

Sign Up Now for Snowmobile Safety Classes

Press release

Winter is almost here, and snowmobile education classes are underway across the state. To operate a snowmobile or Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) in New Hampshire, any person age 12 or older must have either a valid Motor Vehicle Driver's License or have successfully completed an approved OHRV/Snowmobile Safety Education class. Additionally, all children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a licensed adult when operating a snowmobile or OHRV, unless they are on property belonging to their parents, grandparents, or guardians.

Sign up soon if you or someone you know needs a class. There is no charge for traditional classes, which are completed in a single day. For a current class schedule, visit www.wildnh.com/ohrv/education.html. New classes are added as they become available. Traditional classroom OHRV and Snowmobile safety education courses, taught by nearly 150 Fish and Game-certified volunteer instructors and Regional Coordinators, are available statewide at no charge and offer the preferred method of certification. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

As an alternative to the traditional courses, participants may complete the safety training online for a fee of \$29.50. "The online courses provide a convenient

opportunity for students to obtain their NH Rider Certificate, at their own pace, while learning key safety information important for riding both OHRVs and snowmobiles," said Captain David Walsh, OHRV/Snowmobile Education and Law Enforcement Coordinator for NH Fish and Game. "The entire course can be taken on a smartphone, tablet, or computer and offers a fun approach to learning by using live-action video and interactive learning modules."

Many of the trained volunteer instructors are affiliated with one of the more than 100 snowmobile clubs in New Hampshire. "Joining a snowmobile club is a great way to learn about safe riding, help support local landowners, and help maintain trails for your own and others' enjoyment," Walsh said. For more information on how to become involved with a snowmobile club, visit www.nhsa.com.

In addition to safety education, this winter Fish and Game Conservation Officers will be out on the trails conducting patrols to detect and apprehend impaired snowmobile operators, enforce speed limits, deter unlawful off-trail riding, and detect machines with modified exhaust. Their efforts will help to keep the state's snowmobile trails open and safe for all outdoor enthusiasts during the upcoming season.

The Artist of Artist Hill - Part 2

Mary Weston, Andover's First Artist, Launches her Career

John Hodgson
Andover Historical Society

After Mary Pillsbury's idealistic, foolish attempt, at the age of fourteen, to run away from home so that she could seek out her destiny as an artist was frustrated by her loving family, she remained at home in Sutton for a few more years. She still passionately wished to become an artist; her parents now acknowledged and accepted her inclination, while still hoping to keep her with them for some time yet. (There seems to have been no suitor for her hand to offer another alternative.)

When she was nineteen, while on a visit to Lynn, "she saw a portrait painted by a lady, which seized her attention among a collection of indifferent pictures. The longing to be a painter again possessed her so strongly that she felt it an irresistible passion." A year later, in Boston – it seems that she had now moved to this city – she saw another fine painting, this one in a shop window, that again fired her ambitions. This time she followed her dream. She decided that, if she could find some place where she could watch a real artist work, and could refine her own talents for a year or so while supporting herself by painting cheap pictures in the meantime, she could that way manage to establish herself finally as an artist. "It seemed that she must either do this or die."

So once again, in another act of sheer independence, Mary simply went her own way. "Without consulting anyone, with only twelve dollars in her possession, she left Boston in the early morning train, leaving her trunk behind, and taking only a basket with a few changes of clothes." Alarmed on the train by the attentions of an old man in the seat opposite her who asked too many questions, she positively dashed, upon her arrival at Providence, to the boat bound for New York.

Seeking respectable lodging in that city and guided by advice she had received from the packet boat's staff, she found her way to a decent neighborhood, then stopped in a milliner's shop for advice ("She knew there must be many girls there, respectable, though poor, and thought that she might hear of a lodging through some of them"). There she was directed to the boarding house of an old lady. "On being asked for references, she frankly owned that she had none; and, as the best explanation she could offer, related her story."

And this old lady in New York City had already heard of her! "The landlady had heard, through a pious friend in Boston, Mrs. Colby, a lady well known for benevolence, of the strange girl who wanted to be a painter, and she willingly received the wanderer." Somehow Mary Pillsbury had again launched herself into a safety net.

And now, suddenly, she was on her way. The next day she learned of an artist who lived in the neighborhood, went to him to ask for advice about how oil-colors were used in painting, and was allowed

to watch him at work painting a portrait. Then she went to Dechaux, who kept a store for artists' supplies. (We find him in the newspapers of the time – "a Frenchman named Edward Dechaux, who keeps an artists' color and furnishing store on Broadway, near Duane Street.") Then she immediately set to work, painting first a portrait of her landlady's little grandson, which helped to pay her board.

Within a week of arriving in New York, Mary had new opportunities. "Her hostess advised her to go to Hartford, Connecticut, and gave her a letter of introduction to the Rev. Henry Jackson of that place. Thither she went, and was kindly received." She immediately won recognition as a skilled painter and found dozens of sitters for her portraits. Meanwhile, "Mrs. Colby . . . had written to Mr. Jackson, requesting him to advance money on her account to Miss Pillsbury, should it be necessary; but the young artist had no need of more than she could earn."

Here again, we need to pause in the narrative rush of Mary's early biography to appreciate the implications of her untold story. In her brief time in Boston, it seems that she had already managed to attract the attention of at least one potential benefactor, and her story was already spreading around the Northeast. Who were Mary's guardian angels during this time? Her account to Ellet says almost nothing about this, save for that later passing mention of a pious Boston lady, "Mrs. Colby, a lady well known for benevolence." This Mrs. Colby was clearly an interested well-wisher; apparently she was a patron as well, possibly even a friend. Among the paintings that Mary Pillsbury Weston later began exhibiting in 1851 was a portrait of "A Distinguished Benevolent Lady of Boston," and presumably this is the same person: Mary Weston's own descendants later familiarly referred to the portrait as "Mrs. Colby." But Mary had not resided very long in Boston. How had these two women come to know each other then?

Susan McCarthy, who has researched the Weston archives in Kansas, speculates that "Mrs. Colby may have been the wife of Gardner Colby, a prominent Boston philanthropist and founder of Colby College, although her identity has not been established definitively." The guess is a very shrewd one: Gardner Colby, although still a young man (27 years old) at this time, was already becoming known in Boston for his philanthropy. He and his new wife (Mary Low Roberts Colby, from Gloucester, 24 years old) had been married only one year. Most importantly, they were active, ardent Baptists, and they made Baptist and educational causes the foci of their charitable gifts and activities; Mary's background story thus might have seemed particularly interesting and appealing to them. Moreover, they knew the Rev. Henry Jackson of Hartford (pastor of the North Baptist Church there) very well. He in fact had been called to his ministry in Hartford only recently, in 1836; before then he had been the minister of the First Baptist Church in Charlestown, MA, immedi-

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THANK YOU, VETERANS!

