



# THE PIERCE BRIGADE MONTHLY NEWS



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## Broadsided

After the members of the Continental Congress finished drafting the Declaration of Independence in July of 1776, a local Philadelphia printer by the name of John Dunlap was hired to produce an estimated 200 “broadsides.” These large poster-sided copies of the Declaration were then dispersed throughout the 13 colonies the following day. New Hampshire received its copy on July 16th and the Declaration was read in Exeter (then the capitol). As time passed, New Hampshire’s copy of this historic document disappeared, as did many of the other 200 copies.

In 1985, a local tradesman made a startling discovery as he was rooting around in the attic of an antique property in Exeter, NH. It was not uncommon in colonial times to use whatever was on hand—particularly old paper and clothing—as insulation. In order to install a modern day security system, the tradesman was removing this antique insulation and noticed that one of the poster-sized pieces had the word “Declaration”



*Copies of the Declaration of Independence were printed by John Dunlap and were known as broadsides because of their broad poster size.*

written across the top.

Understanding the significance of his discovery, he insisted the owners of the property, the Society of the Cincinnati (the historic organization to which both Benjamin and Franklin Pierce belonged), come and look at his discovery. As it turned out, his instincts were correct. He had found New Hampshire’s lost Dunlap Broadside.

Believing that the broadside had been

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## Upcoming Events

### Presidential Wreath Laying Ceremony

Tuesday, November 24th  
@ 10:00 a.m.

Old North Cemetery

Each year the White House sends a wreath commemorating President Pierce’s birthday. Join us graveside as the NH Army National Guard and the Governor’s Horse Guard conduct the annual wreath laying ceremony.

*Refreshments to follow at the  
Pierce Manse.*

### Christmas at the Manse

Sunday, December 6th  
Noon to 3:00 p.m.

Join us for this seasonal celebration at the President’s house.

*Music and Refreshments*

Special Holiday Admission  
Will Be Charged



## The Start of an American Tradition

In 1856, President Franklin Pierce was the first President to have a Christmas tree in the White House. To commemorate this historic first, the Pierce Brigade has produced a set of one-of-a-kind handcrafted ornaments that can be purchased in the Manse gift shop.

The Christmas ornament is crafted in the “penny rug” style, following the tradition of homemakers in the late 1800’s. At that time, women used scraps of

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**Broadsided cont...**

found on private property and was therefore theirs to do with as they wished, the Society contacted an auction house and put the copy up for sale. In 1989, only 24 copies of the original were known to exist and the Society's newly found treasure would have fetched a handsome price.

Finding it strange that the State of New Hampshire would be willing to let the one and only known copy in the state be sold, the auction house contacted the Secretary of State. Unaware of the discovery, the Secretary quickly put the wheels in motion that would ensure that New Hampshire's sole surviving copy of this important document would remain in the state.

After a lengthy court battle, a compromise was reached. The Society retains possession of the broadside, but the American Independence Museum was

created with the Dunlap Broadside at the center of its collections.

Today, the museum, which is based in the Ladd-Gilman House in Exeter, is a private, nonprofit institution whose mission is to provide a place for the study, research, education and interpretation of the American Revolution and of the role that New Hampshire, Exeter, and the Gilman family played in the founding of the new republic. The Society continues to own the building in which the Dunlap Broadside was found and where the museum operates. Society members continue to use the facility for their annual meeting.

Pierce Brigade volunteers visited the museum on October 28th for volunteer appreciation day and learned more about the time period that shaped Benjamin Pierce's outlook and influenced President Pierce's values and political views. [www.independencemuseum.org](http://www.independencemuseum.org).

**Did You Know?**

The Governor's Horse Guard, who will be participating in the ceremonial wreath laying at Pierce's grave on November 24th, began on June 24, 1859. It was created by an act of the New Hampshire Senate and the House of Representatives and was originally attached to the fourth brigade of the second division of the New Hampshire militia.

The Guard's principle duty was to escort the Governor on public occasions and President Franklin Pierce was elected Honorary Colonel.

Today, the Governor's Horse Guard is a non-profit all volunteer ceremonial unit of the New Hampshire National Guard. The Guard continues to escort sitting Governors and participates in other public ceremonies. Each member participates at their own expense.

**American Tradition cont...**

material cut in circles and sewn using different designs and embroidery stitches. This ornament would have been one of multiple "pennies" on the decorative rug, which were used on floors and tables.

There are three available designs this holiday season—a Christmas tree, a mitten and a dove. The Christmas tree ornament design recognizes Pierce's role in what has become an American Tradition—the White House Christmas Tree—while the dove and mitten designs are reflective of the time period. Set of three \$10.00.

**Get Involved**

**Christmas at the Manse** is just around the corner. This year, we are hoping to increase the number of trees we decorate and install in the Manse. If you have an artificial tree that you are no longer using and would like to donate to the Pierce Brigade, please call Joan Woodhead at 224-1819.



Please, no trees larger than 6 feet tall.

Looking for a way to get into the holiday spirit? Join us the week of December 1st and help decorate the Pierce Manse. If you'd like to volunteer your time, please contact Joan Davis at 224-2939.

**REMEMBER!**  
**Monthly Board Meetings** occur the third Wednesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. and are open to all interested members.