

PORTSMOUTH PEACE TREATY: CITIZEN DIPLOMATS

On August 29, 2010 – 105 years to the day that the Russian and Japanese diplomats agreed to the peace ending the Russo-Japanese War – the Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum recreated a historic photograph from the peace conference summer. The idea that citizen diplomacy helped shape the outcome – that the conscious choice each individual who participated made to get involved, mattered – proved to be a motivating force in 2005. The Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum recreated the historic photograph to tell the story of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty Anniversary celebration in 2005 and events since. The mass of New Hampshire people in the 1905 photograph and the larger group in 2010 show the extent to which ordinary people got involved in both celebrations. As Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum chairman Charles B. Doleac said at the photo recreation event, “We are not here just to honor history, but to make history. In 1905, and in 2005, we indicated to the world that citizen diplomacy would work. That idea is now officially recognized throughout the state – and beyond – by observing Portsmouth Peace Treaty Day.”

A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE

Following a Welcoming Parade through the streets of Portsmouth, the Governor of New Hampshire hosted a reception in the Rockingham County Courthouse. The photograph (right) of those assembled beneath American flags shows the entire Russian and Japanese entourage and the prominent Americans including the Governor, Secretary of State, NH’s 1905 Executive Council and the NH Congressional delegation. It also includes prominent Seacoast citizens who helped make the arrangements for hosting the conference. Behind the headlines and behind the scenes in 1905, dozens of individuals from all walks of life contributed to the welcome the Seacoast and the state offered to the diplomats.



AN UNCOMMON COMMITMENT TO PEACE BECAME A COMMON VIRTUE

Set in the Grand Ballroom at Wentworth By the Sea Hotel – the same room where a reception honoring the Russian and Japanese delegations took place the night of August 29, 1905 -- the photograph above replicates the symbolism of key figures arranged in front of the same backdrop of American flags. Pictured are Russians, Japanese, government dignitaries and the key local people who made the arrangements for Portsmouth to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the peace conference. The photo group includes the chair and members of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum along with representatives from the NH National Guard, the US Navy from the Shipyard and key NH government figures including Secretary of State Bill Gardner and the members of the NH Legislature who passed the bill making September 5th Portsmouth Peace Treaty Day. Deputy Consul Nakatomi, Consul Aoki from the Japanese Consulate in Boston and Japan Society of NH board members honor the Japanese delegation. Russian Orthodox Church figures, members of the Russia Society of NH and descendants of some of the original Russian participants honor the Russians. Mayor Ferrini and many City Councilors echo their counterparts in 1905.