

# NEWBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



# Newsletter Volume 5, No. 1 Winter, 2008

## History of the Fishersfield Park Site in Newbury

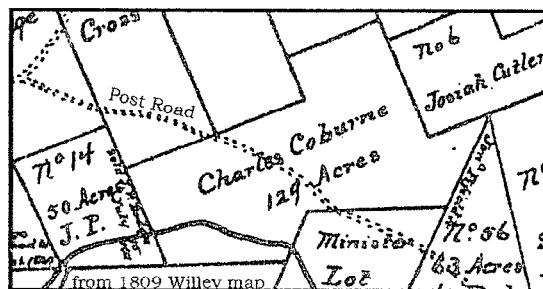
### Early History and First Inhabitant

The 94 acre site of the new Fishersfield Park on Old Post Road in Newbury has a known history that goes back to the late eighteenth century. The initial plan for what is now the town of Newbury was drawn up in 1771 by the earliest settler, Zephaniah Clark. Capt. John Fisher using Clark's plan was successful in winning a grant for the town's charter in 1772. In 1778 the township was incorporated as Fishersfield by an act of the General Assembly in the State of New Hampshire.

The land parcels and settlements Fisher created are defined in Clark's 1775 survey map. In 1809 Allen Willey surveyed the town and published a revision of the Clark map titled "A Plan for the Town of Fishersfield". It is on this map that the distinctive outlines of the Fishersfield Park site first appear. That lot is shown inhabited by Charles Colburn, occupying 129 acres that originally extended over both sides of present day Old Post Road.

Colburn was born in 1762 in Chester NH, the son of Stephen and Mary Colburn. The family moved to Weare in 1765, and in 1779 when Charles was 17 he enlisted for 6 months in Col. Moses Kelly's Regiment. His Revolutionary War service was with Major General Nathaniel Greene in Rhode Island. After the war he returned to his home town and married Abigail Atwood in 1787. At age 29, in 1791, he moved north and purchased a 100 acre lot in southeast Fishersfield. Abigail died in 1796, and he married Anna Bailey in Bradford in 1797. They sold the first Fishersfield property in 1804, and then lived in Bradford, perhaps with Anna's family, for a few years.

On March 26, 1807 Charles Colburn purchased the 129 acre Fishersfield lot on Old Post Road, conveyed by John Peirce "...in my own Right and by virtue of a Power from John Fisher Esq.", for \$654. The property is described matching the 1809



## President's Message

As you can see from the committee reports, the Newbury Historical Society has new energy and vitality. More people are getting interested in the town's history and they want to find out what it is and share it with others. If you want to get involved, the committees reporting here are always ready to include more members. But there are other areas too. For those who like to research and write, there is the History Club which is looking for a new leader. For those with an interest in web site development, a new web site committee is forming. We are eager to get a real presence on the web. For those with an interest in graphics and photo repair, I am looking for help in building the Historical Society photo archive. Also the newsletter committee would like some help.

The Society now has a presence on the town's web site. Look for the "Historical Society" button on the front page. As we build our own web site, we will keep some basic information on these pages such as the minutes from past board meetings and contact information.

Everyone is welcome at board meetings. Call for information.

Bill Weiler 938-2892  
w\_weiler@conknet.com

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Willey survey. John Peirce was a wealthy merchant and principal Proprietor involved in the original development of Fishersfield. As such he initially held half of the township and mortgage deeds for many of the early settlers.

On the same day, Colburn signed a mortgage deed to Peirce for the purchase price payable in two annual installments of \$200 and a third installment of \$254 in 1810. Colburn's mortgage deed was witnessed by John Chandler and Samuel Gunnison. Both deeds were recorded at the country seat in Nashua on November 23, 1807. Charles Colburn was age 45 at the time he bought this land, with a family of 8 children ranging in age from two to eighteen (with 4 more on the way).

### **1834 to 1849**

Fast forward to 1834, when Charles was 72. In that year Sherman's history of Newbury (pg 24) describes a town meeting on April 9 to organize the Religious Toleration Society. The minutes of this meeting list 13 prominent persons in the town that included Charles Colburn, Charles Colburn Jr and Thomas Colburn. The other two were sons of Charles.

On 4 August 1834 Charles Colburn conveyed, for \$1000, his 129 acres to Mark W. and Joshua W. Peirce, executors for John Peirce deceased. In the 1834 deed to the Peirces, Colburn states in describing his land "...It being all the land whereon I live with son Thomas & where I have many years lived tenant at will of said Mark W and Joshua W". The reference to tenancy is confusing given his purchase of the land in 1807.

Charles Colburn died in 1847 in Henniker NH at age 85. His death record in Henniker is listed as "Charles Colburn of Newbury" suggesting he was just visiting there at the time of his death. His son Charles Jr testified for mother's widow pension application in 1848 "...that his father died Friday, May 21, 1847 and was interred the next day". Unfortunately his burial site has never been found in any local area cemetery. Thus it is conceivable he may have been interred somewhere on his farm, however to date no burial remnants have been discovered.

On 15 September 1849 Charles' youngest son Samuel Colburn purchased from Joshua and Daniel Peirce, for \$700, land described as "...being all that part of the Colburn Farm so called lying northerly and easterly of the old road leading from Bradford to Wendell". It's not clear where Charles Sr lived after 1834, but he may have remained on his farm as a tenant, or moved in with other nearby family members to care for him. The land conveyed to Samuel Colburn in 1849 conforms to the 1809 Willey survey map for that part of Charles Colburn's property east of Old Post Road, and closely matches the present boundaries of the Fishersfield Park.

### **1849 to 1871**

The 1858 map of Merrimack County (H. F. Walling Surveys) shows "S. Colburn" identified on the northeast side of Old Post Road at the Colburn farm location. Probate records tell us Samuel kept the Colburn farm until his death on March 11, 1870. In September 1871 his farm was sold at auction for \$1000 to pay debts against his estate. The auction deed conveyed the property to Frederick S. and Samuel Muzzey both of Newbury.

Samuel Colburn was buried in Newbury's Lakeside Cemetery along with his wife Sybil and two children. Samuel's gravestone gives his birth year as 1814. Overall 21 Colburns, all but one born before 1860, are buried at Lakeside (16) and South Newbury (5) cemeteries.

The Fishersfield Park property today has no farm buildings but does contain remains of some historical features of the Colburn farm. Specifically there are substantial remnants of a stone-walled cellar hole, a

stone-walled cow or sheep path, and a stone-walled enclosure (about 200 by 250 feet) thought to have been a large sheep pen. All these remains are clustered in the same vicinity roughly 300 by 500 feet in from Old Post Road and not far from the park access road. In addition, old stone walls mark the farm boundaries for most of the 1.7 mile perimeter. Remnants of a stone rubble wall, over 400 feet in length, can also be seen along the lower part of the Farmstead Trail in the park. That trail also runs alongside or nearby the other features noted above.

### **1871 to 1927**

Ownership of the Colburn farm stayed in the Muzzey family from 1871 to 1927. Samuel Muzzey was an abutting neighbor of Colburn and likely farmed the land, although there is no evidence it was ever occupied by him. After Fred and Samuel Muzzey bought the farm at auction the land was passed through the family to widow Hannah Muzzey and Fred A. Muzzey, who conveyed it to Fred's son Willis Muzzey in 1908. Willis, then of Antrim, Hillsborough County, kept the property until 1927 when he sold it to Shirley Powers of Newbury for \$650.

### **1927 to the Present**

From the Muzzey era to the present the Colburn farm tract changed hands five more times, including the final lease/purchase agreement between Cersosimo Industries and the Town of Newbury in 1998. In all that time the land was left undeveloped and continued to be referred in later deeds as the former land and buildings of Samuel Colburn.

Possibly a Colburn descendant still in the area today might come forward and shed light on their family's history. Several later Colburns bought land near the old farm, southwest of Old Post Road and north of old Rt. 103 now known as Colburn Farm Road. The Merrimack County 1892 Atlas contains a town map of Newbury that shows "Colburn Heirs" at this location off old Rd. 103.

Charles Crickman

### **Town History Subcommittee**

For the past few months, Newbury residents have been meeting to determine if a town history should be undertaken. The meetings have had a cross section of residents ranging from long term residents to those "new to the area." After much discussion, the majority of those attending focused on the importance of oral histories of long-term residents to gather information before their stories disappear.

The consensus of the committee also decided that before we undertake an extensive history of the town, we should do a pictorial history of Newbury for the time frame of 1800 to Newbury's Bicentennial (1978). This would allow time for the collections at Sherman Hall to be cataloged for usage in the future. We expect to bring a proposal to Newbury Historical Society within the next month, asking for Society approval to submit an application to Arcadia, a publisher of regional and local interest books head quartered in Portsmouth, NH. If Arcadia accepts our proposal, they would gather the pictures and information from the committee and publish the book with no "upfront" costs. We would receive royalties from the sale of the book which would be seed money for an extensive history of the Town.

Over 30 residents have shared their thoughts and remembrances and pictures with the committee, THANKS TO Ron Garceau and Bill Weiler for sharing their extensive collections and Many thanks to Bob Morris, Mary Thayer, and Shelly Candidus for keeping this project going forward.

We need help finding old pictures. Please look in your desk drawers, old trunks, boxes etc. to see if you can find some pictures to with share us. Call me to have them copied at your convenience.

Dennis J. Pavlicek

## Historic Date Marker Project

The Historic Date Marker Project is well underway, several homes have been identified and with the owners permission an attractive wooden marker will be placed on their home. The committee's initial goal is to place markers on the first 10 structures, for which the background information has been submitted and authenticated by home owners. Applications are available from committee members.

Researching and authenticating your home's history is not very complicated, it just takes some time. A few suggestions: first know your property parcel's number; then create a list of previous owners and physical changes to the structure. Some of this information can be obtained from our town deed offices. Deeds are a good starting point, beginning with the present owner and work backward. Physical changes to the structure will usually be available from the office who handles building permits. Detailed maps created for the insurance industry also may be helpful the most popular maps are the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

NHS voted at their November meeting to consider all 18th. Century (1700-99) and 19th. Century (1800-1899) homes/structures for this project. This project will be useful in the development of a Newbury town history. Residents wishing to serve on this committee should contact: Richard Cole, [newburyone@wmconnect.com](mailto:newburyone@wmconnect.com); Judy Healey, [gannonhealey@tds.net](mailto:gannonhealey@tds.net); or Diana Morris, [bdmorris5868@verizon.net](mailto:bdmorris5868@verizon.net), telephone 763-5859, or any member of the NHS Board.



Diana Morris

## Collection Rehousing and Cataloging Project

This spring and summer we are embarking on a new and exciting phase of our long-term project to improve how our collection is stored and to gain better access by generating a computer catalog of our holdings. We have solicited a proposal from Museum Collector Resource for a two-phase project and hope to complete the first phase this summer. There will be an article in the March Town Meeting warrant to see if the town will approve \$5,000 as their contribution to the project, since we are holding a large number of old Town records. The remainder of the first phase cost will be approximately \$12,500, some of which will come from the remainder of our collection study grant. Donations for this project would be most welcome. We have a donor who will match all donations one for one. If the Town approves, we will complete the first phase this summer. This consists of badly-needed rehousing of the materials, in acid-free boxes, for example, and generation of an inventory. We hope to follow up next year with the second phase, to generate a computerized catalog which we could make available on our new web site.

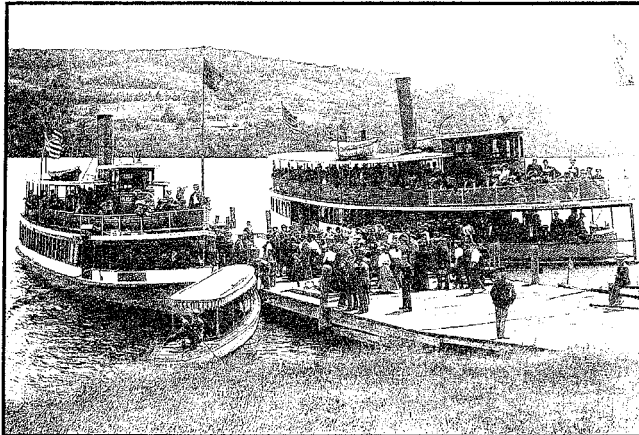
This project builds on earlier contributions by many members, including installation of new shelves in the Sherman Hall vault (Bill Annable and Bill Weiler), major reorganization of the vault collection including moving non-archival materials out of the vault (John Grocott), and some preliminary inventory and catalog work (Margie Weiler and Barbara Steward). We have been guided by the recommendations from our 1996 grant to study our collection.

Margie Weiler

**Hosting Our Summer Guests  
The 1880's through the 1930's**

A History Collaborative Around Lake Sunapee, NH

PALS (Partners Around Lake Sunapee), is a collaborative effort by the New London, Newbury and Sunapee Historical Societies along with The Fells, The Barn Playhouse and The Lake Sunapee Protective Association. The result is a year long series of events, lectures and exhibits highlighting how our summer guests arrived, where they stayed, and what activities they enjoyed while here.



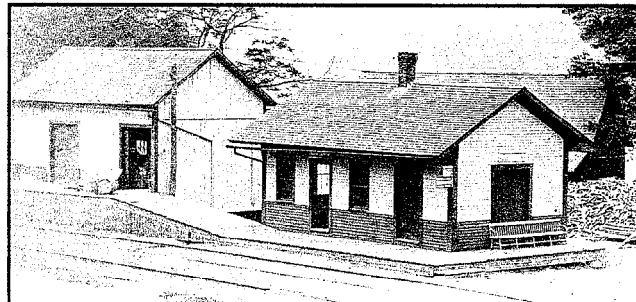
The Newbury Historical Society's exhibit, *Riding the Rails to the Lake*, will feature the Bell Cove Caboose and the Newbury Train Station as a part of the transportation aspect of the era. Visitors will likely feel as if they have taken a jaunt back into time. The antique caboose holds an extensive collection of railroad memorabilia including signal lights and lanterns, bells and whistles, brochures and timetables, a clock, desk and stove. Its contents are reminiscent of the good ole' days when the B & M ran from Concord to Claremont from the 1870's to the 1950's.

The caboose sits on a site that was part of the original railroad line that extended beyond Bradford to Newbury and points west. In 1871 the Newbury Cut was blasted with a revolutionary new steam drill and dynamite. The extension of this railroad brought an outpouring of goods and visitors to the Lake Sunapee region. Long before the automobile and second homes appeared on the scene, summer guests came by train through the now famous Newbury Cut and transferred to steamboats for the trip up the Lake to the various hotels.

The Train Station will also be open to visitors and will offer additional historic pictures of the era and other materials of interest. Come enjoy these exhibits and re-live this exciting time, and be sure to hang onto your copy of the *PALS 2008 Event and Program Guide* as it will serve as a great resource throughout the year.

Our *Riding the Rails to the Lake* exhibit will be open from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm on the following weekend days:  
July 12<sup>th</sup> (Newbury Old Home Day),  
July 13<sup>th</sup>, August 9<sup>th</sup> and August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Additionally, on July 12 the SRK Greenway will lead guided hikes to the Eagle's Nest outlook.





Newbury Historical Society  
P. O. Box 176  
Newbury, NH 03255

#### NHS Board of Directors

Term expires June, 2008:

John Grocott, Dennis Pavlicek & Barbara Steward

Term expires June, 2009:

Deane Geddes, Margie Weiler & William Weiler

Term expires June, 2010:

Alice Lynn, Richard Matte & Robert Morris

#### Dates to Remember

NHS Board will meet at 7 pm in the Town Office Building as follows (public is invited):

February 21, May 1, June 5, August 7, September and November 6.

The Annual Meeting will be held July 20 at 2:00

PALS Exhibit, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm:

July 12 & 13 and August 9 & 10.

#### Not yet a member? You can join today!

Help support the Society and its work in preserving Newbury's history by becoming a member  
Please make your check payable to the Newbury Historical Society and mail to: PO Box 176, Newbury, NH 03255

\$ 5.00 Individual

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ 10.00 Family

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ 25.00 Business

\_\_\_\_\_

\$100.00 Life

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_