

NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MILL TOWN MESSENGER

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Volume 9, Issue 2

April, 2015

From the President's Pen

by Cathryn
Baird

*"In this world nothing is to be certain except death and taxes."
Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790)*

In spite of the uneasiness that many people feel when discussing the topic of death, there is a certain comfort and sense of pride knowing that The Newton-Bartlett Funeral Home is one of Newport's oldest business establishments and is very much alive and well. Created in 1876 by David A. Newton who operated the business until 1907, it was then passed on to his sons, Dixi C. and William A. Newton. The family continued the business under the name Newton Brothers until 1919 at which time Dixi became sole proprietor. In 1953, Clinton S. Bartlett became a partner hence the name change.



D.A. Newton originally did business at this site, now the parking lot between The Eagle Block and the bridge. S.G. Whitmore had a livery stable in the rear.

Dixi C. Newton died in 1959 and Clinton Bartlett died in 2008. In 1998 Wilfred Tremblay, a valued employee for many years, purchased the business; and, after 11 years, sold it to Chadwick Funeral Home. Current ownership and management is through the partnership of Steve Robertson of Newport and Marian, Charles and Dan Hafner of Chadwick's Funeral Home, New London, NH. The Newport Historical Society is most

grateful for their generous sponsorship of the 2015 Mill Town Messenger Newsletters.

We are now in an "Age Wave" where American seniors older than 85 years are the fastest growing demographic in our country but no matter how well one ages, eventually we all must accept our mortality and also pay our taxes!



GETTING SOCIAL WITH THE SOCIETY

Thanks to Jennifer Rogers, the Historical Society now has a Facebook presence, enabling us to use social media to tell our Newport stories to a wider audience. Go to [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) and log in with your account. Not on Facebook? Its easy to enroll. You will be prompted to create a personal account. Once logged in, in the **FIND** space type **NewportHS1761** to go directly to OUR Newport Historical Society page (there are many other Newports!) Direct questions or thoughts to the "Admin." We hope you will visit the page, give us your input, and share it with your friends.

Meeting & Program Times

*All members and the public are invited to
all meetings and programs.*

BUSINESS MEETINGS:

Held at the museum, 6:30-8 PM

Mon. Apr. 13

Mon. May 11

Mon. Jun. 8

Mon. Jul. 13

PROGRAMS:

Tues. Apr. 14

"Visions of the Past," by Larry Cote, Richards Free Library Ballroom, 6:30-8 PM

Wed. May 13 -

"Business After Hours," with the Newport Chamber of Commerce, at the NHS Museum, 5-7 PM.

Tues. Jun. 9 -

"Discovering New England Stone Walls", with Kevin Gardner. Richards Free Library Ballroom, 6:30-8 PM.

Tues. Jul. 14 -

"A Soldier's Mother Tells Her Story" presented by Sharon Wood. Richards Free Library Ballroom, 6:30-8 PM

THE DEWOLF BLOCK, by Larry Cote



Photo # 1 - Circa 1900, showing a portion of Main Street after the DeWolf Block (center building) was completed. Main Street looks much the same today as it did at the time of this photo.

The DeWolf Block, at 12-16 Main Street, was designed by Samuel DeWolf Lewis in the Romanesque Revival style and built in 1893/94. It is located to the right of the Lewis Block, also designed by Samuel DeWolf Lewis, which was built in 1886, and to the left of the Newport Opera House, rebuilt in 1886. These three buildings were built after Newport's largest fire in 1885. This fire destroyed the Nettleton Building, circa 1850, (Photo #2), the Bank Building, circa 1853 (Photo #3), and the 1873 Newport Opera House (Photo #4.)

When Samuel DeWolf Lewis built the Lewis Block, in 1886-7, (see Photo #5), there was an empty space between the Lewis Block and the Opera House, probably the cellar hole that remained after "The Bank Building" was destroyed in the 1885 fire. Note the Public Notice board, lower right corner, in front of the vacant lot. Was this bulletin board to keep people from falling into the cellar hole?

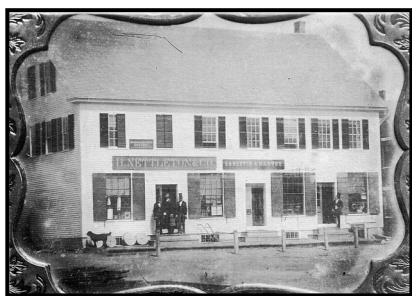


Photo #2 - The Nettleton House, built in 1850, was destroyed in the fire of 1885 and replaced by the Lewis Block.

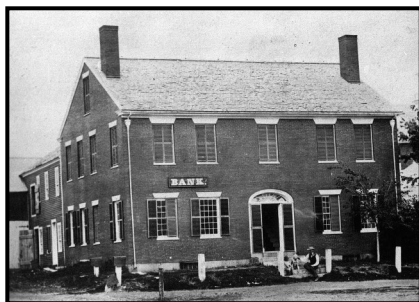


Photo # 3 - "The Bank Building", built in 1853, was destroyed in the fire of 1885 and replaced by the DeWolf Block.

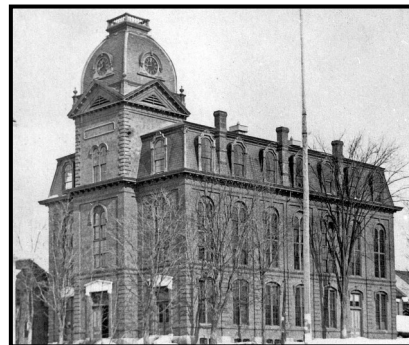


Photo # 4 - The Newport Opera House, destroyed by the fire of 1885. Note the similarity to the current Opera House with the exception of the tower.



Photo #5 - The Lewis Block, and Opera House, photo taken between 1887 and 1893.

Public Notices



In the 1950's the DeWolf Block was home to J. S. Hirsch Department Store, operated by Joshua & Sally Hirsch, until it was purchased by the Hubert family in the 1970's. The Huberts operated a clothing store there until the building was purchased by Sullivan County and has since housed the county offices.

As was traditional with many business blocks, fraternal organizations occupied the upper floor. In the case of the DeWolf Block, it was the Knights of Pythias. In photo # 6, on the third floor, is the banner for the Knights of Pythias; the "F" = Friendship, "C" = Charity, "B" = Benevolence. In the second floor left hand window is a sign for the Penawan Club and in the center of the second floor is the Masons' banner. The business on the first floor is the Hunton & Barker Clothing Store.

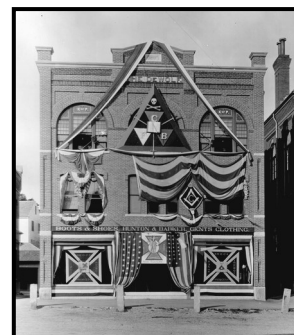
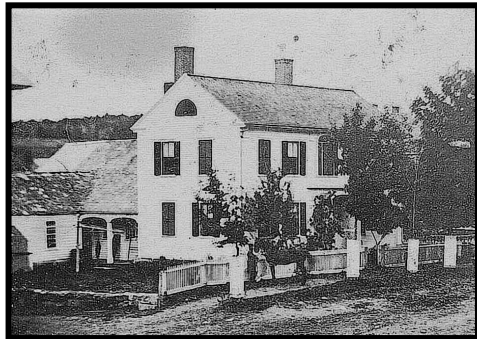


Photo # 6 - Circa 1900, the DeWolf Block, decorated for some unknown celebration.

THE AMOS LITTLE HAT FACTORY

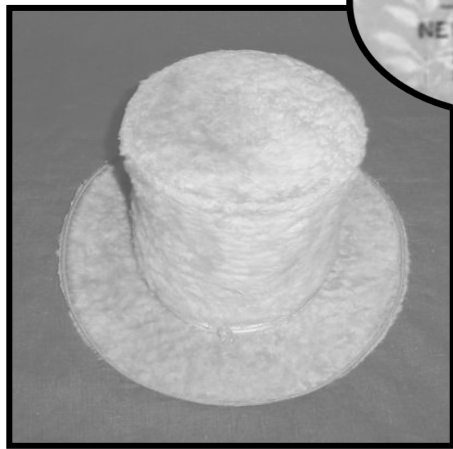
By Larry Cote

The business of Amos Little's Hat Factory was conducted in the attached barns and sheds of his home, built in 1819, on the corner of West and Main Streets. The home was located beside the Sugar River House that was built in 1858. Both establishments were lost to fire in 1867.



Amos Little's house and hat factory

Amos Little was born in Springfield, NH in 1796. He came to Newport in 1818 from Hampstead, NH where he had learned the trade. For many years he supplied a large geographic area with hats. He died in 1859; but, the business was continued by his son, Charles Henry Little, who was born in 1820. Charles served in the Civil War and is mentioned several times in a Civil War diary that can be borrowed from the Museum.



White Beaver hat of
Josiah Forsaith, Esq.
And the "Little" label inside



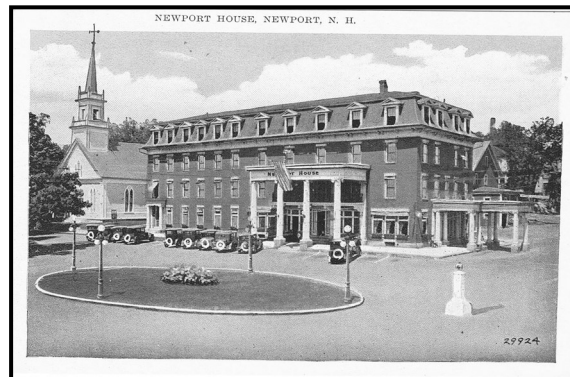
The Newport Historical Society has a white Beaver Hat that was made by the Amos Little Hat Factory and was worn by Josiah Forsaith, Esquire, who practiced law in Newport.

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

By Jackie Cote

During the past three months, we have successfully concluded our Museum Replacement Window fundraising. All 23 windows have been individually purchased. Brass plaques with the name of the purchaser will be placed on the interior window sills once installation is complete. We also have a project contingency fund of approximately \$2,500. We all know that when renovating an old building, unexpected needs often arise. The Board wishes to express their sincere gratitude to all who contributed to this much needed renovation.

Any day now we expect proof copies from artist, Joan Dodge, for the 2015 hand-painted ornaments. The subjects will be Towle High/Elementary School and The Newport House. For those not familiar with the latter subject, it was a wonderful four story hotel that burned in a fire in 1965. It was sited at the location of the current parking lot on the corner of Sunapee and Main Streets.



In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Newport Winter Carnival, we will offer three ornaments for 2016 available in February for carnival week. Subjects have been chosen and mailed to artist, Joan Dodge, and will be announced in a future newsletter.

To date our membership drive has resulted in 236 members. We hope to reach our 2015 goal of 254 members in recognition of the 254 years since Newport was granted a charter in 1761. With that in mind, we need 18 additional members. Many thanks to all renewing and new members. Your membership dues support the activities of your historical society.

HISTORICAL TRIVIA!

Can you name the three men who once lived in Newport and served as Governor of New Hampshire?

#1- He was publisher of a monthly magazine in New Hampshire, was not born here, but lived in the Lafayette House on South Main Street for a time. **#2-** He was born here, was the President of the State Senate and became the Acting Governor when Governor Henry Wilder Keyes became ill and couldn't perform his duties. **#3-** He was a long time Newport resident, not born here, but managed a factory and owned property in Newport until his dying days.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE REPORT

By Larry Cote

As usual, winter visitation to the Newport Historical Society Museum was light, which makes it a great time to make a quality visit. As of the October 2014 rotation, we have four completely new displays and two that have had changes. There is something for everyone.

1. The toy display will appeal to the young and to the young at heart.
2. The kitchen display will interest the cooks in the family.
3. The Newport business display will attract business-oriented people.
4. The old photographs will appeal to anyone.
5. The reference room/library has something of interest for most everyone.

With the pledge payments for the windows nearing completion, we anticipate that the windows replacement project will commence in late spring/early summer. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who has helped us with this project and the past four years of improvements to our little Museum and historic building.

We are always looking for volunteer Docents to help staff the Museum on Sundays from 10 AM until 2 PM. This can also be done in two hour segments, 10am to noon or noon to 2pm. Training will be provided and a member of the Museum Committee or Board of Directors will always be there to assist you. You will enjoy your time at the Museum. Newport has a rich history; come and share it with us and others.

NHS Donates to Aid

Digitized Newspaper Records Project

Recently, the Newport Historical Society contributed \$1,000 to the Richards Library digitization project, in which Argus Champion records, now only available on microfiche, will be digitized. This project will greatly facilitate research that the Society and other Newporters perform as they delve into the history of Newport. In many instances past newspaper articles are the only existing reference to a particular event or person. Because the new digitized version will be word searchable, research time will be greatly reduced.

TRIVIA ANSWERS:

#1 - Governor Ralph Metcalf published the Granite Monthly Magazine, lived for a time in Newport until he moved to Concord and was Governor from 1855-1857.

#2 - Judge Jesse Barton, a Newport native and life-long resident, became the Acting Governor in 1918.

#3 - Francis Parnell Murphy, long time Manager of the McElwain Shoe Factory. He married a Newport native, owned a home on Spring Street, moved to Nashua and later became Governor from 1937-1941.



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P.O. Box 413, Newport, NH 03773,

Website www.newportnhhistory.org Email newporths1761@gmail.com Facebook [NewportHS1761](https://www.facebook.com/NewportHS1761)

Museum phone number 603-863-1294

Call the Museum number above for appointments to tour the Museum at alternative times

Contributors to this issue: Cathryn Baird, Jackie Cote, Larry Cote & Jen Rogers

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 \$ _____ Buildings \$ _____

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

Please mail to:

Newport Historical Society, PO Box 413, Newport, NH 03773