



# Unit 13: Tourism in New Hampshire

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## Section 1: Introduction

People have been coming to New Hampshire for vacation for almost 200 years. They come for many reasons—to enjoy the scenery, to see interesting or historic places, and to relax and enjoy the outdoors.

When they first started visiting New Hampshire in the 1820s and 1830s, it was a long, hard journey to come to the state, especially if visitors went as far north as the White Mountains. But Granite Staters built hotels, inns, and taverns so tourists would have somewhere to stay when they visited. The people of New Hampshire also organized tours to take visitors to important sites, like the Old Man of the Mountain. And they built roads and railroads so people could get to tourist destinations faster and easier. By the 1920s, New Hampshire had become one of the most



popular tourist destinations in the country.

As you learn more about tourism in New Hampshire during this period, ask yourself the following questions:

- Why did tourists come to New Hampshire?
- How did technology and industrialization impact tourism in New Hampshire?
- How did people preserve their ideas of nature through art?
- How did the rise of tourism change New Hampshire?



## Section 2: New Hampshire's Tourists

The idea of a vacation—that is, taking time off from work and going on a trip just for fun—was something new in the 1800s. Before then, most people worked six days a week and never had days off from work just to relax. But in the 1800s, the way people worked started to change, and so did their ideas about leisure time.

In the early 1800s, only the people who owned the factories could afford to take vacations, but by the end of the 1800s, many of the workers were able to take vacations as well. And nearly all factory workers had at least the weekends to relax by 1900.

*Video: Mason Explains: The Invention of "Free Time"*

Leisure Time! You probably have some activities and hobbies you like to do in your free time—when you're done with your schoolwork, of course! Did you know that people didn't always have time for fun, especially if they weren't rich? Let's join Mason as he explores how and when people began to have time to do things besides work.

*What did people do with their weekends and vacations?*

Just like today, people spent some of their time-off doing chores like laundry and cleaning. But also like today, people wanted to use some of their leisure time to do something fun or go somewhere interesting. Usually that meant getting out of the crowded cities that had grown up near the factories in the 1800s. Especially in the summer, people found life in the cities to be hot and unpleasant.



They wanted to see beautiful sights, get some exercise, and enjoy some cool weather and open spaces. For all these reasons, people in the 1800s left the cities on the weekends and went on vacations as much as they could.

### *Why New Hampshire?*

Once people started taking vacations and having weekends, they saw New Hampshire as the perfect place to visit.

New Hampshire was beautiful, from the White Mountains to the Lakes Region to the ocean beaches and everywhere in between. The rural landscape was very different from what people experienced in the cities.

Not only did New Hampshire offer lots of nature with interesting things to do and see, but it was also close enough to some big cities, like New York and Boston, to make it easy to get to.

For these reasons, New Hampshire became a popular place for people to visit in the 1800s.

### **Let's Review!**

*What are the big ideas in this section?*

1. Weekends and Vacations: In the early 1800s, only wealthy people could afford to take vacations. But by 1900, almost all factory workers had at least the weekends off for leisure
2. Leisure Time: People's leisure time grew through the 19th century. Leisure time is time you spend not working, when you rest or do something enjoyable, like sports or hobbies.



3. Summer Away from the City: Many people tried to spend their leisure time away from the crowded city, especially in the hot summer months.

4. New Hampshire's Pull: New Hampshire was a perfect place to get away to because it was so beautiful, from the White Mountains to the seashore, and easy to get to from Boston or New York City.



## Section 3: What To Do in New Hampshire

*What did tourists do when they visited New Hampshire?*

In the early 1800s, before vacations were popular, only a few people visited New Hampshire just for fun. That started to change after a terrible tragedy struck in the White Mountains: the Willey Landslide.

*Video: Mason Explains: The Willey Slide*

Disaster tourism! Lots of tourists come to visit the White Mountains every year to do fun activities and see the beautiful views. You may be surprised to learn that the thing that brought some of the first tourists to New Hampshire was a terrible tragedy. Join Mason to learn the sad story of the Willey family and how it made the White Mountains famous.

The deaths of the Willey family made national headlines because the story was so tragic and strange. People all over the country read about the tragedy in newspapers and magazines. Some people decided to travel to New Hampshire to see the Willeys' house for themselves. It became one of America's first major tourist attractions.

Once these tourists were in New Hampshire, they saw how beautiful the White Mountains were and wanted to explore them more.

Over the next several decades, more and more people came to the White Mountains and visited spots like the Old Man of the Mountain, the Flume Gorge, and Mount Washington, which is the tallest mountain in the northeast.



Granite Staters started to advertise these attractions to tourists to encourage them to visit—things like guided tours, hikes, or even carriage rides.

Mount Washington was a particularly popular spot.

Some people hiked to the summit, or the top of the mountain, even though it was dangerous because the mountain is so high.

It can get very cold on the top of Mount Washington, and storms can start very quickly. Sometimes hikers would get lost in the storm and freeze to death.

Starting in the 1840s, Granite Staters began building structures on the summit of Mount Washington to provide shelter. In the 1850s, two hotels were opened on the summit so tourists could stay overnight: the Summit House and the Tip-Top House.

To make it easier to reach the summit, the Mount Washington Carriage Road was built in the 1850s and 1860s. By using the carriage road, people could safely ride up to the top of the mountain in stagecoaches or on horseback. (Today the carriage road has become the Mount Washington Auto Road, and cars drive to the summit.)

In 1869, the Cog Railway opened to take visitors from the base of Mount Washington to its summit. The railroad, which was designed to climb up the mountain by a man named Sylvester Marsh, was the first cog railway in the world. Even today, thousands of people still ride it to the top of Mount Washington.



## Video: *Mason Explains: The Cog Railway*

The Railway to the Moon! How can you get to the top of Mount Washington? Well, you can hike . . . or you can drive . . . or you can take a train! That's right! There's a train called the Mount Washington Cog Railway that goes up New Hampshire's tallest mountain. Let's learn all about why the cog railway is there and how it climbs the mountain.

Tourists also saw how beautiful the rest of the state was too. They started visiting other spots around New Hampshire, like Lake Winnepesaukee, where they could swim, boat, and fish. Or, tourists went to the seacoast to enjoy places like Hampton Beach or the Isles of Shoals.

Even small towns in New Hampshire welcomed tourists to enjoy the beauty of the state and its fun outdoor activities.

By the early 1900s, New Hampshire was full of carriage rides, hikes, scenic views, and parks.

The state also had a new type of attraction: amusement parks. Pine Island Park opened in Manchester in 1901, and Canobie Lake Park opened in Salem the following year, 1902. There were other amusement parks in Penacook and Dover.

Just like today, amusement parks had Ferris wheels, roller coasters, and other rides. But they also offered boat rides, beaches and swimming piers, and other entertainments like concerts and dance halls to keep people amused.

Because these amusement parks were located on trolley lines, people could reach them quickly, making it easy to spend the day there.





## **Let's Review!**

*What are the big ideas in this section?*

1. **The Willey Slide:** Although the Willey Slide was a terrible tragedy, it brought people to New Hampshire. People then realized New Hampshire was a perfect vacation spot and tourism to the state grew.
2. **White Mountain Tourist Sites:** In the White Mountains, people visited places like the Flume Gorge and the Old Man of the Mountain. Mount Washington is New Hampshire's most famous mountain and was developed with a carriage road, structures on the summit, and the Cog Railway.
3. **Tourism on the Water:** People also enjoyed visiting the lakes and the ocean in New Hampshire and doing outdoor water activities. They traveled to the Lakes Region and the seacoast.
4. **Amusement Parks:** By the end of the 1800s, more reasons to visit New Hampshire had been built. People especially went to amusement parks like Canobie Lake Park in Salem and Pine Island Park in Manchester.



## **Section 4: How to Get There, Where to Stay**

*How did New Hampshire change to welcome the tourists?*

All of these people coming to New Hampshire brought a great deal of change with them. How would tourists get to New Hampshire? Where would they stay and eat while they were here?

Granite Staters developed different kinds of tourist attractions to keep visitors entertained, but they also had to develop other kinds of visitor services to encourage people to come to New Hampshire. All of these new visitor services changed New Hampshire a great deal.

*How did visitors get to New Hampshire and its popular tourist sites?*

*Video: Mason Explains: Traveling to New Hampshire in the 1800s*

Stagecoaches, Boats, and Trains! It's easy to get to New Hampshire to take a vacation today. Most people drive or take an airplane! But back in the 1800s, it took a lot more effort to come to New Hampshire for vacation. Come with Mason as he travels to the past to learn how people got around.

*Where did tourists stay when they visited New Hampshire?*

In the early 1800s, visitors stayed in taverns, which were really just the houses of people who had extra rooms to rent. Usually there was a "common" room where the guests could meet and eat their meals. Most taverns were pretty basic—the furniture was hard, the food was plain, and there wasn't much to do if it was raining outside.



Some of the most famous early taverns were owned by the Crawford family, who lived in the White Mountains near what is today called Crawford Notch.

Abel Crawford moved to the area in 1792, bringing his son Ethan Allen Crawford with him. They each built a house and ran the houses as inns, offering rooms and meals for travelers. For years, until the 1840s, the Crawfords were the most important family in the White Mountains, and they worked hard to promote the area as a tourist destination.

They helped build roads so people could travel through the mountains more easily. They offered guided tours of the area and carved out hiking paths and trails. Ethan's wife Lucy wrote a popular book about the White Mountains, which advertised the area to tourists throughout America.

The Crawfords also encouraged family and friends to move to the White Mountains and offer more attractions for visitors.

As tourism in New Hampshire became more popular in the mid-19th century, Granite Staters began to build hotels for tourists to stay in during their visits.

Hotels were a little bit nicer than most taverns and had more rooms. Sometimes hotels were called "houses," but they were much bigger than a typical house people live in today.

Many hotels were built around the state, especially in the White Mountains and on the seacoast.



## **Grand Resort Hotels**

After 1850, a new kind of hotel became popular in New Hampshire: grand resort hotels.

These very big hotels could hold 200 or more guests at once, and they usually offered lots of luxuries for the time, like hot and cold running water, electricity, telephones, and flushing toilets.

The grand resorts served visitors lots of good food, usually prepared by a trained chef. Their staff organized games and trips for guests—things like hikes, carriage rides, picnics, tennis, swimming, fishing, bike riding, golf, dancing lessons, and lawn games.

They took tourists to visit nearby attractions like scenic views, waterfalls, and rock formations. The resorts held concerts, lectures, and plays for the guests' entertainment.

Some guests would stay at a grand resort hotel for the entire summer, while other people would visit for just a week or two.

Although most grand resort hotels were located in the White Mountains or near the seacoast, they could be found all over the state, even in fairly small towns. In fact, New Hampshire used to have 150 grand resort hotels, spread out across the state. Only 10 of them are left today.



## **Beyond the Grand Resorts**

There were also other options than grand resort hotels for visitors to New Hampshire.

There were hundreds of smaller hotels and inns, cabins, and boardinghouses in popular tourist areas for those who could not afford to stay at a grand resort hotel.

## **Summer Homes**

Some New Hampshire tourists loved the state so much that they bought summer homes here. Many people built summer homes in the Lakes Region, but tourists also moved into summer homes all over the state.

There were lots of houses available in the 1870s and 1880s, because many of New Hampshire's farmers moved to the Midwest during these years—to places like Iowa and Nebraska. The farming was easier there. They sold their land and farmhouses to rich people from Boston or New York who wanted to spend their summers in New Hampshire.

## **Family Camps**

Other visitors to New Hampshire would buy some land and then set up a temporary campsite on it where they could stay for the summer. They would live in cloth tents or build small shelters or lean-tos.

Over time, these campers would make the rough structures nicer, more weatherproof, and larger until they had their own summer cabin.



These types of camps were very popular in the Lakes Region.

Often, a camp would be handed down through several generations in one family. Many families continued to call their property a camp even if they had built a house on it.

## **Sleepaway Camps**

New Hampshire is the birthplace of “sleepaway” summer camps, where kids stay—sometimes for several weeks—and sleep in cabins or tents. Thousands of kids from all over the northeast have come to sleepaway camps in the Granite State. Most of these camps are in the Lakes Region. There have been more than 450 sleepaway camps in New Hampshire.

Camp Chocorua was the first sleepaway camp in New Hampshire and in the United States. It was founded in 1881 by a Dartmouth College student named Ernest Balch.

In addition to all the outdoor activities, like swimming, boating, hiking, and fishing, Camp Chocorua had a choir and a newspaper run by the boys. The boys held races of all kinds, played baseball, cleared trails through the forest, and learned how to build things out of wood. There were also “liberty days” when there were no rules at all.

Camp Chocorua closed in 1889 after just 9 years. But many people were interested in the camp’s ideas and started their own camps in New Hampshire.



## Let's Review!

*What are the big ideas in this section?*

1. **Visitor Services:** As tourism grew in New Hampshire, visitor services developed as well. Visitor services are features made for visitors, from amusement parks to hotels to railroad train lines.
2. **Early Tourism:** Early tourists stayed in taverns, which were basic places to stay without extra activities. The Crawford family was an important family because they supported early tourism in the White Mountains.
3. **Grand Resort Hotels:** Grand resort hotels began to be built after 1850. They were large, expensive places to stay that had wonderful food, many fun activities to do like dancing lessons, and took visitors to nearby tourist attractions. Grand resort hotels brought many people to New Hampshire during the summer months.
4. **Summer Homes and Camping:** Tourists could also stay in summer homes or family camps to visit New Hampshire. One special kind of tourist destination were sleepaway camps where kids could go and spend weeks enjoying summer in the Granite state.



## **Section 5: Tourism and Art**

*How did art promote tourism in New Hampshire?*

Artists loved coming to New Hampshire, particularly the White Mountains. In fact, about 450 artists came to New Hampshire during the 19th century to create masterpieces that showed the beauty of the state.

Some artists would come for short visits, make sketches, and then return to their studios in Boston, New York, or Philadelphia to paint. Others stayed longer in New Hampshire and rented studios so they could create their paintings right here. A few even moved to New Hampshire to live here year-round!

The most famous of the White Mountain artists was a man named Benjamin Champney. He had a studio in North Conway, and many people visited him to see—and sometimes buy—the art he created. Even other artists came to see him, to learn more about how to paint such powerful images of the natural world.

Most of the art these 19th-century painters created were landscapes, showing the beauty and power of the natural world. This style of art became so popular that people started calling it White Mountain art.

Some of the paintings were huge, measuring 8 or more feet wide. The artists used strong colors to make the paintings more dramatic and make nature seem more impressive. When these massive paintings were hung on a wall, it was like looking out a window at an inspiring natural scene, which is probably why so many people living in big cities wanted to own these paintings. The huge paintings made them feel like they were close to nature and far away from busy city life.





The White Mountains weren't the only part of New Hampshire that attracted artists. Painters also visited other parts of the state, like the Lakes Region and the seacoast, and created works of art.

The Isles of Shoals was a particularly popular spot for artists and writers. Located in the Atlantic Ocean 10 miles off the coast of New Hampshire, the islands stay cooler than the rest of the state during the summer months, which brought a lot of people to visit when it got too hot.

The Isles of Shoals was also the home of Celia Loughton Thaxter, who was a famous poet and artist. Her books about life on the Isles of Shoals helped make them famous.

Some artists set up studios in New Hampshire to sketch and paint. Visitors would come to the studios to see the artists at work, view the paintings the artists had created, and maybe even buy one of them. Seeing the artists in their studios became popular tourist destinations.

Even if paintings were created in New Hampshire, they didn't stay here. Artists usually sold them to museums or private collectors.

Once sold, the paintings showed the beauty of New Hampshire and encouraged more tourists to visit. It was almost like the paintings themselves became advertisements for the Granite State.

In addition to creating landscape paintings, artists often found jobs working at the grand resort hotels. Some of the resorts even had artists-in-residence who would live at the hotel and create paintings as souvenirs for the guests, decorate brochures and menus for the hotel, and give art lessons to tourists.



## **Let's Review!**

*What are the big ideas in this section?*

1. **New Hampshire's Beauty:** The natural beauty of New Hampshire, especially the White Mountains, inspired many artists in the 19th century.
2. **Landscape Paintings:** A lot of the art created was landscape paintings, which showed beautiful nature scenes in the White Mountains. Benjamin Champney made powerful paintings of the natural world
3. **Art Throughout the State:** Artists also visited the Lakes Region and the Seacoast to get ideas for their art. Celia Loughton Thaxter was an artist and poet from the Isles of Shoals.
4. **Art as Advertisement:** When people saw the art about New Hampshire, it made them want to visit. Grand resort hotels sometimes had artists working there to try to help more people create art about the Granite state.



## **Section 6: Souvenirs**

*How did people remember their visit to New Hampshire?*

Just as tourism was new to the 19th century, so were souvenirs—the things people buy at tourist destinations to help them remember their visit.

Souvenirs came in all shapes and sizes, such as postcards and photographs, pin cushions, plates, jewelry boxes, teacups, guidebooks, and collectible spoons. Just like today, people bought these items to help them remember their trip.

Souvenirs often contained the name of a popular tourist attraction or of a grand resort hotel, and sometimes they had a picture too.

### **Arts and Crafts**

Although many souvenirs were mass produced, tourists also bought hand-made souvenirs created by Granite Staters who lived in the state and used natural resources to make their products. In fact, tourists' interest in hand-made souvenirs led to an arts and crafts movement in New Hampshire, when creative people who lived here made all sorts of things to sell to visitors who came to vacation in New Hampshire.

Some of these local artists were colorful characters who became well known among the public, like English Jack, who told stories and carved walking sticks that he sold to the public. Another popular figure was the "Hermit of Manchester," who also shared tall tales with visitors and sold them herbs and vegetables from his garden.

One of the best known White Mountain characters was Frank Leavitt, who created a series of wacky maps for tourists in the



second half of the 19th century. He was a popular guide who took visitors to historic sites and places of great natural beauty in the mountains. The maps he created were not accurate depictions of the White Mountains—in fact, some of the maps were upside down!—but they shared stories of the mountains and encouraged tourists to visit some of the region's sites.

## **Abenaki Crafts and Storytelling**

Although all kinds of souvenirs could be purchased in New Hampshire, crafts made by Abenaki Native Americans were particularly popular.

Most of the Abenaki had left New Hampshire in the early 18th century, but some still lived in the state, especially in the White Mountains and the Great North Woods.

Abenaki communities worked through the winter months creating baskets with complex decorative designs and other handmade items. During the summer months, when visitors flocked to New Hampshire, the Abenaki set up roadside stands where tourists could watch baskets being made, listen to stories that shared Abenaki culture, and purchase souvenirs to take back to their homes.

Some Abenaki traveled between the grand resort hotels in the summer to give demonstrations of traditional Abenaki crafts.

The popularity of Abenaki crafts and culture sparked new interest in Abenaki life and their history in New Hampshire.

## **Let's Review!**

*What are the big ideas in this section?*



1. Remembering a Visit: Souvenirs are items people buy to remember a visit to a special place.
2. Kinds of Souvenirs: Souvenirs come in all shapes in sizes, from a deck of cards to an enormous landscape painting. They can have the name of an attraction or a hotel on them and sometimes have a picture too.



3. Unusual Souvenirs: There were some creative, unusual souvenirs created in New Hampshire in the 19th century. Two examples are English Jack's walking sticks and Frank Leavitt's crazy maps.

4. Abenaki Souvenirs: Abenaki people created special souvenirs that showed tourists their traditional crafts, like basket weaving.



## **Section 7: Tourism Brings Change**

*In what ways did the tourism industry change New Hampshire?*

So many tourists came to New Hampshire that they changed the state in many ways, especially the White Mountains region.

Granite Staters built roads, bridges, and railroads for the tourists to travel on. They developed tourist destinations that brought more visitors to the state. They opened hotels, inns, restaurants, and stores for the tourists, which encouraged visitors to spend money in the state. Tourism became one of New Hampshire's leading industries, meaning it became one of the main ways people in the state made enough money to live.

Tourists also began expecting certain comforts when they were in New Hampshire, things like hot and cold running water, telephones, and electricity. And the owners of hotels and tourist attractions responded by bringing these technological improvements to different parts of the state. By having things like roads, railroads, and telephones, the different regions of New Hampshire felt more connected to one another. Not just tourists could travel easily from one part of the state to another, but so could Granite Staters themselves!

The tourism industry also made people more aware of how beautiful the state is and how its natural resources and stunning scenery needed to be protected.

Taking care of New Hampshire's natural resources—for the tourists and for the people who lived here—became important in the second half of the 19th century, when the mills and factories began to pollute the state's waterways. As the lumber industry cut down more and more trees, New Hampshire's natural landscapes were threatened, which was a challenge for the tourist



industry. No one wanted to travel to the Granite State to see a forest that had been cut down!

The needs of all these industries—tourism, factories, and lumber—had to be balanced for the people of New Hampshire to prosper.

## **Let's Review!**

*What are the big ideas in this section?*

1. **Tourism Changes New Hampshire:** As tourism grew through the 19th century, it changed New Hampshire. Today, tourism is a leading industry, or a main way people in the state make enough money to live.
2. **Tourism's Improvements:** Positive changes happened in the state because of tourism. Many things were built to help tourism grow, from roads and bridges to hotels and telephone poles.
3. **Good for Granite Staters:** The positive changes from tourism helped not only the tourists, but also the people who lived in New Hampshire. They were able to travel on better roads and experience useful electricity even if they did not work in the tourist industry.
4. **Protecting Nature:** Tourists in the 19th century came to New Hampshire because of its natural beauty. At the same time, industries and factories began polluting the state's water and cutting down its forests. Balancing the state's tourism and businesses is important for everyone.