

## *MERRIMACK'S 275 ANNIVERSARY*

For many of our town residents or those interested in Merrimack's history with or without computer access, this is telling you what's happening in 2021 to celebrate our town's 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Merrimack originally become a town on April 2, 1746. Previously to that we had been part of Naticook, which included most of what is now Litchfield. Naticook had split off from the town of Old Dunstable in 1734. Our settlers went to the other side of the Merrimack River to the Meetinghouse there (now the Litchfield Historical Society) on the ferry to attend town or church functions.

In 1746, our early settlers were granted land to be our own town bordered by Pennichuck Brook, the Merrimack River and the Souhegan River. Four years later, in 1750, we petitioned for more land, and acquired the land north of the Souhegan River to what would be Bedford. The western border with Amherst has fluctuated since then giving us an interesting border as you travel over Seaverns Bridge Rd. So we have TWO anniversaries, depending on where you live in Merrimack.

Soon after that the town developed in four different sections, now called the Villages of Reeds Ferry, Souhegan Village, Thornton's Ferry and South Merrimack, each of which had its own schools, churches, stores, post offices and railroad stations.

Merrimack is celebrating its founding during 2021 with many events headed by the 275<sup>th</sup> committee under the direction of Matt Casparius, chairman of the town's Parks and Recreation Department. On April 9, we held a kickoff ceremony at Abbie Griffin Park with Proclamations and the presentation of the Boston Post Cane. A NH state flag was donated by Bob and Fran L'Heureux after it was flown over the capitol. This was all televised due to COVID restrictions on our Facebook page on Youtube. It wasn't held on April 2, due to the holiday weekend. There are many more events coming up through October, which will be open to the public.

1. The Boston Post Cane was presented to Arthur Haight, the OLDEST qualified resident of Merrimack. To be eligible, the candidate must have lived in Merrimack for a minimum of 25 years.
2. The YOUNGEST resident was found to have been born on April 2, and has received a package of items to recognize her big occasion. Yes, she is a SHE, but her name is not being made public.
3. Currently, there is a campaign for our residents (and friends) to contribute to the cost of building a NEW covered bridge over Baboosic Brook at the Twin Bridges site behind the MYA building/Kid's Kove. Chuck Mower, a well-known woodworker and Merrimack's version of Fritz Wetherbee, is heading this project. The bridge will be a traditional one called "Grist Mill Bridge", after the old mill originally built nearby. Chuck has made a model of the bridge, while donations are being sought to pay for the construction. Merrimack was known for its two covered bridges over the Souhegan River until they were destroyed in the 1960's by arsonists. In 1990, our town employees built a modern covered bridge off Parkhurst Road going into Bedford.
4. We are selling commemorative license plates to be placed on the front of your vehicle as a fundraiser and memorial for you. These are available at the Town Hall- Finance office, the Transfer Station and the Parks and Recreation office for a \$20 donation (cash and check only). You may place them on your vehicle throughout 2021
5. On May 15<sup>th</sup>, Parks & Recreation sponsored a 2.75 mile (not quite 5K) Run/Walk with fees for in-person or virtual participants.

6. The Historical Society is sponsoring a scavenger hunt from now through October. There are 12 stops on the “hunt”, beginning at the end of the parking lot at Anheuser Busch. At each stop there is a container with information about the site and stickers to be placed on your “passport”. Passport sheets are available online as well as at the Library, Town Hall and Historical Society. When you have all 12 stickers on your passport, turn it in at the white mailbox located outside the Library to be eligible for prizes to be chosen through a lottery in October.
7. The Historical Society will be posting displays in various locations throughout the April-October celebration. The first one at the Town Hall, features the historic district schools, created by John Lastowka. As new displays are made, they will be rotated around other locations in town. Watch for Native Americans, mills and various other subjects. There is a display on covered bridges in the display case at the top of the stairs in the old Town Hall building.
8. Banners now appear around town on the “lampposts” along with the American flags. There will be a way for you to purchase one eventually.
9. Lots of fund-raisers coming up throughout the year.

There are many other events coming up throughout the seven months of our celebration, sponsored by the Library, the Town, the Historical Society and the Chamber of Commerce. Keep posted at the website: [www.Merrimack.gov/275th](http://www.Merrimack.gov/275th) and [www.Facebook.com/merrimack275th](http://www.Facebook.com/merrimack275th).