

Franconia Heritage News



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Moxie Corner

About a hundred years ago the notch side of the intersection at Main Street and Forest Hills Road (Rte 142) in Franconia was nicknamed Moxie Corner because great quantities of a popular soft drink called Moxie were sold at a store on that site.

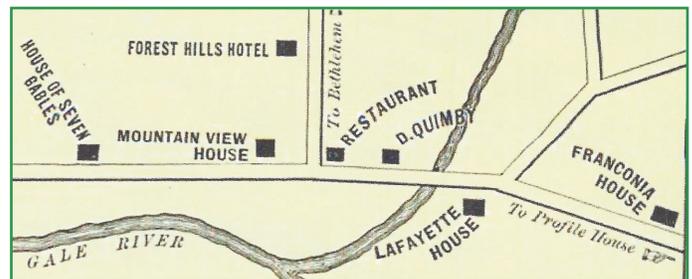
The history of this corner begins in late 1877 when Charles and Angeline (Spooner) Keniston bought one fourth of an acre of land from Daniel Quimby, the owner of the farm that bordered on these two roads. On July 1, 1880, the *White Mountain Republic* newspaper reported that “The restaurant and refreshment rooms at the Half Way House so-called, has again been opened to the public by Mr. Charles Kennison (sic) and wife, who have been in charge of the house for the past two summers. This house has become very popular under their management.” This Half Way House is not to be confused with the one that was three miles south of the Profile House in the notch. Keniston’s restaurant was ideally located as shown on the below map, just a short walk or buggy ride from nearby busy summer boarding houses and hotels. It had a dramatic ending as the same newspaper stated that “The proprietor of the half-way house was arrested and fined for liquor selling. He has left the place, and consequently the house is closed.”

In early March of 1883 Moses Wheelock and Harold Marston, business partners in Lisbon, bought the restaurant and converted part of it into Marston’s Drug Store which was open for the summer seasons until the spring of 1891 when it went up for sale. Fred White of Bethlehem became the new owner for just the 1891 season, long enough for his name to appear on several maps as the store proprietor.

Mr. White sold the property in October 1891 for \$725

to Caleb Huntoon of Bethlehem who moved with his wife onto the corner lot and ran a variety store there until his death in 1918. Huntoon’s store, also referred to as a souvenir shop, is the enterprise that sold so much Moxie that the local residents took to calling its location Moxie Corner.

The next proprietor was Clement Clark from Wells, Maine, who bought the Huntoon place in 1925. He was skilled at carpentry and remodeled the existing buildings into Clark’s Lunch and Friendly Shop. The *Littleton Courier* in July, 1931, said “Its newness, its cleanliness and its congenial atmosphere already has made many friends for this new establishment both locally and transient. Here rooms for the night may be hired. Fine, airy, pleasant rooms cooled by mountain breezes both day and night. For a place to stop for luncheon or dinner, Clark’s has no competition. A dish already made famous by this new lunch room is its New England chicken pies.” The shop



Half Way House restaurant surrounded by summer lodging places. 1883 map issued by the Boston, Concord, Montreal, and White Mountains Railroad.

offered souvenirs, gifts, ice cream, soda, tobacco and candy. In a 1998 interview, Elizabeth Dudley Herbert, who lived on the opposite corner in the Mountain View House, remembered: “There was a little restaurant—it wasn’t exactly a restaurant—more like a tea room. I used to go over with 5 cents and get an ice cream cone every day. That was my treat. I was maybe five, six, eight or ten years old. You got a real decent ice cream cone for a nickel back then. It used to be called Moxie Corner.”

(continued on page 2)

CLARK’S LUNCH ROOM

MOXIE CORNER

Cigars, Cigarettes, Ice Cream, Tonics

LUNCHES SERVED

Advertisement for Clark’s Lunch Room in 1924 *Doings of Dow* yearbook for Dow Academy in Franconia.

Unfortunately, this find sounding establishment went up in flames in February 1932; the house, souvenir store, shed and barn were a total loss though most of the furniture was safely removed from the house. Mr. Clark immediately built a new store for summer trade which included a soda fountain, said to be the first one in this area. The building had a wide veranda on which to serve lunches and tea. Mostly likely this new store was the back part of his advertised “filling station” which had one or two gasoline pumps out front, looking somewhat like the one pictured below. He also advertised “overnight cabins with hot & cold showers” so he must have built these small buildings behind the filling station. Mr. Clark retreated from the hospitality business, moved his family over to Harvard Street and hung out his carpenter and contractor shingle.



Representative “filling station” structure. The one at Moxie Corner for many years had a veranda or porch attached to one side to serve as a dining area. (photo from loc.gov)

In October 1932 Harry Benedict of New Haven, CT, became the new Moxie Corner owner. His deed from Clark included “all furnishings and 2 sets of bed linen for 4 camps, also 5 tables, 21 chairs, 1 counter, 1 show case, 1 electric refrigerator, 1 soda fountain and plant, 1 gas range.” The Benedicts hosted the overnight cabins and filling station until June 1939 when Mr. Benedict passed away. His widow sold the business in September 1939 to Philip and Mary Rich of Franconia, who in turn sold to Henry and Rena Landry in May 1941.

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Joseph and Alice Megna of Franconia took ownership in May 1945 and operated as the Green Lantern Cabins and Spaghetti House. Their house burned flat in mid-January 1948; the cabins, restaurant and filling station escaped damage. A smaller house was rebuilt. In 1952 Joseph quit claimed all his rights to Alice, and she, now Alice Blondeau, continued with the business until she sold it to Gerard and Rena Longchamps of Littleton in 1956.

GREEN LANTERN CABINS
and SPAGHETTI HOUSE

Specializing in Italian Cooking
 Chicken, Steaks and Spaghetti

JOSEPH A. MEGNA and ALICE B. MEGNA

TEL. FRANCONIA 78 MAIN ST. FRANCONIA, N. H.

Advertisement in the 1946-'48 *White Mountain Directory*

The Longchamps replaced the four overnight cabins with a seven-unit motel row, calling it the Longchamps Motel. They also ran a restaurant in the former filling station building that no longer sold gasoline according to Franconia resident Kay Whitcomb who waitressed for them. The boundaries of the corner changed somewhat during this time period with the construction of the I-93 highway, the overpass bridge and the on-ramps.

In 1964 Mr. and Mrs. Newton Raynor, who a few years earlier had purchased the Mountain View House on the other side of Forest Hills Road, and had built two rows of motel units in the adjacent field on that corner, acquired the Longchamps Motel. They razed the restaurant building and landscaped the area in front of the motel rooms which became an annex to their Raynor’s Motel.

Over the years, the old Moxie Corner property continued to change hands a number of times, becoming a part of the Cannon Mountain View Motel, and finally apartments, but its appearance has remained about the same for the last fifty years.

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Moon Shine

The moon shone so brightly last week that it was almost impossible to tell night from morning. One of our citizens tells how nicely he was deceived. He retired about 8 o’clock and later on awoke, supposing it to be morning, after building a good fire and attending to his chores, he came in for breakfast and chancing to look at the clock, found to his surprise that it was 10.30 p.m.

[from Franconia column in *The Littleton Journal* January 6, 1888]

The Franconia Stone Furnace

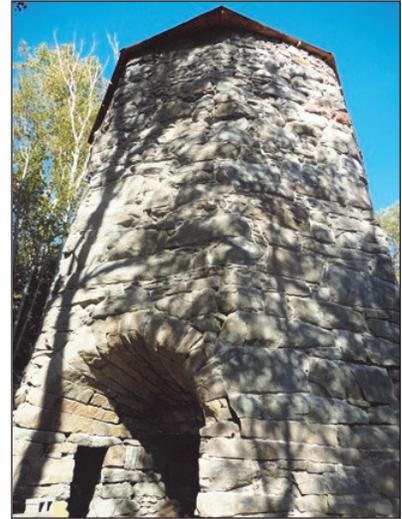
What a treat to drive through Franconia, New Hampshire, and see the restored stone chimney! In the 1800s, this was a working furnace for The Franconia Iron Works. The tall stone chimney, beautifully restored through the persistent efforts of Jean Goehlen and her sons, is now a vibrant addition to Franconia's main street in the area on the Gale River that includes the Besaw Interpretive Center.

From Jean Goehlen's Notes:

October 29, 2011. I purchased a house along the Gale River in Franconia. Along with it came a huge stack of stones. At the time, the stack was so hidden by weeds, brush, and trees that it was not at all visible from the house and could barely be seen from the Besaw Interpretive Center across the river.

My sons and I communicated with many experts involved with historical restoration, but received very little good advice.

The Franconia Area Heritage Museum kindly loaned us the large pile of reports and studies that had been done over the years on the old Iron Furnace. What depressing information! The Stone Chimney was originally built in 1806 and The Franconia Iron Works was the largest employer in the area at that time. The Stone Chimney was now considered ruins, and their estimates to repair it amounted up to several million dollars. Interest in the 'pile of stones' had disappeared.



Frustrated by the lack of interest and support, we called on Rusty Hubbard, a local third generation stone mason. What a relief when Rusty said he was willing to look at the project! He wasn't sure if it was feasible, but he was certainly going to give it a try. His estimate was not at all like that of the experts!

Now the Stone Chimney has been completely restored thanks to Rusty and his Dad and two helpers. Dan spent almost every day during the summer of 2014 removing all the green growth and 18th century lime and sand mortar from between the rocks and filling all the holes with 21st century mortar - - 350 bags of mortar! Rocks were replaced in all areas from which the large granite boulders had fallen.

Now, the Stone Chimney will be around for at least another 200 years! I know this amazing historical chimney will be a reminder of a bygone life and will be appreciated by all who see it.

(The above article was reprinted by permission from the Sugar Hill Historical Museum January-February 2015 newsletter.)

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Stone Stack in late March 2015.

Kudos to Jean Goehlen and her sons for taking it upon themselves to restore the old stone furnace, and thank you to Rusty Hubbard, his father and helpers for taking on the masonry work. The iron industry was an important part of Franconia's founding and development. It is wonderful to know that the old Stone Stack will be around for years to come as a historical marker to be appreciated by so many and to remind us of the past. Some remarks from 2014 tourists: unexpected jewel ** so glad to see someone working to save this site ** let's keep this for future generations ** thanks for preserving ** fun & interesting—a great place for young & old alike ** as a stone mason I really loved seeing a relic of my trade ** nice to see brush cleared and cleaned up ** beautiful piece of history—a gem.

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The museum is open from Memorial Day to the end of October on Saturdays 1-5 p.m.
The Stone Stack, bridge & exhibit panels at the Besaw Interpretive Center can be viewed anytime.

New Hours

The Franconia Heritage Museum will be open only on Saturdays from 1-5 p.m. during the 2015 season. Due to a lack of visitors on Fridays, we are eliminating that day but extending our Saturday hours. Other times can be arranged by calling or emailing the museum several days in advance.

Plant and Yard Sale

As part of the Lupine Festival, the Franconia Heritage Museum will be having a spring plant sale and a yard sale at the museum on Saturday and Sunday June 13 & 14. If you would like to join our yard sale, please contact the museum by May 23rd — **space for your own table is \$20.**

CALENDAR

Upcoming Events

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|------------|---|
| May 23 | Museum Opens for Season |
| June 13/14 | Plant & Yard Sale at Museum |
| July 14 | Humanities to Go Program - Maggie Stier |
| Oct tbd | Humanities to Go Program - Steve Taylor |

Humanities to Go Programs

The Heritage Museum is sponsoring two Humanities to Go programs this season.

- 1) July 14th at 7 pm in the Abbie Greenleaf Library meeting room. Maggie Stier speaker: "On this spot once stood...." remembering the architectural heritage of New Hampshire.
- 2) October, date still to be determined. Steve Taylor speaker: Poor Houses and Town Farms: the hard row for paupers.

These talks are free and open to the public. Please mark your calendars!

School House Exhibit — Our *Readin' Ritin' & Rithmetic* exhibit was well received last season. We have opted to offer it again this summer. So, if you missed seeing the one-room school house and displays, come on over. Even if you saw it last year, come for a visit and take another look around the museum as there is plenty to see!