

THE FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Newsletter

Vol. 8, No. 10



October 2022

WEASEL POP

THE UNCOMMON, COMMON BICYCLE

Now most have memories of their first real “grown up” bicycle – on two wheels, no training wheels, etc. No doubt there are also memories of the skinned knees and elbows incurred while learning to ride it.

But that shiny new Schwinn, et al, had some earlier iterations. Take the Crawford Ladies Bicycle.



Looks common enough, but let’s look a little more closely. While your shiny Schwinn and the bikes of your friends no doubt had the chain from the pedals to the rear wheel on the right side of the bike. Not the Crawford which was left side driven.



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SPINNER’S WEASEL

So the sheep have been shorn and you have spent countless hours spinning your wool (bear with me fellas this is probably not about you).



You now need to decide what to do with those countless balls of yarn, and soon, as your cat has some ideas of its own.



Since you have wound your wool into these balls it would be nice to know how much you have.

A common measure of wool for knitting is the skein. While there are variations, a skein is generally considered to be 80 yards. It would be tedious, to say the least, to try and measure out 80 yards of wool from one of these balls and wind it into a skein.

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OCTOBER THEME CROSSWORD

This a FRENCH GRID puzzle. Rather than tiny little numbers inside individual squares like in the American puzzle you just have neat column and row numbers. There are no numbers in the cubes but rather along the margins. Therefore any one line or column can have multiple words in it.

All clues for theme words are in capital letters. The **yellow** blocks contain the theme words and all come from the text of this newsletter.

Happy Halloween and Enjoy!

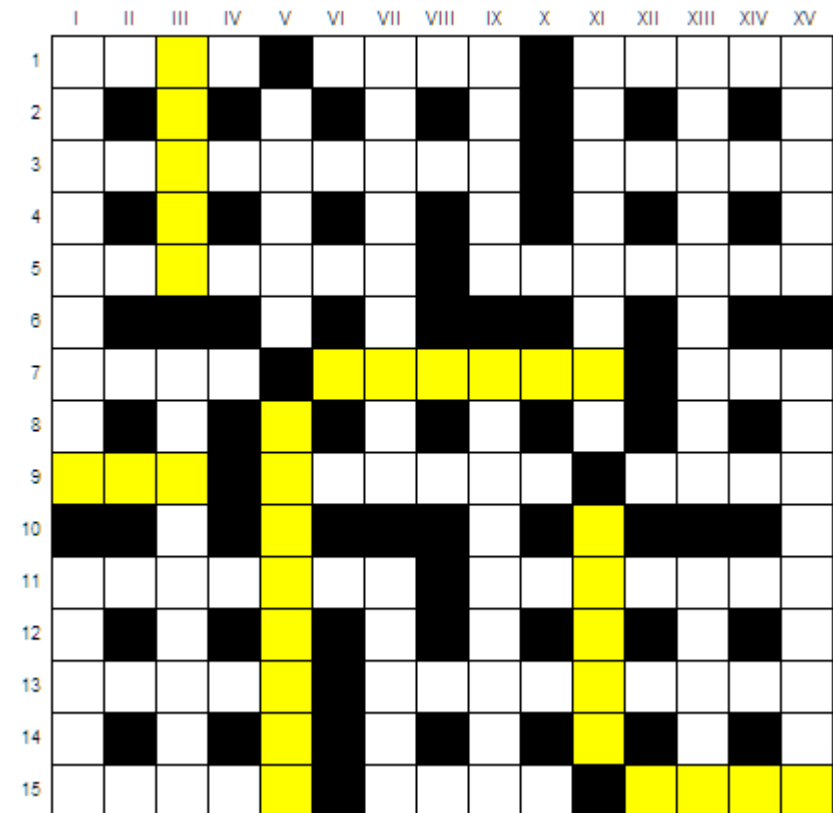
Remember that on October 16th the Museum will be open for photos of your children in our horse drawn vehicles – see flyer insert.

ACROSS

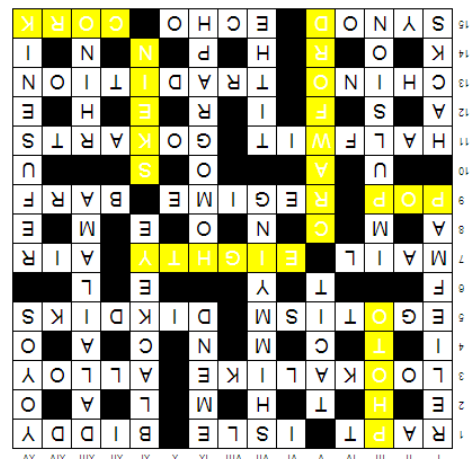
1. Absorbed
Bermuda e.g.
Old woman
3. Clone
Two combined metals 5.
Self-importance
Dwarf antelopes
7. USPS
8*10 =?
Balloon filler
9. **NOTIFYING SOUND**
Authoritarian gov.
Vomit
11. Nincompoop
Small vehicle
13. Durable fabric
Long established custom
15. Church assembly
Bounce back in a way
OLD BICYCLE HAND
GRIP

DOWN

- I. Map with contour lines
Cabbies
- III. **FHM OPPORTUNITY**
Impetus
- V. Implied
1896 BICYCLE
- VII. Shaking the body
Church donation



- IX. Correct text
Bow or bow
- XI. Stigma
LOOSELY COILED YARN
- XIII. Buddhist spiritual head
Safari sight
- XV. Move up and down
Soviet dissenter



CONTINUED FROM PAGE # 1

POP GOES THE WEASEL - CON'T

In short, what you need is a device that will wind 80 yards of wool into loops of yarn that could be made into a skein.

History suggests that the early German Lutherans developed the clock wheel for that purpose.



A simple device that by turning the wheel 40 times, wound approximately 80 yards of yarn into loops with which to form a skein.

Now picture the poor colonist sitting in front of this wheel for hours and hours turning it round and round. After a while, what are the chances this user will remember if it was revolution 30 or revolution 40, they just did? Further improvements were called for. How about a dial that will tell you how many revolutions had been made? Something that not only provided a visual clue as to how many revolutions you have made but a warning sound when you reach the 40th revolution.

Now remember that this was the 1700's and there were hardly any machine shops in the colonies and there was a limit as to what the local blacksmith was capable of making – a metal clock type counter mechanism not being among them. However, we had lots of trees and lots of people who could whittle. Surely such a device could be devised. Devise one they did. With this device, as you were turning the wheel to measure, you were also turning a small

wooden worm gear.



As the gear turned a small wooden peg would come against a wooden reed causing it to bend and snap back into place creating a loud “pop”. This would alert the spinner that they had reached the 40th revolution and the 80 yards of yarn were complete.

It is believed the “pop” sound reminded folks of the nursery rhyme “Pop Goes the Weasel”:

*All around the mulberry bush,
The monkey chased the weasel.
The monkey fell down and oh what a sound,
Pop! Goes the weasel.*

Giving rise to the name “The Weasel Spinner”.

Now you have all read these Newsletters long enough to know that I would not be devoting this much time and space to something that you could not witness for yourself at the Francetown Heritage Museum. Come see and hear the weasel going pop at the museum. Ω

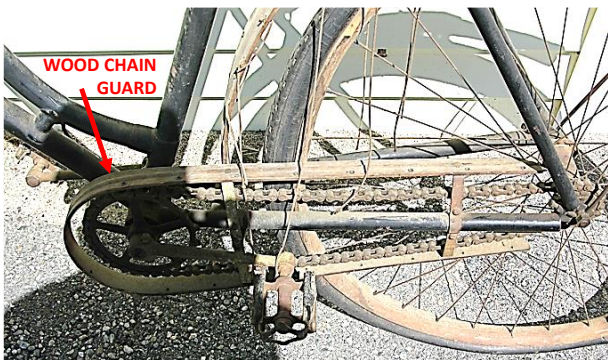


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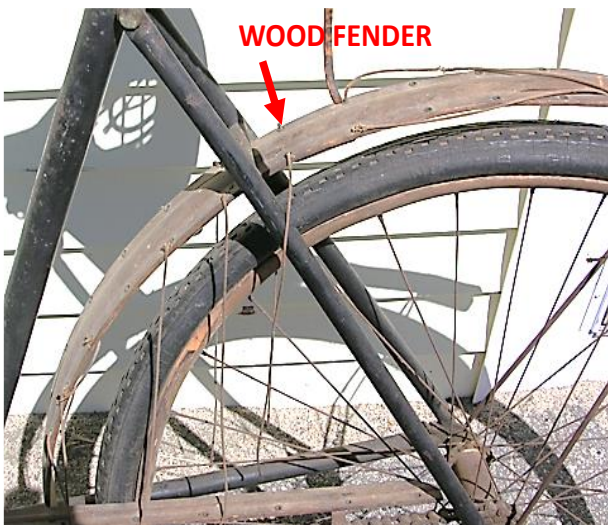
THE UNCOMMON, COMMON BICYCLE . . .

Your Schwinn kept your pant legs from being caught in the teeth of the pedal drive wheel by a metal chain guard. The occasional fall might result in the metal guard getting a little bent but you could just bend it back out of the way.

Not so the Crawford – as you can see, the chain guard on the Crawford was made of wood. Equally protective of your pant leg but not so good at withstanding mishandling. Metal bends – wood breaks.



Now boys being boys, they may remember taking the rear fender off their bike because that was “really cool”. Not so cool was the wet streak up the back of their shirt from the spray when riding in the rain or through a puddle. But the fender was metal and easy to take off, easy to put back on and pretty rugged. Not so the Crawford – that fender was also made of wood.



To stop your Schwinn you had only to push backward on the pedals. But the Crawford was the forerunner of what we would refer to today as the “English” style bike. A single steel pad was positioned directly over the front wheel. To stop you squeeze the hand lever forcing this steel pad against the tire.



How effective this was when the rubber tire was wet would seem questionable.

But if all this caused the rider to have sweaty palms, Crawford still had you covered with their cork grips on the handlebars.



However, in 1896 when the Ladies Crawford Bicycle was introduced, it was the Cadillac of the two-wheel bicycles. But the tale does not end there. The Crawford Bros. sold the bicycle company in 1902 and started manufacturing the Crawford Automobile. Ω



**NOT TO BE MISSED
PHOTO
OPPORTUNITY**



The Francestown Library Children's Program and The Francestown Heritage Museum are once again teaming up to provide our youth, and in this case their parents also, with a special chance to create a family photo that will be truly unique. Dress them up in a Halloween costume or maybe that special Christmas card photo of your child(ren) with Santa Claus in one of our historic horse drawn vehicles.



**YOUR CHILD HERE
OR HERE**



These and other horse (and one horsepower) drawn vehicles on display in the museum will provide the background for a unique family photo. Due to the age of the vehicles we have to limit the size of the child to ~40 pounds or less. Larger youths can be posed next to the vehicles.



NOTE: There are two horse drawn hearses for those with an eye towards Halloween.

So bring your favorite camera, and child(ren) to the Heritage Museum October 16th between 4 and 6 PM (concurrent with the Farmers Market).