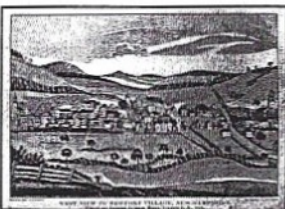


NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MILL TOWN MESSENGER

Volume 17 Issue 4

January 2024



NHS Times
Business Meetings:
 Jan. 8, 7 PM
 Feb. 12, 7 PM
 Mar. 11, 7 PM
 Apr. 8, 7 PM

Museum Open Hours
 10AM-2PM Sundays

Programs
 See article on *Newport Chronicles* at
Summercrest, page 2

From the President's Pen: By Arthur Walsh

Our Rich Newport History and
 Chain of People, Contributing and Caring

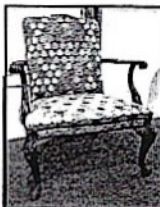
Rather than recommending that you go out for a driving tour of our town at this time of year, please just imagine, for a minute, driving around Newport and think about the sights that you see in daily life. Think of how this little settlement, beginning on some relatively flat land along the Sugar River, was first populated and even named while this entire region was a colony under the crown of England. The surrounding mountains and the river are relatively unchanged, but this little valley has seen a remarkable stream of events over the past 264 years.

The citizens of our town, even now numbering only some 6,500, have labored and contributed to our evolving nation. It seems almost unbelievable to me that the same surrounding mountains and hills have looked down on this small community as we contributed to and transitioned from English law and subservience to the Crown of England, through years of agriculture and then the rise of Yankee ingenuity and industry, joined vigorously in the Civil War which was tearing our nation apart, and then joined again to make America the strongest country on the planet. To think of the people of Newport, on these same streets and fields beneath the gaze of these hills is impressive enough, with thoughts of thousands of mostly unsung lives who labored here and preceded us, but I am truly astonished as I learn the stories of some who were recorded and the amazing breadth of ability and

contributions which our little town has hosted.

A quick review of today's Mill Town Messenger gives a taste of the breadth of contributions of our citizens. As you can read on these pages, our town is still in possession of Dexter, the fire pumper which arrived in our town in 1832- almost 200 years ago! Imagine the generations of our citizens who first used this little machine to fight fires in our village, then those who cared enough to store and later restore this amazing piece of history- just one indicator of the continuous generations of people who care in Newport. I try to picture the dozens, more likely hundreds, of people who have been involved over the past two centuries just with this one artifact and the cause of mutually protecting our homes in Newport- of course I cannot, other than some I am familiar with in recent years.

Similar contributions and caring have been provided in so many arenas, all adding to the ease and richness of our lives today. One need look no further than the mentions of Sarah Josepha Hale, Parlin Field and the list of upcoming programs to be held at Summercrest to have a feel for the abundant variety of contributions by our past and present citizens, and there are thousands more untold stories, large and small. For this little town along the river, amazing things have been done in 260 years. Let's keep it up!

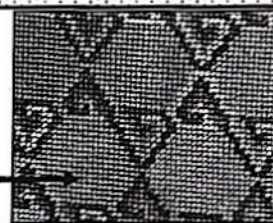


DORR NEEDLEPOINT CHAIR—*Oh, the Stories It Could Tell!* By Pam LaFountain

Recently the Newport Historical Society received an interesting donation; an upholstered chair that belonged to the wife of Guild Woolen Mill owner, George Dorr Sr.. Mrs. Dorr, the former Helen Ruby Neal, was the grandmother of the donor Terry Dorr. Terry related that the needlework on the chair was most likely done by his grandmother. Mrs.

Dorr was well known in the area for her "petit point" and her work was often displayed at hobby shows in the Newport area, at the Eastern States Exhibition in Springfield, Massachusetts and at the Boston League of Arts and Crafts, according to local newspaper accounts. The Dorr's lived on Pine Street in the house now occupied by Woodlawn Care Center. Mrs. Dorr died in 1951. Terry explained that he can remember his grandmother's tapestries that could be as large as a shower curtain. The chair itself was made by the Robert W. Irwin Company. The Irwin company was in business from 1919-1953. Terry believes it was purchased in the 1920s.

According to the tag found under the chair, the item is made of 35% Cotton Felt and 65% Curled Hair. The curled hair in the stuffing is 40% Hog Hair and 60% Horse Hair. The threads of the needlework are most likely either cotton or in Mrs. Dorr's case, made of wool. Whichever is the case, it is pretty certain this chair has seen a lot of Newport history. We thank Terry for his donation.



NEWPORT NH CHRONICLES At Summercrest Assisted Living, By Dean Stetson

Earlier in November, the NHS was asked to collaborate with Newport's Summercrest Senior Living Community on a series of presentations related to Newport's noteworthy history. As a result, a group has formed to put together information on specific topics. The team's mission is to gather and compile from the trove of images and information found in the rich archives of the NHS Museum, presentation material for the series.

The first program of the "Newport NH Chronicles" series was on November 29th, 2023. It was titled: "Sarah Josepha Hale: Much more than the Mother of Thanksgiving". It was produced by Pam LaFountain and was co-narrated by Dean Stetson. To this day, we practice many activities, as common as table settings, that are attributed to Sara. The group was thoroughly engaged and surprised in many of the lesser-known influences by Newport's native daughter.

April Anderson videotaped the event for NCTV. Other members of the Historical Society provided some amazing authentic artifacts and memorabilia for the audience to view. The event was well attended. Please refer to the NCTV schedule for rebroadcast.

Planned programs include:

January 25 - "Parlin Field -Newport's Historic Airport"

March 21 - "Civil War Diaries" (First-hand accounts by local soldiers)

May 23 - "When the News Was on Paper" (Newport's *Whip and Spur*, *Argus Champion* Newspapers)

Fall 2024 - "FIRE: Newport's priceless "Dexter" Fire Pumper"

The "Newport NH Chronicles" programs are from 2:00-3:30 PM and are sponsored and hosted by Summercrest, located at 169 Summer St., Newport, NH. These events are open to the public and free. However, space is limited and reservations are required.

Each program will include a presentation by members of the Newport Historical Society, discussion and social time featuring refreshments and light snacks provided by Executive Chef Kory. Please contact Diane Way at 603-863-8181 to sign up for a space.

Parlin Field - Newport's Historic Airport

Parlin Field is a municipally-owned public use airport and one of the oldest established airfields in New Hampshire.



Bob's Fogg's Curtis JN-4 Canuck, the first plane to land at Corbin Field (now know as Parlin Field) in Newport, NH, Sept. 18, 1920.

Newport's airport is a rarity among our Statewide Aviation Network and recognized as a "gem" by aviators from all over the country. Today, it remains unique and relevant among airports in New Hampshire.

Throughout the years, Parlin Field has served the community with Emergency, Military, Civil, Corporate and Private operations. The Newport Historical Society, with the help of Parlin Field, has teamed up to "land" on topics including the origin of this unique airfield, the storied past of its founders and how it has served the region over the years. We will also take a "Birds Eye View" of Newport and see how our community has changed over the years.

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

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 \$ _____ Building Updates \$ _____

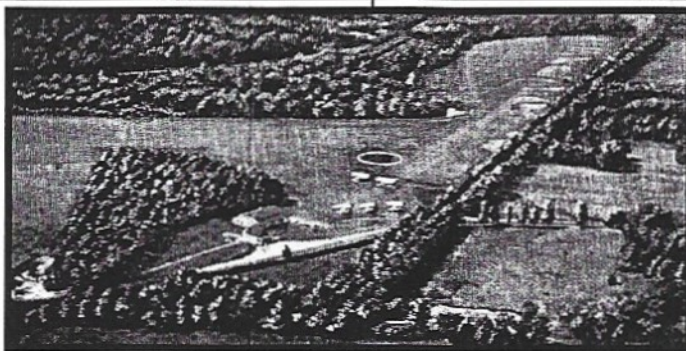
Life Membership (\$250 - each person) _____ (Never have to renew again!)

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

Please mail to: **Newport Historical Society, PO Box 413, Newport, NH 03773**

WHO WAS PARLIN, OF PARLIN FIELD AIRPORT? by April Anderson

Drive north of Newport on Rt. 10, take a left on Airport Road, and you'll run across a quaint little airport most refer to as "Parlin Field" or simply, "Parlin". Its official government name is "The Albert N. Parlin Airfield", acquired by the town of Newport in 1939. Just who was Parlin?



Albert Norton Parlin was born on September 16, 1848, in Everett, Massachusetts. His parents, Ezra and Nancy (Pickering) Parlin, both died at a young age from tuberculosis. Nancy passed first in 1853, when Albert was just 5 years old; Ezra followed 5 years later, when Albert was nearly 9. Fortunately, Albert's maternal grandmother, Sarah Howe (Edmester) Pickering took him in and raised him in the Pickering House where he was born. Albert attended public schools and managed to graduate from Malden High School at age 15. Interestingly, he was the only member of the class of 1864.

Having little money, college wasn't an option, so he headed to Boston in search of employment. He was hired as an errand boy/floor sweeper at a cloak shop where he remained for eight months. His employer was so pleased with Albert's work ethic that he increased his pay wage in the first week. By the time Albert left for a better job, he'd worked his way up to salesman and was earning a healthy wage.



years, retiring in 1905.

Due to many connections made during his Magee years, Albert was able to serve on many boards of varied interests, always holding a high ranking position. Of interest are: President and Treasurer of the Houston Texas Electric Street Railroad; President of the American Glue Company; Chairman of the Finance Committee and member of the Executive Committee of the American Malt Corporation; President of the Chicago and Ohio River Railroad; and Director of the Fourth Atlantic National Bank of Boston.

Locals will not be surprised to learn Albert was a close friend of Austin Corbin Sr. and a longtime member and Trustee of the Blue Mountain Forest Association, also known as Corbin or Corbin's Park. Parlin's 700 acre estate in Croydon, NH was adja-

cent to the park property.

Aside from governing companies and corporations, Albert liked to travel and took special interest in foreign countries, ancient peoples, evolution, and farming. He was a true lover of transportation and first to drive an automobile from Boston to his farm in Croydon. It took from early morning to late night.

In 1871, while working at Magee Furnace Co., Parlin met and married Sarah Battelle Emmons of Massachusetts. They produced one child, a son named Frederick Emmons Parlin. Frederick died at the age of eighteen. In his honor, Albert donated the Pickering Estate, along with additional funding, to the City of Everett to be torn down and a new library built on the property. His greatest gift to that library is a fund, in his son's name, that is still used by the Library Board of Trustees today.

As a shrewd, yet generous, business man, Albert amassed a large fortune. When he died on March 15, 1927, his estate was worth \$2,244,328. By then, his first wife had passed (it's reported she "became insane upon the birth of their son") and he was remarried to his longtime secretary, Susanne C. (Hay) Parlin.

The disposition of Parlin's estate bore evidence of his lifelong devotion to the people and communities he loved. Among bequests, he left \$10,000 to the Croydon Flat Church and \$12,000 to his farm employees. Due to his massive contributions to the city of Everett, MA, Parlin is known as "Everett's Greatest Benefactor". Newport, too, can claim Parlin a "Great Benefactor" as he left funds for Newport's Carrie F. Wright Hospital (no longer in business) for free beds.

Parlin and Austin Corbin Sr. shared interest in not only hunting and fishing, but also railroads and aviation. For years there was a private airstrip located on Corbin's property. Around 1928, a group of interested citizens gathered in Newport to form an airport corporation. A resident offered up a strip of property along the Sugar River, but it was later determined the Austin Corbin field was best suited for airport operations. Soon after, the Austin Corbin Airport, Inc. was established. Not long after, the airport directors changed the airfield's name to The Albert N. Parlin Field, Inc., following a generous donation of \$10,000 from Parlin's widow.

Around 1937, talks began concerning Newport acquiring the airport. A town warrant passed that the town of Newport acquire the airport property, "provided this can be accomplished without expense to the town...", along with several other stipulations. All told, the airport was successfully transferred to the town of Newport in 1939. And there it remains, mostly unchanged, to this day.

Continued on Page 4



THE PASSING OF THE GUARD

By Pam LaFountain

"The Dexter" is getting a new caretaker! As of December 31, 2023, the Newport Firefighters' Association has disbanded. This Association was formed as a local philanthropic organization, where members raised money for local projects, additional firefighters' equipment, scholarships, etc. and participated in community activities like putting up the Christmas lights, and was separate from the actual regular services and funding of firefighting.



The Dexter

Information about the formation of the Newport Firefighters' Association includes the statement, "But the primary function of every firefighter has always and continues to be to report to a fire with the Town of Newport's equipment and utilize their training to extinguish it."

One of this group's duties was to take care of this 1815 hand-drawn, hand-pumped fire apparatus. So, when a couple of members of the Firefighters' Association approached the Newport Historical Society to see if they were willing to take over custodianship of "the Dexter," the Board of Directors voted unanimously to take on the task (but not to respond to Newport fires with it!).

The Dexter came to Newport in 1832 and was the first piece of equipment for the Newport Fire Department. In 1996, the Dexter was placed in the Lake Sunapee Bank lobby and has been on display ever since. The Dexter will remain at its present location, (now the Bar Harbor Bank's lobby). It will now be cleaned and maintained by the Newport Historical Society. The Firefighters' Association also gave a generous donation to the Historical Society to support any maintenance needs. This newsletter will be providing more information in the future about the Dexter, but in the meantime, drop into the Bar Harbor Bank, located on Main Street, and check out this wonderful historic relic.

A GLIMPSE AT THE 1917 WINTER CARNIVAL

Compiled by Ann St. Martin Stout

As we know, the Newport Winter Carnival is the longest consecutively running town winter carnival in the nation, a treasure to our town. Likewise, we have a Museum which houses loads of information about the carnivals and so much more. It was here in the archives of Winter Carnival ephemera (and the historic newspaper online) that I researched the following:

A basketball game, held at the Newport Opera House, was reported by the newspaper. "In the evening, the McElwain AA basketball team lost a hair-raising game to the Sullivan Machine of Claremont team. The opera house was filled with rooters for both sides, a special train from Claremont having brought over some 150 people." The final score after overtime shots was 38-37.

Also, in the sports news of 1917 Winter Carnival, Wilho Maki, winner of the 5 mile ski race, received a live deer as a prize. The winning time was 30 minutes.

The booklet for the "Annual Carnival of Winter Sports" which I found at the Newport Historical Museum, contains the schedule, and numerous ads for businesses, most of which do not even include an address (presumably, everyone already knew!)

Please visit the Museum soon. We have binders for perusing that contain maps, church, club and business information and so very much more.

Parlin Field Article, continued from page 3. By April Anderson

Pilots and other aviation fans are not the only ones who still benefit from Parlin's generous contributions. Generations of students and Naval Aviators are required to memorize his words, engraved on the front outer wall of Everett's Middle School and included in required reading of Naval Officers:

"I would have all young persons taught to respect themselves, their citizenship, the rights of others, and all sacred things; to be healthy, industrious, persevering, provident, courteous, just and honest, neat in person, and in habit, clean in thought and in speech; modest in manner, cheerful in spirit and master of themselves; faithful to every trust, loyal to every duty, magnanimous in judgement, generous in service and sympathetic toward the needy and unfortunate; for those are the most important things in life, and this is not only the way of wisdom, happiness and true success but the way to make the most of themselves and to be of the greatest use in the world."

In today's world, we'd all be better not only to memorize these words, but also to live by them. Thanks for caring, Mr. Parlin. We appreciate you!

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- Bulletin of The Everett Historical Society, *Albert Norton Parlin* by Julia Rich Hogan, Volume 1, Issue 2, November 1977
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- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/173237682/albert-norton-parlin>

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