
HENNIKER HISTORIAN

JUNE 2019 NUMBER 76

NEWSLETTER OF THE HENNIKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Henniker Historical Society Board 2018-19

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Treasurer: Ron Taylor

Secretary/Newsletter: Ellen Reed

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Susan Adams, Deb Dow

Nicole Giradet, Marc McMurphy,

Yolande Nicknair, Martha Taylor

Congratulations to Our Newest Boston Post Cane Recipient



Selectman Peter Flynn and HHS President, Kristen MacLean present centarian, Lois Fitch, with her new Boston Post cane, awarded to the oldest resident in Henniker. Congratulations!

DIGITAL UPDATE

We are happy to report that the job of digitizing all our photos is well underway. This has been an excellent opportunity to clean up our files and update our records. Our goal is to someday have these images available to search online, but until then, we will continue to plow through our thousands of historical images and get them onto the computer.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The growing season has finally arrived in New England. Farmer. This is the occupation most frequently given through the decades for Henniker residents on the U.S. census reports. I understand that the majority of “farmers” were managing small family farms. What about the larger operations? Where exactly were they? Did the farm have a name? What did they produce?

Over the years, information has trickled into the Academy Hall archives that can answer many of these questions. Compiling our records into one project would allow us to determine what we know and don't know about Henniker's agricultural history. I would like to conduct a farm survey of Henniker in the form of a mapping project. If you are interested in this kind of research project, please email society@mcttelecom.com.

~ Kristen MacLean, President

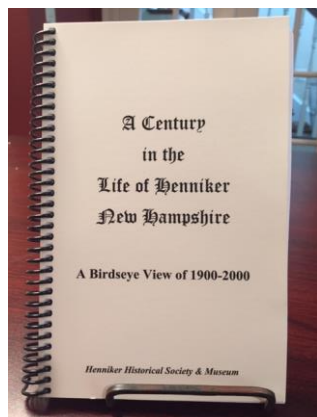
Congratulations to Bertha McComish



Local resident, 92 year old Bertha McComish, and her granddaughter, Kelsey McComish, attend the 71st reunion of Bertha's nursing class. Bertha is wearing her uniform from 1948

A Century in the Life of Henniker, NH A Birdseye View of 1900 - 2000

Copies of Martha Taylor's new history of the town of Henniker is now available at the Henniker Historical Society and Museum for \$20. Told through newspaper clippings from throughout the 20th century, this highly readable and entertaining book gives us a wonderful overview of life in Henniker. From locals protesting whist games in 1900 to Bruce Elliott being named Citizen of the Year in 1999, readers are sure to be enlightened. Get your copy now!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The Historical Society is always in need of volunteers to help us in our mission to preserve Henniker history. No experience is needed! New board members are also needed. So, if you have some spare time you'd like to donate, please contact Deb Dow at 491-6686.

VISIT US ON THE WEB:

www.hennikerhistory.org

email: society@mettelecom.com

Facebook

VISIT US AT ACADEMY HALL

51 Maple St

Henniker, NH 03242

603-428-6267

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Monthly board meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 pm in Academy Hall. Members and prospective members are invited to attend.

MEMBERSHIP

Your membership expiration is noted on your mailing label, if yours is about to expire please renew to continue to receive the newsletter and support us as we preserve Henniker history.

To renew, send \$5.00 per person (checks can be made out to Henniker Historical Society) along with your name and address to:

**Henniker Historical Society
PO Box 674
Henniker, NH 03242**

**THANKS TO ALL OUR ANNUAL GIVING
CAMPAIGN DONORS! YOUR SUPPORT
FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HENNIKER
HISTORY IS PRICELESS!**

Metal Detecting

Have you ever wondered what kinds of mysterious objects or historical treasures might be lurking just inches below the surface of your property? Local metal detectorist, Sandy Moritz, is looking for residents interested in having their properties scanned. He would like to donate items of historical significance to the Henniker Historical Society and museum. There is no charge for this. If you would be interested, contact Sandy directly at 428-7204 for more information.

FARM SURVEY

Do you or have you ever lived on one of Henniker's many area farms? If so, we are hoping to create histories for as many of these historic farms as possible by collecting stories and information from current and past residents. Did your farm have a name? What was raised there? Whatever you can think of that would help us preserve the history of these wonderful properties is needed! Please contact the Historical Society if you can help!



Eastman Farm

MURDER MYSTERY TOUR

On Thursday, May 23rd, Ellen Reed and Kristen MacLean took members of the White Birch Senior Center on a fact-filled tour of Henniker as they outlined the series of events that led to Henniker's first murder: the shooting death of 14-year old Nettie Belle Douglass by her 21-year old beau, Arthur McLean. Two busses traveled through Henniker visiting sites such as the location of the murder on Old Concord Road, Nettie's and Arthur's homes, and the location of Courser's livery stable on Main Street where Nettie's body was found early in the morning of August 15, 1894.

DO YOU KNOW ME?

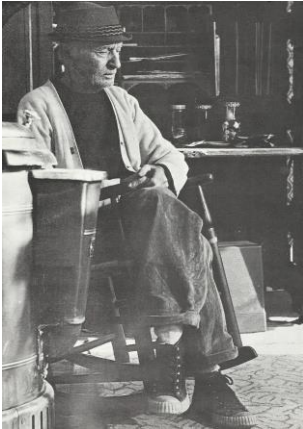
Another of our many unidentified photos. We think this photo may be from someone in the Connor family, but we're not sure. If you can identify this lovely lady, please let us know so we can update our records!



Getting ready for the first ever Henniker murder tour!



Louis Maurice Augustus Roy: Photographer and Teller of Tales



In the early twentieth century, the old house now known as the “Ocean-Born Mary” house was nothing more than one more interesting old home in the town of Henniker, but in 1918 that was all about to change with the arrival of photographer, Louis Maurice Augustus “Gussie” Roy.

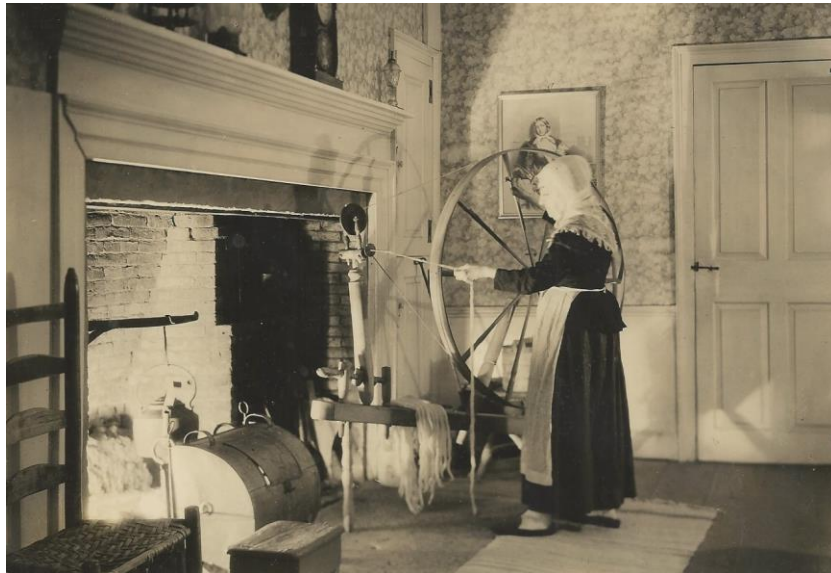
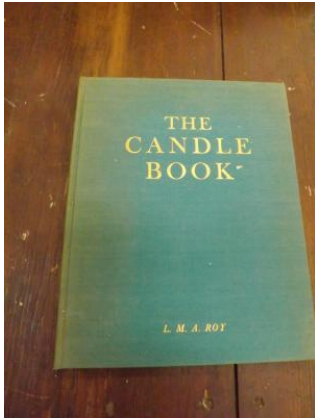
Roy arrived in Henniker in his thirties, along with his mother, Flora and it wasn't long until he turned the old Robert Wallace house into a huge tourist attraction. The imaginative Mr. Roy spun a captivating tale of ghosts, pirates and buried treasure that drew people from all over the country, as well as famous ghost hunters such as Hans Holtzer and national publications like *National Geographic*, *Life*, and *Holiday* magazines. To this day, the stories of a ghostly Mary wandering the halls of the old home persist.

Many people only know Gussie Roy as the perpetrator of a huge hoax on the gullible tourist trade, but he was much more than that. Roy was actually a renowned photographer and writer, especially on early crafts.

Gussie Roy was born in 1883 in the town of LaCrosse, WI. His career in pictorial photography began 1909 in New York City. He won numerous national and international awards for his work including prizes from Belgium, Ireland, Canada, Hungary, Scotland, and Ireland. His work was exhibited in galleries in New York, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as in other large cities such as San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Chicago.

Roy was not only interested in taking photos, but interested in finding methods to help preserve the images he took. He wanted to manufacture his own paper from linen and bleach it with the sun rather than chemicals. He would then sensitize the paper and make his own ink from carbon. He then printed his pictures, which were inked images of carbon pressed into the linen paper. He believed pictures printed in this way would last 2000 years.

In addition to a love of photography, Gussie Roy had a deep interest in history, especially early arts and crafts. He wanted to preserve the old methods used by our forebears and started writing a series of books on *The Old Ways of Working*. The first book in this series was on making candles. Roy enjoyed using his mother, Flora Roy, as a model for his photos of life in the past. He also wrote on weaving and making dyes from plants and vegetables.



Flora Roy spinning in front of the fire at the Ocean Born Mary House

Roy frequently used local residents in his photos as well as his mother. He took a series of photos of the Morse family involving their oxen. Here, Arthur Morse plows on Craney Hill with his team.



Gussie Roy lived in Henniker for 47 years, until his death in 1965. Both he and his mother are buried in the Roy family cemetery.

Shortly before his death, his sold the Ocean Born Mary house whereupon the new owners began the arduous task of setting the record straight on the history of the Robert Wallace house (for example, Mary never actually lived in the house). Despite their work as well as the efforts of subsequent owners, the story of the haunting lives on. Thanks to the talents of a superb teller of tales, the legend of Ocean-Born Mary continues to draw ghost hunters to this day.

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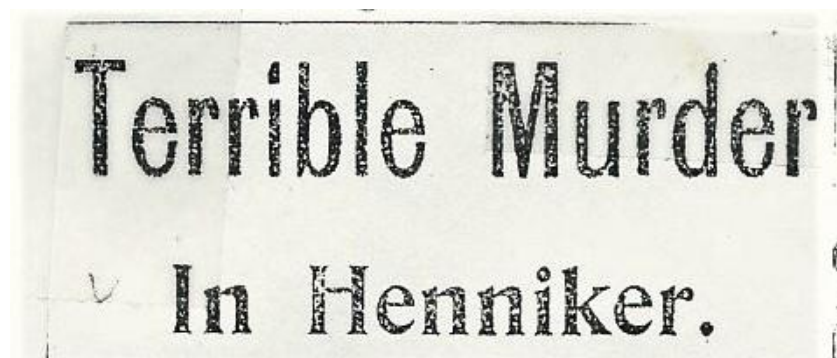
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ANNUAL MEETING POTLUCK: JUNE 26, 2019
5:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH PARISH HALL



The Henniker Historical Society and Museum will hold its annual meeting and potluck dinner on Wednesday, June 26th. As usual, we ask attendees to bring a dish to share. This year's talk will be:

Henniker's First Murder: The Untimely Death of Nettie Belle Douglass

This should be a fascinating evening as we discuss the true story of Henniker's first homicide!