

The independent nonprofit that saves, preserves, and shares New Hampshire history.

**NEWS FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Additional Photographs Available

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The Concord Coach Comes Home

CONCORD, NH— How do you move a 170-year-old stagecoach, a beloved symbol of Concord and the entire state of New Hampshire? Very carefully, and with a lot of old-fashioned muscle power. On Sunday, August 18, the New Hampshire Historical Society moved its Concord coach out of storage and into the rotunda of its Park Street building.

“The coach is one of the most iconic, charismatic objects in our collections,” said the Society’s president, Bill Dunlap. “We are delighted that it will once again be displayed prominently for all to enjoy.”



The Concord coach, made by the Abbot-Downing Company of Concord, was one of New Hampshire’s chief products in the 19th century. Its innovative design made it the most popular stagecoach in the world. Many commercial concerns, including the Wells Fargo

Company, bought dozens of them and used them to help settle the American West, bringing people, goods, and the U.S. mail to far-flung towns and outposts.

The Historical Society's stagecoach was built around 1855 and used on a mail line in Massachusetts until the 1890s. The coach was eventually purchased by the Boston & Maine Railroad, which put it on display in the Concord train station.

When the train station was torn down in the late 1950s, the Boston & Maine donated the coach to the Historical Society. Relatively few were left in the world, particularly after Hollywood destroyed so many making western movies. The Historical Society moved the stagecoach from the train station to its Park Street building by driving it through downtown Concord, pulled by a team of horses in a "coach parade."

The coach was displayed in the rotunda of the Historical Society's main building from 1957 until 1994, when it was moved to the Society's exhibition galleries at Eagle Square. In 2014 the coach went into storage. It has now returned to the rotunda at the New Hampshire Historical Society, where visitors can once again connect with this important state symbol. The coach's doors, painted by artist John Burgum, feature the Old Man of the Mountain on one side and the New Hampshire State House on the other.



The project to move such a cherished object was not undertaken lightly. The Society called upon the services of Brian Erickson of Contocook, who, as past president of the Abbot-Downing Historical Society, has spent decades studying and preserving Concord

coaches. With his own team, along with assistance from the Society's staff, the Concord coach was disassembled, then loaded onto a flatbed trailer and transported to the Park Street building, where it was reassembled. It just barely fit through the building's front doors. According to Jonathan Olly, the Society's Director of Museum Collections, few people today know how to responsibly "take apart, transport, and reassemble a Concord coach," which is why Erickson's expertise was so critical to the project. "This was a once-in-a-career move," Olly continued, stating that the entire effort was months in the making.



By the end of the year, the Society will be opening an exhibition about the history of the Concord coach, focusing on what makes it unique and what it has meant to New Hampshire.

The New Hampshire Historical Society is open to the public Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults. Children 18 and under are free, as are full-time students and active military personnel and their families with a valid ID. Members of the New Hampshire Historical Society are admitted at no charge.

Founded in 1823, the New Hampshire Historical Society is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to saving, preserving, and sharing New Hampshire history. Nowhere will you find a more extensive collection of objects and archives related to New Hampshire's history. The Society shares these vast collections through its research

library, museum, website, publications, exhibitions, and youth and adult educational programs. The Society is not a state-funded agency. All of its programs and services are made possible by membership dues and contributions. For more information about the Society and the benefits of membership, visit nhhistory.org or call 603-228-6688.