

RESOURCE TRANSCRIPT

Title: Mason Presents: Fritz Wetherbee on New Hampshire's Primary

Caption: Hear all about how the 1952 primary started it all!

Credit: New Hampshire Historical Society

Fritz Wetherbee: Speaker of the House Richard Upton had an idea. With the hope of increasing voter turnout for primary elections, and some legislation, he turned New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary into a national media event. The 1952 primary election started it all. Reporters came up from New York and Washington to look over the country's first primary. They took lots of pictures of people in flannel shirts. They were always on the lookout for farmers spitting on pot-bellied stoves in the general store and saying, "ayuh." But New Hampshire voters surprised them with savvy and sophistication. We took our first-in-the-nation primary seriously and we turned out in great numbers. To this day we are still the first primary in the nation and even have a law that says no matter what state tries to get ahead of us, we'll move our primary date up to beat 'em.