

# Mil I Town Messenger

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Volume 4, Issue 1 February 2010

## What's hidden in the Cupboard? Christina O'Brien

This summer we uncovered several hidden treasures from a small cupboard in our Museum. At first glance the shelves appeared to hold old grammar school textbooks from the 1800's. Some of these are: The North American Spelling Book (1846), The Franklin Fifth Reader (1875) and New Practical Arithmetic (1883) - all in very good condition. This was treasure enough, but... Below the school books were many composition notebooks filled from cover to cover with the very beautiful handwriting of Ada Tenney. Ms. Tenney was born in Newport on March 26, 1877 to Simon and Clara (Rollins) Tenney. Not only a fine student, Ada grew up to be a fine teacher. Her notebooks consisted of math workbooks, spelling and reading lesson plans and extensive notes on Geography and English Literature. What an excellent resource for

understanding education in Newport schools from 1895 to the turn of the century. Below the Tenney notebooks were Newport School District Accounts Payable records spanning the years 1865 to 1917. These show teacher salaries (they earned a far smaller wage back then), school and property tax records, a Pupil Record Book from 1887-1896 (naming all Newport schools and pupils' attendance and grades), and a 1912 Red School House Historical Association Record Book. Then we found even more interesting treasures: day books from the many dry goods stores located in Newport. Unfortunately, many of these tall, tan, suede covered books were not labeled with names of the stores they represent. The elaborate penmanship simply lists pages and pages of items purchased by local residents from 1810 through the 1880's. A few were

labeled: Mudget & Higbee's, Edes Store, Nourse and Company, and the W.H. Story Grocery. Some of the orders inside include:  
 Monday October 16, 1848  
 Calvin Pike: ¼ lb. tea \$0.15  
 ½ lb. tobacco \$0.13  
 2 dozen crackers \$0.12  
 ½ lb. ginger \$0.06  
 ½ lb. nutmeg \$0.04

Tuesday May 7, 1850  
 Sylvester S. Chase: 1 comb \$0.12  
 "Deliver to Wife" lb. starch \$0.03  
 hair pins \$0.02  
 5-1/2 dozen buttons \$0.33  
 1 paper of needles \$0.06  
 1 yard of ribbon \$0.15

Wednesday July 3, 1850  
 Lucius Wright: 30 lbs. nails \$1.50  
 4 pair (door) butts \$0.32  
 3 door handles \$0.38  
 7 dozen screws \$0.21  
 1 hay fork \$1.08

To compare these with today's cost of living, the average wage between 1840 and 1850 was \$5-\$6 per week.

## NHS Gifts available Jackie Cote

As you plan your Christmas giving this year, why not give a gift reminiscent of Newport? We have three new Christmas ornaments: the Corbin Bridge, Richards Library and Mary's Little Lamb. Ornaments from prior years include our flagship Pier RR Covered Bridge, the Courthouse, Newport Opera House and Richards School.

This is the final year for the Pier Bridge ornament, so be sure to pick one up. Still only \$11.00, our hand-painted ornaments come safely boxed in bubble wrap. Also new this year is our sturdy camp mug with an etched image of the Opera House. A great gift for any adult on your list. Our newest book Streets, Roadways and By-Ways of Newport,

NH makes a wonderful addition to anyone's library. Selected products will be available at the LAC Gallery of Gifts, and all items will be available in the foyer of the Sugar River Bank on most Fridays and Saturdays in November & December.

Think of us when looking for those unique gifts for your

## Please join us! NHS Monthly

### Meetings

Second Monday of the Month

Sugar River Bank Community Room

December 14

January 11

7:00 pm

## Membership Drive Raffle Winners Congratulations to

1. Edwin Perkins
2. Igor Blake
3. Allan McGuire
4. Diane Rochford
5. Dan Cherry
6. Larry Cote

THANKS EVERYONE  
For Your Support!

## The Inside Scoop

- Whip & Spur
- Pine West Personalities: Ezra Parmelee
- Newport in the Revolutionary War
- Newport Notables: Benjamin Giles

## The whip & spur 1839 - 1860

Larry Cote

In the November 1906 issue of the Granite State Magazine there is an article about the Whip & Spur, a political newspaper published in Newport, New Hampshire.

Why would this newspaper have an article written about it? It is believed to be the first illustrated newspaper in the world.

The Whip & Spur was first published in 1839 by the editors of the Argus and Spectator: brothers Henry E. and Samuel C. Baldwin. It was published for three months every fourth year for the presidential elections of 1839 through 1860. The Whip & Spur is an unusual name for a political newspaper. The Granite State Magazine article explains that the name came about in 1839 when:

General James Wilson, a celebrated stump orator of Keene, NH made a speech in Faneuil Hall, Boston, in the Spring election of 1839, in which he said that the "Whigs of New Hampshire needed the whip and spur - the spur rowel deep would set them upon the trot." This expression caught Mr. Baldwin's attention, and he immediately drew out upon paper the State House with General Wilson seated upon a large horse with a long whip in

one hand and very large spurs, rowel deep in the horse's flesh, driving the Whig party, which was represented by a large number of men to the State House.

The actual block print that appears in the first paper in 1839 shows General Wilson sitting on the back of a very large politician, with the rowel from the spur cutting the mans pants. General Wilson was the Whig candidate for the Governor of New Hampshire. The Whip & Spur supported Democratic candidate John Page, who won and served as Governor from 1839 to 1842. Soon after the election General Wilson went to California.

The paper consisted of four pages, eleven by sixteen and one half, and sold for twenty-five cents or five for a dollar. The paper enjoyed great success from the start with a circulation of nearly four thousand. The Newport Historical Society Museum has a collection of 37 issues: (3) from 1839, (11) from 1840, (13) from 1852 and (10) from 1860. It is interesting to look at the various issues and see the illustrations. Illustrations from 1860 depict Stephen Douglas and Abe Lincoln. Lincoln, as the rail splitter, is shown with a

large ax and Douglas is on the stump giving a speech. We assume that the Whip & Spur was supporting Douglas. When reading the daily paper Newporters should find pride in the fact that the illustrations in today's papers were pioneered by a man from Newport!



## Pine West Personalities: ezra parmel ee 1745 - 1838

brenda cur tis

Ezra Parmelee came to Newport with the original settlers in June of 1766 from Killingworth CT. He was only 21 years of age and planned to start a family. His father bought him Lot# 64. This land spanned the western side of the Goshen branch of the Sugar River from Unity Road to Rt. 10. His log cabin was located on the hill just behind and north of today's Franklin place on Unity Road. He eventually moved his family down the hill to the Josiah Stevens house, at 121 Unity Road. From 1766-1768 he worked his land in Newport, returning to Killingworth during the winters. On May 1, 1769 he married Sibyl Hill

and by the fall took up permanent residence in Newport. Ezra and Sibyl had eight children between 1770 and 1793: Rhoda, Jemima, Ezra Jr., John, Sibyl, James Hill, Pamela, and Candace.

During the Revolutionary War Ezra participated in the second march on Ticonderoga, for which he was later granted the title Captain. But the demands of his family did not allow him to be away long, and it is recorded that he hired another to serve in the Continental Army in his stead. He was a hardworking and prosperous family man that lived to the ripe old age of 92.



### Inscription

Ezra Parmelee  
Died  
Jan 18.  
1838. AE 92 Y's  
& 5 mon's

He was born in North Killingworth Aug 1745 came to Newport in 1766

Our Fathers where are they.

# Newport in the Revolutionary War

mary Lou McGuire

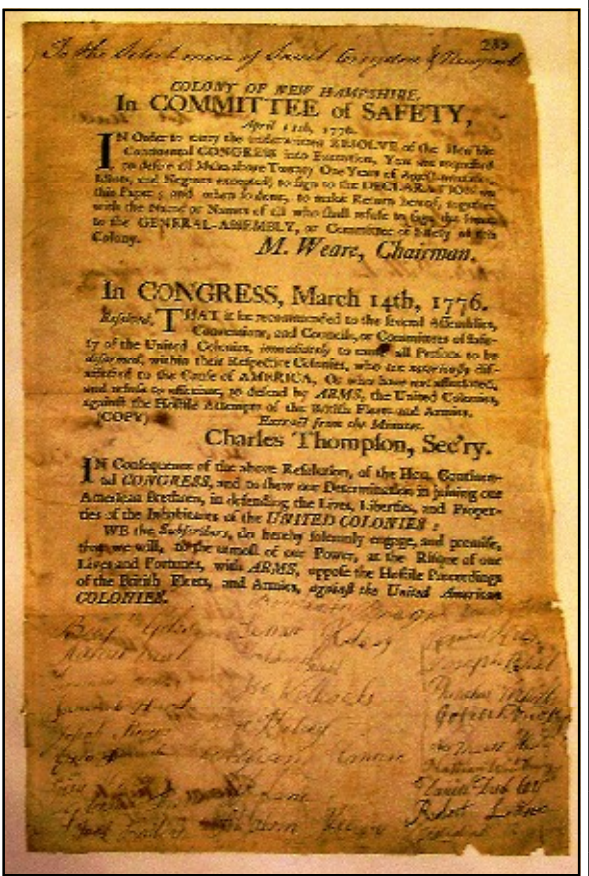
When the Revolutionary War officially began at the Battle of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, Newport was still a young agricultural town, and residents were focused on carving a life from the wilderness. Just ten years before no one even lived here. Men from Killingworth, CT stayed the first winter in 1766; the following summer several wives arrived, helping to insure the permanence of the new settlement. In 1776 townspeople still considered themselves frontiersmen. Benjamin Giles and representatives of the surrounding towns sent a petition to Exeter in June of 1776 on behalf of the Inhabitants of the Western Frontier. They requested permission of the Provincial Government to immediately raise a company of Rangers to "range and scour" the woods between Lake Champlain and the Connecticut River, fearing an attack by small parties of Indians fighting for the British. The settlers were so "apprehensive" they considered leaving their settlements to move inland, which, the petitioners pointed out, would cause "irreparable injury to the Glorious cause."

Newport's first recorded act of participation in the Revolution was to establish a Committee of Safety on July 20, 1775. Benjamin Giles, Aaron Buel, Jesse Lane, Josiah Stevens, Robert Lane and Jesse Wilcox were elected members. The Committee of Safety oversaw local affairs pertaining to the war, such as organizing the local militia, raising money to pay salaries, and providing beef for the Continental Army.

In response to a March 1776 Continental Congress resolution, Meshech Weare, chairman of New Hampshire's Committee of Safety, sent each town a directive requiring all eligible males over twenty-one years of age to sign Articles of Association. When the document shown at right was returned, it was to be accompanied with a list of those who refused to sign. All of Newport's thirty-six eligible

men signed the Articles, and by doing so promised "the Risk of our Lives and Fortunes, with ARMS, to oppose the Hostile Proceedings of the British Fleets, and Armies." Their fortunes included land, livestock, tools and what little cash was earned from the production of potash. At the May 22, 1776 town meeting it was voted to raise money to buy forty pounds of powder, one hundred pounds of lead, and ten dozen flints for the town's arsenal. On July 24, 1776 Newport's Committee of Safety appointed three officers of the militia: Capt Samuel Hurd, Lt Jeremiah Jenks, and Ens Uriah Wilcox. By August Newport was ready to contribute nineteen muskets and thirty-six able bodied men to the cause. The Newport Militia were called upon to fight at Ticonderoga and the Battle of Bennington. In June of 1777 the first march from Newport to defend Ticonderoga was led by Samuel Hurd, 1st Lt Co 2 of Gen. Benjamin Bellows' Regiment from Charlestown. They were discharged June 21st as it was thought to be a false alarm. The second call to defend Ticonderoga came on June 30, and twenty-nine men from Lempster and Newport were led by Ezra Parmelee (2nd Lt Co 8) and Uriah Wilcox (1st Lt Co 5) of Bellow's Regiment. According to J. W. Parmelee, they were still at Fort No. 4 when news arrived of the American retreat from Ticonderoga. Newport men who reported to Fort No. 4 in Charlestown include Samuel, Nathan and Stephen Hurd, Ezra Parmelee, Isaac Newton, Christopher Newton, Joshua Warner, Matthew, Daniel, Joseph and Abraham Buel, Jesse and Thomas Lane, Jeremiah Jenks, Josiah Stevens, Absalom Kelsey, Ebenezer Merritt, and Jesse Wilcox.

After taking possession of Fort Ticonderoga, British Gen. Burgoyne planned to cut the Colonies in half by marching south. Lt Col Baum was sent to raid the storehouse at Bennington, VT to replenish British supplies. The NH Militia answered the Vermont Committee of Safety's call for help, and under the leadership of John Stark soundly defeated Burgoyne's troops. The victory at Bennington by Stark's militia was a significant contribution to Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga in October 1777. At Bennington Uriah Wilcox was 2nd Lt Co. 2 in Col Hobart's Regiment and Jesse Wilcox was a Lieutenant of Co. 4 in Bellow's Regiment. Many men who fought in the Revolution and afterwards moved to Newport are



The Association Test signed by eligible Newport males on June 20, 1776. This document can be seen at the NH State Archives.

## Newport Historical Society Membership Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

New Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal 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 \$\_\_\_\_\_ Operating \$\_\_\_\_\_ Building\$\_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery \$\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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### Newport in the revolution continued

buried in our cemeteries. They include our first physician, Dr. James Corbin, (continued last page)

Thomas Carr, Robert Durkee, Samuel Thompson, Philip Kibbey, John Pike, Richard and Theophilus Goodwin, William Haven, Jonathan and Silas Wakefield, Simeon Buel, Daniel and Phineas Chapin, Robert Woodward,

Samuel Washburn, Amos Hall, Jr., Solomon Dunham, Joel Kelsey, Samuel Sischo, Elias Dudley, Hezekiah Reynolds, and the two longest survivors of the war in New Hampshire, brothers John and Joel McGregor. During the years of the war and after, several men from Newport helped to guide the formation of the New Hampshire government. Most notably Benjamin Giles represented Newport,

Lempster, Unity, Acworth, Croydon and Sunapee (Saville) at the first meetings of the Provisional Government in Exeter. He first appears as an official part of the 5th Provisional Congress, but State papers mention him as a member of various committees at the Fourth Congress. Other

Sources: Hurd: History of Cheshire and Sullivan County; Wheeler: History of Newport; NH State Archives: Returns of the Association Test 1776, Petitions; State Papers: v7, 8, 10, 14-17, 30; Potter: Military History of the State of NH.

### Newport Notables: Benjamin Giles 1717 - 1787

mary lou mcguire

Benjamin Giles was a central figure in Newport's early history. He was given 100 acres to build the first saw and grist mill, land which spread east from the Lily Pond to a dam along the Sugar River near the site of the Dorr Woolen Mill in Guild. J. W. Parmelee described Giles as "...a man of good natural ability, well educated, a fair estate with much experience in human affairs," which befits a man who played a prominent role in state and local politics.

Locally, he was the first Town Clerk for Proprietors meetings held in Newport; helped to lay out the second division of land and organize the Congregational Church; was the first Town Moderator; the first to sign the Articles of Association; and served as one of the

first selectman. His activities on the State level began in 1775 as the Representative for Unity, Lempster, Acworth, Croydon, Sunapee and Newport at the first Provincial Congresses in Plainfield and Walpole. He continued to represent this locality throughout the Revolutionary War and the period following. He represented Newport when the town voted to join the State of Vermont in 1781, and in 1782 when we returned to New Hampshire he was a member of the Congress in Concord and helped create New Hampshire's first permanent government.

Benjamin Giles built the house at 75 Unity Road. Twice a widower when he came to Newport in 1767 with his three daughters, he eventually married Abigail Hubbard of Charlestown. His daughter Ruth bought

Lot 51 and married Rev. Abijah Wines, a prominent local minister. His daughters Mary and Hannah married Christopher and Isaac Newton. Buried in the Pine Street West Cemetery, Giles' headstone reads:

Erected  
In Memory of the Honourable  
Benjamin Giles Esq<sup>r</sup> Who  
after Sarving his Generation  
faethfully in public Life then  
departed this in hope of  
a better Dec<sup>m</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 1787  
aged 70 years.

Although I l̄ep in Du t̄fa while,  
Beneath this barren Clod,  
Ere long I hope to ri e and n̄ile  
To ēe my Saveour God

Sources: Wheeler's History of Newport; History of Cheshire and Sullivan Counties, NH.