

NEW HAMPSHIRE

*Historic towns and Robert Frost,
"green" mountain huts and New Hampshire Made candies*

Named one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "Dozen Distinctive Destinations" for 2008, Portsmouth is a living museum chock-full of historic houses, museums, history tours and cultural attractions. Now the Portsmouth Historical Society has given the town a 385th birthday present: a Visitor Center housed in a landmark building that used to be the public library. The perfect gateway back into the past, the Center has gallery space hung with early 20th-century paintings of Portsmouth and "then & now" photographs of New Hampshire. An intriguing video takes guests back in time and introduces Portsmouth's historic and arts sites, including Strawberry Banke Museum (www.strawberrybanke.org), celebrating its 50th birthday this year.

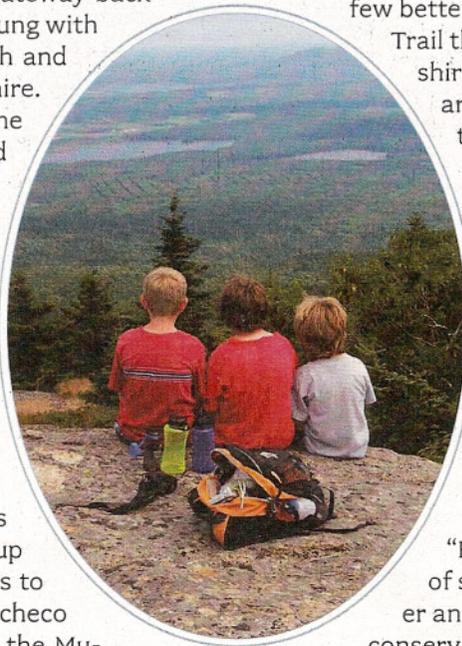
For 25 years the Children's Museum of New Hampshire (www.childrens-museum.org) has bridged the gap between formal education and family fun in its original Portsmouth location on Marcy Street. So great is its reputation, the Museum is already the most-visited cultural attraction in the state, prized for its hands-on activities and innovations. This July it will ratchet-up that effort yet another notch when it moves to a converted armory on the banks of the Cocheco River in downtown Dover. After the move, the Museum will have triple the space, expanded visitor services and new exhibits, including the "Cocheco-system" that explores the natural, industrial and ecological history of the river, and "Build It, Fly It" for budding aeronautical engineers.

Did you ever wonder what Robert Frost really meant by "the road less traveled"? The best way to find out is to visit the Rauner Special Collections Library at Dartmouth, the college in Hanover where Frost was both a poor student and a

great teacher. While you won't get to ask the poet directly, you can look through Frost's manuscripts, photographs, papers and transcripts of his classes. Recently discovered by the archive editor of the Poetry Foundation in Chicago, these transcripts capture Frost in his efforts to engage his students with his famous laconic advice and less-often-seen humor.

Those wanting to take a walk on the wild side will find few better choices than the section of the Appalachian Trail that weaves its leafy way through New Hampshire's White Mountains. Yes, there is the legendary beauty, the topography and the wildlife, but there is also the White Mountain Hut System run by the Appalachian Mountain Club (www.outdoors.org). These backcountry huts are spaced a day's hike apart and provide shelter, bunkrooms, hot meals and trail advice to those traveling the Trail. They can be reached easily from various trailheads (making them suitable for active families) and many offer the additional incentives of educational workshops, hikes and naturalist programs to help guests make a deeper connection with the natural world. The entire hut system has recently been named an "Environmental Champion" thanks to its use of such alternative energy sources as solar power and wind generators, plus its devotion to water conservation, composting and recycling.

Was politics ever more simple than it is now? One way to get an answer is to anticipate Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday in 2009 and retrace his 1860 visit to New Hampshire. The beautiful riverwalk along the Squampscott River in Exeter, the town hall where he spoke in Dover, and the mills of Manchester still look pretty much the way he left them. History buffs can even ride the same rail line he traveled from Dover to Exeter on Amtrak's Downeaster.



LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

When locals are looking for precise and timely "insider" information, they ask a Granite State Ambassador. Four hundred of these ambassadors staff welcome desks around the state. These green-shirted volunteers are passionate about their own "backyards" and special interests, whether it's hiking in the White Mountains or the best local source for hand-spun wool.

DID YOU KNOW?

On October 18th the United States Navy will commission the USS New Hampshire, a Virginia-class submarine, at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. The name was chosen thanks to a letter-writing campaign by third-graders at the Garrison Elementary School.

TRUE FLAVOR

Dorothy Timberlake Candies (www.timberlakecandies.com) is one of many purveyors gathered under the New Hampshire Made umbrella (www.NHMade.com). Makers of traditional "barley candy," Timberlake has amassed a collection of 14,000 different molds for their candy figures and lollipops.

