

NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MILL TOWN MESSENGER

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Volume 11, Issue 4

October, 2017

From the President's Pen



by Cathryn Baird...

“Science and technology revolutionize our lives, but memory, tradition and myth frame our response.”

Arthur M. Schlesinger 1888-1965

Memory is a fascinating curiosity to me. Memory is everything that has happened prior to the existing moment. Push pause and think about this for a moment because a moment is all you have for your current experience. Tennessee Williams once said “Life is all memory except for the one present moment that goes by so quickly you hardly catch it going.” In today’s world is there too much information to “catch” and remember? Absolutely!

For better or worse, we forget more than we remember. Memory is affected by a multitude of factors: aging, emotions, illness, injury, medication, alcohol, repression, deprivation, selective recall, time, etc., etc., etc. Memory can definitely be enhanced, but the only accurate memory is the moment. Moments from the past are rekindled personally through family pictures, celebrations and stories of which the accuracy are often the subject of debate! Family history and local history enrich our lives.

The wise scholar, Cicero, once said “Memory is the treasury and guardian of all things.” The Newport Historical Society aims to accurately record, preserve and share the treasures of our town’s collective past. On behalf of the NHS Board, I extend great appreciation to those who have generously donated artifacts and given financial support to help guard and share memories of the past. Take a moment to experience history and enhance your memory by taking a short trip down Memory Lane at the NHS Museum.

Meeting & Program Times

All members and the public are invited to all meetings and any of these free programs

BUSINESS MEETINGS:

6:30-8 PM, NHS museum,

Mon. Nov. 13

No December Business meeting

Mon. Jan. 8

EVENING PROGRAMS:

6:30-8 PM Richards Free Library

Ballroom (unless otherwise noted)

Tue. Oct. 24, New England

Quilts & Their Stories by

Pamela Weeks, Curator of the

New England Quilt Museum, in

conjunction with the Library Arts

Center Quilt Exhibit.

Watch for 2018 programs in the next Newsletters.

THE NEWPORT – KILLINGWORTH CONNECTION by Jackie Cote

Many Newporters have no idea how and by whom Newport was settled and where the settlers came from. Historical records state that the original settlers came from Killingworth, Connecticut. Most agree that a Killingworth trapper by the name of Eastman travelled to this area in the mid 1700’s. He was impressed with the beauty, abundant supply of game, fertile soil and available water supply. Upon his return, he shared this information with other Killingworth families. Fathers were looking for land grants for their sons, since local land was rarely available. When Governor Benning Wentworth issued a charter for Newport, these men purchased land grants in Newport.

In 1766, six men travelled to Newport to begin settling the area. They were Deacon Stephen Wilcox (who

was never an actual resident), his sons Jesse and Phineas, brothers Absalom and Jesse Kelsey and either Ezra Parmelee or Benjamin Bragg. Historical accounts differ as to whether Parmelee or Bragg was in the original party; however, both were early settlers. Others who came between 1767 and the end of the century were Uriah Wilcox (son of Stephen), Samuel & Nathan Hurd, and Gordon Buell (father of Sarah Josepha Buell Hale). Other families with the last name of Allen, Baldwin, Comstock, Lane, Nettleton, Harris, Stannard, Stevens, Hill, and Gray, all came from Killingworth to settle in Newport and marry within these families. Over time, ten members of the Kelsey family came; which was typical of many of these other families. (continued on pg. 3)

What and Where is "Cooper Square?" by Larry Cote



Can you find the sign?

While walking down Sunapee Street recently, I looked over at the southeast corner of the Richards School playground fence. I noticed a green tablet mounted on a post; the tablet stated that this was Cooper Square. The tablet is cast bronze with a very attractive coating of green oxide, about 12" tall and 18" wide.

I walked back to the Museum to see what "*Wheeler's History of Newport, N.H. 1761-1878*" said about Captain John B. Cooper. Wheeler's stated that he came to Newport in 1857 at the age of 16. He apprenticed with a local blacksmith, D. B. Chapin, and later went into business with him. He married Mary O. Moody on August 23, 1862, just two days before enlisting in Newport's 1st Regiment, Company "D," at the outbreak of the Civil War. When the term of his first enlistment ended, he returned home, recruited members for the 9th Regiment, Company "K." He was eventually made the Captain of that Regiment, serving four years and two months. He fought in two major engagements, Antietam and Fredericksburg.

Two letters written to his wife, Mary, in October of 1864, and February of 1865, are on-line for you to read. An interesting point these letters made was that near the end of the war, the recruits sent to the front were new immigrants, who often couldn't speak English and had little desire to fight for a cause they didn't understand. During the



time of the American Civil War, if a man was drafted into the Army, the draftee could pay another man to take their place! Immigrants looking for work were easy targets to fill these undesired draft responsibilities.

After the war, Cooper established a long and distinguished career as a public servant, serving Newport as a Selectman in 1866/67, a Representative to the New Hampshire House in 1868/69, as the doorkeeper in the N.H. House of Representatives in 1874/75 and a Delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1876. He was the Newport Postmaster and Town Moderator for over 20 years and served as the Superintendent of the Newport Water Works.

Around 1902, when Newport was preparing to build a new Primary school, (which, today, is the Town Offices building) the home of Angie Gunnison had to be moved. The building, pictured here, was relocated to the corner at the top of Central and Sunapee Streets. But to do this, they had to move the old Captain Cooper home back from that corner of Central Street. I assume the Cooper home was later razed when the gas station/convenience store was built in the 1960's.



Captain John B. Cooper died on May 18, 1911. At the Memorial Day Service in 1938, he was honored by erecting the tablet and naming the area at the top of Central and Sunapee Streets "Cooper Square".

Citations:

Wheeler's History of Newport 1761-1878

Newport Nuggets & Gems from Richards Free Library Scrapbook Collection

Celebrating Community 1761-2011 by Jayna Huot Hooper
The Archives of the Newport Historical Society

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)

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

Life Membership (\$250) _____ (Never have to renew again!)

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

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

THE NEWPORT – KILLINGWORTH CONNECTION by Jackie Cote

(Continued from page 1)

This year, 2017, Killingworth celebrated its 350th Anniversary. Newport Historical Society members, Dean Stetson and Jayna Hooper, created a Proclamation, signed by our five Selectmen and Town Manager, honoring the connection between our two communities. It was sent to Killingworth in early May, at the beginning of their celebration.



On September 2, Laura McCrillis Kessler, Larry Cote and I went to Killingworth to help them celebrate. We



were invited to ride in the parade in a 1956 Rolls Royce with a Newport Historical Society magnetic sign on the car. During the slow-moving morning parade, many residents cheered as we approached, knowing the connection between our two communities. As we rode, we had time to explain our connection to many others.

The balance of the day was spent at the huge Parmelee

Farm property, where the farm house is the Killingworth Historical Society Museum.

Former Newport resident, Lucinda (Cindy) Hill Hogarty

Cindy Hill Hogarty



(Evan Hill's daughter) was chairperson of the events. She mentioned in her welcoming remarks that Newport Historical Society members were in attendance. It was a fun day and we were glad to make the trip to help them celebrate!

References:

History of Newport, New Hampshire, 1766 to 1878, Edmund Wheeler
Celebrating Community, Newport New Hampshire, 1761 – 2011, Jayna Huot Hooper
Written in Stone, Brenda Curtis and Mary Lou McGuire
Newport, New Hampshire in Time & Place, Mary Lou McGuire and Ray Reid
History of Cheshire & Sullivan Counties, New Hampshire, D. Hamilton Hurd
Granite Monthly Magazine, March 1980
A Photographic History of Killingworth, Thomas L. Lentz

NHS Board Members: Cathryn Baird, Pres.; Jerry Hagebusch, V. Pres.; Larry Cote, Museum Director; Jackie Cote, Treas.; Jayna Hooper, Secretary; Priscilla Hagebusch, Arnie Hebert, Rita James, Laura McCrillis Kessler, Dean Stetson, Stan Sweeney, Arthur Walsh.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE - A Village Residence

With about four acres of meadow land, nice 1 1/2 story cottage, 10 rooms, with splendid closets, large front hall. Wood house with barn attached. In excellent repair, painted, papered and blinded - could be used for two families. Barn will accommodate 4 horses; with little expense this land could be made a fine Cranberry meadow, which would pay better than any farm in town. This property is situated in the beautiful Village of Newport, N.H. being the estate of the late Mrs. F. P Buell, situated on West Street, within three minutes walk of Depot, Stores, Hotels, Schools, Churches and the business portion of the town. To anyone desiring a nice, pleasant home or a profitable investment, this is a chance seldom met with, as real estate in this part of the village is rapidly advancing. For particulars, apply to M. P. Buell, Newport NH.



From the NH Argus & Spectator, Friday, October 27, 1871



THE MUSEUM REPORT by Larry Cote

The displays in the Museum have been changed and/or updated for the coming year by the Museum committee. The featured displays are "Music" on the first floor and "Woven Baskets" on the second floor. Both displays are accompanied by seldom-seen pictures of Newport. Paintings by Kenneth Andler, Barbara Huff and Edna Eggleston, previously unexhibited, are hanging in the halls. The Bedroom display features a different quilted bed covering and paintings by Sid Bickford, Kenneth Andler and Edna Eggleston, from our archives. The Kitchen display also has changes, including a lovely set of Staffordshire china from the Wakefield family. (More about this china in our January newsletter.)

Lionel (Arnie) Hebert has been busy cataloging the donations making them easier to find. We are making great progress in the Annex, (the second floor of the old Courthouse), conserving items in acid free boxes and storing them on the rolling racks donated by our patrons. The racks purchased over the past year are filling up fast. If you wish to donate towards additional racks, they cost about \$110 each.

We have been extremely fortunate to continue to receive wonderful family and collected items; amounting to over one

hundred donations recently. It takes a large inventory to keep the displays interesting!

As you downsize or clear out your home or family homes, please remember the Historical Society. Town and family photographs help to preserve the history of Newport. We would love a copy of your family genealogy. These become invaluable treasures for distant relatives who come looking for information.

A common request lately has been for information on individual homes. What is the history of the home, when was it built, and who owned it? We have so very little of this type of information! As you come to know more about YOUR home, share this information with NHS to help future Newporters know their history.

Old hand tools, especially the unusual ones, would make interesting displays. People are always interested in the history of how we did things before power tools.

Remember, we are open Sundays, from 10 AM until 2 PM. If you need an appointment to visit at a different time, call 863-1294 and leave a message. We are looking forward to seeing you, so come on down.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT by Jackie Cote

With this year's Farmers Market and other off-site summer venues in the "rear view mirror", we look to our busy Christmas season beginning. We will be offering Historical Society merchandise at the **Sugar River Bank** foyer from the first Friday and Saturday of November through December 22 and 23, with the exception of Thanksgiving weekend. You will also find us in the Opera House for "*Twas Just Before Christmas*". Of course, you can also shop every Sunday, year-round, from 10am to 2pm at the **Museum**. We have some great sales in progress on all of our shirts and a limited number of other items. Thank you for your support, which funds the operating expenses of our Nettleton House Museum building.

Our **Membership Drive** is going well, with 193 new and renewed members at this writing. Merchant donors in our membership drive raffle are: **LaValley Building Supply, Shaws Supermarket, Grazi's/Newport**

Meat Market, and Huberts Department Store; with \$25 gift certificates, and **The Old Courthouse Restaurant**, with Sunday brunch for two. We thank our sponsors for their support. While the drawings will be held at our November 13 Business Meeting, the membership drive continues throughout the year.

As a reminder, our membership year runs from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018. On September 30, 2017, we ended the membership year with a **record 275 members**. Life memberships are also offered for \$250. Life members and those who have paid ahead are still entered into our membership drive raffle.

Your continued financial support and encouragement helps our Historical Society to fund the many avenues of historical preservation and public education, for which we sincerely thank you!

The *Mill Town Messenger* is published quarterly by the Newport Historical Society
P.O. Box 413, Newport, NH 03773,
Museum phone number 603-863-1294
Call the Museum number above for appointments to tour the Museum at alternative times.

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Contributors to this issue: Cathryn Baird, Jackie Cote and Larry Cote.