

MILL TOWN MESSENGER

WHAT'S COMING NEXT FOR THE MILL TOWN MESSENGER?

In an effort to get this “October” newsletter in your hands, we will leave you with a couple of teasers for the January 2023 issue. We are currently corresponding with family members of Ruth Elaine (Whitney) Talbert chasing a wonderful story of the Whitney family who in the 1930’s and early 1940’s lived on a farm on Barton-Whitney Road that eventually joins Blueberry Ridge Road and ends up in North Newport. The Whitney portion of the road’s name relates to that family. There is a great story here, and photos to go with it. We look forward to telling you about it in January.

Then, we will have more about Ernest Harold Baynes, Conservator of Corbin Park, from 1904 to 1925. We have a bit about him in this issue, as he was involved in training the Corbin bison. He truly had a remarkable way with animals, as you will see in January. He wrote several small books about his time with some of the animals in the park. The story of “Jimmy” the bear cub, comes to mind. Having just purchased four more of his books for the Museum archives, Larry Cote, our Museum Director, now believes that we have all of his books.

NHS Meeting Times

Board Meetings:
(Open to all members)

Nov. 14, 2022

Dec. 12, 2022

Jan. 9, 2023

7:00 PM, Museum

No programs at the present
time

Museum Hours; 10AM-2PM

Sundays

BISON TALES IN CORBIN PARK

By Pris Hagebusch



Preliminary Note: Buffalo and Bison are two separate species. The Buffalo (who has downturned horns) lives in Africa and Asia: the Bison (who has upturned horns) lives in the New World and Europe. Buffalo never “roamed” in America despite the song lyrics!

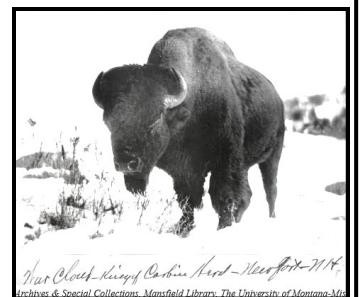


While we all may not envision Bison “roaming” in New Hampshire, our own Corbin Park was especially influential in the preservation of this country’s mammoth native bovine! Battles with the Indian populations throughout this new country (for the European settlers) led to an attempt at mass extermination of the Indian’s main meat source. Bounties were given to hunters for Bison hides, and the massive herds were destroyed all across the plains, where they did “roam.” The meat was often left to rot!

A native son of Newport, Austin Corbin, Jr., had become a wealthy businessman thru his ventures on the Eastern seacoast, railroads, banking, and other investments. In 1890, he founded a 26,000 acre “Preserve”, called the “Blue Mountain Forest and Game Preserve” (also known as the “Blue Mountain Forest Association” and “Corbin’s Park”) by buying properties near his family home, in what is now North Newport, Croydon, and Grantham Mountain. The Park was fenced, policed, and the animals well cared for.

It was to be a hunting preserve and reservation for saving and breeding endangered animals, such as the American Bison.

Other animals were also included, such as elk, wild boar from the German Black Forest, white-tailed deer, black-tailed deer, mule deer, European red deer, bighorn sheep, moose, antelope, caribou, Himalayan mountain goats, and pheasants. (The pheasants flew off over the fences, but the rest stayed for a while!)



He had begun buying bison in 1888, first from a Canadian supplier of the “Stoney Mountain herd” and then later, from a Texas supplier, of the last of the great Southern herd in the Texas Panhandle. In 1889, the bison herd in the US was reported to be down to **541 animals!** By 1896, it was reported the Park had over 90 bison in its herd. Corbin began making donations from the herd to parks in the US, giving 30 bison to the Van Cortlandt Park in New York. (where, eventually, they all died!)

(Continued on Page 2)

BISON TALES IN CORBIN PARK, (Continued)

By Pris Hagebusch

Austin Corbin, Jr. died in Dec. 1896, but his family continued to propagate the herd and share it with organizations across the country looking to prevent the extinction of this noble species.

Austin Corbin, III, his son, continued to care for the Corbin herd, and share it with well-run parks and preserves.

There was a wide interest in trying to cross-breed the native bison with domestic cattle. Austin Corbin, Jr. had imported Polled Angus cattle from Scotland to attempt cross breeding, but later stated categorically, that the attempt had failed! In a very business-like manner, he stated that a pure-bred bison cow sells for \$1,000, where a cross-breed would only bring \$500.

In 1904, three cows from the Corbin herd went to the National Zoological Park Herd, Washington D.C. January, 1907 saw the first annual meeting of the **American Bison Society**, located at the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park, New York City. Austin Corbin, III was present for that meeting, as he was a life member.

In January, 1908, the Corbin herd was recorded to have 136 bison. The family's donations continued, giving three bison to start the Montana National Bison Reserve. On Nov. 8, 1910, one bull and two cows were presented by the Blue Mountain Forest Association to the National Bison Range.



Ernest Harold Baynes was the "Conservator" at the Blue Mountain Forest and Game Preserve, serving from 1904 to 1925. He worked with the bison at the park, and learned that bison can be tamed and domesticated, not easily, but he felt time might make a change in this respect. Mr.

Baynes is shown here, driving a pair of three-year-old bison which he had trained in the Corbin preserve in New Hampshire.

Baynes believed that after a few years of domestication, this animal could be tamed sufficiently so that it could be handled by small farmers in the semi arid regions of the West, and utilized upon the lands not otherwise available for the raising of cattle.



In 1903, the Corbin herd had reached a high watermark at about 173 head. The expense of maintenance, and particularly of feeding the animals through the long winter, proved too heavy, though, and in the next 10 years the herd was gradually reduced. In

1908 it numbered 65 bulls and 71 cows, or a total of 136. In 1910, the number of bulls was reduced to 36 and the cows to 70, making a total of 106. In 1912, there were 41 bulls and 45 cows, or 86 in all. On January 1, 1914, there were 41 bulls and only 28 cows, making a total of 69 head, of which 13 were calves.

In 1919, the Pisgah National Forest, in the mountains of North Carolina, received six Corbin bison. American Bison had formerly roamed in that area, but were exterminated about the time of the Revolutionary War. This little-known bison habitat was mentioned in the "Outlander" books, by Diana Gabaldon!

An article in 1924 stated that there were six nationally owned bison herds in the United States. The two largest were located along the line of the Northern Pacific railroad, one in the Yellowstone National Park and the other on the Montana National Bison range. The government-owned herds in the United States



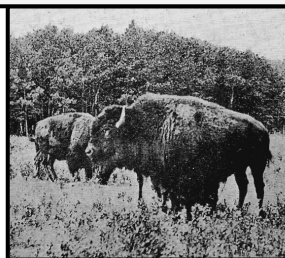
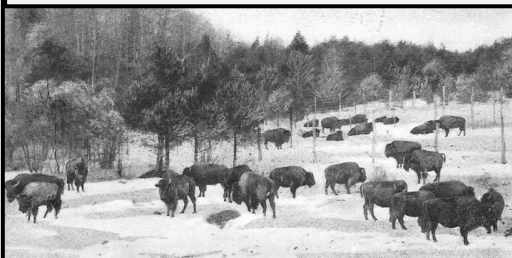
contained 1,719 animals. There was one herd in Canada reported to contain 10,000 head. Today, (2017 data) the estimated bison herd size in North America is 362,406 animals. Many of these are on farms and ranches that are involved in selling bison meat, which has become popular, but many head are preserved on federal reserves or tribal lands. Unfortunately, there are currently no bison in Corbin Park. We do, though, appreciate the Corbin's continued persistence in saving the bison herd of the northern US.

Much of this story comes from the following link:

<https://allaboutbison.com/bison-in-history/austin-corbin-park/> and was provided by Laura McCrillis Kessler.

Many of the photos are from the NHS archives.

Bison from Corbin Park made for popular Postcards



DAR HONORS ARNOLD GRATON, BRIDGE BUILDER BY LARRY COTE



Corbin Bridge Infrastructure

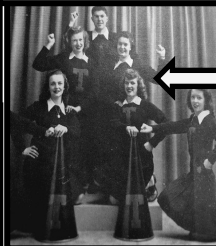
On October 1st, the Newport Historical Society assisted the Reprisal Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, DAR, in honoring **Arnold Graton**, the builder who replicated the Corbin Covered Bridge in 1994, after the 1843 original was lost in an arson fire.

Bill Caswell, the President of the **National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges**, was also on hand to accept honors for that society's work in preserving and documenting covered bridges around the world. The award ceremony was held beside the Corbin Covered Bridge with a reception held at Dr Arthur Walsh's barn in North Newport.

GO TIGERS!



Cheerleading sweater of Louise Crone Russell, mother of Kurt Russell, and Newport's 1945 Winter Carnival Queen.



We recently received Louise Crone Russell's Towle High School cheerleading sweater. Included are photos of the front and back of it. To see it in person, visit the museum any Sunday from 10am to 2pm. It is in the display case in the front room off the office. We are very delighted to have it, thanks to Louise's daughter, Jami Russell Way who sent it to us.

THE NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAS BOOKS FOR YOU! By Jackie Cote



"Thank You, Sarah"
We have a new children's book in full color, explaining the origins of our national Thanks-giving holiday and how Sarah made it happen. Cost of this great short book is \$8.00.

The Finns in Newport, New Hampshire
by Olli Turpeinen

(back in stock at the NHS Museum)

This wonderful book outlines the history of the Finnish population of Newport, New Hampshire. Its Appendix consists of a 70-page compilation of Finns who lived and worked in Newport from 1887 to 1997. The book also explains more fully who the Finns were, why they came to Newport, what they did here and what happened to them. This book is a must read for anyone interested in Newport's history.

Olli Turpeinen was born in 1924 in Sunapee, New Hampshire. He moved to Newport in 1930. Graduating from Towle High School in 1942, he entered UNH, then the Army, returning to UNH after the War, graduating in 1948. After graduate school, he worked for the National Biscuit Company. For a short period of time, he was a diplomatic courier for the State Department stationed in Cairo, Egypt. Upon returning to Newport and in desperate need of work, he took a job teaching at Towle High School. He had planned to remain a year but the year stretched into 30 years! Olli was a much-loved teacher by all his students, including this author!

The Finns in Newport, New Hampshire

By Olli Turpeinen



NHS Board: Arthur Walsh, Pres., Jackie Cote, VP and Treas., Pam LaFountain, Sec., Larry Cote, Museum Director, Pris Hagebusch, Newsletter Editor, Jerry Hagebusch, Arnie Hebert, Laura McCrillis Kessler, Donna Menard, Dean Stetson, Stan Sweeney.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Jackie Cote

MUSEUM REPORT

By Larry Cote

Our Membership Drive is underway for the 10/1/22 to 9/30/23 fiscal year. Many of you have already responded and I'm confident more will be forthcoming. If you did not receive a Membership Drive letter, the reason is that you have paid ahead or are a Life Member. If you are not sure and want to check your status, you can email us newporths1761@gmail.com or leave a voice message at the museum and we will respond.

At this time one of our members, Bruce Kozlik, is updating our website, which unfortunately, has been idle since 2019. Once completed, all of our 22 books will have a photo and price listed. Remember, the price is for the book only. If you want the book(s) shipped, please call the museum (603-863-1294) or email us and tell us what you would like to order. Be sure to leave your name, address and phone number. I will package the book(s), bring to the post office to ascertain exact shipping (media rate) and email you with the total to be mailed to P O Box 413, Newport NH 03773. Once we receive your check, the book(s) will be mailed. With Christmas approaching, please consider our products for your gift-giving needs. We have many items other than books. The Museum is open on Sunday's from 10am to 2pm or by appointment (603 863-1294).

On Wednesday, October 5, we hosted the Chamber's "Business After Hours" at the Museum. We offered drinks and food was prepared by Lee Dufort. A fun time was had by all. As always, thank you very much for supporting the Newport Historical Society.

We had (125) people sign the visitors register at the museum since the July Newsletter. Visitation has been strong with a mix of local and out of town visitors.

We made (2) purchases of artifacts, the first was a very large purchase/donation of local memorabilia and the second was a unique Newport business sign.

On October 5th, the Newport Historical Society Museum participated in the Chamber of Commerce "Business After Hours". This was the first time that we have had an "Open House" since 2019. It was great to have the Nettleton House full of people once again. There were some familiar faces and some new faces. It is always fun to have first time visitors at the Museum. The attendance was smaller than those of pre-pandemic, but I guess that is to be expected. Thank you all once again for helping make the evening a success.

For the Open House and as a tribute to Barbara Huff, the paintings in the bedroom were exchanged for Barbara's works. On display are Barbara's very first painting as well as her last. All of the Barbara Huff paintings were donated by her. We feel privileged to have and display them.

Recently, we had a first-time visitor who was researching the Corbin Railroad Station in North Newport. It is very rewarding to see the excitement of a first-time visitor exceeding their expectation while searching our Library/Reference Room.

We are happy to announce that one of our long-time members and great friend, Bruce Kozlik, has agreed to update and maintain our web site. We thank all those who in the past have worked on the web site. We are excited to see what fresh eyes will come up with.

We are open on Sundays from 10 AM until 2 PM or by appointment. Call 603-863-1294 for an appointment and we will get back to you to arrange a day and time. We will be closed on holiday weekends so our members can enjoy the day with family.

The *Mill Town Messenger* is published quarterly by the
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)

Newport Historical Society Membership Form:

Date: _____ New Membership _____ Renewal _____

Your annual membership earns you a new or continued, subscription to this newsletter!

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 \$ _____

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**