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Laconia Evening Citizen

Gilford Resident Discovers Rare Historical Documents

By BETTY TRASK

The fabulous discovery of two rare historical documents was revealed this week by historian Hector Bolduc of Gilford and Washington. Outside of the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, they are reputed to be the most important documents in the entire history of our nation, signed by the entire federal administration. One is entitled "The Administration of the U.S. Government at the Beginning of its Second Century," Washington, D.C., July 4, 1876, U.S. Grant, President, and the other, "The Beginning of the 400th Anniversary of the Discovery of America—1492-1892," Benjamin Harrison was president. Each is valued at well over \$100,000!

Mr. Bolduc, whose interest in antiques and items of historical importance is well known, had done research on Civil War Col. James D. McBride (owner of printing companies in Washington and several other large cities, McBride had printed both scrolls and taken them to Washington where the various signatures were affixed). It seems that the colonel's son sold at auction for a couple of dollars, several of his father's Civil War maps which were rolled up along with the

The purchaser traded them in Washington for an old Civil War gun. Knowing of Bolduc's interest in Civil War artifacts, the new owner then offered them for sale to the local man. Although not sure of their value at that time, Bolduc had a "premonition," and after the purchase, took them to the National Archives last May where they remained for several months while undergoing intensive scrutiny and examination.

Shortly after they had been authenticated by the archives, Bolduc happened to read in a December edition of the Evening Citizen, an editorial by publisher Edward J. Gallagher concerning Silson Hutchins, former local resident, politician and philanthropist about whom the latter

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TWO HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS missing for close to 100 years, are now in the possession of Gilford historian Hector Bolduc, who on obtaining them, took them to the National Archives in Washington for verification. With this discovery, it was learned that the one on display in Concord was just a copy. Prior to framing Bolduc shows the scrolls to Evening Citizen County Editor Betty Trask. He has been offered over \$100,000 each for them.

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had previously written a book. The editorial said in part: "As a member of the legislature from Laconia, he," (Hutchins, who was a delegate to the 100th anniversary in Philadelphia), "presented to the state a framed collection of the signatures of the President of the United States, members of Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court in office when the country celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1876. Addressing the House of Representatives at the time of the presentation, he informed his fellow members there was only one other collection of the famous signatures in existence. In a heavy gold frame, inclosing the autographs, the collection is now in the state archives building at Concord. It was restored as nearly as possible to its original condition when John W. King was governor."

To say the least, Bolduc was shocked at the preceding news. He thought he had the only original. Therefore, he immediately had photostats made and enclosed them in a letter sent to Robert A. Lauze of the Department of Administration and Control, Division of Records in Concord.

"It would appear," Lauze wrote back, that the copy here is not an original."

This past weekend, Bolduc who was here for a few days over Easter, visited the state archives with his documents and at the same time inspected theirs, commenting on how strange it is that two originals and one copy have found their way back to this state.

Gen. McBride, he said, had kept the two originals and had an engraving made in Philadelphia, the latter being what is now on display here. However, for close to 100 years, until their discovery by Bolduc, no one knew where the originals were.

The National Archives restored and backed them with canvas, in exchange for the loan of the two documents in 1976 when the country observes its bicentennial. In the meantime, they have reportedly sent several representatives to Bolduc, seeking to purchase them for the archives.

Although Bolduc is not certain yet just what he will do with his tremendous find, he has arranged for them to be framed immediately for protection.

The following printed history of

the scrolls accompanied them, explaining their history. It was interesting to note that two New Hampshire senators were the third and fourth persons to sign the 1876 document.

History Part I

"The Centennial Memorial entitled 'The Administration of the U.S. Government at the Beginning of its Second Century', shows the growth of the nation during its first century, and the men who administered the government of July 4, 1876. Every signature upon the original document was placed there by the hand of the person whose name it purports to be, and was affixed with the distinct purpose of constituting this a memorial of that period, and as such it must forever stand alone.

In addition to the attestation by the Judicial Departments confirming its genuineness, the seal of the United States was by authority of an act of Congress.

This statement was exhibited by the Centennial celebration at Philadelphia July 4, 1876, and also formed a part of the government exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago."

History Part II

"The Centennial Memorial was signed at the executive mansion in the cabinet room by the President and his cabinet; at the capitol the chief justice and associate justices affixed their signatures in the Supreme Court chamber; the senators subscribed their names to it in the vice president's room; the members of the House of Representatives and territorial delegates, to complete the record, enrolled their names upon it in the Speaker's room.

This arrangement of signatures is in the following order:

The President, the cabinet in the order of Presidential succession, the Supreme Court according to seniority of appointment, the Senate and House of Representatives in the geographical order of location of state; and territorial delegates in the order of the creation of their territories. The senators longest in continuous service signed first under head of their respective states, and representatives in the numerical order of their districts."