

# THE FRANCETOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Newsletter

JUNE 2022

LIVE FREE OR DIE



## “LIVE FREE OR DIE” . . .

New Hampshire’s iconic State Motto is emblazoned on our license plates and countless other media materials.

It officially became the State Motto in 1945. But how many know its origin and better yet, what is the rest of that sentence from which the motto is taken?

Local readers have no doubt heard of General John Stark, the Revolutionary War hero whose victories at the Battle of Bennington (no, not our Bennington but rather Bennington, VT) and the Battle of Saratoga were considered turning points of the Revolutionary War. Well after retirement in 1809 he wrote a letter to a group of veterans planning an anniversary celebration of the victory at the Battle of Bennington. However, when the date of the celebration arrived, General Stark’s age and medical issues made it impossible for him to attend. So he wrote a letter which was to be read to the attendees. The letter included a line that read:

“Live free or die, death is not the greatest of evils.”

So now you know the origin and the rest of the sentence.

Equally well known in this area is the wife of John Stark, Molly. A revolutionary war heroine - the Molly Stark Trail is named for her. She was also a nurse for John’s troops.

A cannon captured by John Stark in the Battle of Bennington also bears her name and can be seen these days at the New Boston Historical Society.



John was apparently a loquacious fellow for in addition to the Live Free or Die . . . . . statement, he rallied his troops at the Battle of Bennington with the battle cry, “There are your enemies, the Redcoats and the Tories. They are ours, or this night Molly Stark sleeps a widow.”

The battle was won, John and his troops returned to NH and he to his wife via what he named the Molly Stark Trail. Ω

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## LICENSE PLATES . . . .

Now that you know the history of our State Motto , it would be appropriate to complete a short diachronic on our State license plates that display this bit of our history.



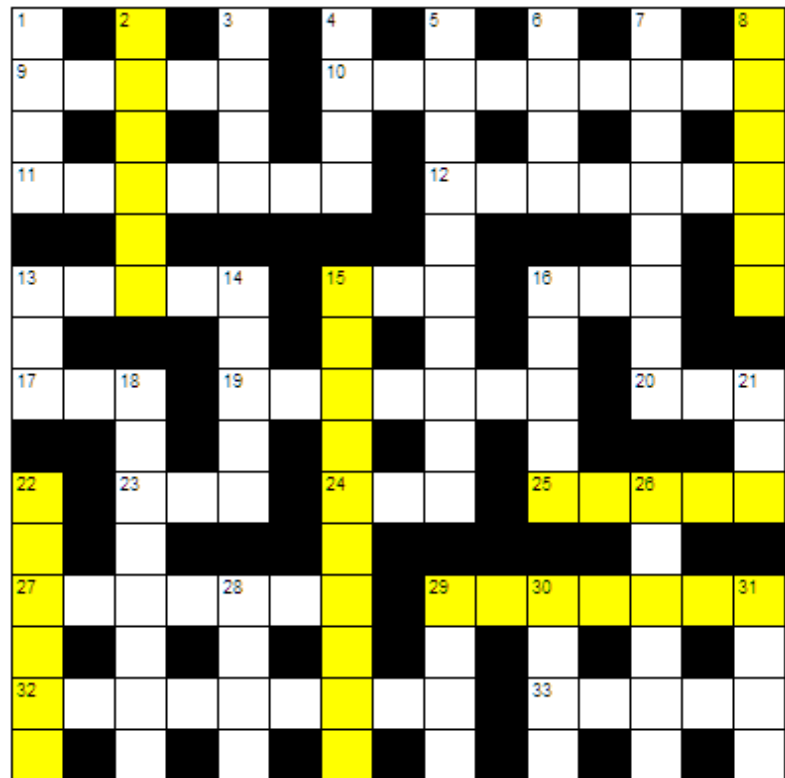
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## JUNE THEME CROSSWORD

This is a "Quick Style" crossword that's not too difficult - just right for June as we know you are all busy preparing for the Sestercentennial celebration. Yellow blocks contain the theme words, which come from the text of the newsletter. The solution appears on page 3 of this newsletter.

### Across

- 9 Type of woven fabric  
 10 Among other things  
 11 Baton wielder  
 12 Cruel  
 13 Outfit  
 15 Mouth muzzle  
 16 Juliet, to Romeo  
 17 Anita Brookner's "Hotel du \_\_\_\_"  
 19 Source of sudden wealth  
 20 \_\_\_\_ juice (milk)  
 23 A little of this, a little of that  
 24 Sting \_\_\_\_\_  
 25 BATTER'S POSITION  
 27 Inflexible  
 29 TOOL FOR SEPARATING FLAX  
 32 Woman's bed garment  
 33 Article of faith



### Down

- 1 Individual thing  
 2 MUM  
 3 Smudge  
 4 "Bye now"  
 5 Deficiency  
 6 Bow  
 7 Silver-gray metal  
 8 NEW BOSTON HAS ONE  
 13 Come together  
 14 Address abbr.  
 15 PERIOD FROM BIRTH TO ADULT  
 16 Little rascal  
 18 Military operation  
 21 " \_\_\_\_ to Billie Joe"  
 22 SINGLE CUTTER TOOL  
 26 Acropolis figure  
 28 Mercury, for one  
 29 Full house, e.g.  
 30 Little ones  
 31 Behind time

**LICENSE PLATES**

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Once the automobile became more popular and more and more were owned and driven, it became apparent that some regulation was needed. In 1905 the New Hampshire State legislature passed an automobile bill the first provision of which was “All automobiles and motorcycles needed to be registered.” Some of the provisions include:

- applicants had to register with the Secretary of State. A number of provisions were included in the bill:
- the registration fee was \$3.00 for automobiles.
- registrations from other states would be recognized (this provision was inserted to indicate we were favorable to tourists).
- motorists were required to behave respectfully around horses.

The first license plates were steel with several coatings of baked porcelain and are sought after by plate collectors. The state continued to issue these plates until 1912 but went back to porcelain in 1913 due to rust problems.

It was not long before the government bureaucrats were issuing all manner of license plates: Boats, Commercial Boats, Commercial Vehicles, Dealer Plates and Motorcycles. Yes, they had motorcycles back then. It was the invention of a fellow here in Franconstown, Sylvester Roper, who



in 1867 designed and built the velocipede which was the precursor of the motorcycle we know today. (Please refer to the July 2021 edition of the Heritage Museum Newsletter for the details and photos of this vehicle). Or better yet, come visit the museum and see the photos and story first hand (alas we do not have the velocipede itself as we were beaten to the punch by the National Museum of American History).

The City of Manchester issued its own series of plates where the letter “G” was the start of the registration number. You guessed it - these plates were for the garbage trucks that operated in the city. No other plates were issued by non-State entities.



I see that true to form this article has gotten way out of hand and the one thing I was looking to cover has not yet even been mentioned – the Non-Resident license plate.



Several of these unusual plates grace the walls of a barn here in town. These hexagonal plates had to be displayed on vehicles from July to September on any car registered in a State outside of NH, that would be staying in NH more than 10 days. An obvious way designed to ensure that the

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**LICENSE PLATES** CONTINUED FROM PAGE #3

summer tourists contributed to the road use revenue.

While most of the these plates were porcelain, one series was made of fiberboard.

All that said, please don't ask, "how did I just manage to go from a cannon named after a general's wife to garbage truck license plates". I have no idea; historic events don't have clean lines.

Oh, and while we are on license plates, don't forget to stop at the Town Office and get one of the Francestown 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary plates which can be displayed in place of your front license plate until January 1, 2023. Ω

**GENERATION NAMES . . . .**

Those folks born at a certain time are often referred to by various generational names. There are three sources of the generational names but all differ somewhat in their generation name and/or dates: A common list defines this as follows:

2000 – present: Generation Z

1981-2000: Generation Y (Millennials)

1965-1980: Generation X

1946-1964: Baby Boomers

1928-1945: The Silent Generation

1901-1927: The Greatest Generation

A reader sent us a list of the characteristics

of the Silent Generation. It is four pages in length and I was going to include part of it in each of several of the coming issues of the newsletter. However, it loses a good deal of its impact if not read all together as a whole. So the July issue of the newsletter will have the entire listing on the characteristics of the Silent Generation (a/k/a Children of the Greatest Generation). Ω

**THE WHAT'Z IT REVEALED . . . .**

Last month we presented two different tools that were used for somewhat simialr purposes. The first tool is known as a Granny's Tooth Router Plane.



GRANNY TOOTH ROUTER PLANE

Once the wheelwright, cabinet maker or cooper cut a groove, rabbit, tenon, or dado in a piece of wood, how would they smooth the bottom. Reach for their granny tooth. This plane has a single blade in the center that projects down into the groove. With the blade set just ever so slightly longer than the depth of the groove they would pull the plane toward themselves shaving off a thin bit of the groove bottom creating the smooth surface.

The second tool is known as a Chamfering Spoke Shave Plane.



CHAMFERING SPOKE SHAVE

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WHAT'Z IT . . .

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This tool has a concave cutter knife



This chamfer type spoke shave plane makes a convex cut.

While both tools serve the function of a plane in that they smooth a surface, both have different uses – one providing a smooth surface on deep set surfaces such as a groove and the other providing a smooth surface on a convex surface.

Both are handmade, probably by the craftsman who used them as neither has a makers mark. Ω



HERITAGE SCAVENGER HUNT . . .

The Heritage Museum in a cooperative effort with the Bixby Library Children's Program held our first "Seek and Find" for youths. Each participant was given a booklet depicting 27 different exhibits in the museum with a description of each and what it was used for.



If they found 12 of the 27 items they were a winner and received a prize. There was one

participant who after finding 12 items and receiving their prize, went back and found another 12, thus getting a second prize. It also seemed fair that very young participants also received a prize. The participants also got to keep their booklets.

We plan to keep a supply of this booklets on hand and anyone can stop by any time we are open to seek and find their 12 items thus becoming a winner.

The chosen exhibits vary widely from a Hetchel,



To Leather Fire Pails.



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The Francetown Heritage Museum would like to thank Nelson's Candy and Music in Wilton for the donation of the scavenger hunt prize candy.



Nelson's is located at 65 Main Street in Wilton and welcomes children to stop in and watch them making their favorite candy on site.

# FRANCESTOWN 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

