

Mill Town Messenger

This newsletter is generously sponsored by the James E. Lantz Family Trust

Volume 2, Issue 3 August 2008

From the President's Pen ~ Cathryn Baird

"A nation that forgets its past can function no better than an individual with amnesia."
~ David McCullough

As president of the Newport Historical Society, I am honored to serve the community and work with a dedicated group of historic-minded individuals who wish to maximize and preserve past memories of local history. Unfortunately our group is small and our memories are limited. Your interest and help would be a perfect antidote to help save the past and enrich the future.

With your input a "collective memory bank" would help to expand the knowledge of Newport's past. Please stop by the Historical Society booth at the Apple Pie Festival on August 23rd and help us identify photographs, documents and artifacts so future generations can remember and appreciate their heritage. Please contact me (863-5089) if you have any questions or suggestions.

WCNL 1010AM Newport Minutes ... With Larry cote

Have you heard the Newport Historical Society Minute on WCNL-AM, 1010? We are on seven days a week at 8:00 and 11:00 AM. To date we have covered Newport's early history with stories of Sarah Josepha Hale, Benjamin Giles, Admiral Belknap and the story of when Newport joined Vermont for a short period.

The object of these historical minutes is to get WCNL lis-

teners excited about Newport's past, especially Newport's young people. Many know about Newport's rich heritage of textile and shoe manufacturing, but we also had toy and furniture makers and book printers dating back to the 1830's. Did you know there was a dam that created a mill pond parallel to Central Street to provide water power for these factories? And that the

first horseless carriage seen in Newport in the 1860's was from Sunapee - way before Henry Ford built his first car? If you know a good story we can share please contact Larry Cote at 863-3105. You might hear it on the air! LC

Make a habit of tuning in daily for some fun with Newport history.

Life Memberships

Ray Reid, Andy Andrews, Marjorie Sawyers, Harold Perkins and Ann Tenney recently received Life Memberships to the NHS. The NHS thanks each one for their long-term support of the Society. Their years of membership have contributed to the stability of this organization, and their contributions have guided the NHS through many important projects. Their dedication and hard work on behalf of the NHS is sincerely appreciated.

Newport's 250th

A steering committee and parade committee have been formed to guide Newport through its 250th celebration in 2011. Generously volunteering their time are Ella Casey, Betty Maiola, Cathryn Baird and Pam LaFountain for the steering committee. John Larock will head the parade committee.

Regular 250th meetings will resume in September - watch for meeting details in late August!

Please join us!

NHS Monthly Meetings

Open To All

Second Monday
of the Month

Sugar River Bank
Community Room

August 11
September 8
Annual Meeting:
October 13

7:00 pm

The Inside Scoop

- Sunapee Program
- Dodge Display
- New Publication
- 1873 Courthouse
- NHS Museum
- Recent Donation
- Newport Notables:
Harvena Brown
McCann

Postcard History Program ... by Larry Cote and Ray Reid

On Thursday, July 17 NHS members Larry Cote and Ray Reid presented a program for the Sunapee Historical Society. Over thirty people attended A History of Postcards With Views of Sunapee, NH, which included a lively discussion of Sunapee history. Through

Larry Cote's presentation the audience learned about postcard collecting and postal history. The audience thoroughly enjoyed the humorous anecdotes he shared regarding his hobby. The second part of the evening centered on historic Sunapee postcards. Ray

Reid led the discussion, providing much additional information about each view. Through the postcard collections of Ray and Larry, this program offered Sunapee residents an opportunity to learn more about their common history and share many

personal anecdotes.

MM

A History of Postcards
with Views of Sunapee, NH



Larry Cote, Ray Reid
Newport Historical Society

Guy Dodge, SR Display at Richards Free Library

Hopefully you saw our July display at the Richards Free Library. Linda Fournier of Goshen, granddaughter of Guy A. Dodge, Sr., donated many family items to the NHS Museum. Arnie Hebert spent the winter adding them to the collection, and created the exhibit.

Guy Dodge, Sr (1889-1965) was a local building contractor also active in community affairs. He served on the Board of Selectmen from 1950-1953, and the School Board from 1949-1952. He was involved

in the construction of the Richards School addition, the Wheeler Gym, and the fire station. Well known for his Yankee ingenuity, Mr. Dodge moved many buildings in the area. Notice the size of the 8-10 Maple Street house ... he moved it back from its original lot on the northeast corner of Maple and Main. Mr. Dodge met his mentor Jim Canto, architect for Corbin Park, while still in high school.

Born in the Brighton Gate

section of Croydon to Elmer E. and Louisa A. Dodge, Guy was a football and basketball star at Richards High School, graduating in 1910 with many honors.

The first Dodge in this line, Nehemiah, moved to Kelleysville from New Boston, NH in 1835. Nehemiah's son Francis and Alzira Chandler of Goshen settled in Croydon. Francis' second son, Elmer E. raised his family in Croydon, and

moved to Newport when he purchased the Jenks homestead on Oak Street from his father in 1900. Elmer's son Guy married Maizie Wright, and they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 11, 1962.

MM

1910
RHS
Spoon



New Publication in the Works

The NHS is working on a new publication: A Pictorial History of Newport, New Hampshire to 1870. This book highlights Newport history from its very beginning until the railroad came to town. Inspired by the work of Mr. Richard Parker, we thank him for generously allowing us to base our work on his understanding of Newport history and the historical perspective he acquired through many years of research. This book will focus on the houses, buildings and people of early

Newport in an effort to capture what life was like before the Industrial Revolution. Looking forward to our 250th celebration (2011), the Historical Society published Mansions and Prominent Landmarks of Newport, New Hampshire in 2007. That book was enthusiastically received, and we are continuing the series with a second book looking back on Newport from the 21st century.

The last formal history of Newport was published in

1879 by Edmund Wheeler, and Joseph W. Parmelee wrote the History of Newport for Hurd's History of Cheshire and Sullivan Counties, published in 1886. The 1961 Bicentennial booklet provides much valuable information on Newport's more recent history. Now, almost one half a century later, our goal is to present a review of Newport history which collects historical pictures and information from various sources. If you have resources to share

(pictures, diaries, letters, postcards) please contact Ray Reid (863-3147), Larry Cote (863-3105), or Mary Lou McGuire (863-5119).



Newport's first business district, the "foot of Claremont hill" from an 1877 Ruger & Stoner bird's eye view.

1873 Town Hall and Courthouse

This picture shows the Newport Town Hall/Sullivan County Courthouse of 1873. Built to replace the outgrown first Courthouse of 1827, this new courthouse costing \$40,000 (approximately \$714,972 in 2007*) was funded by the town. The seed money to finance the project came from reimbursement by the State of New Hampshire for Civil War expenses: Newport received \$16,000 (\$285,989). The town paid Dr. J. L. Swett \$6,000 (\$107,246) for his house lot, which was situated at this location. The Dedication Ball was held on January 1, 1874.

The new building burned twelve years later on June 27, 1885. The fire began in the Nettleton Block, at the corner of Sunapee and Main. Most of the County and Town records were rescued. If you visit the Sullivan County Registry of Deeds you can see some of the fire-

damaged papers.

This view from the north shows what was left of the Courthouse after the fire. Notice the first (1827) courthouse in the background.

This view from the south shows that only the facade was left standing along Main Street.

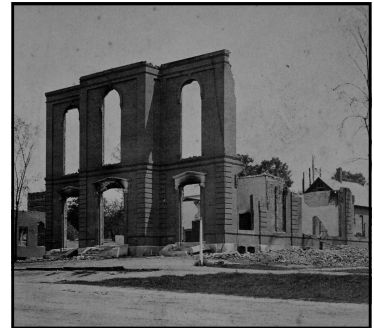
Other facts associated with this fire include: George A. Fairbanks helped to rescue the piano; the law library of A. S. Wait was



lost; and the offices of the Argus-Champion, housed in the Nettleton Block, were de-

stroyed. MM

* based on CPI. See <http://tiny.cc/dk8tn>



What's happening this summer at the NHS museum

The NHS Museum remains closed to continue an ongoing inventory. (For appointments: 863-1294) We plan to open a portion of the museum this fall.

Some exciting finds have been uncovered lately. While sorting through old town record books we found five from the Fire Department dating back to the 1840's. Many of these handwritten

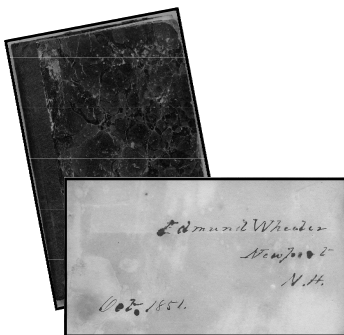
pages report weekly firemen's musters, but others are detailed accounts of fires which provide an important resource in telling Newport's story. We also found several leather-bound volumes detailing property transfers, again about 150 years old, which shed light on how land and buildings were distributed in town.

Although much of the content in these ledgers are of a mundane nature, the ledgers them-

selves tell a story. Covered in heavy leather, they have survived the years in outstanding condition, something not often seen in today's world. For the most part the handwriting is very legible. The oddest ledger is one entitled "Lost Property." Several entries document stray domestic animals found about town - no "magic fences" back then!

LC

Recent Donation... from Martha Harris of New London



Please remember the Historical Society when you are cleaning out closets and attics! We appreciate the donation of any Newport items you might find - no matter how insignificant they may seem to you.

The latest donation pictured here is a copy of *The Frugal Housewife* published in 1802. Martha Harris of New London donated it after noticing the inscription in the front:

Edmund Wheeler Newport N.H. Oct 1851

Author of the 1879 *History of Newport*, Wheeler once lived at "Wheeler's Corner," the location of Irving's Blue Canoe gas station today. Please contact us if you have any items to donate.

Ray Reid (863-3147) Larry Cote (863-3105) or Mary Lou McGuire (863-5119)

Newport Historical Society Membership Form

Date: _____

New Membership _____ Renewal _____

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

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Newport Historical Society

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Newport Notables: Harvena Brown McCann (1893 - 1922)

Harvena Joan Brown was the only Newport resident to join the Army Nurse Corps during WWI. Born in Georges Mills in 1893, she moved to Newport with her parents Harvey and Angie (Colby) Brown. After graduating from Richards High School, she attended the Peter Bent Brigham nursing school in Boston, graduating in 1916. In 1918 at the age of 25 she enlisted in the Red Cross, and served

overseas during WWI for three months. After Armistice Day, Harvena became a government nurse, stationed at Camp Devens, MA. At that time Devens was a separation center for troops returning from France. Between 1918 and 1920 she married Thomas P. McCann, and they lived in New York City.

Harvena Brown McCann died at the Carrie F. Wright Hospital at the age of 29 from a re-

lapse of influenza, after returning home from New York.

Mrs. McCann was the first woman in Newport history to be buried with military honors. Forty ex-servicemen formed the escort, and Lt. Milo H. Brill (father of June Liberman) was a pallbearer. MM



Red Cross Nurse
at Evacuation Hospital
1918