

# Newsletter

## JULY 2013

**Conway Historical Society**  
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VOLUME 19, ISSUE 3

A quarterly publication  
of the Conway  
Historical Society

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*Serving Conway NH since 1935*

#### **Welcome New Members**

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If you would like to submit an  
article for publication or want to share a  
picture and story  
please e-mail the materials:  
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#### **CORPORATE SPONSORS**

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The new website is still under  
construction.  
Thank you for  
your patience.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

Save the dates—monthly  
every 2nd Tuesday

July 9

Brian Wiggan, speaker  
Re: the only NH born President,  
Franklin Pierce

\*\* August 13

Annual Picnic Outing

September 10

tba

\*\* October 8

Annual Dinner and Meeting

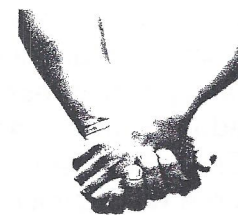
November 12

tba

\*\* December 10

Christmas Party and  
Yankee Swap

\*\*Potluck dinner begins at 6pm with  
regular meetings and presentations at  
7pm. All programs are open to the  
public at the Salyards Center.



Bring a Friend !



Railroads in the Mount Washington Valley from the 1870s to the 1970s

Dwight Smith, Founder of the Conway Scenic Railroad

Presentation to the Conway Historical Society, February 12, 2013

Dwight Smith, founder of the Conway Scenic Railroad, is the ultimate "rail fan". His presentation at the February Conway Historical Society meeting was a valentine to the booming era of train travel following the Civil War.

Dwight's extensive collection of vintage railroad post-cards centered his PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the impact of the era in establishing the Valley as both a summer and winter vacation destination.

According to Dwight, the North Conway area was once home to several rail lines, now all defunct: Great Falls, & Conway Railroad, which later became the Boston & Maine RR, the Portland & Ogdensburg RR, which later became the Maine Central RR, as well as several logging railroads including the East Branch, the Rocky Branch, and the Swift River RR. The Boston & Maine and the Maine Central RR each served the area with passenger travel, mail, and/or freight transportation.

The granite and logging industries in the Valley flourished as trains made it possible to haul the area's abundant natural resources long distances.



*Photo by Joseph Wilson : Boston & Maine "Mountaineer", North Conway, NH August, 1940.*

Of all the rail lines, the Boston and Maine railroad was perhaps the best known, and the longest lasting. The North Conway train station, built in 1874, overlooked Schouler Park, featuring two turrets, "porthole" windows, diamond patterned shingles, and a 7 day clock wound by hand. More humble stations existed as well—the 1905 Madison Station at Silver Lake, the Bartlett Station, the old Conway Station, and Intervale Station. From Intervale, a passenger could take the Maine Central to St. Johnsbury, VT via Crawford Notch, or could travel to Portland, ME. The Boston & Maine made as many as three round trips a day between North Conway and Boston.

Train travel waned slowly as the automobile era began. Many lines closed down. Still, the famous B & M "snow trains" brought skiers to the valley, beginning in the 1930's and continuing for many years. The "Buddliner", a self-propelled diesel train for passengers, mail, and baggage, was used on the daily route until all passenger service terminated in early 1961.

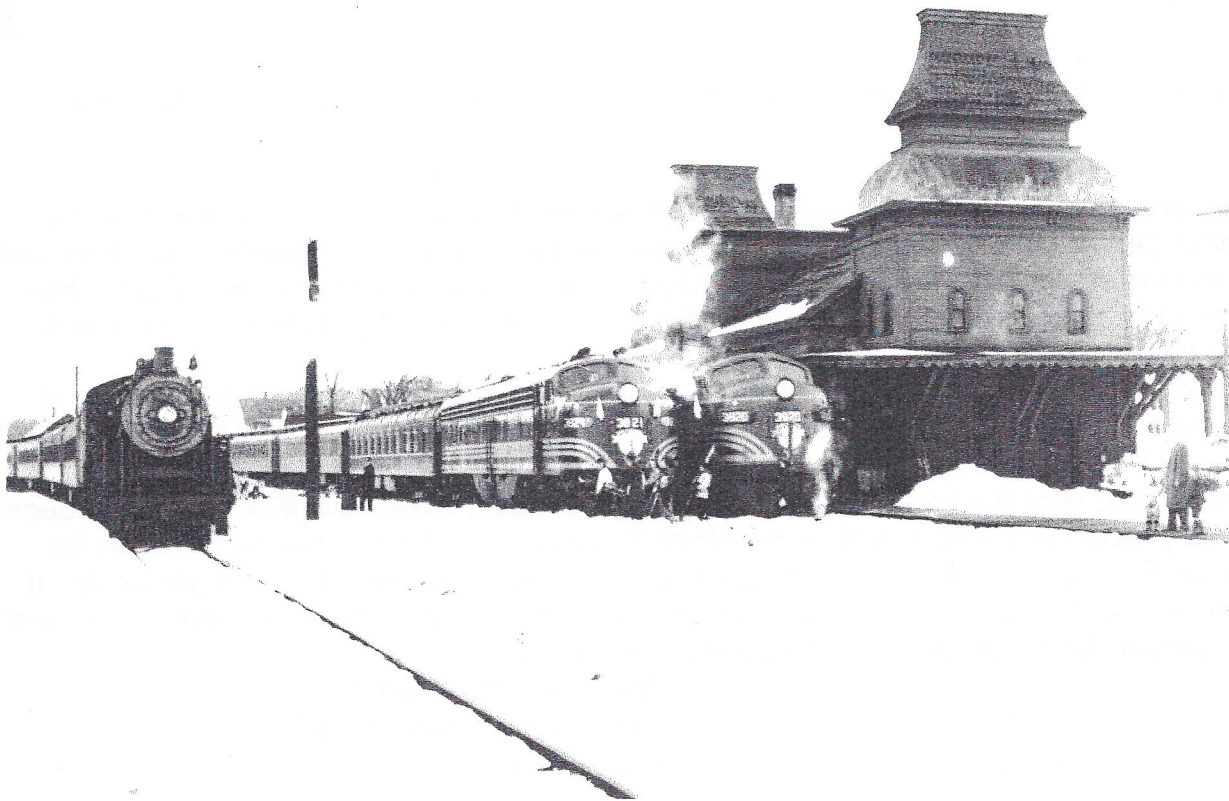
Born in Baltimore, Maryland and raised in Brooklyn, NY, Dwight Smith summered in Groton, VT, developing a fondness for New England. After a stint in the US Navy during World War 2, Dwight graduated from Dartmouth College in 1947. He considered a career at sea, but Gertrude Emma, his fiancée, posed the ultimate question: "The sea or me?"

Recognizing a wise choice when he saw it, Dwight chose love, married Gertrude in 1948, and entered the railroad business with the Boston & Maine Railroad. In his long career with B & M, he worked in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. The couple's five children were born in each of the four states.



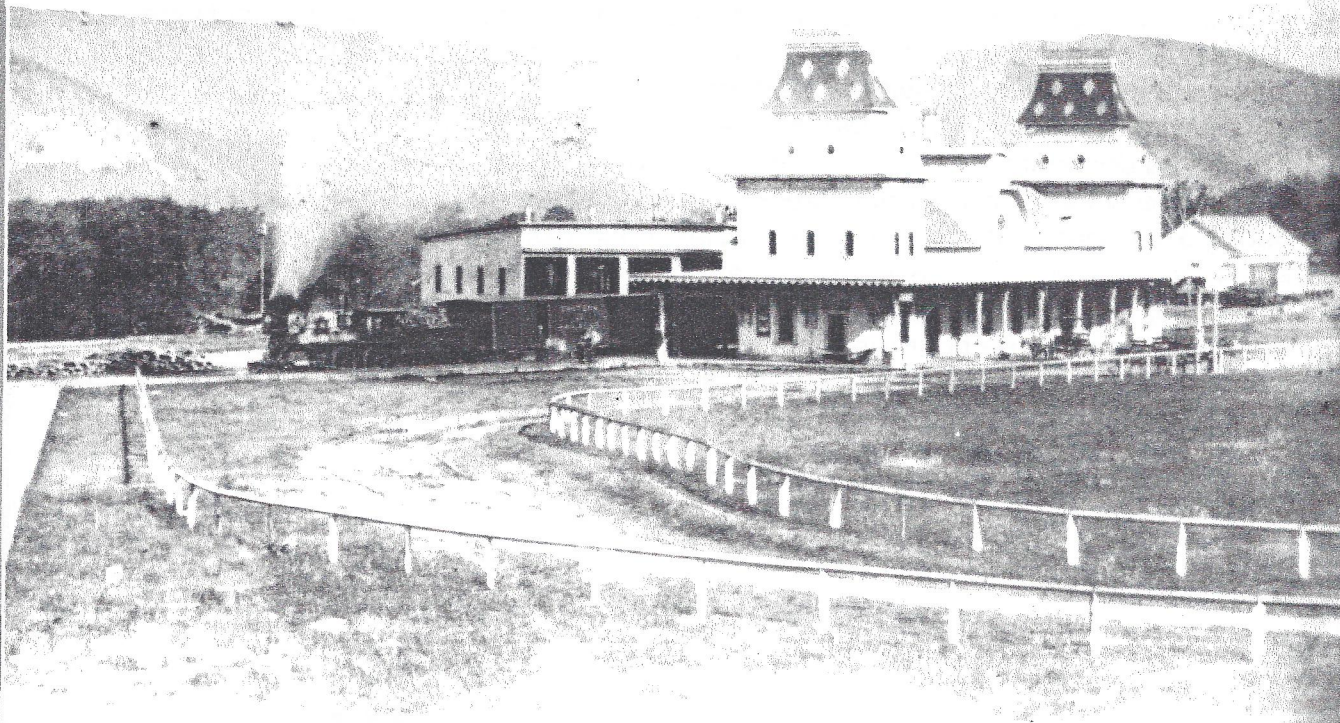
## Dwight Smith's presentation by M. Ammendolia

One winter's day in 1968, Dwight had a brainstorm that would not only change his life, but also revitalize train travel and tourism in the Mount Washington Valley. As Dwight tells it, "I stepped down from a special one-day only Buddliner snow train at North Conway, looked around at the beauty of the station and its surroundings, and a light bulb went off in my head—what a perfect location for an excursion railroad!" Dwight, whose wife reminded him he had children in college, bought an ancient steam locomotive, and a decrepit turn of the century Pullman parlor observation car, and gained access to the North Conway train station, sadly in need of repair. Restoration began during a six year battle filled with "obstacles, court cases and bureaucratic blockades" as Dwight and his business partners Carroll Reed and Bill Levy sought to gain ownership of the rails themselves from B & M Railroad. Persistence won out, and on August 4, 1974, the first three hour run of the Conway Scenic Railroad finally happened. As a tribute to his wife's patience and loyalty, the beautifully restored 1898 Pullman car was dubbed the "Gertrude Emma" in her honor.



*From the collection of Dwight Smith — Snow trains ready to depart for Boston. North Conway, NH ca 1950.*





*From the collection of Dwight Smith - Portsmouth, Great Falls & Conway train, North Conway, NH ca 1874.*

A large and enthusiastic crowd enjoyed Dwight's lively and humorous presentation at the Salyards Center. In attendance were old friends and employees who helped restore the rail cars and the station. Gordon Lang for example, who still works at the Conway Scenic Railroad, explained to the audience that the 7 day clock overlooking the park still runs, and is wound by hand every week.

Dwight Smith retired in 1990 from the daily operations of the Conway Scenic Railroad. In 1999, he sold off his last stock in the venture and retired for good, choosing to remain here in the Mount Washington Valley.

Whenever you hear the haunting whistle of Dwight's steam locomotive #7470 echo through the Valley, when you stop to admire the North Conway train station or enjoy a ride on the "Gertrude Emma", take a moment to appreciate the vision and tenacity of Dwight Smith. If you should happen to run into him in town or at a Conway Historical Society event, do thank him in person for his priceless contribution to Valley history.

Maura Ammendolia  
Conway Historical Society  
May, 2013



**Thank you** for the complimentary CHS Newsletter. Enjoyed Brian Wiggin's story of exploring the bowels of the former KHS. I graduated from Kennett in June 1975. When I entered Jr. High School, from the mighty John Fuller, I joined the ski team my 7th grade year. There was no junior varsity and certainly no junior high ski team at the time. Coach "Slim" Broomhall took all comers and molded us into athletes regardless of age or experience! "Our" locker room was on the same level from which you looked down into the Pit. The locker room was located to the right at the bottom of the stairwell situated in the southeast corner of what was the junior high school addition to original building). The locker room door shared an "alcove" with a set of stairs that descended to the Pit. The locker room was also used by Coach Chuck Pierce's cross country running team (which I joined in 8th grade) and Coach Don Trimble's track team (which I also joined in 8th grade). When you entered the locker room there were lockers on the left and right. The small shower area was beyond the lockers on the left with two toilet stalls and a urinal straight ahead on the back wall. To the right of the toilet stalls was a door that remained locked, except during ski season, which opened onto a spiral iron stairway. At the bottom of the spiral stair was a cement/brick/granite walled room which housed a boiler/furnace, as I remember, and beyond that was a much larger "room" with similar walls. I was told, by older ski team members, that this had been the coal room. (There actually might have been a total of three "rooms" in a row.) Anyway, the "coal" room was well illuminated and we stored our jumping and cross country skis along three walls (left, back & right) and had a big wooden waxing bench in the middle. As I remember, there was a stairwell on the right side of the middle room that went up to an exterior door and out onto the paved area enclosed by the junior high, the original high school and the auditorium building (under which were the physical education locker rooms also shared by football, basketball & baseball teams plus the auto and wood shops). This enclosed outdoor area could be viewed from the principal's office and was where students went out to board the school buses. That's what I recall but it was 43 years ago.

**Evan M. Lucy**



A. Crosby Kennett School, Conway, N. H.





Independence Day . . . a time for rejoicing in our great national heritage. The 4th of July . . . the birthday of our nation.

We celebrate with festivities, with picnics, with fireworks exhibits.

But let us also celebrate this great day with a pause to consider the truths upon which our nation stands: Liberty and Justice for All in one nation indivisible . . . the equality of men in God-given rights . . . and a government of, by and for the people.

Happy Birthday, U.S.A!

### New Street with New Problems . . .

The village of North Conway is now blessed with a nice wide Main Street flooded with the latest neon lighting, which undoubtedly makes an impression upon our summer visitors. From those who are supposed to know, such a street is a big boom for business, and merchants who have suffered during construction will certainly be glad to see an increase in their business.

With this advancement there have also come problems.

First, Main Street in North Conway has become a speedway. Many city drivers must of course be frustrated with the traffic problems in their own locale to the point that they become forgetful in villages such as ours. Local residents are by no means without blame, too.

Warning signs are inadequate at the north and south approaches. This leaves the responsibility of slowing down the traffic to Officer John Poor, stationed at the corner of Kearsarge and Main Streets, about half way through the town. John's whistle can be heard many times a day as he earnestly tries to keep things under control. He is to be commended for his good work.

It must be remembered that North Conway's Main Street in summer is just like city traffic . . . No U turns, no backing into traffic in the wrong direction, no double parking; in short, don't be a "rube" with your automobile.

Second, parking is now a problem and the time will come when meters will go into the North Conway and Conway villages unless local residents are willing to do more off-the-street parking. To give merchants an opportunity to get their business, there must be parking space available. The new white lanes, both angle and parallel, in North Conway are helpful and necessary. However, the new parallel parking on the east side has cut down the number of cars which can park, which further adds to the problem.

Third, "Is it necessary to holler and yell and bang the shovels on the curbstones in the early hours of the morning while cleaning the streets?" This is a question which is now being asked of hotel owners and by residents who are awakened at an early hour with seemingly unnecessary clatter. To keep the Main Street clean is of utmost importance, but to do it without disturbing the peace also seems to be a part of the job.

New facilities planned to accommodate and conduct our living on a higher scale always make new conditions. This is the challenge in the age in which we live, and our newest is a . . .

New Street with New Problems.  
P. K. B.

**-THE LOW-COST,  
COOL AND COMFORTABLE  
WAY TO TRAVEL**



**YOU RIDE IN COOL,  
DUSTLESS, AIR-CONDITIONED  
COMFORT**

**THE SCHEDULES  
ARE CONVENIENT  
WEEK DAYS**

Read Down		Read Up
8 15	Lv PORTLAND.....Ar	6 35
8 29	...Westbrook-Cumberland Mills.....	6 22
8 38	...South Windham.....	6 11
8 49	...Sebago Lake.....	6 01
8 02	...Steep Falls.....	5 50
9 05	...Mattocks (E. Baldwin).....	5 45
9 16	...Cornish.....	5 37
9 19	...West Baldwin.....	5 33
9 26	...Hiram.....	5 27
9 36	...Brownfield.....	5 17
9 49	...Fryburg.....	5 07
9 56	...Conway Centre.....	4 58
10 00	...Redstone.....	4 54
10 06	...NORTH CONWAY.....	4 50
10 09	...INTERVALE.....	4 45
10 15	...GLEN and JACKSON.....	4 40
10 25	Ar } BARTLETT.....Lv	4 31
10 27	Lv } BARTLETT.....Ar	4 29
10 34	...Sawyers River.....	4 21
10 38	...Notchland.....	4 17
10 59	...Crawford Notch.....	3 57
11 09	...BRET, WOODS-FABYAN.....	3 43
11 17	...Twin Mountain.....	3 39
11 17	...Quebec Jct.....	3 28
11 43	Ar Whitefield.....Lv	3 06
11 43	Lv Whitefield.....Ar	3 06
11 53	...Scott.....	2 54
11 58	...Lunenburg.....	2 51
12 04	...Gilman.....	2 46
12 09	...East Concord.....	2 42
12 15	...Miles Pond.....	2 37
12 23	...North Concord.....	2 31
12 33	...Concord.....	2 23
12 42	Ar East St. Johnsbury.....	2 15
12 55	Ar ST. JOHNSBURY.....Lv	2 05

**IT'S CHEAPER  
THAN DRIVING-  
SAFER TOO**

**CONNECTIONS AT  
PORTLAND FOR  
BOSTON,  
NEW YORK AND  
ALL OTHER  
POINTS**

**CONNECTIONS AT  
ST. JOHNSBURY  
FOR MONTREAL  
AND  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
POINTS**

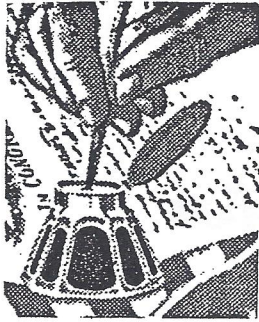


**MAINE CENTRAL RAILROAD**

### Conway Historical Society Enjoys Trip

Thanks to the generosity of the management of the Cog Railway, Conway Historical Society's annual June tour was a trip to the top of Mt. Washington on the famous Cog Railway Sunday, June 23. Forty-one were present for the luncheon at the Base Station, and thirty-six made the trip up the mountain.





## INKLINGS

By Sally Mander

What was North Conway like "in the good old days" — seventy years ago, for instance? I was not present at that time, but recently I have been reading an interesting account of that summer of 1887 written by Ellen McRoberts Mason. Every Sunday

from June 12 to October 9 the Boston Herald carried one of her articles extolling the beauty of North Conway scenery and the pleasures to be enjoyed by summer visitors. The only other resorts given as much space by the Herald were Nantasket and Saratoga. In addition to this publicity, a new edition of Starr King's "The White Hills," with illustrations made from photographs by Mr and Mrs T E M White of local fame, had just been published. Consequently an unprecedented number of visitors flocked to the North Conway hotels, and Mrs Mason says: "The Kearsarge is having an unusually successful season as in fact is every other North Conway hotel, and the best of it is that this state of things seems sure to last well into the month of September, and a good business is assured for October."

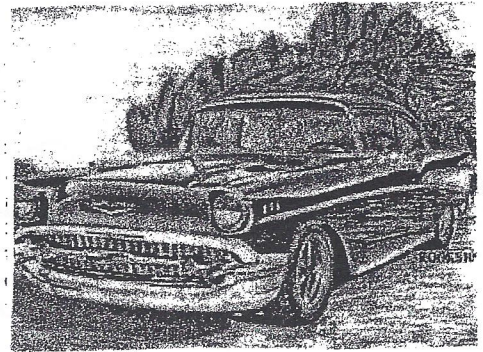
What was going on in North Conway that summer? Perhaps most important of all was the installation of electric lights at the Kearsarge House, lights on the lawn will make that part of town as light as day," the Herald states. One light was fastened to the front of the little rail that topped the tower, at the base of the flagstaff. "From that height it will flame forth like a blazing meteor upon the night." After a few weeks of the new lights Mrs Mason comments: "... since the introduction of the electric lights on the lawn of the Kearsarge, it has seemed obvious that all North Conway streets must be lighted with electricity, and that at no distant day... we must have the roads lighted by electricity though we face the danger of having to go to the Carroll County Poor Farm in consequence, a not altogether impossible contingency."

The old academy building which had occupied a site close to the present Community Center and obstructed the view from the Kearsarge House piazzas had been removed since the previous summer (the method of that removal is still something of a mystery) and the Boston and Maine Park added much to the beauty of the near surroundings of the hotel, with its "young trees, rich grass, and sprays of sparkling water." There was a new music room at the Sunset at the gala opening of which "The house was brilliantly illuminated with Chinese lanterns and the hall was beautifully decorated." (It was later to be made into the Eastern Slope Theatre.) A public library was started through the efforts of Dr. J. H. Pitman. There was a North Conway Brass Band which serenaded newly married couples, especially Mr and Mrs Wallace Mason, who were married on June 30. At the lower end of the village the artist Benjamin Champney had his summer home; and at the upper end, opposite the Sunset Pavilion, was the studio of the artist-photographers, Mr and Mrs T E M White. The historian James Schouler had a summer home in Intervale.

The previous year a road up Humphrey's Ledge had been constructed by Mr Lycurgus Pitman, and the drive to the summit became one of the pleasures of the season, rivalling the Dundee Drive. The proposed railroad up Mt. Kearsarge and extending to Chatham had not become a reality, though Mr. Mansfield, who had obtained a charter in 1883, had expected to start work in September, 1886, and complete the road in June, 1887. The Portland and Ogdensburg Railroad had arranged a train schedule which allowed one on Wednesday and Saturday to make the trip to Mt. Washington and return in a single day.

"But this is a great season. North Conway is very fashionable, and those who want gaiety need go no further, for here they may find enough," writes Mrs Mason.

Of what did the gaiety consist? There were hops at all the hotels, especially the Saturday night ones at the Kearsarge House, featuring the german. There were musicales, illustrated lectures (three in one week), readings, progressive euchre parties at the Sunset, an entertainment by a ventriloquist and charcoal artist, and a "donkey party" at the Kearsarge. Between seven and eight hundred people attended Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks under the direction of Mrs Alice J Osborn at the Kearsarge. There were horseback riding and bicycling; walks to Enchanted Woods, Artists' Falls and the mineral spring; drives to Cathedral Woods, Diana's



Baths, the Devil's Den, the White Mountain Mineral Spring, Washington Boulder, Humphrey's Ledge, and Shadagee.

Perhaps most exciting of all were the baseball games between the Kearsarge House and Wentworth Hall. The first game was played at Jackson, and crowds of people drove from North Conway to attend it. Coaches and carriages were decorated with the colors of the contestants: red for Wentworth Hall and blue for the Kearsarge. In the seventh inning the Jackson players, objecting to a decision of the umpire, refused to play any longer and so forfeited the game. Much acrimonious discussion followed in the Herald and the White Mountain Echo, but finally the quarrel was settled by playing two more games at the old ball grounds in North Conway (now A Street), where more than a thousand spectators were present. Before the first game there was a street parade led by the North Conway Brass Band "that was gallant and brave and showy indeed." Each team won a game, and everybody was happy.

Late in the summer Mrs Mason wrote: "One thing everybody knows, however, and that is that this year and last North Conway has had summer visitors in numbers far exceeding those at any other White Mountain resort." And on October 2 comes this prescient remark: "... the proprietor of the Russell Cottage at Kearsarge Village entertains each winter a number of his summer guests, and four most enthusiastic Harvard students tramped all about here last winter making the ascent of Mt. Kearsarge among other things. Nevertheless, as we make no extraordinary claims that might seem to be a prejudiced writer to be presumptuous or undue ones, we do not set forth that North Conway is a winter retreat as well as a summer resort. No, we do not quite claim that — yet."



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# CHS Newsletter

VOLUME 19, ISSUE 3 July 2013



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## Conway Historical Society

100 Main St.  
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Phone: 603-447-5551  
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CHS Membership Dues = \$20.00 per person per year

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Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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