

MILL TOWN MESSENGER

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From the President's Pen: by Arthur Walsh

HURRICANES

As a boy growing up on a “Sea Island” in Georgia, one of the islands in the marshy areas off of Savannah, hurricanes and their fringe winds were a common event. Fill the bathtub with water, bring in or tie down loose items in the yard, get out the candles and sterno. As boys, my brother and I thought it was exciting- the thoughts of my parents were undoubtedly very different!

Moving to New England as an adult, I never imagined that such things as cyclonic storms could occur here. I was impressed soon enough, however, by the substantial blow-downs of trees one could see as the result of “microbursts”, which I had never encountered before. One of these was to be seen right along I-89 on the drive to Lebanon. The way those large trees had been toppled and scattered made me think they had been struck by an avalanche, but there was no mountain above them for that to be possible. The aftermath of another one was to be seen only a few years later on the property of friends who lived near Ludlow Vermont. A beautiful stand of stout, mature hardwoods and some pines was leveled, with the trunks scattered like toothpicks dropped out of a box, and some even shattered.

New England’s “microbursts,” were new to me. Little did I picture true hurricanes extending this far north- but anyone seeing the effects of the heavy rains of Hurricane Irene is a believer. The Hurricane of 1938, addressed in this newsletter, was even worse. These make the microbursts look “micro” indeed!

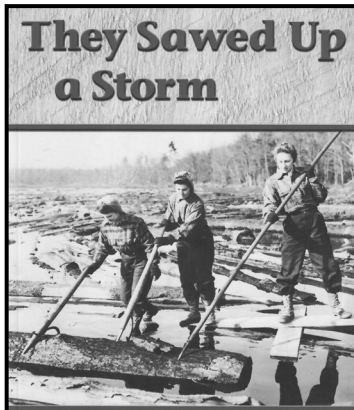
NEWPORT'S HISTORY OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, 2020 TO ? by YOU

As you read this issue’s fascinating peek into Newport’s 1938 Hurricane experience, through George Edgel’s diary, think about how you might describe YOUR experiences with the Covid-19 Pandemic. When the Historical Society tried to write about Newport’s 1918-1920 Spanish Flu Epidemic experiences, there was very little local material to draw upon.

Jackie Cote has been tracking the case numbers for the pandemic with her daily log. We would also like to leave some personal history of Newport peoples’ time in this difficult year-plus. It does not have to be a long, true “diary,” but just a page or two (or more?) of your thoughts and feelings and things you have done (or NOT done) thru this time. We will gather these stories in a binder (or several!) so that in 100 years, when the NEXT pandemic shows up at Newport’s door, we can look back and see how it was handled by our town’s people.

We can include your name (**or not - as you prefer**) and can check spelling and grammar (if you would like, or not.) It may be handwritten, typed, or printed (or you could send a computer file if you like - and we’ll print it.) This is your story, for future Newporters. The binder will reside in our 3rd floor “library” of like binders of Newport History. You can come in and read each other’s stories if you like.

Send your story to: **Newport Historical Society, P.O. Box 413, Newport, NH 03773** or send a file to **newporths1761@gmail.com**. Children’s stories will be welcomed too. Make it a family project.



They Sawed Up a Storm

The Women’s Sawmill at Turkey Pond, New Hampshire, 1942

By SARAH SHEA SMITH

HOW NEW HAMPSHIRE LADIES DEALT WITH THE FALLEN TREES OF THE 1938 HURRICANE

The 1938 Hurricane knocked down 417 million board feet of lumber in NH! In 1942, the Forestry Service was still trying to process it all. The men were going off to war, so they constructed a sawmill at Turkey Pond, (in the city of Concord) and staffed it with women! Sarah Shea Smith has written this great little book about the hurricane and wonderful job the gals did dealing with the 12 million board feet of downed trees in the pond. The book, with great 1938 Hurricane photos and the story of the Turkey Pond Sawmill, is available at the Historical Society Museum and for sale at booksellers. **Historical Marker at Turkey Pond** →



George H. Edgell's Hurricane of 1938 Diary Entries

By George H. Edgell and commentary by Jackie Cote

The following is an excerpt from the diary of George H. Edgell, son of Isabella & George S. Edgell. The diary is currently in the possession of Ellen Edgell Simmons of Sargentville, Maine, who is a member of the Newport Historical Society and George's granddaughter.

To set the scene, George and his wife lived at 'Hardscrabble' now the home and location of Full Circle Farm on Edgell Road. At the time Edgell Road went from Fletcher Road all the way through to Croydon Brook Road. With the approach of the 2021 hurricane season, we thought it important and interesting to look at information and some photos about the Hurricane of 1938. The following script commentary is in the words of George Edgell, from his diary:

September 20th, Tuesday – *"Did errands in the morning. Went to see Farrington [Corbin Park Superintendent] in the afternoon. More rain. Farrington had had a serious attack of acute indigestion but seemed better."*

September 21st, Wednesday – *"Terrific rains and flood conditions get very ominous. Telephoned E. S. H. [Eleanor S. Hunneman, George's secretary living in Massachusetts] to check up before she tried to come to Newport on the morrow."*

Motored to Asa Kemp's and found the water a foot deep pouring over the state road and filling the meadow beyond. Cars went through but I did not attempt it. Returned to the Corbin Place and went through two feet of water just east of the Corbin Bridge. Went on toward Northville [as North Newport was then called] and found the road blocked with a wash out. Finally, turned round and got home via the Kibbey's. [Kibbey's lived at the bottom of Edgell Road that at that time connected to Croydon Brook Road and is now the home of Phil and Margot Estabrook]

Brakes gone hay-wire on account of the wet so I left my car for the afternoon in the garage. After luncheon walked to Northville via Sheltie Land [have not been able to find out where this is] and found the road completely gone by Lehtinens [current home of Paul & Cathryn Baird on Fletcher Road] Went on to the Blakes [farm owned by Igor Blake's parents] and then, with them, walked to the Corbin Bridge to see the flood.

By that time, the water was touching the bottom of the bridge and, while there, the boat house [part of the Corbin Mansion property] upset. Dent [Hardscrabble

groundskeeper] came along with the truck and took me home.

I decided I wanted pictures so Dent took me to the village in his car via the Corbin Place and Northville [currently Oak Street] the washout being passable and the road over the hill clear. Bought films and returned the way we went [via Oak Street]. Came over the hill and down to Croydon Flat and back along the state road to Asa Kemp's. Water was pouring over the road at the culvert below the Edgell Place and where the back road to the Edgell Place enters the state road. From Kemp's on, Wilmarth Flat [from the current high school north on Route 10] was an angry, muddy lake with high waves. Took a picture and motored all the way round again to the Corbin Bridge to take two more pictures.

Wind rising steadily. Dent took me home and went home himself. Electricity went off and Iva [Hardscrabble housekeeper] and I got oil stove down from the garret and filled lamps. While she was cooking dinner, the wind rose to hurricane force, the barometer dropped to 28.7, nearly an inch in an hour. Wind blew into the cellar so as to make the carpet in the dining room heave. Finally, succeeded in nailing the cellar door tight. The wind blew in one window pane in my bedroom. Had dinner and told Iva to go to sleep in George's room [his son, George H., Jr]. No time to be out. In the night, the wind went down."

September 22nd, Thursday

"Awoke to find myself in a new and unpleasant world. The magnitude of the disaster dawned on me only slowly. Many of my apple trees were down and the woods back of the Kennel looked as though they had been skillfully lumbered. Found I could get to the village and motored over the hill to see how the Blakes fared. They had fared very well. Ate a sandwich and told them I was going to walk to the Central Station (Corbin Park). They decided to come with me.

We left the car at the Flat and started up the road. By the time we got to the top of the hill, the road had disappeared under fallen timber. We struggled through as best we could, finally abandoned all attempt to follow the road and went into the Beaver Brook valley where the violence of the wind had been less, and followed the brook. We came out at the sawdust pile to find Farrington's men sawing and chopping



Corbin Mansion boathouse
(rightside up)
to the left of the Corbin Bridge.

Edgell Diary, Continued

out timber. They had got only that far from the Central in a day. I learned that the fence was down flat and in places difficult to find all the way from the Fletcher Corner to the Jimmy Place. The dam had gone out.

I finally got to the Central and had a talk with Farrington. Asked him to get out the next day and try and ascertain the extent of the damage on the west side. Then struggled back to the Flat and finally arrived completely exhausted by a four mile walk."

September 23rd, Friday

"Went to the village in the morning to survey the damage. Telephone lines down. Electric light out of commission. Half the trees on the Common overturned with one large elm reposing against Sidney Rollins' house [now Richards Free Library].



**Tree clearing work before chain saws.
Telephone lines downed on Laurel St.**

Returned to the house for luncheon, having discovered no way of communication with Cam-



**Rollins house (now Richards Library)
takes a hit too.**



**Trees downed on the Common.
The Union Soldier stands through it all!**

bridge. [The balance of the narrative for this day concerns Corbin Park. The following concerns his secretary E.S.H.'s journey from Cambridge to Newport and is a bit amusing].

Message-to-Garcia: Hunneman had flown from Boston to Concord, chartered a private plane to Claremont, taken the bus from Claremont to Newport, fell into the hands of a jackass who did not know enough to tell her to come to the house by Croydon Flat, had been dumped by him near the Corbin Bridge. She had walked to the house escorted part way by the Jones boy and part way by Dent."

October 2nd, Sunday

"Jean told me in the morning that Cy Thompson of Croydon had come to Dent with a blank [form] to be filled out by every resident stating the damage to his property. Dent and Jean had already made it out for our property and had done the same for Newport. Thompson wanted me to estimate the Park. One hell of a job. Thompson said to put it in high and to figure on fifteen million feet of destroyed lumber to be estimated at five dollars a thousand.

I went immediately to the Central Station and had a talk with Farrington. We estimated the damage in Croydon to be seventy-five thousand dollars; damage to the roads in the Park, fifteen hundred dollars; damage to the buildings five hundred dollars, and damage to the fence sixteen hundred dollars a mile for eight miles. I then told Farrington that we must get in touch with the Surveyors in Grantham, Plainfield and Cornish since the figures had to be in that night and in Concord the next day."

Although the October 2nd financial survey of damage is for the area of Corbin Park in Croydon, it is interesting how they calculated the amount of damage. Let's all hope that a storm of this magnitude is not repeated any time

MUSEUM AND TREASURER'S REPORT

The question as to when the NHS Museum will open to the general public on Sundays has, naturally, come up. When the pandemic started in February of 2020, the Historical Society decided to follow the timeline that the New Hampshire Historical Society Museum was using. Their best guess for reopening is October 2021, depending on the conditions of the pandemic. We are currently accommodating special request visits such as receiving a donation of artifacts or your company from out of town who would like to visit the Museum.

We did not produce an ornament for 2020 and do not believe we will produce one for 2021. Due to the pandemic, our venues to sell our products are very limited. We do have a good supply of past ornaments, so if you are filling in your collection or replacing a broken one, contact us at:

- 603-863-1294 by phone (leave a message)
- email us at newporths1761@gmail.com
- mail at Newport Historical Society, -P.O. Box 413, Newport, N.H. 03773

During this pandemic we are not idle; requests for information on Genealogy are coming in on a regular basis. We are supporting local writers with data for their articles. We are still accepting and receiving donations of Newport related artifacts. We are organizing our inventory and processing donations. We are so looking forward to the day that we can greet you at the Museum again with regular visiting hours. Till then, stay safe, healthy and happy; this too will pass.

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

You may notice that we are a few board members short of our usual 12. We will be looking for a few new board members, especially once we open back up for meetings. If you are interested, contact one of the board members, or call the Museum phone number .

NOTICE: We regret that due to the current virus prevention recommendations, we are suspending the NHS Business Meetings and Monthly Programs until further notice. The Museum will also be closed until further notice, but is available for family tours by appointment!. Call 603-863-1294. We will stay abreast of the latest healthcare advice and return to our usual Historical Society public activities as soon as possible!

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Newport Historical Society
P.O. Box 413, Newport, NH 03773,
Museum phone 603-863-1294

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

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

Life Membership (\$250 - each person) _____ (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**