



An old military chest was found in the basement of the Town Hall in 2017. It contained documents dating back to the end of the Civil War and Board of Selectmen's papers from the mid-1800s to early 1900s. Photo: Ed Hiller

Antique Military Chest Loaded with Historical Documents

Militia and Town papers from 1820 to 1939


Ed and Mary Hiller
Andover Historical Society

In 2017, the Town did some reconstruction work on the cellar of the Town Office. During this work, a small wooden chest full of papers was found in the old vault. It was marked "MILITARY" in black stencil on the side. It was transferred to the Andover Historical Society for its preservation.

A detailed examination of the documents in this chest has just been completed. A large portion pertains to the State Militia and dates from 1820 to 1865 (the end of the Civil War). Includ-

ed are lists of enlistees, requests for excuse of absence from muster, medical exemptions from military service and requests for assistance by dependents.

A second portion contains various Selectmen's papers dating from 1851 to 1939 (with several with earlier dates). In this portion, there are performance bonds for tax collectors, treasurers, and road agents, compensations for elected officials, personal mortgage deeds for sales of oxen, horses, wagons, hay, etc., permissions to underage applicants to marry and such.

There are approximately 800 documents in this chest. The documents are now sorted according to date and are bundled into decades for easy access. 

Non-Native Plant Species Wreak Havoc on Local Environment

How to identify and remove invasive plants

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Andover Conservation Commission

During my childhood on Ragged Mountain, there was a triangular bit of land where three gravel roads converged, called "Bittersweet Corners." The split-rail fence around this triangle of land was adorned with bittersweet vines, vines that were so beautiful in the autumn when the yellow and orange seeds popped open. We made bittersweet "fairy crowns" for our heads and for our dolls, and we cut tendrils of bittersweet for our Christmas wreaths. But by my adolescence, Bittersweet Corners had changed from a magical childhood fairy garden into a scary tangle. The old apple tree behind the split rail fence no longer bore fruit. Bittersweet vines entwined most of the branches of the apple tree, and the dead branches reached for the sky like blackened fingertips. The split-rail fence had fallen to the ground under the weight of the tenacious vines. By my early adulthood the "answer" to what needed to be done about Bittersweet Corners was to cut down the old apple tree, haul away the fence rails, and uproot and remove the vines, using a "Ditch Witch" digger. Then the road grader came and flattened the triangle of land and covered the area with road gravel.

Have you seen an invasive plant species take over one of your cherished spots? My childhood memory may provide an example of an effort at containment of an invasive plant species in a limited area.

Definition

An invasive plant species is a species that is non-native to the eco-system, and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause environmental harm or harm to human health. (US Forest Service; 1999 Presidential Executive Order 13112). In 1999 the Federal Government established the National Invasive Species Council. In 2000 New Hampshire passed House Bill 1258-FN, and established the NH Invasive Species Act. Our state then created the NH Invasive Species Committee and the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, & Food (DAMF) which manages all matters concerning invasive species.

Migrations of peoples and animals, globalization of trade, and climate change all have contributed to the introduction of non-native species of plants to many areas of the world. These new plants enter an eco-system which do not have the usual insects, parasites and animal predators that may have kept them in check in their natural environment. Not all newly introduced plants become invasive in their new eco-systems. But many do. Why do some newly introduced plants become "invasives?" Why should we be concerned? Biologists re-

port that more than 100 million acres of land in the US are covered with invasive species of plants which have resulted in billions of dollars per year of lost agricultural and forest crops. Invasive plants also have destroyed other natural resources, altered water flow, and depleted soils of natural nutrients. (Douglas Cygan. 2018. NH Guide to Upland Invasive Species, 5th edition).

What makes invasive plant species so successful? Most invasive plants produce large quantities of seed. Their seeds are easily spread by the wind, water, animals, and also (often initially unknowingly) by commercial trade, agriculture, and emigration of peoples. Many invasive plants have aggressive, vast root systems that may extend long distances from a single plant. Their extensive root systems are so dense that they choke out the root systems of nearby native plants. Invasive plants are highly adaptable, they develop early, and have a high tolerance for many environments and climates. Some invasive plants produce chemicals in their leaves and/or roots which are toxic to other plants and may be lethal to some animals. Invasives compete successfully for moisture, sunlight, nutrients, and space, and thus decrease plant diversity. Decreased plant diversity alters wildlife habitats. Invasive plants rapidly change nature's balance upon which all species depend.

The National Forest Service has developed a very comprehensive four-pronged approach towards control of invasive plant and animal species: 1) Awareness and Prevention 2) Detection 3) Control and Management 4) Restoration and Rehabilitation. As Douglas Cygan, the NH Invasive Species Coordinator, points out, there are many things you can do, as an individual, to help control the spread of invasive species and preserve native flora and fauna. In your yard or on your larger properties minimize impacts to natural vegetation, soils, and drainage. Learn how to identify invasive plants and how to distinguish them from native species. When landscaping, ask your local garden center or your County Extension Service about alternative plantings. Become active in local efforts to control invasives. If you have been working in an area with invasive species, take care to remove soil from your boots or clothing, tires, and equipment, and remove any seeds or burrs from your clothing before returning to your land. Various control methods can be used:

- Mechanical control involves uprooting, digging out, repeated mowing, and cutting, or smothering unwanted species. Mechanical Control methods work best on small areas.

- Advice from the County Extension Service can be helpful in Cultural Control, which involves the planting

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