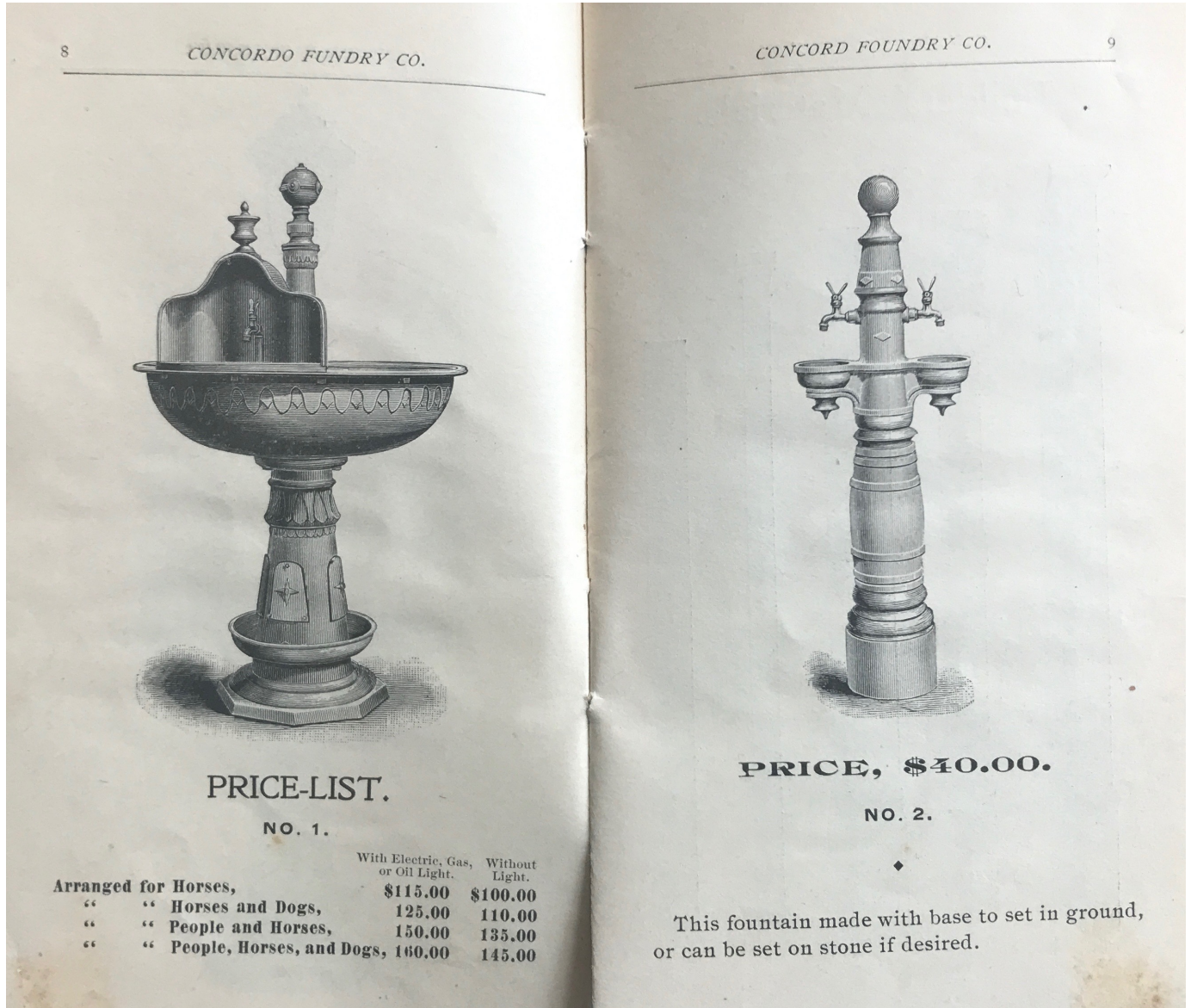


BRINGING the PRESENCE of the PAST into the PRESENT

The Village Fountain – Thanks to the W.C.T.U & the New Hampton Garden Club

“You have done nicely in such a small town. No doubt it's created much interest and will give great pleasure.”



The cast iron fountain on Main Street has been in place for 119 years. Purchased by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) in the spring of 1900 for \$145, the fountain provided water for, as the brochure says, “People, Horses, and Dogs.” The W.C.T.U. wanted to ensure there was a steady stream of a non-alcoholic beverage available 24 hours a day (except, as noted in the correspondence below, in winter – unless the residents wished to share the water in the big bowl with the horses). New Hampton School alumna and town activist, Emma Grace Bickford¹ successfully headed the effort to place one of the famed “Clapp’s Fountains” in the center of the village. Below are excerpts of letters from the Foundry to Emma.

¹Emma Bickford’s husband, Rev. Lewis P. Bickford, was a fellow alum of New Hampton School and the first librarian at the Gordon-Nash Library. Their children were Grace, John, Ina and Annie Bickford. Grace and Ina were also librarians, and then ran the Pillars Guest House on Main Street for many years. John married his 1896 NHS classmate, Lillian Frost, and their son, Chaloner, was born in 1905. Many readers will, no doubt, have fond memories of Chaloner and his wife Ann.

May 14 - 1900

Dear Madam

I ship drinking fountain today in good condition and hope it will reach you the same... The fountain can be handled very easy by using a heavy pair of skids. Roll the fountain on to the skids, and with small rolls it can be moved anywhere. The iron handles and stop-cocks are for dog trough and one for large bowl. The dog trough is to be shut off in winter. And the people's faucet is shut off in large bowl. The large bowl runs all the year round...

May 31 - 1900

Dear Madam;

Did you have any dedication at the time it was set? If so send us a paper containing it... Also, will you send us names of other W.C.T.U.s, to whom we could send our circulars?

You have done nicely so it seems to us in such a small town. No doubt it's created much interest and will give great pleasure.

Yours respectfully,

B.S. Rolfe, for Clapp, Esq.

While the dog trough may be gone, it is good to know that our fountain was intended to serve pure water to New Hampton's horses, dogs and people! A big SHOUT OUT to the New Hampton Garden Club for ensuring that the fountain continues to give us all "great pleasure!"



Spring 1900 Correspondence from Concord Foundry to the New Hampton W.C.T.U.



The Clapp's Fountain today thanks to the kind efforts of the New Hampton Garden Club

For more information on the history of the town, please visit the New Hampton Historical Society website at www.newhamptonhistory.org/

For information on the New Hampton Garden Club, see <http://www.new-hampton.nh.us/orgsNHGC.asp>

Kent Bicknell
Historian, NHHS
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