

Franconia Heritage News



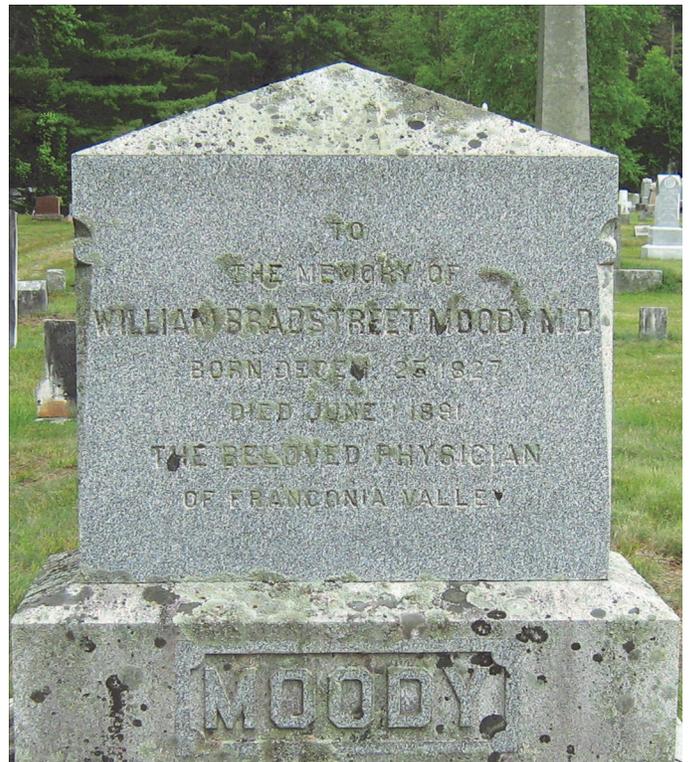
Vol. 31, No. 1
April 2014

Country Doctor

Franconia lost its beloved country doctor, William B. Moody, on June 1, 1891. He died a couple of weeks after receiving a bad gash in his head after being thrown from his carriage when a pair of runaway horses ran into it. He was 63 years old.

William Bradstreet Moody, born in Easton on Christmas day in 1827, descended from a long line of Moodys; the immigrant Moody came to Ipswich MA in 1633. William's grandfather Benjamin was the first generation in New Hampshire, moving to Landaff about 1785. Benjamin, Jr., William's father, died when William was only four years old and his mother died about that same time. William was cared for by Elder Cogswell in Easton for five years, then he lived with another family for several years. He was a smart, ambitious young man as he received his Doctor of Medicine degree from Dartmouth Collage with the Class of 1850, working his way through school. In the spring of 1850 William married Elvira Stuart (sometimes referred to as Sanborn) who was born in Landaff. They had just one child, Eva M., but took in several foster children.

Before settling in Franconia, Dr. Moody practiced medicine in Sandwich NH, Sag Harbor NY and Brownington VT. In 1870 he purchased in Franconia a 3/4-acre parcel of land with the building thereon and three adjoining acres, known as the O. F. Willis place. This property today is the Rivagale office building on Main Street, next to the library. It has a history of sheltering medical men as the house was built in 1860 for Otis Willis who was a physician, and it was greatly expanded in the late 1920s by Dr. Hiram Johnson and his wife Dr. Sarah for use as a convalescent home and clinic.



Gravestone for Dr. Wm. B. Moody (1827-1891) in Elmwood Cemetery. "The Beloved Physician of Franconia Valley"

William C. Prime, the famous journalist who summered in Franconia, knew Dr. Moody for thirty years and wrote a wonderful eulogy that was printed in *The Littleton Courier* on June 6, 1891. Parts of it read:

"Dr. Moody gave his life's work, all his time, to the people of Franconia and the surrounding townships, because he felt a warm personal interest in them all, young and old, poor and well-to-do."

"The valley, or valleys which meet in Franconia village, lie as you know at the foot of the mountain range. They are sparsely inhabited. Except in the village and along the main roads houses are scattered far apart, now away upon the mountain slopes, reached by rough roads through forest, now on the lower lands in widely

(continued on page 2)

Remember When

“We used to call that the Big Rock Swimming Pool where the Gale River and the Easton River met. [Ham Branch of Gale River, behind Garnet Hill parking lot] There used to be a beautiful big pool there. Then they dredged out the Gale River down below here, and that was the end of the big pool. Every year it was less and less. That was a very popular spot. It was deep enough so you could get up on a big rock and dive off. That was back in the 30’s or early 40’s. It was nothing to have 10 or 15 to 25 to 30 kids over there swimming, especially on the weekend or evening. A lot of the smaller children used to swim underneath the Sugar Hill bridge because there was a nice sandy stretch there—probably at the deepest spot, three feet. It used to be a good place for smaller children to swim.” [Wayne Blodgett 9/15/1995]

“When we first came to Franconia, the Profile House was in business, and all the people around could sell everything they could produce to the Profile House. Milk and cream, meat, butter, eggs, cheese, wild berries, potatoes, wood, everything—and horses. It took 500 horses to keep the hotel in business, saddle horses, draft horses, wagon horses.” [Edgar Davis 12/5/1993]

“Near the motel on the way out of town [Gale River Motel], they had a dance pavilion [Lafayette Dance Hall]. They had dances on holidays. You couldn’t dance on Sundays back then. They’d start at midnight and dance til morning. They had nice orchestras, one from St. Johnsbury was very good. We had some good times; we went in droves—there was usually 15-20, maybe more.” [Myra Sherburn 9/20/1993]

“One other thing that I remember my sister and I doing quite a bit, while the Forest Hills Hotel was open and operating, was that they maintained a riding stable there and usually had someone come in with some riding horses for the guests to ride on the various trails around the hotel. The horses didn’t get very much exercise early in the spring, or early season, nor in the late fall, so we were allowed, or asked, to ride the horses to keep them from getting stale and over rambunctious. So my sister and I almost every day, every afternoon, would go up and ride anywhere from one to three horses for perhaps an hour each, and we had a wonderful time riding horses there. That was a great experience.”

[Allen E. Grass June 1999]

“We’d make a great big dish of popcorn, and apples. Did you ever hear of naming an apple? You’d name the apple, and then you swept the floor and counted the seeds—One I love, two I love, three I love the same, four I love with all my heart, and five I cast away, six he comes, seven he tarries, eight he courts, and nine he marries.” [Myra Sherburn 9/20/1993]

Early License Plate

A handsome enameled plate, with a fine likeness of New Hampshire’s Great Stone Face has just been put on the market. It is for use on the front or rear of an automobile and fits above the number plate. It should find a place on every New Hampshire car as well as on those of the many tourist visitors who love the Granite state.

[*Littleton Courier* May 26, 1927]

Country Doctor (continued from page 1)

scattered clearings. Within a territory of fifteen miles long and six miles wide there is a population of some eight hundred people. And there is not a house in this territory in which Dr. Moody was not known, probably not a house in which he had not given his professional aid. And I am right as to a large part of these houses in using the word “given”. I know I am correct in saying that when sent for, the idea of earning money by going never entered his mind. He had simply and only the idea they are my people, I must be of service to them if I can. As a result a large part of his practice was without money reward. The relationship existing between him and the people was one of friendship, confidence and affection. No man in the country was so much loved.”

“And how they loved and honored him was shown by the scene on Wednesday at his funeral. Standing in front of the church you would have seen on the roads, coming down the hills and along the valley, in every direction, wagons, carriages, buggies, all sorts of vehicles, all loaded with people, all the people mourners. Houses everywhere were left empty, for all came, mothers bringing their babies in their arms. There was not room for them all in the church.”

New Exhibit - School Days

The 2014 feature exhibit at the Franconia Heritage Museum this season is **Readin' Riting' & Rithmetic**, capturing the evolution from modest school houses in neighborhood districts to three- and four-town combined regional schools. Two former school buildings still exist, Dow Academy in Franconia and Carolina Crapo Memorial in Sugar Hill, but they are no longer used for educational purposes. The one-room school houses are long gone—torn down, victims of fire, or remodeled for other purposes. Our display includes a newly created mock school room with teacher Miss Wallace presiding.

To go along with our exhibit, the museum will be sponsoring a talk by Steve Taylor on *New Hampshire's One-Room Rural Schools: The Romance and the Reality*. We invite everyone to stop by the museum this summer to learn about our local school history; and, on August 9th, to hear Steve Taylor discuss early schools throughout the state. We also recommend a visit this season to the Sugar Hill Historical Museum to view their exhibit entitled *Once Upon a Time...* which features such childhood memories as cradles, clothes, books, toys.

*Thank You for
Supporting the FAHC*

Franconia Hardware Store
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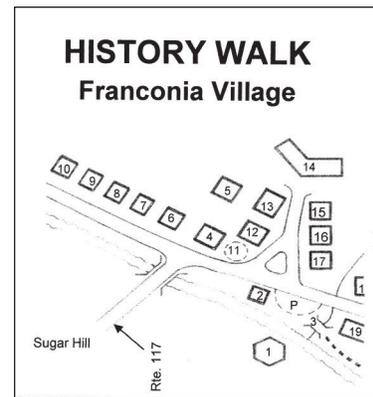
**Museum opens
for the season on
Friday May 23rd**

End of the Line

The Profile Branch of railroad is no more as the tracks were removed last week. This road now owned by the Boston & Maine company was opened in 1879, as a narrow gauge and was changed to standard gauge 1897, being used only during the summer seasons. Since the automobile traffic has so largely increased, the road has been run at a loss and the railroad officials have not operated it for the last two years, ample provision for passengers being made by automobiles, while baggage and mail is carried by trucks from various stations.

[*Littleton Courier* Oct. 13, 1921]

(The Profile Branch ran between Bethlehem Junction and the Profile House in the notch.)



This summer a **History Walk** flier will be available for those who want to learn about the former trade, owner and vintage of about 50 buildings along Main Street. Our thanks to the Community Design Committee for creating this informative map.

Recent Donations — Thank You !

Peabody family—travois & toboggan

Brad Ball—ski rescue sled

James M. Schibanoff—1955 Hannah family photograph

Robert Gilbert—anniversary & centennial issues of Littleton Courier, issue of NH Times on Franconia College

Edgar Anderson—Forest Hills and Brooks & Whitney Mill photographs

Peter T. Halferty—Great Stone Face 150th first day issue envelope

Susan Goodro-Gutt—View-Master with 3 reels of White Mountains scenes

Peter Ainsworth—ski poles, child's sled, scythe, railroad lantern, school clock, antique school desks & chairs
and lots more

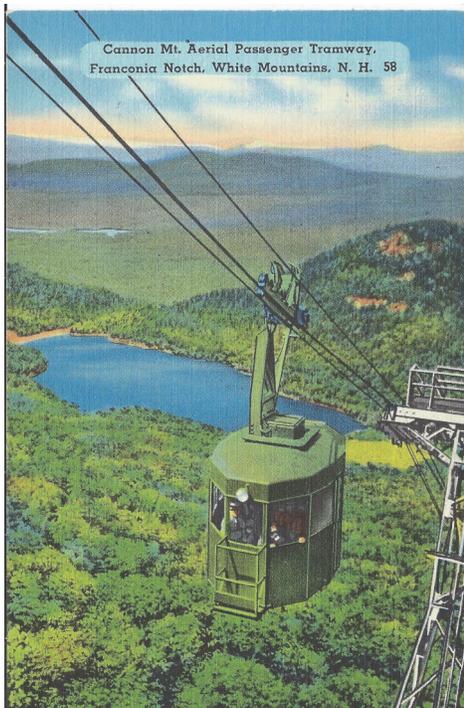
Presby Construction—lumber for school house exhibit walls

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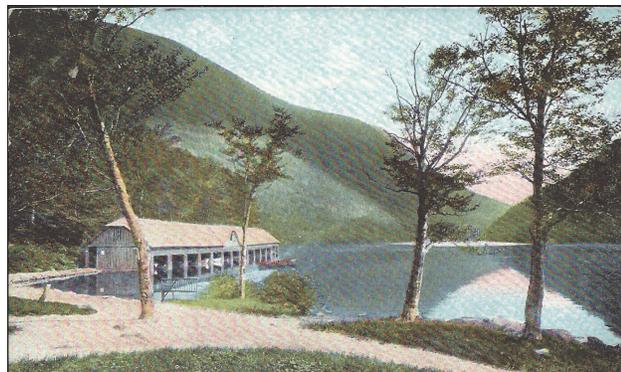
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The museum is open from Memorial Day to Halloween on Fridays and Saturdays 1-4 p.m.
The Stone Stack, bridge & exhibit panels at the Besaw Interpretive Center can be viewed anytime.



View from aerial tramway car shortly after it started operating in June of 1938. It was the first passenger aerial tramway in North America and had a capacity of 28 people.



Boat House on Profile Lake in Franconia Notch c. 1909.

“At your right lies a small lake—Profile—reaching from one side of the Notch to the other—and candidly I can say that nowhere on earth is another more beautiful—surrounded by a primeval forest, with the giant mountains rising on two sides, and watched over by the ever-changing Stone Face. It is a paradise for the lover of nature, and the ardent fisherman, for its green waters are fairly alive with gamest of trout. Numberless boats await your occupancy, and a moonlight row upon these still waters can better be imagined than described.”

[from Profile House A Summers Sojourn booklet printed in 1895 for Taft & Greenleaf, proprietors of the Profile House]