

Twin Mountain-Bretton Woods Historical Society

2025-3 Newsletter

Greetings:

On Memorial Day weekend the society will hold an open house in the community room in the town hall. There will be many displays featuring assorted items from our extensive collection. The community room will be open from 10 AM to 3 PM on Saturday May 24th and Sunday May 25th. On Monday, Memorial Day items will be on display from 10 AM until 1 PM.

Speaking of collections, society members have been cataloging our vast collection of historical photographs, paper documents, paintings, clothing, business signs, and a myriad of other assorted items of historical significance. We measure, describe in detail the item, photograph it, then enter this information into a computer database. When completed, this database will be available for researchers and the public.

Continuing this collection theme, we have in our possession Carroll Town Reports dating back into the late 1890's. I looked at the town report for the year ending in 1925. One hundred years ago, the town selectmen were Leonard Burroughs, Philip F. McKenna, and Jos. Houghton. The town clerk and treasurer was Fred E. Staples and the tax collector was Jas. A. Mulleavey. There were 222 registered voters, and we had a total of 65 Vehicles registered in town. We also had 101 horses plus 14 mules and asses for those who preferred four-legged transportation.

According to the annual town report, the total evaluation for property 100 years ago was \$2,002,897 dollars. Compare that to our present evaluation of \$669,177,308 dollars. The total town budget for 1925 was \$55,399. In vital statistics there were 6 marriages, 5 births, and 7 deaths reported.

This is a reminder that currently the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition: *Crossroads-Change in Rural America*, is featured at the Jefferson Community Center 178 Meadows Rd. in Jefferson. It is an interactive exhibit focusing on the changes in rural America over the past century. The hours are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 12-8, and Wednesday and Friday 9-3 and Saturday 9-1. Admission is free. Stop in for a look back in time!

Here is a trivia question for everyone. While cataloging our collections we came across this item. It is a **Stymie Measure**. What is it, and where was it used? The answer will be in our next newsletter.

Try your hand on this Word Search puzzle created by Mark Leno and his daughter Megan.

"Carrolling" Around Town

NXDOWZOTZMINIGOLFGOKARTSMOMRSH
 UIGUGWEKQSVLLUZXECRAWFORDNOTCH
 KMCLHWTWJHPOSJGRFRAGZKDSLNPJRK
 ZFKVELWRFFZGRANDHOTELSBCCQQCQQ
 EIXKRWJSQDVFFJEBFPMSSVYMIIVQEDLE
 ASFMMVEEVAAZVSNXQPMNHDVYOTDNLA
 THKKIFIOWOYKKSEKMMARHBBTGZZFYC
 ZHAETXHCIRCUSTOWNEBAMMONOOSUCW
 MAFNPWDCCPDLHVZVDILFTNRAWGXIKYG
 RTOVMCROSSCOUNTRYSKIINGFTYZYKK
 FCEQXTEGRZAAEHMSFKVTDWPHHLSTRB
 DHIUQFSAVFIGXARDWMGCSHOREACRES
 REWZRJTABZMMKUANOQTYGFXACJYEZC
 ERZBRETTONWOODSCOASTERUPSSMSOL
 AYZHQNMENHNHUTATRGEZXLQGRRAHQD
 MAKLOLKMFPQIBSWIMMINGCESKINGZ
 WCRIOFRECREATIONAREADAVIFSRCLCP
 OSQSOTINRIEUHIKINGZJODVYIHPXRR
 RFANAZUBEHMPAJEUHFAEQZIUIZALIG
 LWGOLUJRBMEPTFETBOHMAKJLIVRUEW
 DUAWPPKSYZWWRWQYRHDXLWACFKIBK
 PYZMBTGCIICROIZUMJVKVAALYLHESU
 LAEONRGGFQMFOTAKCZDJLQINHNNOHR
 PSBBTMMVATGVAPIVGZEVRIXEUDAELKG
 TSOIQWRCKBRLFHIIYSTRAWCEMETERYG
 FMALSXLWTWILDLIFEEXHIBITNWDITX
 TAKIVSUBZMESXMVCIUFORUKJXATATS
 WDJNUCBIIDPTZDFWTYRRZTHECOGFIJ
 MGWGSXMYLPLGPVLGCIGGVYAXVKNLRH
 FZINGLIOTWINMOUNTAINDRIVEINWHS

Twin Mountain Drive In	Cross Country Skiing
Bretton Woods Coaster	Recreation Area
Wildlife Exhibit	Straw Cemetery
Snow Mobiling	Circus Towne
Dream World	Fish Hatchery
Upper Falls	Shore Acres
Swimming	Zealand
Skiing	Hermit
Hiking	Air Park
Gazebo	

A Fly-In, A Drive-In, Fly-In Again

By: Mark Leno, Jr.



Aerial View of Charlmont Motor Inn, Drive-In Theater (remains), and “New” Twin Mt. Airport Circa 1972

If you lived in Carroll for some time, you probably know in Twin Mountain there is an airport hidden behind the trees and buildings that line Route 3 South. Located off Airport Road, New Hampshire’s highest elevation runway provides 2660 feet of asphalt for aircraft to land and take off, and it is still active. But did you also know there was another airport long before this one and, at one point, between the two airfields, there was once a Drive-In theater?

It all began back in 1929 when, according to the US Bureau of Air Commerce, Carroll proposed establishing an airport in Twin Mountain. Once approved, a 2000-foot sod and loam runway was constructed on the land of John Houghton off the Profile Road (Route 3). The airport was to be dedicated in July 1930 but was postponed to August 1, 2,3, 1930. As part of the dedication, the first “airmail” from

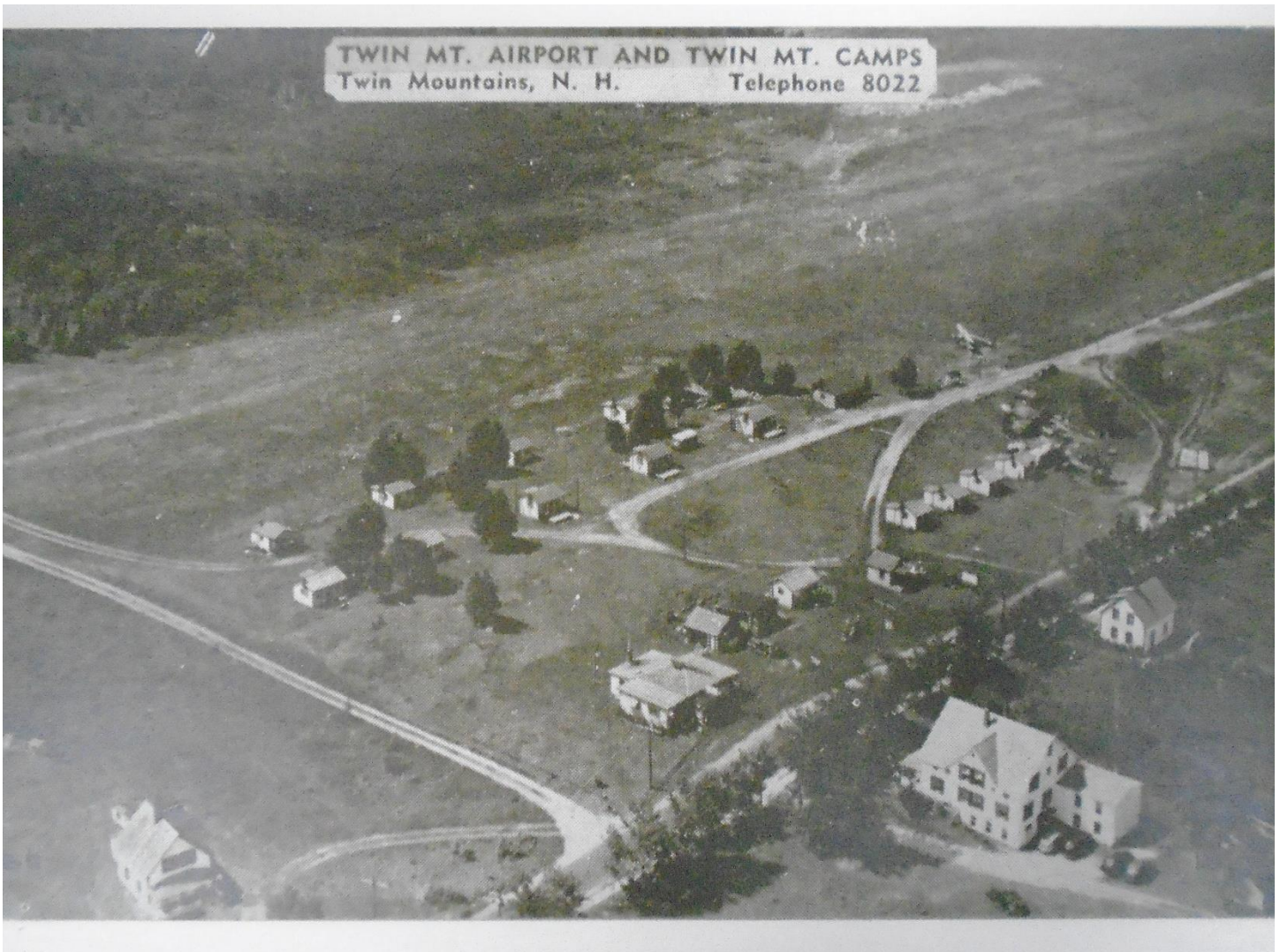
Twin Mountain was sent out and among the pilot's taking part was Wylie Apte, a founder of New England Air Circus Association and early air show pilot from Conway NH.



Twin Mountain Airport - 1931 - Aircraft L to R
1. Curtiss Robin, 2 & 3, Fleet Biplane, 4. American Eagle

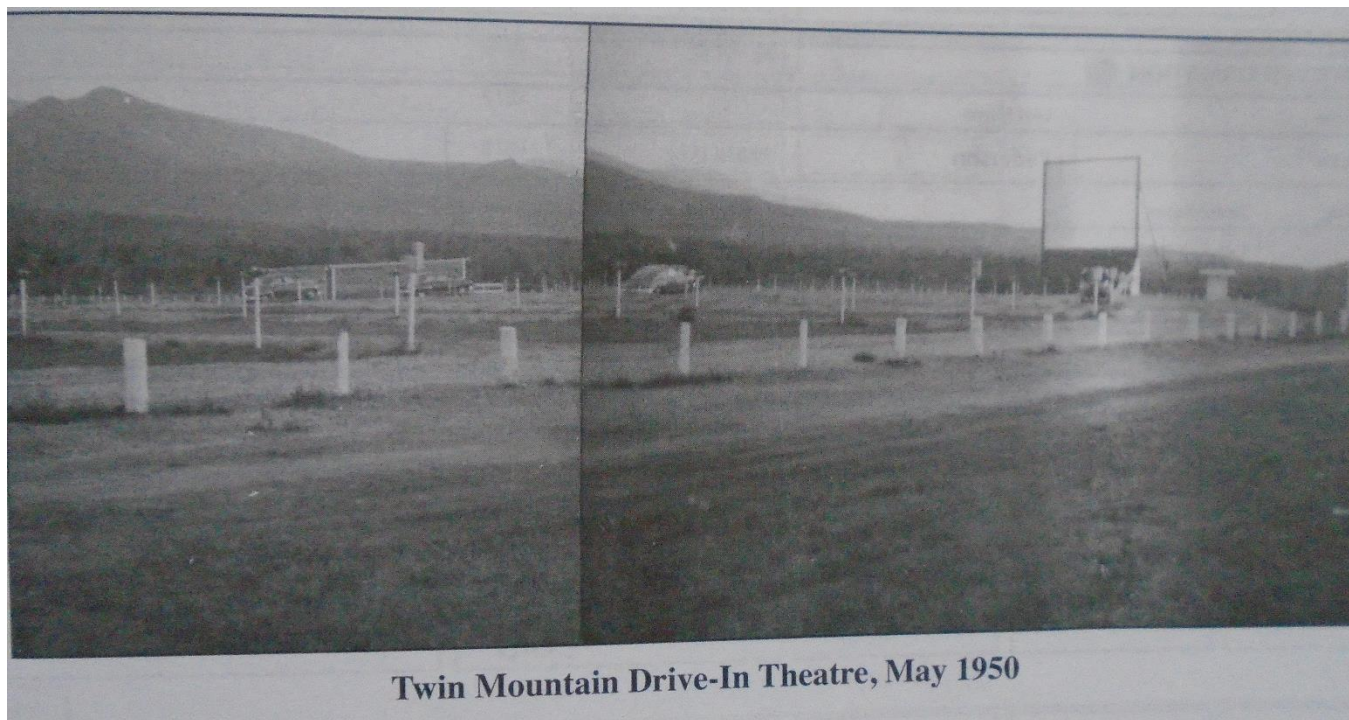
John was the oldest of 8 children born to early Twin Mountain settlers Patrick and Mary Ann Houghton who were farmers. It is unknown why John was attracted to early flight and opening up his family's land for an airstrip but according to a brief history of Carroll written by Bonnie Moroney

in her book *Recipes & Remembrances Let the Memories of Twin Mountain Live On*, "John Houghton was the first person in Twin Mountain to build and operate tourist cabins, and the business was very successful. John's next endeavor was to plan and build the Twin Mountain Airport. ... Once the airport was open John would have fly-ins about every weekend during the summer months. The (pilots) would take people up for rides in their planes and also do stunts to entertain John's guests and customers."



In addition to owning tourist cabins and organizing the airport, John also operated a restaurant and a small zoo on the same site. Mrs. Moroney wrote: “(John) had quite a few animals and even some snakes for sale or pay 10 cents to go and see. He was famous around the area for his waffles and ice cream. He also had a team of German Shepard dogs that he used for sled dogs as well. John had quite a talent for training bears as well and wrestling with them.”

By 1950 the Twin Mountain Airport became known as the Airpark and the restaurant was known as the Airpark Diner. And by 1953 the town directory showed only the Twin Mountain Cabins, Diner and “Trout Pool” but no airpark.



The long grass runway of the first Twin Mountain Airport behind the Houghton Cabins ceased to welcome Fly-Ins by the early 1950's but soon became home to the Twin Mountain Drive-In. With its large white screen towering over Route 3 and its 400-car parking lot taking up much of the former runway, the Twin Mountain Drive-In welcomed thousands of motorists who wished to watch the latest movies on the big screen. It was the peak years of the Drive-In “open air” theater where movie goers could go to spend a night watching -or not watching- a movie from the privacy of their own car or truck. The Twin Mountain theater even had a playground for the kids.

An undated newspaper clipping in the Twin Mountain-Bretton Woods Historical Society reported, “...The popular new Twin Mountain Drive-In Theater, the first in the White Mountains region, (is) on the site of the former Twin Mt. Airport. There are accommodations for 400 cars enabling patrons to drive into a stall, plug in the latest individual speakers and enjoy moving pictures projected on the giant outdoor screen ...

Two complete shows are presented every night, rain or shine, and the management even provides “a free warming bottle for babies.”



c. 1950 Route 3 South
(Supreme View Inn - now Attleboro Ski Club across the road)

The entrance fee to the show was initially 60 cents and later increased to 70 cents, based on two different Twin Mt. Drive-In posters that the Twin Mountain-Bretton Woods Historical Society has.

Mrs. Moroney's Carroll history mentioned that in the 1940's Mike Paquette and Armond Duranleau built the Drive-In and Paquette later sold his share to Duranleau who ran the theater until it closed in the late 1950's early 1960's as he had another business in West Stewartstown.



And just as the first airport closed and the drive-in came in, the closure of the drive-in eventually led to the opening of the new (and present) paved airport in November 1964. And like its predecessor, the “new” airport, was a hit. Frederic B. Lehr, wrote in his 200th Anniversary book: *Carroll New Hampshire The First 200 Years 1772-1972*, “A bit of statistics that may surprise a great many people, even residents of Carroll, is this: At one time not many years ago, Carroll had the largest percentage of licensed private pilots, with respect to its population, of any community in the United States. Years ago, almost at the beginning of air activity, private strips were hacked out of the woods ... (and) helmeted and goggled pilots with the traditional scarf around the neck were much in evidence.” ... At least in the “Fly-In, Drive-In, Fly-In” part of town.

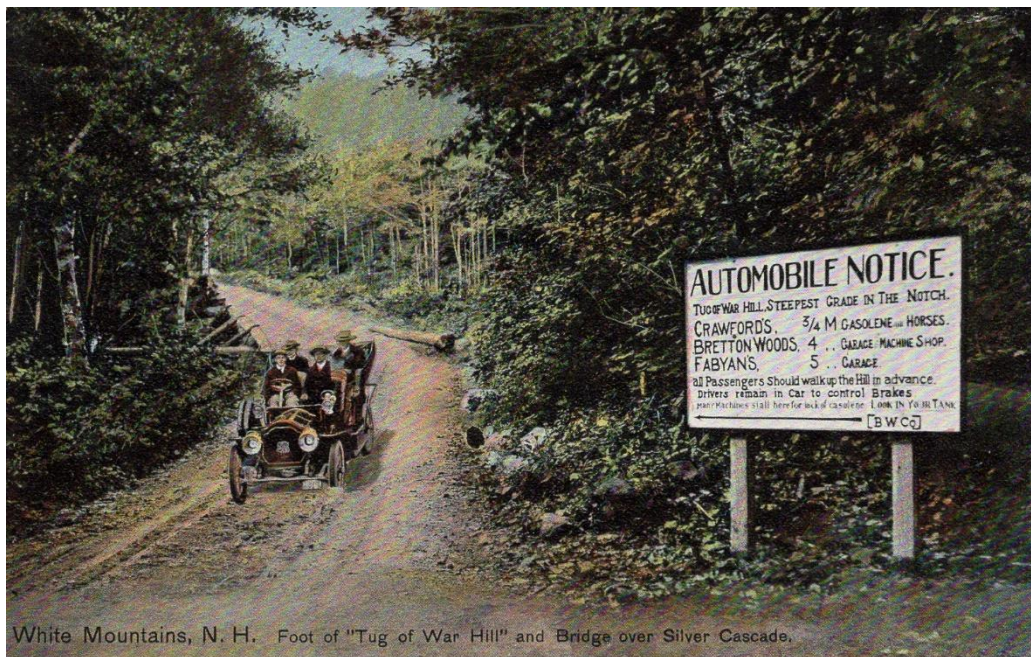
*Thanks to Bonnie Moroney and the TMBWHS for allowing me to use text and photos for the story. *

Stagecoach, Trains and Automobiles

Travelling Through Crawford Notch-First Person Accounts

By: Mark A. Leno, Jr.

Did you ever wonder what it was like when the early stagecoaches, trains and automobiles came through Crawford Notch so many years ago. Fortunately, there are first person accounts of what it was like to travel through “the Gate of the Notch” still around. I have located three accounts of those who had travelled this route by stagecoach (prior to the arrival of the P&O train in the 1870s), by train in 1882, and by one of the earliest automobile trips in 1909 for us to enjoy.



A little background on the notch. Early access to the west side of the White Mountains was via a dirt carriage road that came up through Crawford Notch, a steep roadway with a 23% grade. It made travel extremely difficult for those going north through the notch. The notch was then a narrow path – barely wide enough for a wagon and the Saco River flowing alongside the road. The two mountainsides of Mount Webster and Mount Willard came down to meet at the road and river – thus forming a “notch” between the two mountains.

At the top of the notch stood Crawford House, a large hotel that had its beginnings back in 1828 to house travelers. The area around the Crawford House eventually became known as Crawford Notch, named after the family who made it a destination. Initially known as White Mountain Notch or, more simply the “Gate of the Notch,” it soon became one of the

doorways that welcomed thousands of visitors annually to the natural beauty of the White Mountains. Whether arriving by foot, horseback, carriage, railroad, or later by motor vehicles, the gate has always open to guests who spread its popularity by word of mouth or through newspapers, magazines, and tourist guidebooks.

Here are some first-person accounts of these early visitors who travelled by stagecoach, train and early automobile to Crawford Notch.

STAGECOACH:

“American Summer Resorts in the Seventies”

By: William Frederick Dix (1911)

The Independent Volume LXX (New York) April 6, 1911, pp. 1212-1213



“... When I went to the mountains in the late 70’s I went to the Crawford House, or the Profile, or the Twin Mountain, or North Conway.’ “The Adirondacks* were an almost trackless wilderness. No railway tracks defiled the Crawford Notch, and we used to drive in from North Conway seated – perilously, it seemed to me – a thousand feet up in the air on top of a gorgeous six or eight horse Concord coach. The roads were narrow and rough, the horses would go at a free hand gallop, the coach would lurch around the curves, plunging through the ruts, and sway from side to side, the driver would hold six or eight separate lines in one hand, his long lash-whip in the other, and we would grip the handrail and breathe semi-occasionally. It was a thrilling experience and never to be forgotten, a ride in a

White Mountain coach in those days. I was only a “little shaver” then, but I remember the thrills as if they were yesterday.”

“Tired and nerve racked at the hour of dusk as we emerged from the Crawford Notch, how welcomed were the lights of the old Crawford House glimmering across the valley! Massive black walnut furniture and washbowls and pitchers were in the elegant, Brussels-carpeted bedrooms (there were no private baths), and what a fine, hot supper awaited us after we

had refreshed ourselves. Oyster stew, chops, and baked potatoes, eggs, hot rolls, coffee and tea, custard and jellies and layer cake- what rare feasts and what fine appetites we had.”

(* Authors Note: Did the writer mean the White Mountains?)

RAILROAD:

Samuel A. Drake

“The Heart of the White Mountains” p. 93

New York: Harper & Brothers, 1882

“I have since made several journeys through the Notch by railway. The effect of the scenery, joined with some sense of peril in the minds of the timid, is very marked. Old travelers find a new and veritable sensation of excitement; while new ones forget fatigue, drop the novels they have been reading, maintaining a state of breathless suspense and admiration until the train vanishes out at the rocky portal, after an ascent of nearly 600 feet in two miles.”

AUTOMOBILE:

Motor Age Magazine

October 21, 1909

“While up at the mountains Governor Henry B. Quimby* made a trip around a wide circle, inspecting the work that had been done by the hotel people. A *Motor Age* representative found the results surprising. Remembering how bad Tug of War Hill** in Crawford Notch was when the first Glidden Tour went through there, and when horses were a necessity for many cars, (to pull them up the hill), and later how it served as a hill climb, the writer found it a much easier grade now. He watched several cars go up the hill, among them small ones, and they had little bother. (State) Engineer A. W. Dean (who was riding with the Governor) said that the 23% grade had been reduced now to 12%, or about half. The road had been widened too. ... Average road width about ten feet, increased to 16 feet (with the bad curves eliminated and surfaces of the roads to be firm and smooth.”

(*New Hampshire Governor Henry B. Quimby **Tug of War Hill was the portion of the roadway between the Silver and Flume Cascades)