The Old Stone Wall

E-Newsletter of the NH Division of Historical Resources

Vol 6, Issue 1 2014

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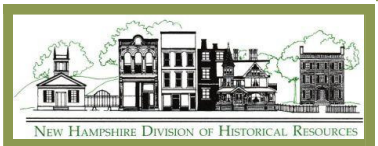

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"DHR Dig Days" are coming!

On April 30 and May 1, the Division of Historical Resources will celebrate "April is Archeology Month" and "May is Preservation Month" by turning our offices and the surrounding lot into a working historical preservation lab. Located at 19 Pillsbury Street in Concord, the building was formerly the maternity annex of the Margaret Pillsbury General Hospital and is the only building left of what was once a sprawling hospital campus.

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DHR staff members practice their sifting skills

During "**DHR Dig Days**," visitors will have the opportunity to learn about the history of both 19 Pillsbury Street and the larger hospital complex. A variety of research sources, including Sanborn insurance maps and historical photographs, will illustrate how the neighborhood evolved through time. Archaeological excavations may uncover artifacts and perhaps former hospital structures.

Neighbors, former patients and state and federal agency partners are already lined up to attend the two-day event. Look for more information and findings on the DHR web site after the event.

Preservation field school at the Jackson House

Inspecting the foundation of the Jackson House.

Photo: J. Andrews

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The DHR is a state resource agency, supported by the State of New Hampshire, by the federal Historic Preservation Fund (through a matching grant administered by the National Park Service of the US Department of the Interior), and by donated funds and services. In addition to its state functions, the DHR is also responsible for administering the federal preservation program in New Hampshire.

Graduate students examined the oldest house in New Hampshire, the Jackson House in Portsmouth, and four other Historic New England properties in a preservation field school last October, an opportunity that drew 23 students from six preservation programs to the New Hampshire-Maine seacoast. Students from Plymouth State University worked with Property Care teams and within the framework of Historic New England's preservation philosophy, which has evolved out of experience and work with historic house museums over the last century. In that time, preservation best practices have shifted as the field has evolved, but Historic New England's relatively conservative approach has left a great deal of historic fabric with which to work. As founder William Sumner Appleton once said, "What is left today can be changed tomorrow whereas what is removed today can perhaps never be put back."

Historic New England owns 36 houses in the region, but the Jackson House is worthy of special study. Built in 1664 for Richard Jackson, the timber-frame house shows evidence of a trained house-wright's craftsmanship in its mortise-and-tenon joinery. With three additions, all occurring on the outside of the original timber frame, the house shows the evolution of a single domestic building that housed generations of the same family from 1664 through the 1920s. Additionally, Appleton's early preservation decision to preserve the additions as well as the original house are prescient, demonstrating a current preservation ethic less often seen in the early years of preservation.

At the Jackson House, students were divided into groups to assess different issues affecting the building. What may have originally seemed like separate projects was an inter-related set of

issues affecting the system -- the building and its landscape -- together. The drainage issues, stemming from grading and the road, affect the foundation, frame, and siding, which may or may not affect the roof and chimney. This series of issues had the students combining detailed assessments of the existing building fabric and conditions with an overall discussion of the root causes of the problems and potential solutions.

Read more here...

Additional preservation field school opportunities in New Hampshire

New Hampshire offers many opportunities for people to take part in historic preservation efforts. This year people can participate at archaeological field schools across the state, including in Portsmouth, Keene, Berlin and Jefferson.

The **Strawbery Banke Museum** field school, June 23-July 25, 2014, will focus on locating evidence of a twentieth-century mikveh, or Jewish ritual bath, on the grounds of the Portsmouth museum. Students will learn proper archaeological techniques, process artifacts in the museum laboratory, and participate in area day trips and museum tours. More information about the field school can be found at

http://www.strawberybanke.org.

The **New Hampshire SCRAP** field school will run in three consecutive two-week sessions, June 23-August 1, 2014. This year's field school, taught by the New Hampshire State Archaeologist Dr. Richard Boisvert, will focus on excavations of prehistoric sites at Mt. Jasper in Berlin and at a Paleo-Indian site in Jefferson. Participants will learn proper excavation techniques, site documentation, artifact identification, and basic mapping skills. More information about the NH SCRAP program can be found at **http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/SCRAP.htm**.

The **Historical Society of Cheshire County** will run a two-week field school under the supervision of archaeologist Martha Pinello, August 11-22, 2014, at the Wyman Tavern in Keene. Participants will gain experience in both excavation on the grounds of this historic tavern and in the laboratory processing materials found during excavation. For more information, call (603) 352-1895 or email

hscc@nullhsccnh.org.

The Beach Club in Rye added to the National Register of Historic Places

Located directly on Rye Beach, the **Beach Club in Rye** is part of Rye's long history as a summer resort destination and is the only private recreational facility of its kind still existing on New Hampshire's coast. The property remains remarkably unchanged and continues to reflect the time period in which it was originally built.

The Beach Club in Rye

Founded in 1925, the club's members have included governors, industrialists, leaders of major corporations and descendants of distinguished old New England families. Charles Studebaker, a Rye Beach summer resident and member of the Studebaker automobile family, persuaded General Electric to install its then-new underwater pool-lighting system in the club's 1929 saltwater pool.

The club's oldest building, a stone and wood-framed clubhouse with Queen Anne and Tudor Revival architectural details, dates to the 1880s. Three wood-framed bath houses surround the 50 feet by 100 feet saltwater pool that was installed in 2007 as a replacement for the original pool.

For more information about the National Register of Historic Places, visit the N.H. Division of Historical Resources (DHR) website at **www.nh.gov/nhdhr** or contact Peter Michaud at the DHR at (603) 271-3483.

Oyster River Dam added to the N.H. State Register of Historic Places

Oyster River Dam in Durham

The **Oyster River Dam** in Durham was constructed in 1913 using funds donated by Edith Congreve Onderdonk as a memorial to her stepfather, Hamilton Smith. The project was part of a pattern of philanthropic activities and community planning and development that flourished in New Hampshire towns at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The first dam at Oyster River Falls was built in the mid-1600s, and over the years several mills and other businesses operated on both sides of the river. Also called the Mill Pond Dam, the current Oyster River Dam is New Hampshire's earliest known example of an Ambursen dam, a patented design that uses a system of concrete buttresses and was considered cutting edge technology in its day. The current dam was constructed to preserve the mill pond for recreational uses.

Anyone wishing to nominate a property to the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places must research the history of the nominated property and document it fully on an individual inventory form from the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. Having a property listed in the Register does not impose restrictions on property owners. For more information, visit **www.nh.gov/nhdhr.**

2014 Moose Plate Grant round closes soon

The current round of Conservation License Plate / Moose Plate Grants is set to close on April 25, 2014. New Hampshire cities and towns still have time to apply for a grant of up to $10,000. Past awards have been used to address the preservation needs of publicly owned historic buildings and properties across New Hampshire. Look for more details at **www.nh.gov/nhdhr/grants/moose,** or contact Grants Coordinator Deb Gagne at **deborah.gagne@dcr.nh.gov** with questions about this popular grant program.

Learn more about preservation programs

To learn more about historic preservation programs and activities on the horizon, visit the **News and Events Page** of the N.H. Division of Historical Resources, the **NH Preservation Alliance Events web site**, the **Association of Historical Societies of New Hampshire E-ssociate**, and the "history" section of **nh365.org**. Also visit **PreservationDirectory.com**, a national portal with links to a wide and expanding range of preservation events, sources and resources.

This newsletter has been financed in part with a federal Historic Preservation Fund matching grant from the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior, to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources/State Historic Preservation Office. However, its

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