The JOYS OF GARDENING have pulled volunteers out of their quarantine doldrums and back into the History House gardens for the start of a new season! Socially distanced, we feel eager to get the beauty of flowers back into our lives. We weed and cut back as we admire early spring flowers, returning birds, and bumble bee and butterfly pollinators. It feels as if the plants also enjoy the convivial comradery of volunteers helping to get them in shape again.

A freshly cut lawn seems to embrace these gardens. Fairy-like columbine dance about in the spring breezes, dressed in pale pinks and white. There are abundant forget-me-nots scattered about the gardens, giving a blue haze to the vista. Interspersed within the gardens are bright, deep blue bachelor's buttons. These contrast beautifully with the chartreuse-yellow spurge. The hydrangea bushes are all pruned and ready for their next flowering later in the season. As the summer unfolds, we will enjoy the coming of day-lilies, foxgloves, delphiniums, hosta, and phlox, among many others. The addition of some larger blue hostas, courtesy of Board member Joan Farnsworth, is a welcome addition to this year’s garden!

Volunteer, Patty Van Horne created an improved stone pathway that connects the enclosed front garden with the west side lawn. This should
IN THE YEAR 1836, James T. Leavitt Esq. was living in a substantial residence fronting on Madison avenue, a little south of and opposite to the Whittier Tannery. He was a prominent attorney and an important citizen. He was influential in the councils of the Democratic party, and served the community in the legislature of the State Senate. He owned a good bit of land back of his home, and was probably also something of a farmer. Part of this area was called Leavitt pasture. Some portions of it were marshy and wont to overflow. The boys of that period were accustomed to skate on the ice of these overflowed patches in the late fall months. There was a schoolhouse on Madison avenue a little way above the Leavitt homestead and at morning, noon, and night, the children used to make use of the Leavitt pasture as a playground. The area then owned by Mr. Leavitt is that now bounded by Madison avenue and Leavitt street, North avenue and Maple street.

In 1857, Mr. Leavitt died, but members of his family remained on the estate until about 1870. After his death, his only son James gave to the town a strip of land running east and west from Madison avenue for a public highway. This was accepted by the town in the early 1860’s and a thoroughfare was built and named Leavitt Street in honor of (his father). “

WHERE LEAVITT STREET GOT ITS NAME
from The Independent Reporter October 24, 1918

“The history of Leavitt Street is a part of the story of Skowhegan itself. It is a street which is closely associated with the growth and development of the community.”

“In the year 1836, James T. Leavitt, Esq. was living in a substantial residence fronting on Madison avenue, a little south of and opposite to the Whittier Tannery. He was a prominent attorney and an important citizen. He was influential in the councils of the Democratic party, and served the community in the legislature of the State Senate. He owned a good bit of land back of his home, and was probably also something of a farmer. Part of this area was called Leavitt pasture. Some portions of it were marshy and wont to overflow. The boys of that period were accustomed to skate on the ice of these overflowed patches in the late fall months. There was a schoolhouse on Madison avenue a little way above the Leavitt homestead and at morning, noon, and night, the children used to make use of the Leavitt pasture as a playground. The area then owned by Mr. Leavitt is that now bounded by Madison avenue and Leavitt street, North avenue and Maple street.

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OVERVIEW 2020

This season with COVID-19 restrictions in place, we don’t know when History House doors will open to the public. However, staff continue to work behind closed doors to protect, maintain, and promote Skowhegan’s cultural legacy. We are offering the following:

- The History House website (skowheganhistoryhouse.org) will host virtual History House and outdoor exhibit tours as well as Indigenous leader James Francis’ video highlighting Wabanaki Culture and Heritage.
- Curator Kim Wilson is on-site to assist researchers and others (phone: 474-6632 or email: curator@skowheganhistoryhouse.org).
- Our lovely spring Heirloom Gardens are open to visitors - as are the outdoor exhibits which include the Kennebec River overlook with its historic signage and lovely views and a refurbished River Bateau Exhibit with signage depicting both Benedick Arnold’s unsuccessful Kennebec River journey to Quebec and the Kennebec River Log Drive.
- We are hopeful that the Wabanaki Wigwam will be built on the History House west side lawn during July or August. Check our website for updated information in July.

(History House Garden News, continued from page 1)

facilitate movement and eliminate plant damage when visitors move from one area to the next to see the new Wigwam exhibit. There is new signage coming as well, which will reflect our updated plant materials. The riverside Bateau exhibit has been refurbished and is ready for the summer. The river overlook highlights the stories of Skowhegan’s 1800’s industrial development and gives an ever changing view of the beautiful Kennebec River.

A visit to the History House gardens would be a terrific summer outing, especially this year with our limited access to indoor activities. It's easy to be socially distanced outdoors, and that Maine air is wonderful!
**The Parcel from Alice Larrabee**

**One Wintry Day,** a parcel arrived at the Skowhegan Post Office. It had travelled across the state from Boothbay, ME and was then brought to the History House where it sat patiently waiting for springtime. Once the History House doors opened and the flurry of activity which accompanies each new summer season calmed down a bit, we had a chance to inspect what arrived over the winter. **The Boothbay parcel contained:** one Girl Scout ‘Membership Certificate’, one embroidered sash badge, one cap, one uniform, and one letter which reads as follows:

Dear Kim,

I thought you might be interested in my old Girl Scout uniform. I joined the Girl Scouts and got my uniform in Skowhegan in 1935 when I was 10 years old. The uniform had deep side gussets in the skirt. My friend joined a year or two later and the ‘new’ uniform was of a lighter material and had a straight skirt with no gussets.

Our Captain was Justina Harding. She took us hiking or camping almost every weekend. One day we hiked to Lakewood, about 8 miles, where her friend had a cottage. I think we stayed overnight.

On Memorial Day or Independence Day parades, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts usually were at the end of the parade, straggling along in some disorder. Not Captain Harding’s girls! Every night after school we went to a quiet side street and practiced marching. We marched in perfect step and I remember that we learned to pivot. When we marched in the parade we were some snappy outfit, believe me.

I stayed in the Scouts until I was in high school. Then Captain Harding left us and that was the end of hiking. Our new leader was one of the Merrills and she decided that we should have a “tea”. We were to invite a boy. When I asked a boy in my algebra class whom I had a crush on, he just laughed at me. Only one of the Scouts brought a boy to the tea. That did it for me. I quit the Scouts in a hurry.

My name is now Alice Larrabee. My maiden name was Alice True. I was born in the Skowhegan Water Company’s Pumping Station at the Eddy. We lived in the company house. My father’s name was Edwin R. True, my mother was Elsie Martindale True. I had three sisters: Gladys, Glennis, and Florence. I graduated from Skowhegan High School (and Bloomfield Academy) in 1942.

Note: I did look on the Internet and they didn’t show any uniforms like mine. I hope you can use it.

Sincerely,
Alice Larrabee

![Alice True SHS - The Lever, 1942](image)

**Oral Histories’ Program**

Continuing this season is our Oral Histories program; Trustee Kay Marsh is available to interview Skowhegan area senior citizens to compile an oral history of our region. This has already proven to be an invaluable legacy! If you would like to participate, please call Kay at 465-7458 or email her at grammy.kay.cee@gmail.com for more details or appointments.
WHISPERING PINES MOTEL (c. 1966)

“Located 12 miles north of interstate No. 95 On U.S. Rt. 201 (Skowhegan Exit.)
Family Accomodations Reasonable Rates”

SOMERSET CABINS (c. 1950)

“30 Units - Private Showers - Panelray Heat
1/2 Mile from business district
AAA Approved”

CHASSE MOTEL (c. 1960)

“SKOWHEGAN, MAINE
Tel. 7-8842
2 1/2 Miles East of Skowhegan on Route 2 to Bangor
14 - Room Motel Hollywood Beds + Private Showers”
Somerset Cabins was on Rt. 201 / Madison Avenue where Hannaford is now. You can see Cold Brook in the background of this picture and on the bottom left of the postcard opposite.

Do you have any Skowhegan postcards you’d like to show us or donate to the Skowhegan History House? We particularly enjoy seeing cards from local businesses!

SKOWHEGAN MOTEL (c. 1960)

“1 Mile North of Skowhegan Direct Route to Quebec. 28 Luxurious Modern Fireproof Units. Central Heating, Circulating Hot Water and Beautyrest Mattresses. Featuring”The Ledge Room” - Maine’s Most Modern Restaurant, Near Lakewood Theatre, Golf Course, Hunting and Fishing, Open All Year Around. Operated by Mr. & Mrs. Leon H. Cossaboom Phone Skowhegan 7-3395”

LAKELAND MOTEL (c. 1953)

“U.S. Route 201 Skowhegan, Maine One of Maine’s Most Modern Motels 4 Miles North of Skowhegan 1 Mile from Lakewood Theatre Completely Insulated Cross-Ventilation Your Hosts - Mr. & Mrs. W. J. Dionne”
ONE OF MY GREATEST JOYS as curator is seeing the wonderful donations people bring to Skowhegan History House.

Last summer, we received more than 100 Skowhegan postcards from the early 1900’s to the 1970’s. They were collected by Skowhegan native Susan (White) Martin who passed away in 2013 and donated by her sister Dorothy. Amongst the collection is a rare aluminum postcard from the early 1900’s as well as a number of other historical, humorous, and even hand-glittered cards. Postcards are scarce these days now that our smartphones can send selfies around the world in seconds. We are grateful to Susan for collecting and Dorothy for donating (and thus preserving) these postcards.

A more recent donation was something used in Skowhegan many years ago - a German Feldmeyer Spirit Iron. Back in the early 1900’s it must have seemed magical to have an iron that didn’t require heating on a stove or fireplace. It heated itself but my goodness, what a fire hazard! It’s fun to share items like this with visitors on House tours because not only are they sometimes unique, but they usually serve as good reminders to be grateful for all the product safety features we take for granted today.

As always, if you have or know of any items related to Skowhegan which you would like to either show us or donate to History House, please get in touch. If you can’t donate at this time, then with your permission, we may be able to photograph your item for inclusion into our virtual collection. We love to see Skowhegan’s treasures!
Membership Benefits…

✓ Recognition as an interested supporter of the preservation and promotion of our heritage
✓ Summer & Winter Newsletters

Giving Opportunities…

*History House is a 501(c) (3) non-profit charitable organization and donations are tax deductible within the limits of the IRS Code.*

**Society Membership** Members of the Skowhegan History House Society represent patrons, families, and friends of the History House who wish to financially support the mission of preserving Skowhegan’s legacy and promoting its heritage.

**In Memoriam** Families, family members, or friends may make memorial donations in honor of their loved one.

**Annual Appeal** Contributions to the Annual Appeal advance the goals and mission, programming, and general operations.

**Student Intern Supporter** Contributions go towards supporting a ten week internship for a local high school or college student. The Student Intern assists with special projects, conducts tours, and performs other duties related to operating a museum and research center. This program offers students an opportunity to gain direct work experience, as well as develop communication, and team skills in a professional setting.

For more information on any of our giving opportunities, please write to us at PO Box 832 Skowhegan, ME 04976, call History House at 207-474-6632, or email president@skowheganhistoryhouse.org

Thank you.

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**Skowhegan History House Museum and Research Center**

2020 Society Membership Form

Please renew your History House Membership or join today!

Membership dues are the History House’s major source of operating support. Consider what a strong History House means for our community and choose the level of support that’s right for you.

[ ] $24 [ ] $36 [ ] $60 [ ] $120
[ ] $180 [ ] Other Amount $________

Name ________________________________

Mailing Address ______________________________________________________

City/ Town ___________________________ Zip ______________

Email __________________________________________

Method of payment:

[ ] Check, payable to Skowhegan History House
[ ] VISA [ ] MasterCard [ ] American Express
[ ] Other

Card # ___________________________ CVV#___________

Exp. Date ____________________________________________

Signature __________________________________________

Complete and Return to:
History House Association, Inc.,
PO Box 832, Skowhegan ME 04976

Your membership is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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**Our Mission**

*Preserving an increasingly valuable historic collection representing Skowhegan’s legacy and promoting Skowhegan’s cultural heritage*

*The River’s Edge*, Skowhegan History House Newsletter, published biannually

Editors: Patricia Horine and Kim Wilson

All images are from the SHHMRC permanent collection unless otherwise noted.

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From the Archives: ‘Skowhegan Fair at Night’ by Richard ’Scoop’ Plummer (c. 1950)