

## ROSS MUSEUM'S SNOW ROLLER

This rare and interesting antique snow packing equipment probably dates somewhere between 1880 and 1930. The earliest rollers, ca. 1800s, were constructed of a solid log fitted with an axle which enabled it to turn. Later rollers, like the one at the Ross Museum, were constructed of two drums or barrels, generally made of oak staves with metal or wooden wheels at either end. The diameter of the drums varied in size but the rollers were usually, not always, 12' wide. A driver seat was mounted above the rollers. A long pole connected the roller to a team of horses. The largest rollers would be pulled by four teams of horses. Working after dark, with lanterns, in the bitter cold prompted the son of one farmer to recall "Never was there invented a colder and more miserable job than driving a team while sitting on top of the roller exposed to wind, snow and cold."

The invention of snow rollers ended the isolation of rural communities in winter. Rollers packed the snow in place so wagons, carriages, and buggies could slide on runners over the snow. With the advent of motorized vehicles, improved roads, and the snow plough around 1927 snow rollers started to disappear. For a while they worked alongside mechanized snow ploughs which were not always popular as they left snow drifts in front of the store fronts. In time the rollers were stripped of their good oak staves and the metal was used to support the WW11 metal salvaging program.

The result is that these artifacts are rare. Restoration is by conjecture and from old photos as there are no original builders left. There are a few museums in the US, in Vermont, New Hampshire and New York State. In Canada the record seems to be confined to books and picture post cards. This makes the Ross Museum Roller a very interesting item but it badly needs repair and a shelter. The museum executive is working to find government grants and to raise money to restore and shelter it. In time a fund raising drive will be launched. Please support this exciting project. (*information courtesy of [Burlington Free Press History Space: The snow rollers of Peacham, and Mt. Washington Valley Vibe Feb12 2019](#) [White Mountain Snow Rollers - Mt Washington Valley Vibe \(mwvvibe.com\)](#))*)

