

NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MILL TOWN MESSENGER

Volume 19 Issue 1

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UPDATED WEBSITE AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY DEAN STETSON



www.newportnhhistory.org

On December 30th, 2024, the Newport Historical Society launched its new website. The previous website has been dormant for some time. With this new platform, The Newport Historical Society and Nettleton House Museum has new tools available to support the organization.

The Historical Society is fortunate to have the talents of Michael Loftus and Tom Nulty, who have generously given their time and talents helping the organization update our presence in this Digital Age. It is our hope that this vehicle for communication will help transport all of us into the future as we look to our past.

Benefits of our new Digital Platform include lowering printing and mailing costs by offering e-versions of this newsletter to subscribers. Most importantly, the new website will eventually support on-line membership, merchandise and “Donate” options. We are working to eventually allow on-line research as we expand our digital capabilities.

We encourage you to log onto www.newportnhhistory.org to see our new website and the first blog by Michael Loftus, which heralds the Historical Societies’ new presence and offerings. While you are there, please “Subscribe” to be kept up to date with timely information, articles and events with the Newport Historical Society.

Future Goals for the Newport Historical Society and you:

- Upgrade the Past Perfect Software to its most current version, allowing more flexibility in its usage.
- Continue to catalogue donated artifacts (many hundred per year) in a manner that items can be retrieved or viewed when requested, or one day, view on-line?
- Increase our volunteer base. That could be you – for as little as two hours per month. Volunteers are matched with their areas of interest.
- Allow on-line giving, as well as online Newsletter availability, depending on member preferences.
- Resume selling our books and gift items at local events as well as on-line.
- Continue to provide our educational in-person programs, as well as offer on-line versions.

Correction on the October 2024 Edition’s article on Brick-and-Mortar Renovations on the Nettleton House: *by Dean Stetson*

“Numerous attempts were made over the past few years by Museum Director Larry Cote to find an appropriate contractor to address the repairs needed on the Museum. Fortunately, between family and workplace contacts, the need to get the work done reached Mr. Verrill, and he agreed to handle the necessary repairs.”

NHS Times

Business Meetings:

Open to the Public

February 10, 6:30 PM

March 10, 6:30 PM

April 14, 6:30 PM

Museum Open Hours

10AM—2PM Sundays,

and by appointment

Programs:

See below:

Upcoming Programs

These are our usual programs on various historic people, places and things from Newport. The ones listed below will be held at Summercrest Senior Living, at 2 PM. Lovely refreshments will be provided by the house chef.

February 20 - **The Dexter and the Early History of the Newport Fire Department.**

March 20 - **Francis P. Murphy - From a Shoeless Boy to Governor of NH and Beyond!**

May 16 - **“Newport Welcomes a Hero” - The Story of General Lafayette's Trip Through Newport in 1825.**

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These presentations will also be repeated on designated evenings in late February through May in the Ballroom at the Richards Free Library. Dates are forthcoming, so for more information, watch our Facebook page:

(Newport NH Historical Society) and our Website (<http://newportnhhistory.org/>)

Newport Historical Society Election Results for 2024-2025:

President: Dean Stetson

Vice President: Arthur Walsh

Secretary: Pam LaFountain

Treasurer: Paula Johnson

Museum Director: Arnie Hebert

Newsletter Editor: Pris Hagebusch

Facebook Mgr.: Stan Sweeney

Website Mgrs: Mike Loftus and Tom Nulty

Board Members: Ann St.Martin Stout, Donna Menard, Laura McCrillis Kessler, April Anderson

AIKEN FAMILY GENEALOGY

A NEWPORT FAMILY SINCE 1770

AIKEN FAMILY	MARRIED TO:	CHILDREN:
Andrew Aiken (1770-1850) <i>(Was a wheelwright when he come to Newport)</i>	Martha McAllister (or McAllaster) Aiken (1774-1797)	Frederick Heath Aiken William McAllister Aiken Sarah Aiken Newell Ann Riddle Aiken Starbird Martha Mary Aiken Belknap David Aiken Margaret Ann Aiken Bissell James Breck Aiken <i>(Named after prominent shop owner where Fred H. worked.)</i>
Ann Riddle Aiken Starbird	Naylor Starbird <i>(One of the Newporters who purchased "Dexter" and founded first fire department.)</i>	
Martha Mary Aiken Belnap	Sawyer Belnap	George Eugene Belknap (1832-1903) <i>(Became a decorated Rear Admiral in US Navy)</i>
Frederick Heath Aiken (1798-1875) <i>(bought the Aiken Farm in 1837, ran it until 1870)</i>	Almire (Elmire) Carr Aiken (1820-1888) <i>(daughter of David Carr and Sarah Severns Carr)</i>	Addie Jane Aiken (d-1875) Frederick William Aiken (1862-1935)
Frederick William Aiken 1862-1935) <i>(ran the farm 1900-1930)</i> <i>(Selectman in NH Legislature, bank trustee, County Commissioner 22 yrs)</i>	Katherine Herrick Aiken (1869-1961) <i>(of Herrick family on Spring St.)</i>	Charles Francis Aiken (1892-) <i>(Shoe shop foreman)</i> William Frederick Aiken (1893-1974) Arlene M. Aiken Erickson (1902-)
Arlene M. Aiken Erikson	Edward Erikson	<i>They taught school & lived on Aiken Farm.</i>
William Frederick Aiken (1893-1974) <i>(Life Ins. in Manchester & Claremont, State Auditor for Liquor Stores)</i>	Bessie Snow Aiken (1900-)	Frederick W. Aiken (1893-1974) Evelyn Aiken (1955-) <i>(Served as a military nurse)</i>
Frederick W. Aiken (1921-1995) <i>(WWII & Korean vet., AM. Legion, VFW, Naval Reserve.)</i>	Emily Hodgdon Aiken <i>(first female Pres. JH Cain Golf Club)</i>	Virginia Gail Aiken (1955-
Virginia G. Aiken Palmer (1955-	Wayne Palmer	Ryan Palmer Bradley Palmer <i>(4th G. grandsons of Andrew)</i>
Ryan Palmer	Jody _____ Palmer	Lilly Palmer
Bradley Palmer	Maria Stout Palmer <i>(First wife of Bradley & mother of his five children)</i> Amanda _____ Palmer <i>Second wife of Bradley</i>	Dylan Bradley Palmer Caleb Andrew Palmer Hayden Thomas Palmer Bryce William Palmer Leah Elizabeth Palmer

The Aiken Farm's Story by Pam LaFountain & Ann Stout (*Aiken family first and middle names are underlined*)

Andrew Aiken came to Newport in 1813 from Bedford NH. He was the son of James "Deacon" Aiken and Margaret Waugh. His wife Martha McAllister had married Mr. Aiken in 1797. The couple brought their 6 eldest children to town. After arriving in town, their 3 youngest children were born. Andrew and his family lived at different farms around Newport.

Land in Newport, that was to become the Aiken Farm, was first owned by Abijah Wines. While Mr. Wines was having the house at the corner of Pine and (now) Belknap Avenue built, he had an episode which he described this way "as he was getting into his bed, the sight of the sheets between which he was laying himself down, seized his mind with a most thrilling sensation" Abijah soon left for Dartmouth College to become a minister! His wife and family were left with the responsibility of finishing the house and running the farm. (*account found in the papers of Frederick Heath Aiken*) - 8/1/1902, pg. 6, *NH Argus/Spectator*)

The Wines home at the top of the hill became known as "The Parsonage," although it was just the home of the minister and not connected to the church property. That house was built in 1790 by Thomas Tenney, on land that originally was Lot 21 in the first division of land in Newport, bought by Roswell Kelsey in 1770.

Four years after the death of Abijah Wines, in 1837, his widow Ruth Wines, sold the 155 acre farm to Frederick Heath Aiken, the oldest son of Andrew and Martha Aiken. Frederick Heath ran the farm thru the 1850's, 60's and 70's. His son, Frederick William Aiken, ran the farm with his mother, Elmire, after his death.

During the early years, the Aiken farm would appear as one of the heaviest-taxed properties in Newport. People in town report hearing explosions which were discovered coming from the Aiken farm. This was an attempt to move field rocks from the mowing fields. (11/3/1882, p. 2 *NH Argus Champion*)

In 1886, a new barn on the Aiken property was raised by 45 men. One of the property's old barns being demolished was believed to be at least 100 years old. (5/28/1886, p. 2, *NH Argus/Spectator*) Another old Aiken barn was taken down in 1891. (10/16/91 p. 22, *Argus Champion (As We Were)*).

In the 1880's, a Newport lawyer, Arthur Bradley, left his law practice and went to Long Island, NY to work in his brother's paint plant, where he perfected a process of oxidizing pig lead, producing white lead for a fraction of the prior cost. With his new fortune, he returned to Newport in the 1889 to build his summer mansion on some Aiken property, purchased from Frederick William and Kate Aiken. It was designed by the famous architect, Stanford White, of New York, for his Newport bride, Lucy Nettleton.

George A. Dorr Sr. bought the estate of A.C. Bradley, receiving the deed on Tuesday, March 15, 1916. He lived there until his death on January 10, 1947.

L. A. Whipple purchased the mansion as a gift to his wife in the late 1940's or early 1950's. Mrs. Whipple then opened a rest home which grew into **Woodlawn Nursing Home**.

White Pine Blister Rust found on the trees on William Frederick Aiken property, along with many other properties in Newport and other Sullivan County properties - (2/10/1927, pg.2, *Argus Champion*)

Two hundred acres of grown timber were ruined by Hurricane of 1938 on property owned by Mrs. Fred Aiken. (9/29/1938, pg. 8 *Argus Champion*)

THE HISTORY of "BELKNAP AVENUE," which crosses the Aiken Estate. It was built and named in 1891, on land donated by Frederick William Aiken (see genealogy listing) and named in honor of his sister's famous son, Rear Admiral George Eugene Belknap.

- Mrs. Katherine (William Frederick) Aiken furnished the stone on which the cannonball, sent by George Belknap to his wife, is mounted, at the top of Belknap Avenue. (12/9/1943, p. 4 *Argus Champion*).
- The monument was paid for by Mrs. Lucy Bradley and the D.A.R. (The monument still stands at the entrance to Mrs. Bradley's home, now Woodlawn Nursing Home.)
- By 1920 (census) Charles Francis Aiken and wife Luella Collier had moved to another home on Belknap (possibly 6 Belknap Court, built in 1900.) Charles worked as a foreman in a shoe shop.
- According to a newspaper account, Fred Aiken, Charles' first cousin, also built a cottage on Belknap Ave. (11/10/1911- *Argus/Spectator*)
- By the 1930 census, William Frederick and his wife Bessie were living in a home on Belknap Ave, (possibly 4 Belknap Court built in 1928), not the main farm.
- 1940 Census - William Frederick had moved to Laurel Street and was a State Auditor for Liquor Stores.
- In the fall of 1963, Felix and Gertrude Smith built a home on the property of the former Aiken farm, 141 Belknap Avenue. The house still sits at the corner.

FINAL DISPOSITION:

- In the early 1960's the owners of the Aiken farm sold some of the remaining Aiken property to an investment group. They retained two lots on Belknap Court, where at least 4 generations of Aikens have lived, and some are currently living.
- There was a house on this property that was very old and decrepit. The investors wanted it gone so they donated it for practice to the Fire Department. The house was mostly wood, and safer to burn than houses today. Al St. Martin purchased some of that wood and made a dining table, which his family used for many years. It now resides at the Historical Society Museum, in their Kitchen. Come see!

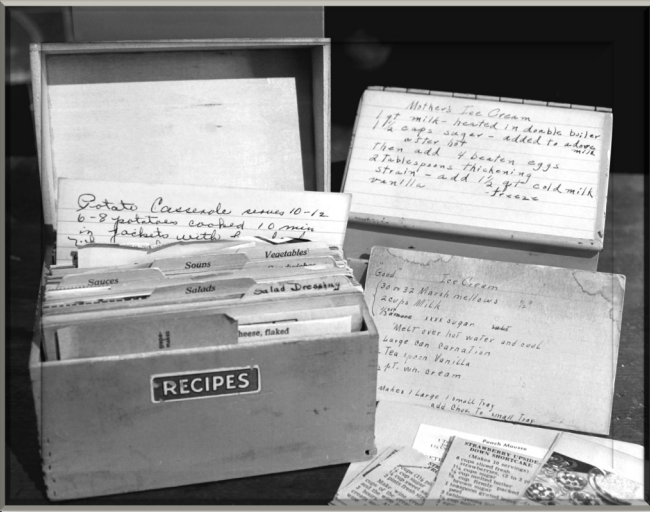
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WOULD YOU ENJOY AN OLD RECIPE?

By Ann Stout

We'd like your help to discover them.



At the Museum, there is an undiscovered corner. In the kitchen there are four recipe boxes each containing dozens of handwritten recipes just waiting for a project.

We also believe many of us have these boxes of old family

recipes in OUR OWN “undiscovered corners,” dating back in time to our own families and friends.

Would you be interested in joining a few others to excavate the delicious little treasures found among these boxes and handwritten recipes from Newport homes? It could be a fun way to help the Historical Society!

If you enjoy cooking and have a sense of historic adventure, contact Ann Stout (leavesarefree@gmail.com, or via the Museum). We'll get a few folks together who enjoy sitting around the kitchen table to discover old recipes. A goal could be to try some recipes, and eventually share them through our online website, or, perhaps in a cookbook (!) to sell at the Museum Gift Shop. Keep the Museum in mind when finding or donating recipes and kitchen related items.

Another **SPIN** Story

SELF PORTRAITS

IN NEWPORT (1998)

Find this book on the third floor of the Newport Historical Society Museum, with other locally-authored books. You could sit down at the table up there on a Sunday, between 10 and 2, and find your favorite as I did!

Throw Together Cake

My mother's mother, Alma Sophia Rantala Kurkinen Koski, made what she called a Throw Together Cake, “Alma's Throw Together Cake” that contained all the things we're not supposed to eat now, eggs, sometimes nearly a dozen, butter, and I used to watch. The women in those days didn't use measuring instruments. Their hands measured, or the knife would break off butter chunks. They did it by hands and eyes. My mother watched her mother work and wrote down what she saw: six handfuls. Her hands were flashing. She would break her eggs on the edge of the earthenware bowl. As I recall, it was A dull yellow with brown circles on it. (When she died, I got the smaller companion bowl, because her cake bowl had been broken. I don't use it.) There was no sequence that I could make out. She had everything laid out on the kitchen table and just threw things together until the batter was ready to go in the pan. The finger circling the bowl for the leftovers was mine. It was the egg, butter, milk taste. Almost makes me want to go home and make one.

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NEW NHS MUSEUM EXHIBIT DISPLAYS WINTER CARNIVAL ARTIFACTS

By Pam LaFountain

A new, short-term exhibit at the Newport Historical Museum on Central Street in Newport displays symbols of the longest continuously running Winter Carnival in the United States. The first event occurred in 1916 and has been held every year since, even if there was no snow. Anyone who has lived in the Newport area is likely familiar with the iconic symbols included in the display, a tiara and a trophy given to the winner of the annual Queen Pageant, a medal awarded for one of the sporting events, buttons dating back to the late 1930s, and annual programs with events and pictures of the queen and princess contestants along with the faithful local business sponsors who support the community event. Come and check these out!

But, did you know that the popular Queen pageant was not always run as it has in the most recent history of the Carnival? The first Winter Carnival Queen was selected in 1921 at the 6th winter event. In the early days, the Queen was the contestant who had sold the most tickets and buttons! Coupons were printed in the local newspaper at the time and could be sent to family and friends to help support your favorite contestant. The winner would be announced at Hourihan's Store around 5:00 pm (when) for those who wanted to see the winner. The Winter Carnival display in the NHS Museum has an example of these coupons.

Probably two of the most famous queens (not due to selling the most coupons!) were Monica Rastallis, who went on to represent New Hampshire in the Miss USA Pageant, and Louise Crone, mother of actor Kurt Russell.

Our extensive collection of Winter Carnival buttons are displayed in this exhibit. Are you a button collector? We have jars of buttons from many of the past carnivals! We could probably sell you ones you need for YOUR collection, for \$1 each!

2025 Newport Winter Carnival—to be held February 12 to 16, with a Wild West Theme!

Don't miss out on this fun town event! Get out your western wear!