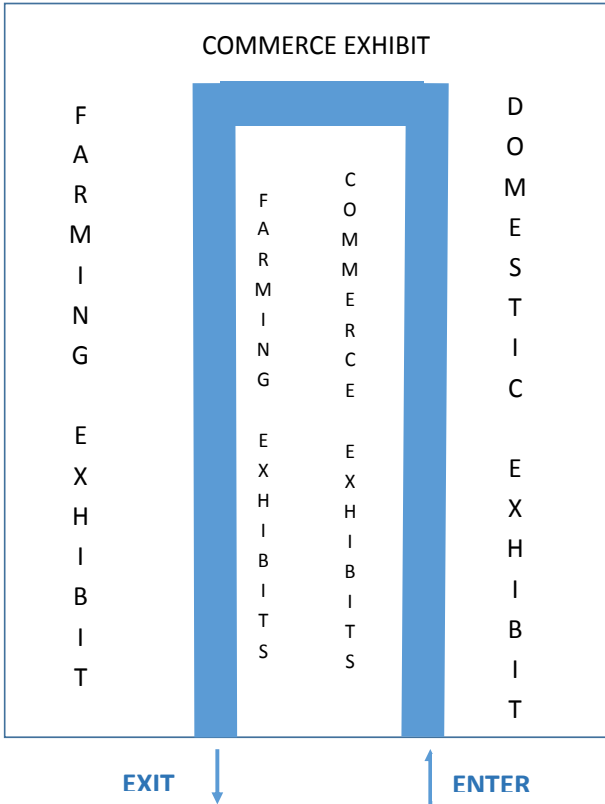
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COMMUNITY MARKET

The Francestown Community Market opened earlier this year and the Town Horse Sheds remain the venue for the market which is open from 4:00 – 7:00 PM on Fridays. As the Heritage Museum is virtually next door we have partnered with the Market and will be open with our hours coinciding with those of the market. Please plan to come down to the Common on Fridays and take advantage of the many fine products in the market all made and/or grown locally. You will not only be supporting the local economy but will also have the opportunity to visit the museum and immerse yourself in the past. A time when life itself depended on the local community.

REAWAKENING –

In accordance with COVID pandemic suggestions the lower level is set up in a horseshoe pattern. The exhibits are along both sides and in the center of this level. This was done in order to facilitate the flow of visitors in one direction only and to allow for social distancing.



To digress, it seems like social distancing is an oxymoron. If social connotes gathering and mingling, how does one mingle at a distance?

However, it worked out that this appears to be a good arrangement, giving folks a chance to stop and focus on a particular object without holding up others. We are still working out a few kinks so stop by and give us any suggestions you might have.

Once you enter this area you will be walking among exhibits that relate to domestic life: everything from making clothing to washing it, from preparing food to cooking it and from rising in the morning and putting feet down on a braided rug to going to bed at night, in a rope bed of course.

HOMECOMING –

The carriage has been in Charleston, SC where it has been owned and cherished for many decades by Jane Evans Hamilton. Jane had it fully restored a number of years ago and has kept it in a climate controlled storage area ever since. Jane grew up in Francetown where her parents owned Tannery Farm (the house on the corner of Greenfield and King Hill Roads). So named because of the tannery located across the street behind what is now the museum. No doubt our readers recall with nostalgia our Heritage Musesum Newsletter of March 2021 where we discussed Tanneries in great detail. But I digress -

In the course of arranging for us to get this Hob & Nob farm vis-à-vis back to Francetown, an e-mail was received from a reader asking “why is it called a vis-a-vis”?

Why indeed - the name comes from the design of the carriage. As you can see in these photos, the passengers sit in two seats behind the driver’s seat facing each other. Since vis-à-vis



is French for face-to-face, hence the name for this type of carriage.





THE JULY CROSSWORD



This month our theme crossword will celebrate the Fourth of July.

The theme words come from this month's newsletter. The blocks on the grid for the theme words are in yellow. This is a French grid crossword (we've done these before so you should be an old hand at them by now). There are no numbers in the cubes but rather along the margins. Therefore any one line or column can have multiple words in it. For example line 1 has 6 adjoining open spaces and also has another 6 adjoining open spaces. This line has two words and in looking at the clues you see there are 2 clues for 1 across. Line 2 has no open adjoining spaces so there are no words going across in line 2. Line 3 has 7 adjoining open spaces and also has another 7 adjoining open spaces so this line also has two words. The same procedure would be used for the Down words. For example, Column I has no adjoining open spaces and so there are no words going down in Line I. All clues for theme words are in capital letters. The solution is on page six.

Across

1. Repeat aloud
Spice made from a seed
3. Fit
Arched roofs
5. Not finished
WITH 14A - causes oohs!
7. "h" written as a word
A softdrink
9. Nervous system disorder
Andean animal
11. OLD GLORY
Indication of rejection
13. 4th OF JULY
Island off Portugal
15. Approval
Against

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
1		R	E	C	I	T	E		N	U	T	M	E	G	
2		I		O		R			S		A		U		
3	A	P	R	O	P	O	S		V	A	U	L	T	E	D
4		E		K		O		A		G		E		R	
5	I	N	C	O	M	P	L	E	T	E		F	I	R	E
6				U		S		S				I		I	
7		A	I	T	C	H		C	O	C	A	C	O	L	A
8		P				I		H		E				L	
9	E	P	I	L	E	P	S	Y		L	L	A	M	A	
10		A		O				L		E		D			
11	F	L	A	G		T	H	U	M	B	S	D	O	W	N
12		O		G		R		S		R		R		O	
13	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y		M	A	D	E	I	R	A
14		S		A		I			T		S			K	
15	A	S	S	E	N	T		V	E	R	S	U	S		

Down

- II. Turn red or yellow, say
A dark spotted horse
- IV. COOK & EAT OUTDOORS
Open side extensions on house
- VI. Ship transporting GI's
Runs on tracks
- VIII. Wrote the Oresteia
- X. Grammar topic
ENJOY A HAPPY DAY
- XII. Hurtful
Deal with
- XIV. Revolutionary fighter
WITH 5A - causes oohs!

REAWAKENING –

When viewing the domestic collection exhibits; it is easy to be drawn to the larger items such as the 5' weaving loom, full size chest freezer (that utilizes ice as a coolant) and the baby cradle, etc. So let's look at a smaller item in this collection. Do you enjoy your morning coffee? Oh, you're in a hurry so you'll just teaspoon some instant into some hot water and there you go. No, no, not in the 1800's. First you will go out and get some firewood that you spent a good part of the previous day chopping and then get a fire going in the stove. Then it is off to the well to fetch some water and put it on to boil. While that is happening you can grind your coffee beans in a your hand coffee grinder:



This grinder in the Heritage Museum is a Peugeot and was patterned after the Wilson grinder patented on March 6, 1818. The grinder is wall mounted at a height that permits the small metal cup to be placed below it to catch the ground bean. So with all that done you can now brew your coffee. Hope you were not in too great a hurry.

As you move through the lower level you will next come to the exhibits in the commerce section. As with the domestic collection it is easy to be drawn to the larger items such as a shaving horse, barrel cart or two man saw, etc. So, as with the domestic collection let's look at a smaller item in this commerce collection.

The old saying that good fences make good neighbors was as true back in colonial times as it is today.

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HOMECOMING –

We did not want the carriage to be homesick so we arranged for another item to go on display with it. You may remember our sending out this photo:



If you look closely you will see that the driver is wearing full livery (formal wear with a top hat). The bride in this photo is the sister of the lady who sold us the carriage and who not only took the carriage to South Carolina but also the driver's top hat.

This is not just any top hat – but a beaver hat. No doubt PETA will be aghast but what was done was done. So we also arranged to get the hat along with the carriage. Both will be on display together along with the wedding photo.



This is a Collins & Fairbanks top hat from Boston having been made by A. J. White in Paris.

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REAWAKENING –

The first settlers had to make do with what they had which was in large part stones. Since they had to clear the land of stones to sow their crops they used the stones to make the walls we still see. These stone walls were effective as a cow will seldom try to go over a stone wall.

Effective or not, they required a lot of effort and when wire became available in the colonies, wire fences soon followed. If you have ever tried to tie a piece of string between two objects so that it was tight and straight, you can imagine how difficult it would be to do that with wire between two fence posts. No farm was complete without one of these –



A wire stretching tool and of course we have one in the Heritage Museum where you can marvel at its simplicity.

The wire stretcher is an essential tool when installing or maintaining a straight wire, barbed wire or woven wire fence. The wire end is placed in the grip on the left ring. The right ring is fastened to some type of pulling device (come-along, pulley or even an animal) and drawn tight before fastening the now taut wire to the fence post.

Your tour of the new lower level of the museum is not over yet for as you complete your circuit around the floor you will come to the agriculture collection and exhibits.

Like the two preceding sections, in the agriculture section it is hard not to be first drawn to the larger items such as a horse drawn hay wagon, a fanning mill, etc. As with the other sections let's take a look at one of the smaller items that you might otherwise miss.

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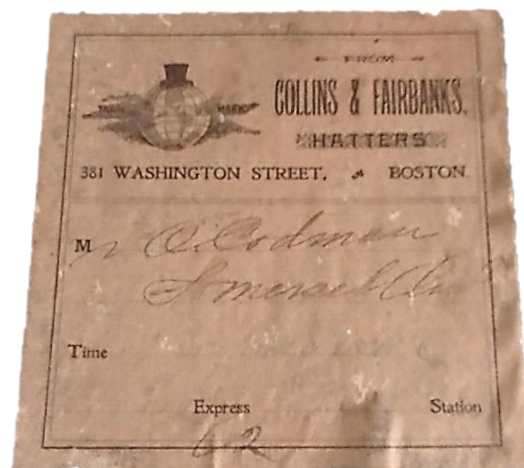
HOMECOMING –

The hat came complete with:

The hat lining with makers mark –



The bill of sale –



And in the hat box -



REAWAKENING –

So how about the lethal looking hetchel?



The hetchel (a/k/a hackle) is a board with a bed of nails used to comb the flax fibers after scutching*. The hetchels were fastened to a surface in a series from coarse to fine. A bundle of flax fiber was flipped over the teeth and pulled through. Doing so separated the fibers from the flax plant in order to spin it into linen thread.

*Hand scutching of flax is done with a wooden scutching knife to whack and scrape at the flax to remove the woody bits. The end products of scutching flax are the long finer flax fibers called **line**, short coarser fibers called **tow**, and waste woody matter called **shives**. This photo shows several wooden scutching knives:



The next photo is showing the rough looking fibers just after it is scutched. It is about to have its initial pass over/through the hetchel.



After several passes over the hetchel the fiber now resembles ribbon like strands.



Sadly the Heritage Museum does not have a scutching knife for visitors to view. To our readers living in old houses or on old farms, check those attics and barns and see if you have one of these knives that you would be willing to donate.

On that note, the introductory circuit of our new lower level of exhibits is complete.

