

# MILL TOWN MESSENGER

## Newport Genealogy at a Glance: The Cains of Newport by Pam LaFountain

*I have to admit, I researched and wrote this article for my own curiosity, but since it is about a family that has influenced the town of Newport in many ways, I want to share it with you:*

In 1962, my parents Joan and Al Hague purchased land from John H. Cain. He was my neighbor and he gave me my first set of golf clubs; 3 wood shafted clubs with metal heads, a driver, an iron and a putter. The set came with its own bag, an off white canvas and I can remember it as clearly as the day I got it!. I am kind of surprised that Mr. and Mrs. Cain were so neighborly to us, since the day we blasted the ledge to build the foundation for our new home that was replacing an apple and blueberry field just west of their home, the dynamite did not blast up as planned, but headed east. The misfire sent one large boulder into the Cains' garage below, which held Mrs. Cain's brand new car. But Mr. Cain really liked my Dad, a young golfer, who later would become very instrumental in running the John H. Cain Golf Club and growing the club from a 9 hole course to an 18 hole one, and he made the best of the situation, Mrs. Cain, not so much. However, she came to like our family with three children and their friends playing in the rocks and trees between our two houses. Enough of that, here is the Cain Genealogy:

Cain Ancestor	Married to	Children
(1) <b>George Washington Cain</b> 1857-1927	<b>Cynthia Jane Leavitt Cain</b> 1818-1893	<b>Dr. John Leavitt Cain</b> William G. Cain
(2) <b>Dr. John Leavitt Cain</b> 1857-1927	<b>Zilphia Cutting Cain</b> 1860 - 1947 <b>Lillian Mathews Cain</b> 1877-1922	John Leavitt Cain Jr. 1904-1904 William L Cain 1905-1989 <b>John Haeckel Cain 1906-1964</b> Cynthia Jane Cain 1910 - 1990
(6) <b>John Haeckel Cain</b> 1904-1964	<b>Irene Witkus Cain</b> 1908-2004	Grace Cain Lacasse Martha (Marty) Cain

George Washington Cain, (1) was born in Unity, Four Corners, NH in 1819. In addition to Unity, Cain also lived in Goshen, Grantham, Claremont, and Croydon. While in Croydon, George purchased the "thousand acre farm" of Ruel Durkee. For most of his life, George was a farmer, but for 20 years he ran a peddler cart for parts of the year. First he sold dry goods from his cart, and later sold medicines he had made himself, earning him the name "doctor" by many who knew him.

As a young child, George lost an eye and had limited vision in the other. As an adult, his wife Cynthia spent hours reading to him, and George retained all he heard with an incredible memory. As a young man, Cain had found a New Testament which was written in "coarse type." The print of this type is thicker and easier to read. With the help of a magnifying glass, George was able to read the text and put it to memory. George came to Newport in 1876 and purchased the Hial Call farm on Unity Road (now the Newport Moose Lodge) where he lived until just a few months before his death, at age 90.

(Continued on Page 3)

### NHS Times

#### Business Meetings: Open to the Public

All held at 6-7:30 PM in the Ruger Room of the **LaValley Family Community Center** on Meadow Road, Newport.

**Monday, July 14**

**Monday, August 11**

**Monday, September 8**

#### Museum Open Hours

10AM—2PM Sundays,  
and by appointment

## Upcoming Events

**Corbin Mansion** - The Newport Historical Society would like to thank Nick Tamposi, the current owner of the Corbin Mansion in Newport, for opening the doors of this historic building for a day of guided tours. Unfortunately, the all the scheduled tours are all full at this time.

Below is a brief history of the house's ownership:

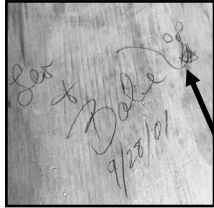
- Dr. James Corbin owned the property after the Revolutionary War.
- Austin Corbin I -1810- built 30x30' farmhouse.
- Austin Corbin II – 1880's - rebuilt the home to a Russian Palace! Corbin family owned thru 1940's, but mostly uninhabited.
- Rush & Loraine Touton, Philly Cigar Co. (Summer residence) – 1940's
- William (Bill) Ruger – 1988-2018 – Also made extensive renovations.
- Harry Watson & Ida Walters – 2019 - 2023 Made more renovations.
- Nick Tamposi – 2024 - Planned as a Wedding Venue.

The Corbin Mansion has long fascinated Newport residents!



**EEK, a Mouse!** By Dean Stetson

A few weeks ago, during a wind storm, Arnie and Lee, Archivists at the Nettleton House Museum were working on cataloging items in the office, when they kept hearing a banging noise from outside the door. The wind had blown the door of our “Information Kiosk” at the entrance of the Museum open and eventually Mother Nature took advantage of the aged construction. Pieces lay on the ground and deck.



Obviously, something had to be done to repair or better yet, replace the wooden box. I found the fasteners holding the box to the wall. I also found a surprise:

**A mouse.**

This small whimsical figure drawn in pencil on the unpainted wood appeared beside two names, Leo and Babe, and the date 9/28/01. Around these parts there is only one “Babe”, **Babe Sargent!**

At one time, the current Nettleton House Museum of the Newport Historical Society had the name of “The Sargent Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology”. The puzzle piece revealed a bit of our local history.

This building, known as the Nettleton House, has seen many occupants. In 1977 it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. From a 2010 report by James L. Garvin, previous occupants included The Economic Corporation of Newport (ECON).

Prior to that and between 1999 and 2001, the building was adapted from a dwelling to the Newport headquarters of the Sargent Museum, by Babe Sargent and his brother, Howard (of Archaeology and Anthropology fame). The official opening of the museum with limited exhibits was on August 15, 2000. Lacking paid staff and volunteers, the exhibits and the Sargent Museum closed by April 2001. Now it seems understandable why there is a connection between the Sargent Museum and Babe, and why he may have been involved with the construction of the Information box.

The cork board has now been remounted inside the box. The museum’s Information Kiosk has been repaired and put back on the building. The signatures remain underneath and undisturbed for the next person to find.



As for the mouse, well who knows where that little critter will show up again!

For more photos and details on the Babe and the Mouse story, see the website at [www.newportnhhistory.org](http://www.newportnhhistory.org).

**SPIN -**  
**SELF PORTRAITS IN NEWPORT**

This wonderful little book resides in the Newport Historical Society Museum, probably on the third floor 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 short tale!

Another place to find a copy of the SPIN book, is the Richard’s Free Library at the check-out desk. They have 5 copies!

**The Priscilla Sweet Shop**

Fifty years ago, a restaurant stood at 59 Main Street, Newport, New Hampshire and people loved it! How do I know? Because my grandfather, Sam Saggiotes, owned it.

It had the best hot fudge sundaes and vanilla Cokes. It was a great place to hang out after a football game or after a movie. The kids favorite was the grilled doughnut: with ice cream and hot fudge. Someone was always putting a nickel in the jukebox to hear a song. All the kids loved to go there and see their friends.

My grandfather made all his own candy, the best of which was the fudge. The name came from Priscilla and John Alden, who were Pilgrims. I wish I could have been there because it was a great place.

By Ashely Scott



Priscilla’s Sweet Shop on Main St.  
Closed in 1960’s.

**NHS Board:** Pres. Dean Stetson, **Museum Director:** Mike Loftus, **Secretary:** Pam LaFountain, **Treasurer:** Paula Johnson, **Museum Archivists:** Arnie Hebert & Lee Branch **Website Mgrs:** Mike Loftus, Tom Nulty, **Facebook Mgrs:** Mike Loftus, April Anderson **Newsletter Editor:** Pris Hagebusch, **Other Board Members:** Laura McCrillis Kessler, Donna Menard, Ann St. Martin Stout

## Newport Genealogy at a Glance: (Continued)

### The Cains of Newport by Pam LaFountain

At that time he had moved in with his son, John L. Cain, on Main Street. His wife Cynthia had died in 1893 of complications from heart disease. According to his obituary in the April 29, 1909 Argus Champion, William “became one of the best informed men in town on historical and many other subjects.” “In religion and politics he held strong and independent views.” George and Cynthia’s two children, William and John both went on to be doctors.

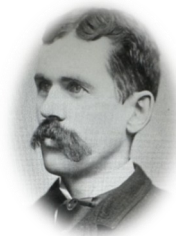


Dr. John L. Cain's Newport home, now Newton Bartlett Funeral Home.

Dr. John Leavitt Cain (2), the eldest son of George & Cynthia Cain, was born on September 26, 1856 in Goshen, NH. John received this education in Croydon, Kimball Union academy, Dartmouth College & Bellevue Hospital in New York City. He first practiced medicine in Grantham before coming to Newport in 1887. According to his obituary in the September 29, 1927 Argus Champion, “. . . he became one of the leading physicians here, always ready to administer to the needs to the sick at any time of day or night and countless times without remuneration whatever.” For many more details of his life please read Larry Cote’s article in the January 2018 Newport Historical Society newsletter, Mill Town Messenger. (Directions for getting to this article are below).

It was Dr. John Leavitt Cain, who inherited the family farm on Unity Road after his father’s death, who would go on to lease the land that, along with two other farms in the area, would become the Newport Golf Course. Dr. Cain was married twice, and he and his second wife Lilian had 4 children, John Leavitt Jr. (would die in infancy), William Leavitt Cain, John H. Cain, Cynthia Cain. At Dr. Leavitt’s funeral, his good friend Rev. James Alexander began the eulogy with this statement: “. . . But this is a service at which it is not necessary to say much. Dr. Cain was the best known man in Newport.”

Dr. Cain’s son, John H. Cain (6) was mostly responsible for keeping the family legacy alive in Newport, through the golf course that would eventually bear his name. John’s love of the game of golf began when John was 14, his father leased land to a group of New-



John H. Cain

porters who were interested in opening a golf course. Land that included the Cain farm on Unity Road was determined to be the best location in town. John, who began as a caddy on the course, then would go on to become a professional

golfer, which included teaching golf, a greenskeeping, and being a club manager.

In addition to working at the Newport Golf Club, Cain also apprenticed under Newport’s first pro, Harold Stallwood in Rhode Island, and work at Granliden Golf Course, Walpole NH Golf Course, and Mt. Pleasant Club in Lowell, Mass. John Cain also served in the Marine Corps in WWII. In 1930, John married Irene Witkus and the couple had a bungalow built just west of the Cain farmhouse. That old farmhouse was turned into the clubhouse for Newport Golf Club. The bungalow located on Golf Club Road remained the home for Mr. and Mrs. Cain and their two daughters after the death of Mr. Cain and when Mrs. Cain was well into her 90s. In 1964, just prior to the death of Mr. Cain, members of the Newport Golf Course voted to change the name of the course to the John H. Cain Golf Club, and presented Mr. Cain with a proclamation while he was in the hospital.

In 2022, 13 local investors, mostly all golfers, purchased the golf club and it became the Newport Golf Club again. However, the spirit of John H can still be felt around the new club house, located just down the road from the old Cain farmhouse, which is now the Newport Moose Lodge, on land that belonged to his grandfather almost 150 years ago. And I am sure John is smiling, just like that day when that young family moved in next door.



Former Cain Farmhouse, now the Newport Moose Lodge

#### How to access the 2018 Mill Town Messenger article by Larry Cote on Dr. John Leavitt Cain.

Go to the [Newport NH Historical Society Website](https://newportnhhistory.org/):

<https://newportnhhistory.org/>

OR Google: **Newport NH Historical Society** to find the link above.

1. Once on the website find the tab at the top labeled: NHS NEWS.
2. Click on the down arrow and the tab will turn a teal color.
3. Under the tab you should see “Mill Town Messenger” when it turns teal color, click on this. It should take you to a page titled “Mill Town Messenger”
4. Put your cursor on the red “Mill Town Messenger Archives” and it should turn teal colored. Click on this.
5. Now find January 2018, put your cursor on this and it should turn teal colored. Click on that.
6. This should take you to the 1/2018 newsletter. Scroll down to page 2 to read the article.

#### Sources:

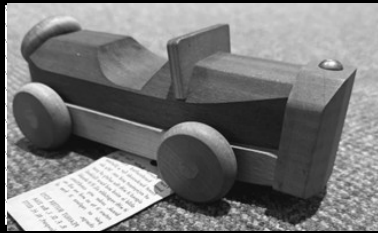
Richards Library Digital Archives; Argus Champions

[Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

Mill Town Messenger, January 2018 by Larry Cote  
Town of Newport Tax Maps

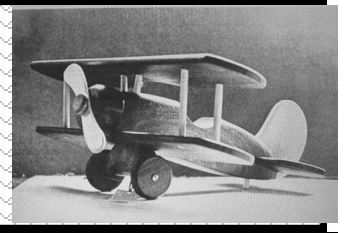


Home of John H. Cain, on Golf Club Road.



# PEANUT BUTTER TOYS

By Pam LaFountain



GOOGLE “Peanut Butter Toys” on the internet and you will get many advertisements for peanut butter flavored toys for dogs! However, recently, members of the Newport Historical Society Board learned that in Newport, this phrase refers to a toy company that was located in Newport in the mid-1970s.

While on a field trip to the Corbin Mansion (more on that coming soon), David Campbell, native Newporter, who was serving as our tour guide, gave Laura Kessler two wooden vehicles. He explained that he found them among the possessions of his father Hal Campbell, but didn’t have much more information. He did decide that they needed to be handed over to the Newport Historical Society as a piece of our economic history. And as we know, behind every donation to the NHS is a story to tell!

According to local newspaper accounts, William (Bill) & Claudia Huntley moved to the Newport area sometime around 1975. They rented space on Oak Street in North Newport in what had been Sugar River Fabrics; as you enter North Newport on the left just before going over the



Bill Huntley & PB Truck!

(formerly) green bridge. The couple had moved from Rhode Island and had only been making toys for about 3 years. It appears as if Claudia had been a certified schoolteacher and was offering child-care in her Sunapee home, in addition to helping out in the toy shop. Mr. Huntley had been a woodworking teacher and on moving to NH had been a juror in wood items for the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen in Concord.



Claudia Huntley & PB Plane!

Peanut Butter Toys was a featured toy company in a December 1976 New Hampshire Profiles Magazine article called “New Hampshire’s Toymakers: Their Job is Child’s Play.” In the article, Bill explained that his business model was “what a child ends up with (for a toy) is what the parents like.” The company’s toys were realistic in that they had moving wheels, propellers, etc., yet they were also “handcrafted decorations, with fine finishes and contrasting hues of wood,” a mixture of nostalgia meets fantasy. The types included vehicles like cars, trucks and airplanes, along with kangaroo, camel, alligator, butterfly or fish pull toys. The woods used were mahogany, birch, oak, walnut and maple. What made the toys particularly unique was that they were finished with a vegetable oil coating that was safe for children.

The Huntleys began making toys as a hobby, but Bill has to admit that the endeavor is much more work than he thought. He would not recommend people turning their passions into a full time business. That doesn’t mean he doesn’t like making toys. He and Claudia love what they do, enjoy being self-employed and find added energy from developing new products or improving on toys they already produce. But, Bill adds, the toy business is very competitive.

During the company’s years in operation, the Huntley’s marketed their toys at many shows including the Guilford, Connecticut Handcraft Exposition, “the Northeast” in Rhinebeck, NY, “the Frederick in Frederick Maryland, the Berkshire Craft Show and the Hilltop Crafts Fair in New London, NH. Bill also participated in “Touch Me -1977” a touring exhibit for the visually impaired. Peanut Butter Toys also won 2nd place in the Area Art Exhibit at the Newport Library Arts Center in 1975.

No more information could be found as to when the company left Newport, or how long the Huntleys produced wooden toys. If you would like to see the samples of Peanut Butter Toys, visit the Newport Historical Museum on Sundays from 10:00-2:00 or by appointment.

SEE THE “DONATION PAGE” ON THE NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY’S WEBSITE, AT **WWW.NEWPORTNHISTORY.ORG**

TO BECOME A MEMBER OF NHS. YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS KEEP US GOING FORWARD. DONATIONS/MEMBERSHIPS MAY BE MADE BY CHECK, OR SECURE ONLINE DONATIONS.

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