

GRANITE STATE DIARY



Fireworks in Waterville Valley, with the east peak of Mount Osceola on the left on July 4, 2019 by Wayne D. Thornbrough.



White Island Lighthouse, Isles of Shoals, at sunset on the summer solstice on June 21, 2019, by Kenneth R. Goldman. Photos courtesy of N.H. Historical Society



Tunza on a Dunbarton farm, which is part of a collective of African refugee farmers in New Hampshire called Fresh Start Farms, on July 24, 2019, by Yoav Horesh. Courtesy of the N.H. Historical Society

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New Hampshire Historical Society
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This October, eight exhibitions simultaneously opened at museums and historical societies around the state as part of the “New Hampshire Now” project, a joint venture of the New Hampshire Historical Society and the New Hampshire Society of Photographic Artists that showcases a photographic diary of life in the Granite State.

Nearly 50 photographers traveled throughout New Hampshire between 2018 and 2020, making thousands of images that collectively create a 21st-century portrait of the people, places, culture, and events of our state. When the project began, little did the participants know what a momentous period it would be, with the 2020 presidential election, the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the rise of a global pandemic that would bring the world to its knees and reshape our lives.

The resulting photographic record is a collection of more than 5,000 images that form a powerful visual archive of both the ordinary and extraordinary events of our time.





Now, a curated selection of these stunning images are available to share with the public through exhibitions, a publication, and public programs and events.

The eight exhibitions are tailored for every region of New Hampshire, featuring images that characterize each specific area. They are located at Belknap Mill Society in Laconia; Colby-Sawyer College in New London; Portsmouth Historical Society; Historical Society of Cheshire County in Keene; the Manchester Historic Association; Museum of the White Mountains at Plymouth State University; and the Tillotson Center in Colebrook. The flagship exhibition at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord showcases the state as a whole.

The “New Hampshire Now” book – available at each exhibition site, at independent bookstores around the state, and online at nhhistory.org — features 256 of these powerful images. The book is an entirely New Hampshire production, designed by Peter Randall in Portsmouth, printed at Puritan Press in Hollis, and produced on paper from Monadnock Paper Mills in Bennington. It contains an introduction by esteemed New Hampshire author Howard Mansfield, and forewords by New Hampshire Historical Society President Bill Dunlap and New Hampshire Now Project Director Gary Samson, who is New Hampshire’s seventh Artist Laureate.

A panel discussion called “New Hampshire Through the Lens of a Camera” provides an introduction to the project for the public. This virtual program features several of the photographers who traveled around the state and created images for “New Hampshire Now.” Learn about their experiences capturing the Granite State — and Granite Staters. Did they find what they expected to find when they ventured out? What surprised them? How did this experience impact the way these artists view New Hampshire? Free and open to the public, this virtual event occurs via Zoom on Oct. 13, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Register through Eventbrite at eventbrite.com/e/new-hampshire-through-the-lens-of-a-camera-registration-173127126897.

All eight partner organizations are also hosting public programs and events of their own. Funded by New Hampshire Humanities, these programs feature a variety of speakers who explore such topics as the history of documentary photography projects in the United States, the sense and power of place and how that can resonate in a photograph, and delving into our state identity through visual representations of New Hampshire. Events include “A Discussion with New Hampshire Now Photographer” on Oct. 9 at 11 a.m. at the Millyard Museum in Manchester and a lecture “More than Just a Pretty Picture,” by project director Gary Samson and Professor Inez McDermott on Oct. 16 at 2 p.m. at the N.H. Historical Society. Visit newhampshirennow.org for more details and other events.

To find out more about “New Hampshire Now,” visit newhampshirennow.org, which includes a 1-minute video that provides a preview of the images that illustrate the Granite State today.

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