

NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MILL TOWN MESSENGER

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Volume 1, Issue 2 November 2007

WE DID IT! - \$100,000 GOAL EXCEEDED!

When the Newport Historical Society volunteered to raise \$100,000 (20% of a \$500,000 Transportation Enhancement Grant) in late May 2006, we were unsure of our ability to raise such a large sum by the July 1, 2007 grant deadline. The State of New Hampshire, pleased with our success, removed the deadline in May of 2007. We are excited to report that we have raised and exceeded our grant match goal of \$100,000!! As of this writing we have raised \$101,732.72.

Contributions for the project have come from as far away as Alaska and Hawaii. Covered bridge and railroad

enthusiasts from coast to coast and beyond have joined forces with local contributors to preserve two priceless and rare examples of covered bridge and railroad history.

A second grant of \$111,000, secured by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, will add fire suppression to the Wright's Bridge. Their 20% matching funds are derived from the sale of moose license plates. This grant is being combined with our \$500,000 grant for a total pool of \$611,000.

Work on the bridges was scheduled to begin in late summer 2007. However, due to engineering delays, work will commence in the

spring of 2008.

We will continue to accept contributions for the Pier (and Wright's) Bridge Preservation Project. Any additional contributions received will be used for necessary repairs beyond the original scope of the project.

Please make your check payable to Pier Bridge Preservation Project and mail to: Leighann King, Sugar River Savings Bank, P O Box 569, Newport, NH 03773.

We thank everyone who so generously supported this important project.

Special thanks go to Jackie Cote, Historical Society Treasurer, who spearheaded this effort.



Pier Bridge (top) and Wright's Bridge
Photos courtesy of John Waldron.

NHS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE: NOVEMBER 1 - 30, 2007

Please join the Newport Historical Society during the month of November. Our goal is to reach 100 new members by November 30!

It's easy to join!

Just send in the membership form on the back page of this newsletter. We offer Individual, Family, Junior and Corporate/Business categories of membership.

Your support helps to make possible activities such as the NHS Vital Records Project. When completed, we will aid national and international researchers by posting on our website the information contained on birth, marriage and death records in our possession, that is legal to share. As a special incentive, any member joining between August 1 and

November 30, 2007 is eligible for a chance to win one of our exciting raffle prizes, which include gift certificates from Hubert's, Salt Hill Pub, and Shaw's. The top prize is an exceptionally designed sterling silver Old Man of the Mountains pendant and chain from Harrington's Jewelers.

See back page for details.

Upcoming Programs

Sugar River Bank Community Room

November 12 7pm

Newcomb Eldredge:

10th Mountain Division

Larry Zullo:

WW II Pacific Theater

January 14 7pm

Daniel Budd:

Budd's Beverages

The Inside Scoop

- *Online Research Tip: Sullivan County Deeds*
- *Newport Gift Shop*
- *NHS Annual Meeting*
- *Genealogy: Kelsey Family*
- *Newport Notables: George B. Wheeler*
- *Membership Form*

ONLINE RESEARCH TIP: Searching Sullivan County Deeds

Sullivan County Registry of Deeds



Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 448
Newport, NH 03773

Physical Address:
14 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Newport, NH

Telephone: 603-863-2110

Land Title Deeds of Sullivan County are housed in Newport, and date back to 1827 when Sullivan County was formed to include the following towns: Acworth, Charles-town, Cornish, Croydon, Goshen, Grantham, Langdon, Lempster, Newport, Plainfield, Springfield, Sunapee, Unity, Washington and the City of Claremont. These towns were originally part of Cheshire County. Sullivan County deeds dated from 1791 - 1827 can be found in Keene, and to access deeds before 1791 you need to visit the State Archives at 71 South Fruit Street, Concord, NH.

Due to the leadership of Sharon A. King, Sullivan County Register of Deeds since 1984, all records from 1827 forward can be searched online.

Follow these steps to conduct an online search:

1. Go to <http://www.nhdeeds.com/slvn/web/start.htm>
2. Click on 'Search County

Records' located on left menu.

3. Click on 'Accept Agreement'.
4. Follow the directions to load Java onto your computer, if needed.
5. When Java is loaded, the screen Sullivan County Index/Image Selection will appear.
6. The first screen allows searching for the years 1965 - Present.
7. To search records from 1827 - 1980 select 'Old Index Books' from the Select Index pull-down menu at upper left of screen.
8. Choose a range of years to search by the Grantor (seller) or Grantee (buyer).
9. Choose 'Click Here to Begin Name Search'.
10. Find the page number for the appropriate alphabetical range.
11. Enter page number in

box located at top right labeled 'Index Page'.

12. The Deed Index appears, giving you the names involved in the transaction as well as the Book and Page numbers of the document.
13. To view the original document, record the Book and Page numbers and return to the 'Sullivan County Index/Image Selection' screen.
14. Enter the Document Book and Document Page at the top right of screen.
15. Choose 'Click Here To View Document'.

Navigate by using the 'Prior Page' and 'Next Page' as well as 'Prior Document' and 'Next Document' functions. You need an account in order to print documents, or you can bring the Book and Page numbers to the office to print a copy.

Happy Hunting!

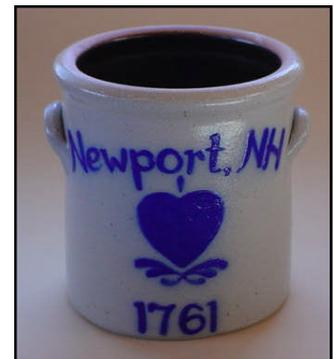
NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY GIFT SHOP

As the holidays approach, please remember the gift items offered by the Historical Society. We feature Newport merchandise that will make wonderful gifts for residents as well as family and friends living beyond Newport's borders. An especially good idea is to begin a collection of the Newport Landmark Christmas ornaments. This year's ornament is

a winter scene of the Old Courthouse based on a painting by local artist Cliff Trefethen. Other thoughtful reminders of the 'old home town' include a selection of Newport prints by Barbara Huff, the recent publication *Mansions and Prominent Landmarks of Newport, New Hampshire*, and our Pier Bridge mugs, note cards

and shirts.

Our newest addition is the Newport Town Crock from Salmon Falls Stoneware in Dover, NH. Very reasonably priced at \$28.00, this and all other items can be purchased at the Sugar River Bank lobby on Fridays (9-6) and Saturdays (9-11:30).



NEW OFFICERS ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Newport Historical Society took place at the Sugar River Savings Bank Community Room on October 8, 2007.

Guest speaker was Igor Robert Blake, who related interesting facts about living in Newport circa 1909 to the present.

The following officers were elected: Cathryn Baird, President; Mary Lou McGuire, Vice-President; Jackie Cote, Treasurer; and Christina O'Brien, Secretary.

Elected to the Newport Historical Society Museum Board of Directors was Ray Reid, Larry Cote and Mary Lou McGuire. As chairperson of the Museum Board, Ray Reid becomes the fifth member of the Historical Society Executive Committee.

The Society recently adopted a revised Constitution, and revisions include a written mission statement and clarification of terminology. The new constitution establishes a three-person Board

of Directors to run the Museum, and new membership categories including a Junior Membership (\$1) for persons under the age of eighteen; a Family membership (\$25) which offers a reduced price to members of the same family unit, and a Corporate/Business Membership covering five levels.

An October date for the Annual Meeting was chosen in 1975 when the Historical Society was revitalized, with the intent to meet on October 6 to coincide with the

date of Newport's original charter: October 6, 1761.

Any person interested in preserving the history of Newport is encouraged to donate items to the Historical Society Museum and to become a member. Check our new website:

www.newportnhhistory.org for more information.

Your membership is important to this newly reorganized Society. If you are interested in Newport history, we sincerely welcome your ideas and participation!

GENEALOGY: THE KELSEY FAMILY

Most of the families who settled Newport originated in England and the genealogy of the Kelsey family provides a representative history. One of the first six men from Killingworth, Connecticut who arrived at Newport's location in 1765 was Roswell Kelsey, a descendant of William Kelsey, who was born in Chelmsford, Essex County, England about 1600. William Kelsey was one of the original Proprietors of both Hartford and Killingworth, Connecticut. In 1632 William arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts as a member of the Braintree Company, followers of the Rev. Thomas Hooker. This religious company removed to Connecticut in 1636, establishing the future settlement of Hartford in 1637. In 1663 he moved to Hammonasset Plantation and founded the town of Kenilworth, later called Killingworth, Connecticut.

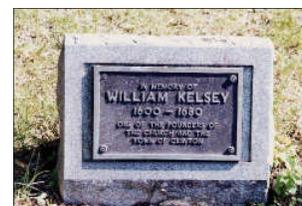
Of William's nine children the fifth was a son, John, born in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1636. John was also an original settler and Proprietor of Killingworth. John's eighth child, Stephen, was born there in 1682; Stephen's fourth child Benjamin (b. 1710) married Ruth Wilcox of Killingworth in 1741.

The second child of Benjamin and Ruth was Roswell (b. 13 March 1743/4), one of the original settlers of Newport. He was granted Lot #21 in the original land grant allocations for the town of Newport. His log cabin was built on the west side of Pine Street. Pine Street, along with Spring Street, was Newport's first thoroughfare.

In 1771 Roswell married Hepsibah Bellows and they had twelve children. Their last child was Roswell Jr., who was born in 1778 and married Susan Flanders. They

had seven children, all born in Newport. Their third child was James, born 21 August 1806, and he married Elvira J. Hurd. They had only two children, the first being Roswell James, born 4 June 1839. He married Harriett Zelinda Lewis in 1864. The first of their seven children was Myrtie Louise Kelsey, born 10 February 1868. She married Henry M. Stevens, a Newport jeweler who came from West Fairlee, Vermont. They also had two children, the first being Earle Kelsey Stevens, who became a barber and the father of current Newport resident Robert Kelsey Stevens. Their second child was a daughter, Ethel Marion (Stevens) Haven, who was the mother of Marjorie (Haven) Patterson Sawyers. Marjorie is a current Newport Historical Society member, and she contributed the information for this article.

The first Roswell Kelsey and



his wife Hepsibah are buried in Newport's first cemetery on the west side of Pine Street. Roswell Jr. and his wife Susan are buried in Newport's second cemetery on the east side of Pine Street. Both James and his wife Elvira, and Roswell James and his wife Harriett, are buried in the Maple Street Cemetery. Myrtie and her husband Henry Stevens are buried in the Pine Grove Cemetery, as is their son Earle Kelsey and his wife Sylvia (Sanborn) Stevens. Their daughter Ethel Stevens Haven and husband Frank are buried in the North Newport cemetery.

Look for more stories handed down through this Kelsey line in future issues of the *Mill Town Messenger*.

Newport Historical Society Membership Form

Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address/City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Membership Type: ___ Individual (\$15) ___ Family (\$25) ___ Junior (\$1)

Corporate/Business: ___Bronze(\$25) ___Silver (\$50) ___Gold (\$75) ___Platinum(\$100) ___Diamond(\$100+)

Here's my additional donation to the: Museum Fund \$_____ Operating Fund \$_____

Payment Method: ___ Cash ___ Check (Newport Historical Society) Total Enclosed \$_____

Please mail to: Newport Historical Society PO Box 413 Newport, NH 03773

NHS Membership Raffle

- 1st Prize: Harrington's Sterling Old Man of the Mountains Pendant/Chain (\$125)
2nd Prize: Hubert's Gift Certificate (\$50)
3rd Prize: Salt Hill Pub Gift Certificate (\$35)
4th Prize: Shaw's Supermarket Gift Certificate (\$25)

NEWPORT NOTABLES: GEORGE BALDWIN WHEELER

George Baldwin Wheeler was born in Newport on February 4, 1854 to Edmund Wheeler (1814-1897) of Croydon and Submit C. Ros-siter of Claremont. He lived at 27 South Main Street, at what was locally termed "Wheeler's Corner." He attended local schools and the Colby Academy in New London, NH. Along with Hubbard Barton, he was editor of the Argus-Spectator.

George Wheeler was reported to be a retiring man, and never married. He was a shrewd financier, and left an estate worth over \$100,000, a very large sum of money for the time. After bequeathing to Ella G. Dunbar, his housekeeper, money and the

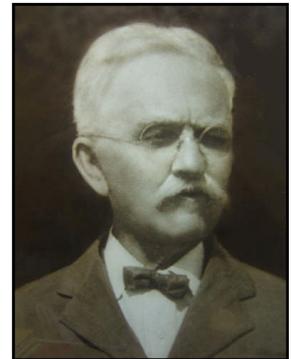
use of his home for one year, he left the remainder of his estate to the town of Newport. The most notable beneficiaries were the Carrie F. Wright Hospital and the Newport School District.

For many years a suitable gymnasium was needed in Newport, and Mr.

Wheeler's generous gift provided one designed according to the prevailing architectural trend of usefulness, simplicity and practicality. The George B. Wheeler Memorial Gymnasium was dedicated in January of 1950.

This addition to the Towle High School was designed by the architectural firm of Lyford and Magenau of Concord, New Hampshire and

built by Donald D. Snyder & Sons of Gardner, Massachusetts. The Rowell Brothers of Newport furnished the supplies, and according to Jesse Rowell "...nothing but the best of everything has been used in the construction of this building..." Based on two years of planning, this building was constructed in seven months at a cost of \$153,000.00. Four hundred and fifty citizens attended the formal dedication on January 16, 1950. The ceremonies were presided over by Howard C. Bennett, Chairman of the Building Committee, and the building was formally accepted by John T. Lee, Chairman of the Newport School Board.



George B. Wheeler

1854 - 1942

Sources: Wheeler's *History of Newport*; *Newport Directory*, 1917; Ketchen, Helga. "A Beginning Who's Who of Some Citizens of the Town of Newport, NH."; *Argus Champion*, 5 Mar 1942; 13 Jan 1950.

The Mill Town Messenger is published quarterly by the Newport Historical Society, P O Box 413, Newport, NH 03773 through generous funding by James Lantz. Contributors to this issue: Jackie Cote, Mary Lou McGuire and Marjorie Sawyers.