



View of Centre Harbor, New Hampshire, by Samuel L. Gerry (1813–91), oil on canvas, 1847, New Hampshire Historical Society, gift of D. Bruce Montgomery. Donated in 2021, this painting is a welcome addition to the Society's collection, which now includes five works by this prominent 19th-century artist.

EXPLORING THE LIFE AND ART OF SAMUEL L. GERRY

In a multi-faceted project developed over the past five years, the New Hampshire Historical Society offers an unprecedented look at the life and art of Samuel L. Gerry, one of the most prolific White Mountain artists. *A Faithful Student of Nature: The Life and Art of Samuel L. Gerry* showcases the work of this important artist using a variety of media and platforms.

During his lifetime Gerry created more than 140 paintings of New Hampshire. His work was realistic, yet it also idealized the natural world, emphasizing its grandeur and its vastness. From the mid-1830s until 1890, he traveled nearly every summer from

his Boston home and studio to the White Mountains or the Lakes Region of New Hampshire. Here, he explored, sketched, and painted the natural world around him, one that, when he first visited the area, had been only lightly touched by man. His landscapes of New Hampshire's natural beauty, including such iconic sights as the Old Man of the Mountain, Mount Washington, and the Flume, helped shape the way Americans viewed the state.

Gerry was part of a new order of artists, centered in Boston and New York, who were intent on establishing

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HISTORICAL
SOCIETY FOUNDED 1823

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Newsletter

Volume 59, No. 1
Spring 2022

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William H. Dunlap

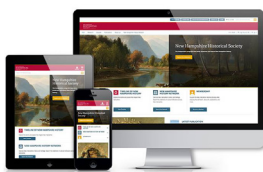
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OPEN 24/7



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Bill Dunlap

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As an independent, non-partisan organization, the New Hampshire Historical Society does not engage in political advocacy, for any point of view. What we *do* advocate for is the value of history and the lessons it can teach us as a country, to help us improve and make us even better.

The Society has a long record of supporting the teaching of history to our children. History taught properly is objective, fact-based, and free from political spin. Given this, I have serious misgivings about the recent passage of the so-called “divisive concepts” legislation by our state legislature. In my opinion it opens the door to censorship, places classroom teachers in a no-win situation, and tramples on the New Hampshire tradition that local communities regulate education, not bureaucrats in Concord.

Culture war-style controversies such as those fueled by the “divisive concepts” law are needless and unproductive distractions from the real problem: the catastrophic decline in history, social studies, and civics education that has been going on for the past decade or more.

It appears some would use this law as an excuse to sanitize our history: any historical facts that could cast our country in a negative light are off limits. This is a recipe for turning out not a well-educated citizenry but an ill-informed one. For real understanding, the entire historical story must be told.

For example, one of the nation’s blemishes in World War II was the forced internment of American citizens of Japanese ancestry. Does this unfortunate history outweigh the good accomplished by the United States in vanquishing Nazism and Japanese aggression? Of course not. But should we pretend it never happened and sweep it under the rug? Of course not, because by learning about it we help to prevent similar mistakes from happening again. As the great philosopher George Santayana said: those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

The key is having a balanced perspective about our shared history: the United States has been since its founding the world’s best example of and hope for democracy. But are we so weak as a nation that we can brook no self-criticism, or are unable to face uncomfortable facts in our history?

No, this is an attribute of authoritarian regimes—think Stalinist Russia or Nazi Germany—now in the dustbin of history; systems that could accept no self-examination, whence comes self-improvement—not because they were strong but because they were weak.

The ambiguous language of this new law lacks precision and is open to widely varying interpretations—there has already been much public debate about what even constitutes a violation of the law. But the penalties for classroom teachers are not ambiguous; they are very explicit. Teachers face dire—even career-ending—consequences for violating a law whose meaning no one seems to be able to agree on.

Teachers deserve our support. The state government’s educational establishment would serve all of us well by providing updated social studies standards rather than creating an atmosphere of menace for educators. A hotline set up to “report” on teachers—our neighbors and fellow citizens—is not the way our democracy should operate.

Culture war-style controversies such as those fueled by the “divisive concepts” law are needless and unproductive distractions from the real problem: the catastrophic decline in history, social studies, and civics education that has been going on for the past decade or more. The Society is doing its part to address this problem with the creation of “Moose on the Loose,” a new social studies curriculum, being provided at no charge to New Hampshire schools. We will keep working on this initiative, which is already showing promising results. Failure is not an option.



Fourth-grade students on a field trip to the Society participate in a program about how everyday life in New Hampshire has changed over time. In June 2017 the Society’s board of trustees voted to launch the Democracy Project, a major initiative to address the precipitous decline in knowledge of history and civics among Granite State students. In the years since, the Society has raised \$1.1 million to fund the creation of a new statewide social studies curriculum, “Moose on the Loose: Social Studies for Granite State Kids,” an interactive and dynamic resource for upper elementary students (grades 3 to 6), covering state history, civics, geography, and economics.

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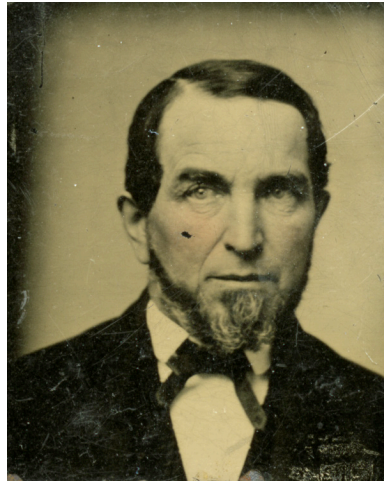
Philip Zea
Norwich, Vermont

SAMUEL L. GERRY (continued from page 1)

America's cultural reputation. They aimed to show that the nation's scenery and its artists rivaled what they had seen when studying in Europe. Together they redefined American art in the 19th century.

A special issue of *Historical New Hampshire*, published in January, features 52 full-color plates of Gerry's works along with articles by Gerry scholar Charles Vogel and art historian Melissa Geisler Trafton. The issue also appears in book form and is available for purchase at the Society, online at nhhistory.org, and by calling 603-228-6688.

An exhibition of Gerry's art is offered in two formats: virtual and onsite. The virtual exhibition includes all 52 works featured in the publication, and the onsite exhibition showcases 38 of the artist's most significant works, with the majority coming from private collections. Also featured are paintings from



Samuel Lancaster Gerry (1813–91), by an unknown photographer, circa 1865. This tintype descended in the family of Gerry's sister, and is the only photograph of the artist known to survive today. New Hampshire Historical Society, gift of Gary Langenbach.

the Society's own collection and from the collections of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Historic New England, Fenimore Art Museum, Revolutionary Spaces, and the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

The Society's annual spring lecture series, titled "Capturing Eden: An Exploration of White Mountain Art," examines the work of Gerry and his contemporaries within a broader context over the course of five lectures held at the Society in April and May. Presenters include author Howard Mansfield, historians Dona Brown and Marcia Schmidt Blaine, and art historians Inez McDermott and Mark Mitchell.

The onsite exhibition, *A Faithful Student of Nature: The Life and Art of Samuel L. Gerry*, is on view at the Society, 30 Park Street, Concord, from March 18 through August 6, 2022. The online exhibition is accessible through the Society's website and at exhibitions.nhhistory.org.

The Society is grateful for the generous support of our project sponsors: P. Andrews and Linda H. McLane, Robert and Dorothy Goldberg Charitable Foundation, LandVest, Carolyn and Bryant Tolles, Robert O. and Jill C. Wilson, Michael Mooney and Robert Cram, Benjamin and Emily Clark, David and Susan Clark, Jackson Historical Society, G. Warren and Leslie W. Schomaker, and New Millenium Studios, LLC.

The Flume, by Samuel L. Gerry (1813–91), oil on canvas, circa 1882. One of Gerry's most important commissions was for Charles Henry Greenleaf, for whom he created this painting. After Greenleaf's death in 1924, his wife, Mabelle Furst Greenleaf, donated it to the Society in his memory.

“MOOSE ON THE LOOSE” RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has recognized the New Hampshire Historical Society’s new online resource, “Moose on the Loose: Social Studies for Granite State Kids,” for its vital work in educating New Hampshire students in state history, civics, economics, and geography.

“Moose on the Loose” is part of the Democracy Project, an educational initiative started by the Society in 2017 to revitalize social studies education in the state. Although nearly three-quarters of Americans believe schools should be spending more time on history and civics, the subject has become increasingly marginalized across the country in recent years. In New Hampshire, where there is limited support for social studies from the state government, many elementary and middle school students receive little if any instruction in social studies, as it has nearly vanished from the curriculum.

“Social studies has recently been at the center of the culture wars in New Hampshire,” says Elizabeth Dubrulle, the Society’s director of education. “There are heated arguments all over the state about what is being taught and how it is being taught. The terrible irony is that most of this controversy is irrelevant—social studies isn’t really being taught at all in our schools, at least below the 8th-grade level.”

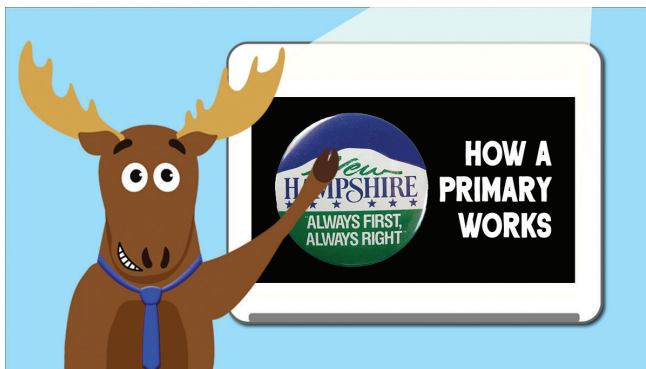
With its lovable mascot, Mason the Moose, “Moose on the Loose” has already been adopted by many New Hampshire schools, increasing the amount of time children are spending on state history and civics. It is provided at no cost, thanks to the generosity of individual donors, foundations, and organizations like the NEH, which recently awarded a grant of \$182,000 toward the total project goal of \$1.1 million.



“No other state in the nation,” says Dubrulle, “offers such a fun and informative look at its history. The ‘Moose’ really makes New Hampshire stand out as a leader in social studies education.”

The New Hampshire Historical Society was awarded the NEH grant in a highly competitive process. These much-needed funds will support the Society’s work to create a comprehensive social studies resource for students and educators. The NEH grant will enable the Society to complete the “Moose on the Loose” curriculum by the fall of 2022, including the creation of eight virtual field trips to iconic New Hampshire locations.

“Moose on the Loose” is an open-access website, available to everyone at moose.nhhistory.org.



SPRING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Virtual Genealogy Workshop: Read All About It! Finding Your Ancestors in Newspapers **Tuesday, March 15, 2022, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Newspapers were the first form of “social media” and captured much more than just obituaries. From birth announcements to crime reports to land sales, this one-hour workshop delves into the wealth of information that can be found in newspapers. Join Melanie McComb, genealogist at American Ancestors and the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS), to learn how to discover your ancestors’ stories using various newspaper collections. This virtual workshop is \$15 for members of the New Hampshire Historical Society or the New England Historic Genealogical Society; \$25 for nonmembers. Advance registration is required via Eventbrite.com.

New Exhibition Opens: *A Faithful Student of Nature: The Life and Art of Samuel L. Gerry* **Friday, March 18, 2022, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Visit the Society for an unprecedented look at the career of Samuel L. Gerry, a prominent 19th-century artist who was known particularly for his paintings of New Hampshire. Well-connected within the Boston art world, Gerry helped organize the city’s first art associations, wrote extensively on the artist’s craft, trained students, and collaborated with some of the finest artists of his time, during a period when American art was coming into its own. Admission is free for New Hampshire Historical Society members and children age 18 and under; \$7 for nonmembers.



Virtual Technical Workshop: Cataloging 101: How to Identify and Keep Track of Your Collections **Wednesdays, March 23 and 30, 2022, 6 to 8 p.m.**

Designed for small museums and local historical societies, this two-part webinar covers how to create catalog records for a variety of collections (books, photographs, archival collections, museum objects). What are the important features to document? How can you identify and describe objects in a way that makes them accessible to others, including colleagues in the organization, outside researchers, or those who may discover the collection in the future? The program includes a brief overview of software programs that provide good cataloging options, and an introduction to the New Hampshire History Network, a statewide database of collections preserved at museums and other cultural organizations. This virtual workshop is offered over two evenings. The cost is \$50 for members of the New Hampshire Historical Society; \$75 for nonmembers. Advance registration is required via Eventbrite.com.

Family Fun Day

Saturday, April 2, 2022, 10 a.m. to noon

Bring the whole family to the Society for a morning of games, crafts, and storytelling. Explore the historic building, tour the exhibitions, test your knowledge of Granite State trivia, and make a New Hampshire-themed craft to take home. Family Fun Day is geared for families with kids ages 6 to 10, but all ages are welcome. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is not required; we welcome your family to drop in. Admission is free thanks to a generous contribution from Concord Pediatric Dentistry.

Curator’s Tour: *A Faithful Student of Nature: The Life and Art of Samuel L. Gerry* **Saturday, April 9, 2022, 11 a.m.**

Join Director of Collections and Exhibitions Wes Balla on a guided tour of the Society’s new exhibition. Admission is free for New Hampshire Historical Society members; \$7 for nonmembers.

Edward and Caroline Gove were married in the Gonic section of Rochester on July 25, 1852, and it is likely this daguerreotype of the handsome couple was taken on or around their wedding day. New Hampshire Historical Society, gift of James L. and Donna-Belle Garvin. Learn how to create catalog records for photographs and a variety of other types of collections at a virtual technical workshop on March 23 and 30, 2022.

Spring Lecture Series: “Capturing Eden: An Exploration of White Mountain Art”

Thursdays, April 14 to May 12, 2022, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

In 1836, a young British painter named Thomas Cole wrote in his “Essay on American Scenery” that “Nature has spread for us a rich and delightful banquet—shall we turn away from it? We are still in Eden.” Cole was one of the earliest artists to venture into the White Mountains of New Hampshire, seeking, as he put it, “the loveliness of verdant fields, the sublimity of lofty mountains, [and] the varied magnificence of the sky.” More than 450 artists came to the region in the 19th century, with sketchpads, camp stools, and white umbrellas. The views they created on canvas would become emblematic of the state. The Society’s spring lecture series explores the White Mountain artists of this era and how they shaped New Hampshire. For more details, visit the programs and events calendar on the Society’s website at nhhistory.org, and watch your mailbox for the spring lecture series brochure. Space is limited, and advance registration is required. Admission is free for New Hampshire Historical Society members. Nonmembers are welcome to attend the series for a fee of \$50, which includes a one-year membership. Register online through Eventbrite or call 603-228-6688 to register by phone and pay with a credit card.



Family Program: Redcoats and Rebels: Gaming the American Revolution

Saturday, April 16, 2022, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Reenact the American Revolution with a tabletop game at the Society. Kids will immerse themselves in New Hampshire’s fight for independence from Britain. Each child will assume the identity of a historical character and have to choose sides in the journey from colony to country. This program is geared for kids ages 8 to 13. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited, and advance registration is required. Register online at Eventbrite.com or by calling 603-856-0645. Admission is free thanks to a generous contribution from Concord Pediatric Dentistry.



A View of the Mountain Pass Called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch), by Thomas Cole (1801–48), oil on canvas, 1839, courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Fund. The Society’s 2022 spring lecture series explores how artists shaped perceptions of the White Mountains and created a new perspective toward wilderness.

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Bring the whole family for a morning of games, crafts, and storytelling!



FAMILY FUN DAY

All ages welcome!
Geared for kids 6 to 10.

Saturday, April 2, 2022
10 to 12 noon
30 Park Street, Concord



FREE admission thanks to the generosity of Concord Pediatric Dentistry.