

This is dedicated to Jane Chworowsky who was my partner in publishing the Bicentennial Booklet of Croydon in 1966. Jane was scheduled to give this information but died suddenly in 1993.

The following information has been taken from a multitude of sources starting with

Dana S. Gross, Croydon Historian

Smithsonian Institution

N.H. Profiles, magazine

Yankee, magazine

Granite Monthly, magazine

Soo Nipi, local magazine

A. C. Champollion's paper

Local newspapers

And materials loaned by

The Edgell Family, Grandchildren of Austin Corbin.

Richard Diehl

Donald Healey

Anna Tenney

And the personal experience of Gerald S. Gross

and his wife

Rita D. Gross

AUSTIN CORBIN, II

July 11, 1827 / June 4, 1896



AUSTIN CORBIN.

An acquaintance of Corbin described him in these words, "His robust and active mind, his keen intelligence, his indomitable will, his rugged independence and self-reliance made him a natural leader of men. Whatever he did, was done with his whole strength. He devoted his talents to the accomplishments of worthy objects. His mission was to build up, and not destroy. Aggressive, masterful, and fearless as he was, he also possessed the gentler traits of a genial manner, a hearty honesty and kindly and generous disposition which endeared him to all his associates."

Born in Newport, N.H. in 1827, he was the son of Austin and grandson of Dr. James Corbin who settled in Newport in 1791. Both of these men were highly respected.

Having completed his education at the district school, he started work in a sawmill and worked his way up from roller to scaler and finally to sawyer. He was quick at figures; a good sawyer has to be. With some savings, and working as a Clerk in Boston, he put himself through Harvard Law school, graduating in 1849. He returned to Newport and practiced law with Hon. Ralph Metcalf for two years. Having heard 'the call of the West', he borrowed \$1200.00 from Metcalf and in 1851 settled in Davenport, Iowa. (Twelve hundred must have been a HUGE sum in 1850).

In Davenport he soon gave up law practice for land speculation which gave him enough capital to start his own private bank. This was a time of wildcat banks throughout the expanding West. The financial bubble burst with the Panic of 1857, but Corbin's bank was one of the few to survive. The First National Bank of Davenport received the first charter granted under the National Banking Act of 1863 and soon became one of the leaders in the field.

Two years in Davenport and he returned for a visit to his family and to marry his childhood sweetheart. The match was a romantic one, the two falling in love while attending the district school, a little red building only a short distance from the old Corbin homestead. Hannah Wheeler of Croydon was the granddaughter of Priest Haven, Croydon's first resident minister. Five children were born to them; three daughters in Davenport and two sons in New York. His first son lived but a few years. His second son, Austin, Jr, succeeded his father in his banking and other business interests.

Mary.....b.	1855.....m.	Rene Champollion	1878
Isabel.....b.	1858.....m.	George Stephen Edgell	1879
Anna.....b.	1863.....m.	Hallett Alsop Borrows	1896
William.....b.	1870.....d.		1873
Austin P....b.	1872.....	Graduated Harvard	1896

But Corbin was still restless and the family moved to New York where he established Austin Corbin and Co., private bankers. He was wealthy and well established by this time (1865). In New York he was quick to see the needs of the growing city. He helped developments on Long Island, developed Manhattan Beach and Coney Island, including building two hotels. Railroading attracted him so he became involved with the Long Island Railroad, which had been failing, and the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad, soon becoming its president.

The Corbin Family made its home on a fenced woodland estate on Long Island. It was here that a friend gave him a few deer. Corbin and his son, Austin Jr. became very interested in the wildlife and even added a few elk and antelope. These few multiplied and he soon realized that ten or twenty acres was insufficient. He had seen the vanishing of the bison in the Iowa plains and he resolved that at least some of them should be preserved for posterity. In 1886 he returned to Newport to devote his remaining years to what had become a passionate hobby.

While the main residence & place of business was New York, Corbin was using the place of his birth in North Newport (then called 'Northville') as a summer home. He had carpenters remove the original building but had preserved the room he was born in. Around this grew a mansion of large proportion where the Corbins entertained lavishly. He even had a railroad siding which took his private railroad car across from the place and they crossed the river on a private bridge. It was in the long, steep driveway of this house that Corbin was killed. The accident occurred when the horses were frightened, ran down the driveway and the carriage overturned, throwing the occupants into a stone wall.

This house today is owned by William Ruger, Jr. who is restoring and remodeling it.

CORBIN'S PARK

"Are not these woods more free from peril than the Envious Court?"

- Shakespeare

OWNERSHIP.....in brief:

Land purchased by Corbin through Sydney Stockwell:
1886 to 1890

Property transferred to the Corbin family and incorporated as the Blue Mountain Forest Asso. in 1891 and governed by special laws of New Hampshire.

As the herds grew, hunting and fishing was permitted to a few individuals on a lease basis, known as the Blue Mountain Forest Game Club.

Due to financial reasons, the Blue Mountain Forest Asso. was re-organized in October of 1944 and remains as it exists today: A PRIVATE PRESERVE AND HUNTING CLUB.

Corbin had purchased additional farms surrounding his birthplace before he started to buy up all the farms on and around the two mountains of Croydon and Grantham.

He hired young Sydney Stockwell, a local farmer, to be his purchasing agent. Over a period of about 3 years, Stockwell purchased 60 farms with buildings, covering well over 20,000 acres. Some sold willingly such as Fred Barton who was quoted as saying, "I sold my homestead farm of 900 acres, with good buildings, for \$2800. I was perfectly satisfied with the price, and through my new purchases in Lempster, I am much better off financially than I was before." And then, for one reason or another, there were those who were reluctant to sell. Reuben B. Ellis, a resident of Croydon sued Corbin and his park for restricting access to several lots he owned totalling 290 acres that were landlocked inside the park. Ellis took his case to the N.H. Supreme Court. He had been furnished a pass to cross the park land "provided he will pay the expense of a gatekeeper and recompense the defendant for any actual damage he may suffer from such opening and crossing". The court sided with Ellis and granted him permission to enter. He finally sold in January of 1906 for \$3,500 and the right to cut lumber on his old land for the ensuing 5 years.

As the sales became public knowledge, opinions locally were mixed. One little bit of ancient history that has been handed down was quoted to me by Patricia Sawyer.

Austin Corbin, grasping soul,
Wants this land from pole to pole.
Croydon people, bless your stars,
You'll find plenty of land on MARS.

In 1890 the fencing began. Thirty miles was needed to keep the large animals in. The wire mesh fence was strung on posts, the fence being about 8 feet high, and a few feet under ground to keep the wild boar in. Strands of barbed wire were above this. Between the stakes were planted trees that were to replace the stakes in future years. This fence had gates which allowed entrance and were tended by gatekeepers. Those most used were Eastpass, Westpass, Haven, and Brighton with the main entrance at Central Station.

To stock this animal preserve, Corbin had hired men in various parts of the country and Canada to supply him with deer, buffalo, elk, antelope, beaver, or "all the animals of the world that can live there harmoniously" but he specified, "no bears, panthers, or wolves." The arrival of a herd of buffalo in Newport by railroad caused a great deal of excitement. These were herded by cowboys up the road to Croydon. The animals were first kept in a separate small fenced area to be certain they were healthy before being released in the main park to live in their natural state. A few Aberdeen Angus cattle were imported from Scotland accompanied by William Morrison, better known as Billie Morrison. Also imported from Germany were 18 or 20 wild boar.

Some animals acclimated well and multiplied and some died for a variety of reasons. The antelope, mountain goats, moose, caribou and reindeer died out after a few years. Of the 4 or 5 different kinds of deer, all disappeared except the white tail deer originally native to New England before the farms had dispossessed them. The elk and bison did well. The wild boar not only acclimated but multiplied like crazy. What had started as a preserve turned slowly into a private hunting club as the herds became too numerous for the food supply, even though extra feed was furnished in the winters.

The buffalo drew the most attention. They adjusted and multiplied well enough to provide stock for other preserves in the northwest and Canada. In the late 1930's, the herd had been allowed to dwindle due to the cost of feeding and management. They developed Bang's disease, a highly contagious disease which also affects domestic cattle. To prevent the spread of the disease, reluctantly it was agreed to dispose of the remaining herd and the last one was killed in 1946.

The white tail deer and beaver are now so common in N.H. that little needs to be mentioned of them.

~~The boar, however, are a constant subject of interest.~~ In the hurricane of 1938 much of the fence was broken and some escaped. The boar live on vegetable ground crops and some roots under the ground. The farmers whose crops have been raided hate them and hunters love them, both for the meat and the love of the hunt. They are extremely intelligent, extremely fast, and EXTREMELY prolific. Of the 18 or 20 brought originally from Germany, they soon became 100 to 500, depending on what you read about them.

This large area contains 2 large mountains, Croydon and Grantham, 3 good-sized ponds, Sumners, Governors, and Red Leaf , with many miles of streams. There were approximately 15 miles of roads in the original area with abandoned houses and barns. When hunting was permitted, the old houses were fitted with stoves, cooking utensils and cots. They are now all gone and have been replaced with log cabins for hunters in various sections.

There once stood 2 schools, one in Croydon, District #6 and one in Grantham, District #9.

In the section of Croydon known as "Under-the-Mountain" lies a small cemetery with a dozen or so monuments still standing. There are two Revolutionary soldiers buried there; Moses Walker and Col. Samuel Powers. It is cleaned and decorated at least once a year by Croydon's cemetery sexton.

Our family has had close association with the Park and its personnel since 1908.

Dana S. Gross, Manager of the Sugar River Valley Telephone Co. installed the first telephones on the mountain and the various stations around the park.

His brother, Carroll S. Gross, was lookout watchman in 1912.

Dana's son, Gerald S. Gross was watchman from 1950 to 1956 and I, Rita Gross, substituted for him a few weeks the summer of 1951, with the approval of District Fire Chief, James Ricard.

George D. Gross, another son of Dana, was watchman 13 years from 1960 to 1973.

The Park is the best of neighbors. They maintain their fence, their own roads, care for their animals and we do not need to furnish welfare, medication , or education to the animals.
ALL THEY ASK IS TO BE LEFT THEIR PRIVACY -- WHICH WE SHOULD ALL RESPECT!!

B L U E M O U N T A I N F O R E S T

Statement

Approximate Cost.

19750 Acres.....Cost estimated.....\$91,250.00

The fencing of the whole tract I estimate at 30 miles. I purchased of the Gilbert & Bennett Mfg Co., a sufficient quantity of Mesh wire -- 6 feet wide, to stretch 15 miles. For this I paid 9cts per running foot. Then, I arranged with the Washburn & Moen Mfg Co., to string that; add certain strands of barbed wire and an iron binder every 12 feet, for 10 cts per running foot. This costs me 19cts per running foot, or per mile \$1,003.20 -- 15 miles, -say- 15,480.00

For the other 15 miles I paid W & M Co., at the rate of 14 1/2 cts per running foot - for 21 strands barbed wire, and the iron binder, which would make cost per mile \$765.60 -- For 15 miles 11,484.00

My posts are set every 12 feet, or at the rate of 440 to the mile, and I estimate it costs 50cts per post, to put them in, the ground for the wire - or \$220 per mile - 30 miles - Total 6,600.00

My Elk have cost me about	\$5,000	
My Moose " " " "	1,500	
My Buffalo " " "	6,000	
My Deer & Antelope "	1,000	
My Wild Boar pigs " "	1,000	
And I will add in purchases of more animals, say	5,500	20,000.00

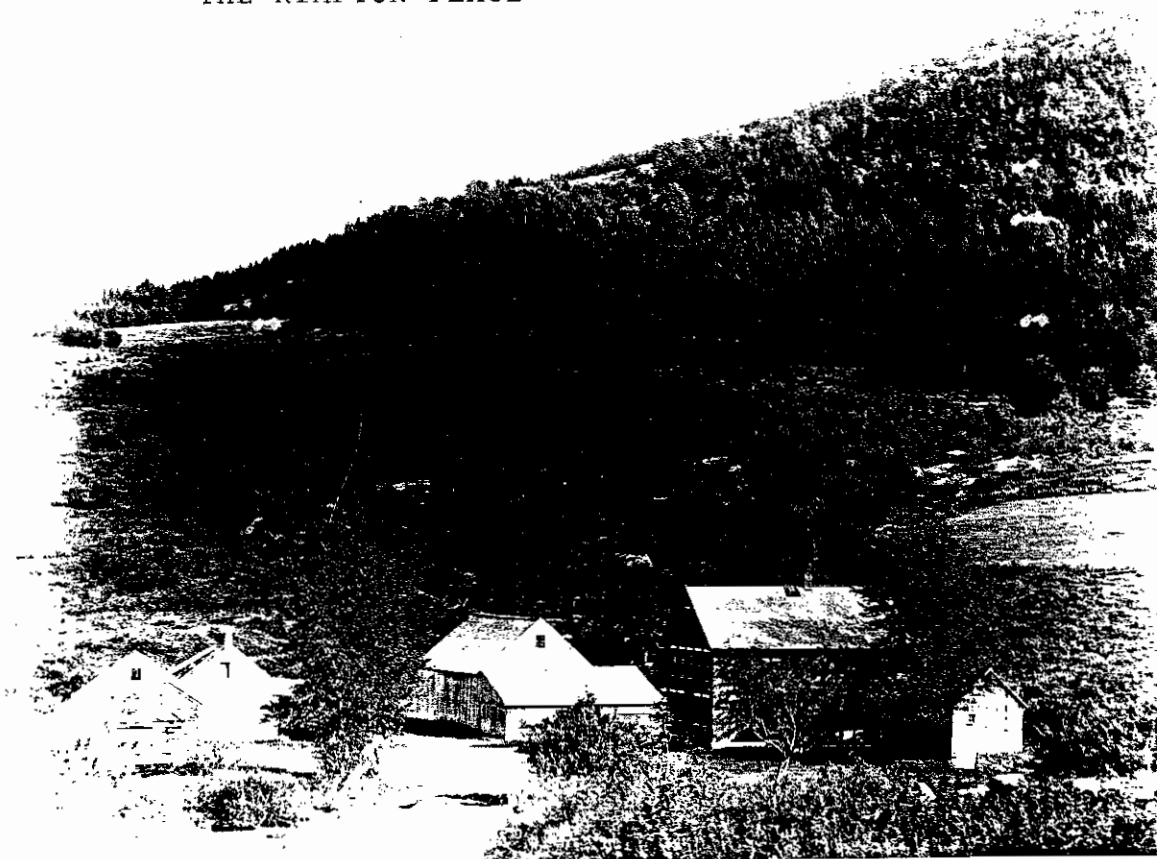
I add for miscellaneous expenses such as Stockwell's salary - freight - deeds - recording - feed for animals, etc. etc. 5,000.00

Recapitulation.

Land	\$91,250	
Fencing	33,750	
Animals	20,000	
Miscellaneous	5,000	
Total Cost	\$ 150,000	

About \$7.50 per acre fenced and stocked.

"THE KIMPTON PLACE"



This beautiful brick house surrounded by various barns, near Poppasquash, was standing in 1951 but the roof had fallen in. Bud and I entered the open door and saw beautiful hardwood floors and carved door frames. Known locally as the "Kimpton Place", it may have had other owners because there was a stone monument a short distance from the house that read

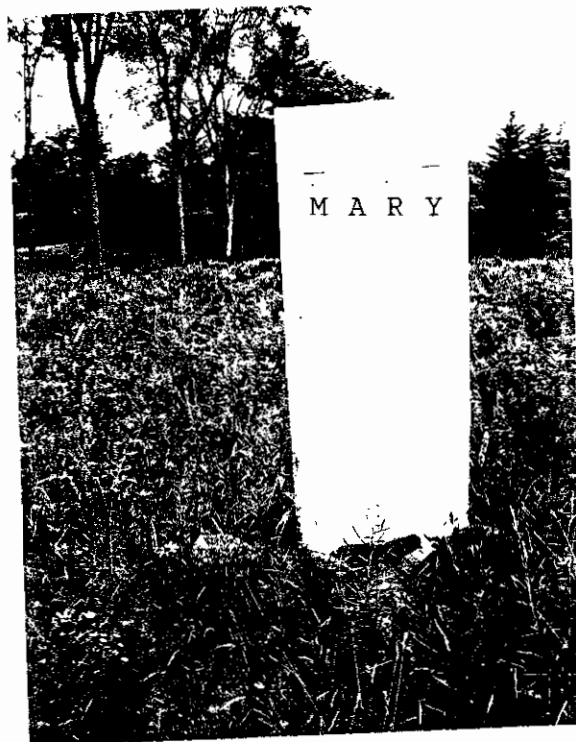
MARY

Wife of Levi Rickard

died

May 16, 1846

AE 53



MAP OF BLUE MOUNTAIN FOREST

Scale:
0 1/2 1 Mile



GRANTHAM FOUR
CORNERS

NORTH WEST GATE

CORNISH FLAT

WEST PASS GATE

POPPY SQUASH

Notch

Road

EAST PASS GATE

HAVEN GATE

CROYDON
FOUR COR'S

Rd. to E. Village

CENTRAL STA.

BRIGHTON GATE

BRIGHTON

CENTRAL STA.
GATE

Claremont

HEAD STATION
AND GATE

CROYDON FLAT

Kelleville

Northville

Northville

Road to Newport

Grantham

Grantham

Grantham

East
Village

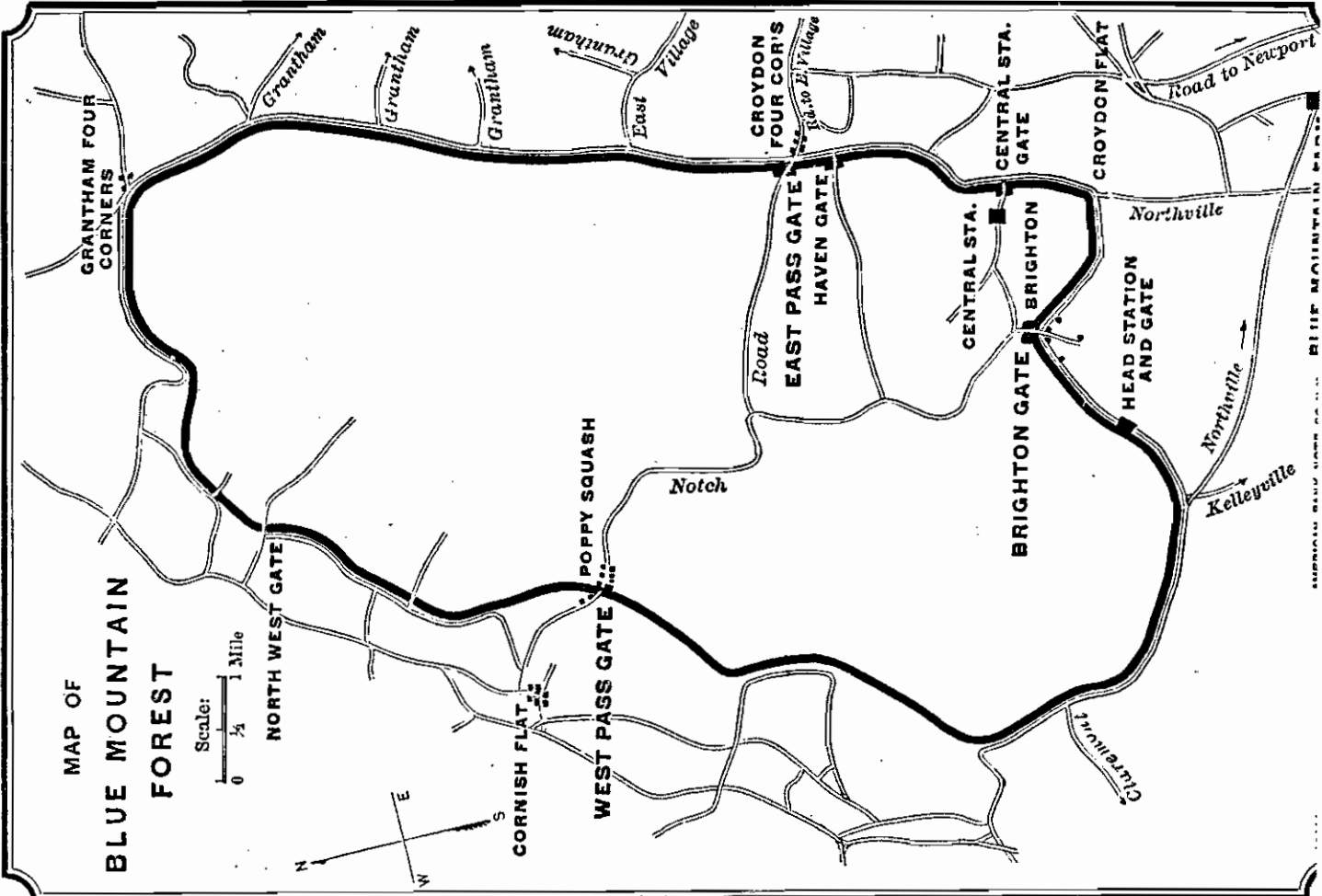
These gates were open
to the public
in about 1910.

NOTICE

Visitors to the Blue Mountain Forest
Park holding passes can enter, or leave,
by either of the three following gates:

- East Pass,
- West Pass,
- Brighton.

Gate-keepers at these will be in at-
tendance. All others will be closed until
further notice.



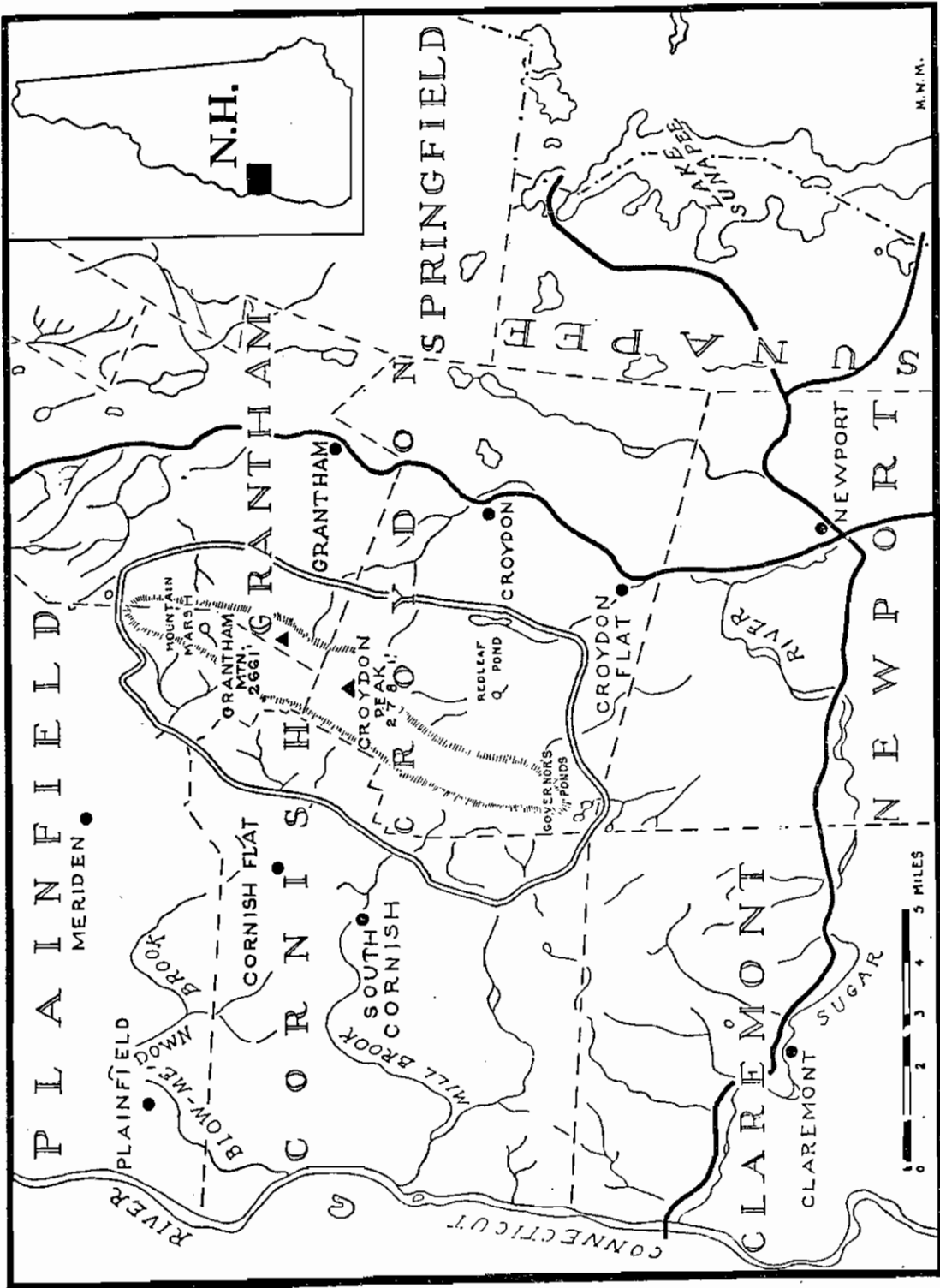
Croydon has over
10,000 acres.

Cornish has
3,410 acres.

Plainfield has
3,160 acres.

Grantham has
1,151 acres

Newport has
49½ acres.



M.N.M.

"Under-the-Mountain School"

NO DISTRICT RECORDS available. The only records are those found in the Town/School reports of 1852 to 1890.

1790, It is believed that the school was built about 1790 and used until 1890.

1834. DISTRICT # 6 - - to contain all the land and inhabitants within the bounds aforesaid (VIZ) John Barton, Zina Goldthwaith, Asa Walker, Elijah Rickard, John Rawson, Peter Barton, David Frye, John Stockwell, Charles Stockwell, Joab Walker, Moses Wright, and Moses Wright, Jr. (12 families).

1890; Sadie G. Blanchard, teacher. Only one visit was made to this school. At this visit we found only two scholars. The teacher was obliged to leave at the close of the sixth week on account of sickness at home, consequently we are unable to report the advancement that was made.

This building, being inside Corbin's Park suffered the same fate as all the old farm buildings...fell in with time.

UNDER-THE-MOUNTAIN CEMETERY

From the Sullivan County Records.....Vol. #134 Page 21.

The right to use the road leading to what is known as "Under-the-Mountain Cemetery" whenever any person shall desire to visit said cemetery, having friends buried there, or whenever any persons shall desire other interments there. It is understood, however, that said road is now discontinued and is not to be opened for any use except that above mentioned, and that the said Corbin or his grantees or assigns shall have the right to close said roadway by fence and gates, the latter to be opened however at the request of the Town for the uses and purposes mentioned but for no other.

It is also agreed on the part of the Grantors that they will enclose said Cemetery with a suitable fence and maintain the same in a manner satisfactory to the said Town of Croydon.

Austin Corbin

May 23, 1891

There are two Revolutionary soldiers buried in this small cemetery: Col. Samuel Powers and Moses Walker.

Disposable Diapers— Indian Style

Long before Pampers, buffalo chips (dried dung) were used by the Plains Indians—especially the Arapaho—as disposable diapers.

An Indian infant, covered with tallo to protect the skin, was put into a cradleboard. The chips, pounded to a powder, were then poured into the wrappings up to the child's waist. Changed twice a day, the powder reduced diaper rash by absorbing urine and feces. If the baby had a bowel movement, the



Mom and papoose—before Pampers powder was thrown away.

The buffalo was the staff of life of the Plains Indians. These chips—used by Indians, explorers and settlers as fuel—also provided a hot, almost odorless fire: One anthropologist documented 87 ways the buffalo was used by the Indians. The products made from the animal included sinew bowstrings, bone tools, rawhide kettles, horn cups and rib-and-skin sleds.

—Idea submitted by Mrs. Roy I. Collins, Crossett, Ark.



William Morrison, better known as "Billie" Morrison came from Scotland with a load of Angus cattle. He was in charge of the Corbin buffalo herd for over 15 years. He made his permanent home in Croydon where Helen Ryan now lives.

There were buffalo in the park from its fencing in 1890 to their finish in 1944.



The BISON

TO THE AMERICAN INDIAN WAS AS VITAL AS LIFE ITSELF.
ITS FLESH WAS HIS MEAT.
HE DRANK ITS BLOOD.
ITS HIDE GAVE THE INDIAN HIS WIGWAM, MOCCASINS, CLOTHING, SHIELD,
COOKING POT, TRUNKS FOR HIS SLED.
ITS RIBS BECAME THE RUNNERS FOR HIS SLED.
ITS SMALL BONES FURNISHED AWLS AND NEEDLES.
ITS TAILS BECAME THREAD AND BOWSTRINGS.
ITS HORN BONES WERE MADE INTO GLUE FOR THE FEATHERING OF ARROWS.
ITS HORNS BECAME BOWS, SPOONS AND CUPS.
EVEN ITS GALLSTONES WERE USED TO MAKE PAINT.

FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT STATION
on Croydon Mountain

The first fire lookout station in the State of N.H. was on Croydon Mountain for the use of the park. It was privately owned by a lumbering concern, the Draper Co. in conjunction with the Blue Mountain Forest Asso. Much more lumbering was carried on in the early 1900's and to protect the forest from a destructive fire, a watchman's cabin was built in 1907. Mr. A.L. Lurvey was the first watchman and how he was to communicate with the valley in case of fire is unknown because there was no telephone until 1908.

In September of 1908, Dana S. Gross, manager of the Sugar River Valley Telephone Co., with the aid of Blaine and Tom Hall and Joshua Dunbar, installed the first telephone line to the mountain top. Telephones were maintained in several houses located near the various gates and at central station.

The approach to the mountain top was by a trail to the foot of the ledges and then a climb of about 500 feet by a series of ladders. The present approach is up the old Notch Road to Stair Pitch and then by foot trail one and a half miles.

In 1910 a 'tower' was built and the State leased it from the Park. There were eight fires reported that year to the Croydon fire warden, F.W.Putnam. Major repairs were made in 1933. A crew from the CCC Camp at Goshen , under the direction of Richard Diehl shingled the cabin, built woodsheds and put in a pole telephone line to the East Pass Gate. (The original log cabin had been replaced in 1929 and the first steel tower in 1920.)In the hurricane of 1938, the tower was destroyed and then replaced by a 24 foot tower with steel stairs.

The tower cab has been replaced twice since then; once in the 1960-1970 period and again in 1989. The wooden sections for this last tower cab were taken in by helicopter operated by Raymond Newcomb. This was a far cry from the men and horses that constructed the first buildings on this mountain top.

Croydon Tower is on private land and is not open to the public. Similar towers throughout the state may be visited such as Kearsarge and Cardigan.

In 1974 the tower was one of those closed to finance a five year trial of fire detection by air patrol. It reopened in 1976.

Ernest Harold Baynes

May 1, 1868 to January 21, 1925



MR. ERNEST HAROLD BAYNES DRIVING THE ONLY TEAM OF BUFFALOES IN THE WORLD

When I read about Harold Baynes I think of Dr. Doolittle who "spoke with the animals." His love of animals is well recorded in his books and photographs.

Born in Calcutta, India, he was the son of an ingenious British inventor who made substantial contributions to the science of photography. His father moved from India because of the effects of the climate on his wife and small son. Stopping briefly in England, they left their 6 year old son to be educated, then they moved on to Westchester County, NY. Harold was 11 when he joined his family in NY. He entered the City of NY College in 1887.

During the Spanish-American War Baynes volunteered for service and ended in a hospital with typhoid fever.

Baynes married an art student from the Boston area, Louise Birt O'Connell in 1901. He had succeeded in selling an article on wild life for which Birt had furnished the illustrations. The success of that article led him to write more on wildlife for newspapers and magazines of the day.

Around 1904 the young naturalist became acquainted with Austin Corbin and his collection of animals. Corbin had purchased hundreds of farms and houses. Mr. & Mrs. Baynes lived briefly in the "Haven Cottage" in Croydon before moving to a permanent home in Meriden. Their home was a mixture of animals and they must have both taken hundreds of pictures. It was my good fortune to have seen one huge album at the Edgell farm in 1964 when I was doing research for the Croydon Bicentennial Booklet.

Baynes crusade to save the buffalo from extinction led to the founding of the American Bison Society. He raised funds for the Society by driving his team of buffalo at the Boston Sportsmen's Show and County fairs. He had published a book "War Whoop and Tomahawk" about these two buffaloes. There are 8 or 10 books by Baynes, one of which is "Wild Life in the Blue Mountain Forest".

Having seen the last few living passenger pigeons in a Cincinnati Zoo, he took up the cause of birds killed for their feathers. Birds had been slaughtered by the hundred thousands for decorations for women's hats. You will no doubt have heard of the Meriden Bird Club and their "Bird Sanctuary" if you are a bird lover. From this modest beginning, there sprang Bird Clubs all over the United States.

Harold Baynes died of cancer in 1925 and his ashes were scattered from the top of Croydon Mountain. There is a bronze marker on the side of one cliff facing Croydon village. In 1958 the ashes of his wife, Louise Birt Baynes, were scattered from the same mountain top by Gerald Gross, District Fire Chief of District #3 for the State of N.H.

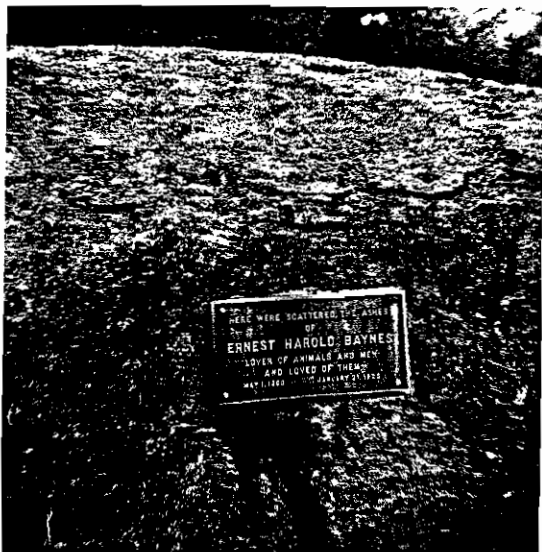
Sunday, Gerald Gross scattered the ashes of Mrs. Louise B. Baynes, age 92 years, residence, Philadelphia, widow of Ernest Harold Baynes, naturalist and author, on Croydon mountain, where Mr. Baynes' ashes were scattered in 1925. Mr. and Mrs. Baynes occupied Haven Cottage many years ago.

L - R..Ross Lurvey,
Walter Arnold, Rita
Gross, Danny Gross.

July 20, 1958



25



Louise Birt O'Connell
"Birt" or Mrs. Harold Baynes

