

### *The President's Corner*

The leisurely times of warm summer days are on the wane. In spite of a little bit of 'hot-hazy-humid' for the last few days it was good weather for people's gardens, as long as you kept them watered.

Watering is important and "we" (our garden committee consisting of Mike Tamulis and Laraine Cormack) have tried to keep the front lawn of the Eastman Lord House in good shape. Even with continued watering after the reconstruction of Main Street was completed the grass did not come back looking good at all. So, you might see some work being done on that area early this fall. We'll be installing a small automatic watering system in the front and will try to de-weed the grass and improve its look. Hopefully, if all goes according to plan, the east side of the building will also be painted this fall.

Speaking of fall, we have just finished the first four of our summer programs ending with our Annual Summer Picnic which was well attended. Our next four fall meetings are described later in this newsletter. To improve the state of care and availability of our fairly extensive photo collections your Board authorized the purchase of a high quality flat-bed scanning system. After a long wait we have received both the scanner and the computer needed to operate it. They are now set up in an upstairs office in the Old Firehouse. We've also purchased some training time and after a few of us get up to speed we'll need to train some additional members to help scan our items. And then, after a number of items have been scanned we'll also need your help in identifying places, people, or events contained within. We'll also have a program early next spring to bring in the general public to help with the identification.

Work still continues on renovating the inside of the Eastman Lord House. Replacing the northwest door and finishing the attic floor is all that remains of the list we needed to complete before we could be open to the public again. As soon as the attic floor is done we can move

Continued on Page 2

### *New Column*

You will note that on page 4 we have added a new column, "From the Archives". This first article, "Intervale Man Makes Gavel for Famous People and Events", is taken from The Reporter's September 21, 1971, edition.

This article relates the story of Rodney D. Woodard and how he came to make gavels for the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference at the Mount Washington Hotel in 1944.

You may remember that Rodney D. Woodard was the focus of our June program on Raised Relief Maps. He was obviously a very talented craftsman.

### *Upcoming:*

- September 13**    **Diary Excerpts from the 1943 Middle Sister Fire Tower Lookout, Elizabeth "Sammy" Sampson**
- October 11**    **Old Homes of Conway, by Town of Conway Historic District Commission**
- November 8**    **History of Eastern Slope Inn**
- December 13**    **Annual Christmas Party**

#### **Save the dates**

Conway Historical Society monthly program is the second Tuesday of each month. Meetings and presentations will be held at the Old Firehouse in Conway village, beginning at 7:00 P.M., and are open to the public.

If anyone has an idea for an upcoming program that would be of interest to you, please contact Ken Rancourt. If you know of someone who would be willing to present a program, also please contact Ken Rancourt.

### *The President's Corner* (From Page 1)

many of the lighter artifacts to the attic for longer-term storage.

Unfortunately we also need to acknowledge our recent loss of both Susan Proctor and Brad Bemis, both long term members of our society. Susan served as CHS President for years and chaired the first CHS annual campaign called "White Mountain Tapestries". That funding, along with significant charitable donations, allowed for the eventual purchase of The Saint Charles Church - now the Salyards. Brad served on the facilities committee for many years and was always helping to set up tables and chairs for our members meetings, especially when we had pot-luck suppers!

Please enjoy the rest of the articles in this newsletter and plan to attend our fall series of members meetings which take place at 7:00 P.M. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Old Firehouse. Topics will range from women in the mountains, to old homes, to the history of the Randall House, and, of course a Christmas Party. There will indeed be something for everyone!

### *Upcoming Programs*

Diary Excerpts from the 1943 Middle Sister Fire Tower Lookout, Elizabeth "Sammy" Sampson  
During the second World War, women from all over the United States were hired by the Forest Service for a variety of positions, including that of fire tower lookout. In April 1943, Elizabeth "Sammy" Sampson and several other women went through three days of training where they learned new skills such as fire detection, map reading and radio communications at the former Gale River CCC Camp in Bethlehem, New Hampshire. After the training, Sammy was assigned the Middle Sister fire tower on Mount Chocorua in Albany, New Hampshire. Fortunately, the Forest Service has a copy of Elizabeth Sampson's detailed

Continued on Page 3

### *Curator's Report*

The ultimate goal of the Conway Historical Society is to tell the story of Conway History. To do that we preserve archives and artifacts that help tell that story. However, we have a big hole in the tale that you can help fix.

Recently the US National Archives released the 1950 census records. They are available online through the Conway Public Library. If you would like help on how to access them give us a call there.

So what is the problem? Well, the CHS collection has archives and artifacts from 10,000 years ago in the form of Native American relics, items from the early days around our town's charter in 1765, through the Revolutionary War, and ending for the most part just after World War II as embodied in our "homefront" exhibit in our WW II kitchen display.

We need to collect archives and artifacts for the last 72 years to preserve more recent history until the present for the future. We also want to collect the stories you have to tell about your experiences in Conway and how things have changed during your lifetime. If you remember the 1960s in Conway, we would love to hear about it.

While we contemplate that, we have been working behind the scenes cataloging the collection. Many of the items we preserve for the future have yet to be listed on our computer. We also need to do additional research in many cases to place the items in context.

If you have time, we would love to have volunteers to help scan our photo collection and work behind the scenes. No experience is necessary, we will train you!

## *Upcoming Programs* (From Page 2)

diary of her 1943 season as a fire tower lookout, in which she describes her daily work and life through words, sketches and photographs. Today, you can visit the remains of the Middle Sister fire tower where Sammy spent two seasons in the clouds.

White Mountain National Forest Archaeological Technician, Genevieve Everett (she/her) will present excerpts from Sammy's diary and photographs of Sammy in and around the fire tower. Additionally, Genevieve will discuss the White Mountain National Forest's role in protecting and preserving historic and archaeological sites on Forest Service land, including the remains of the Middle Sister fire tower.

Our October program will be "Old Homes in Conway", led by the Town of Conway's Historic District Commission. November will feature a "History of Eastern Slope Inn", and December will be our Annual Christmas Party.

## *Obituary: Susan Choate Keene Proctor*

It is with great sadness that we pass along the obituary for Susan Proctor. The following appeared in the Conway Daily Sun on July 20, 2022. You will note that her service is scheduled for the end of the month, August 27<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 P.M., at the Brown Church.

Born in 1936 to Louise and Robert Keene of Garden City, N.Y., Susan Choate Keene Proctor died peacefully on July 6, 2022, at her home in Conway, N.H. As a young child she was on the November 1940 Women's Day Cover and moved to Etna, N.H. with her family in 1947.

She helped her family run the Keenes Lodge and Ski School before graduating from Hanover High School and then attending the University of New Hampshire.

She taught in Hanover, N.H., and the Winnacunnet, N.H., school system before moving to Conway to teach home economics and be a guidance counselor at Kennett High School where she met her husband, a history teacher and local "boy," William Proctor.

Susan was a longtime member of the Brown Church, the Conway Historical Society, The Potluck Singers and the Conway Village Festival. She was ahead of her time by introducing her family to tofu and worm farming in the late 1970s.

Adventurous biking trips around Europe and with family across the country were a part of her growing-up years.

A volunteer trip to Honduras in 1984 and visits with her parents in Mexico added to her world experiences. Susan's warm welcoming smile and interest in people made her a welcome member of any gathering. She will be greatly missed by many.

She is survived by her daughters, Louise Proctor of Franklin, N.H., and Ruth Proctor of Conway. Grandchildren, Samia DeMarco, William Middleton, Lily and Cole Johnson, and four great-grandchildren.

*From the Archives*

“Intervale Man Makes Gavels for Famous People and Events”, from The Reporter, September 21, 1971:

It was 27 years ago that Rodney D. Woodard of Intervale received a call from the manager of the Mt. Washington Hotel asking him if he could make some gavels for an important conference.

“I’d never made a gavel before,” said the 66-year-old woodworking expert, “but I told him I would be happy to give it a try.”

Woodard didn’t realize at that time the importance of the gathering at which brought together representatives from 45 nations to attend the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference at Bretton Woods.

“They cut the wood for the gavels right on the grounds at Bretton Woods,” he recalls. It was cherry “and they took it over to a nearby town, I believe it was Littleton, for some quick aging.

“I used the first gavel I made as a pattern for the 40 they ordered.”

Woodard still has that first gavel wrapped and tucked away in his shop.

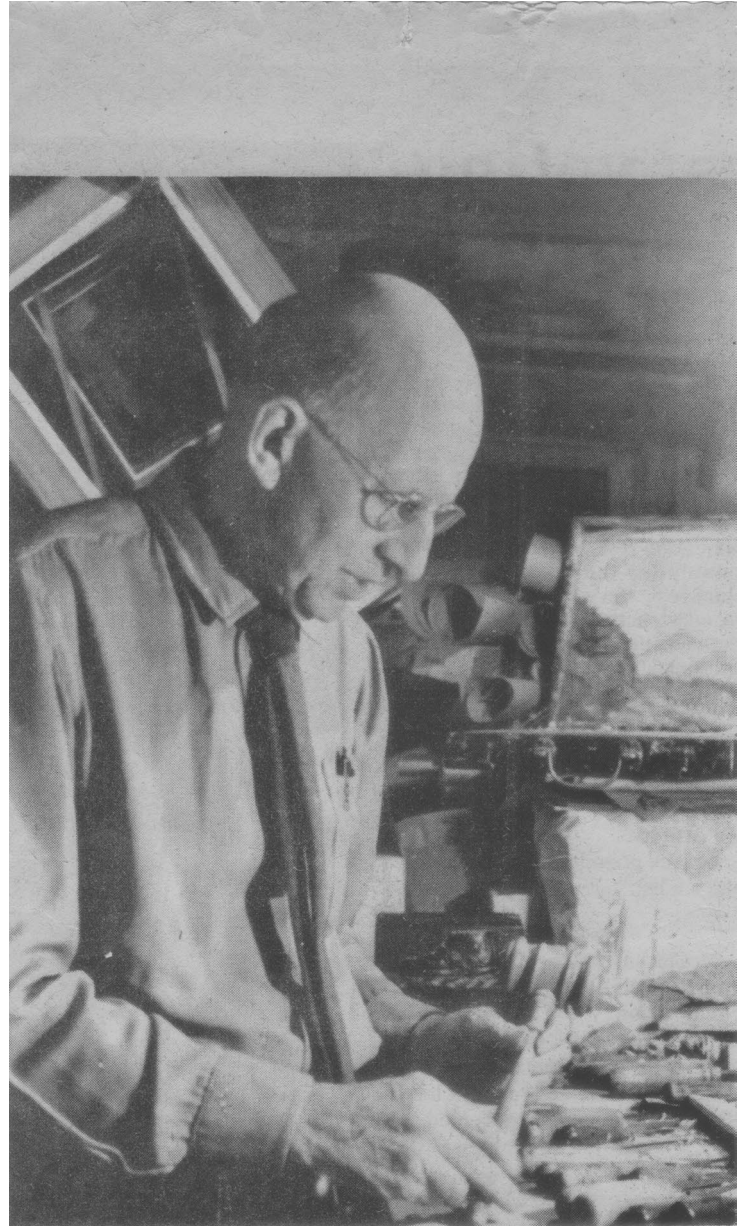
“It took me about two weeks to make the 40. I could have done it in a shorter time period but the order was for a screw type handle instead of the conventional handle that is glued into the head. They wanted to attach a metal inscription band later in Washington.”

Woodard must have done an acceptable job on the Bretton Woods order. He was asked a few years later to make a gavel for Pres. Harry S. Truman and recently received an order by telephone from Washington, D.C., for 20 gavels.

**Ready For It**

“Time passes quickly,” said Woodard as he sat near his ancient potbellied stove crowned by a kettle of water for humidity control, “but all this talk about a possible second Bretton Woods Conference brings back memories of that telephone call 27 years ago.

“I hope they get another conference going at the Mt. Washington Hotel. And if they do I’m ready to fill another order for handmade gavels.”



**Gavel maker**

Rodney D. Woodward of Intervale has a place in history. He made the gavels used in the Bretton Woods monetary conference, turned out one for President Truman and is now making 20 for official Washington.

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# Conway Historical Society

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## CHS Newsletter

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**Volume 28, Issue 2, Fall 2022**

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