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# NEWBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Newsletter Volume 8, No. 3 Late Fall, 2011

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### **Newbury's Notorious Train Wreck**

Three men were killed in the wee hours of the morning of April 12<sup>th</sup> 1922 when an extra freight train plowed into a washout just west of Col. King's estate. The extra freight was not a regularly scheduled train, it was a special train used to carry goods and materials from Concord to Claremont because there were capacity or scheduling problems in the system.

The train left Concord at 10:00 p.m. Tuesday night and was due in Claremont Junction at 1:15 a.m. Wednesday. The accident occurred at 12:41 a.m. Wednesday about three quarters of a mile west of Lake Station, a few feet west of King's Crossing. That crossing was the intersection of the railroad line and the road to Newport. On today's map, it is where the western end of Lakewood Manor Road now intersects with Rt. 103.

The train consisted of ten cars and a caboose with a crew of six. Forward in the cab of the locomotive were the engineer, brakeman, and fireman. In the caboose at the end of the train was another brakeman, a flagman, and the conductor who was in charge of the train.

On the day before the accident, the snow was partially melted and the ground was soft, but the ice was not out of the lake. Around 9:00 p.m. that night there was a cloud-burst storm over Mt. Sunapee that sent a torrent of water down the frozen side of the hill into the saturated soil underneath the railroad tracks and on into the lake.

The washout was hidden from view as the train rounded the curve at King's Crossing. Before anyone could react, the locomotive dropped and slid sideways into the soft earth, coming to a complete stop very quickly. The three coal cars immediately behind crashed into the tender, lifting up its back end and pushing it forward in such a way that it crushed the cab of the locomotive and the men inside. The fourth and fifth cars were boxcars carrying box boards and baled wool. They, like the coal cars, were completely demolished, leaving only twisted metal frames in the midst of splintered wood and wool bales. With the forward cars absorbing most of the energy, the caboose was not damaged and two of the men were only slightly injured.

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### **South Newbury Research Project**

The South Newbury Project is beginning to gain some momentum. Just about a year ago a small group began to meet and discuss what a project might entail to give visibility to this wonderful collection of homes and buildings we have in South Newbury. After several meetings and walking the streets and public places it seemed that a "walking tour" might be the best way we could utilize our resources and provide an informative guide to the village, its past industry, its residents as well as some background history on the Church, Grange Hall, Selectmen's Hall and cemetery.

The process will include research of public records including deeds, tax records, obituaries, cemetery records and oral histories from our town's elders. The group maintains a high degree of sensitivity for the privacy of the current residents.

One of the families of interest is the Fowlers. Two generations operated a workshop and subsequent mill in South Newbury. Some of their handiwork are the settees used today in the Town Office meeting room.

Recently a group of volunteers traveled, twice, to Nashua to obtain an index list of deeds dating back to when the town's name was Fishersfield. The group logged hundreds of book and page entries including the original deed of 27,000 acres granted to John Fisher, the town's founder.

Our deed researchers have also been helpful with other parallel projects including the House Sign project enabling owners to have a sign with the year built (if prior to 1900) on their homes.

Our group is also arranging to tape "Oral Histories" from our folks who have memories of long ago. Some of our town's elders have contacted us to relate stories they recall as well as persons who lived here in the past. Should any of you readers be interested in sharing a story, please contact me (below).

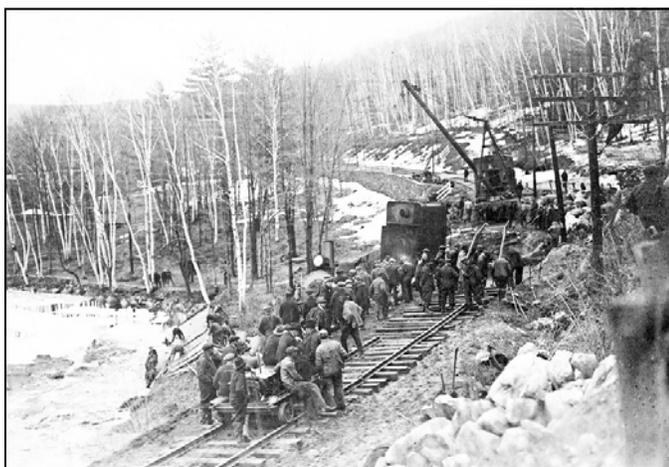
Old photos are welcome too. We have a process of scanning and digitizing old photos for our archives and will be most careful with

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After surveying the wreckage with his men, the conductor walked about a mile up the track to Edgemont station knowing that the station agent often slept in the office. The agent awoke to the voice of the conductor saying: "Wake up Mac, our train is wrecked and some of the men are dead." The agent used the telegraph to notify the Concord office of the accident. He then woke up the Perkins family who ran the general store at Edgemont and told them to get help and some doctors. Soon the section men had the motor car out on the track and heading down to the wreck with the conductor.

Upon returning to the wreck, the men lit some lanterns and went to see if anyone was alive. They found the brakeman sitting in the fireman's seat where he had been killed instantly. Walking around to the other side, they found the engineer on his seat at the throttle where he died a few minutes after the crash, never having regained consciousness. They looked for the fireman but could not find him. Hours later when the tender was lifted out of the wreck, the fireman was found crushed near where he had been shoveling coal into the firebox.

About 4:00 a.m. a relief train arrived from Concord and started cleaning up the tracks and removing debris. Around dawn another train arrived with materials for building a trestle across the hole and repairs to the track. Also an extra passenger train was sent up from Concord to connect with the regular passenger train from Claremont. The mail was



Transferred and the passengers had to walk around the wreck as best they could. That is the way it would be for the rest of the week.

It was not until Sunday that the locomotive was removed and hauled away. Many of the local people walked to the site to see the excitement. Also the afternoon trains were filled with people from farther away who were eager to see the wreckage.

It is truly fortuitous that the extra freight was sent up to Claremont on that fateful night. If it had been the first passenger train of the day, it would have a tragedy of much greater proportions.

Bill Weiiler



*Newbury's Notorious Train Wreck*

*April 12, 1922, 12:41 AM*

*The wreck occurred three quarters of a mile west of Lake Station, which on today's map is where the western end of Lakewood Manor Road now intersects with Route 103.*

## Newbury from the Eagle's Nest

Looking at the photo; across the road from the meeting house and to the right is a disturbed area. This is the site of Matson's Hotel which burned in January 1909. Because the chimney on the meeting house has not been moved to the north wall, this picture was probably taken around 1909-1910. Matson's is now the site of the Veteran's Hall. In between the meeting house and the cemetery is Cilley's Tavern in its original position. Later it was turned almost ninety degrees and turned into a garage. It now houses Outspoken. Across the street is Elwin Lear's house and store. This is now the site of the Mobil gas station. The Lear house has survived and is located at the rear of the gas station property. To the left, on the waterfront stands the railroad station. The freight house is gone, but the station has been restored and returned, as nearly as possible, to its original position. Behind the station is A.A. Durgin's boarding house which was torn down about 1991. John Hay stayed here when he was accumulating land and building The Fells. To the right in the foreground is a house and fancy barn that was Dr. Coggswell's farm. It was demolished at some later unknown time. The houses to the right of the meeting house belonged to V. C. Brockway and his son Charles Brockway. Both were Newbury railroad station agents. V. C. Brockway was involved in some of the repairs and remodeling of the meeting house between 1902 and 1905.



## Eagles Nest continued

The pond not shown but present now behind modern Trading Post and Safety Services buildings is a beaver pond. Some pictures show it and some don't. If the beavers are not there to maintain it, it will breach. At some point, I don't when, beavers were extirpated. They were just coming back when I came here in early 1990s. Bill Weiler

## South Newbury Project continued

our archives and will be most careful with yours. Please share!

We could use some more researchers. If you enjoy doing research and like to be with a terrific group of people or are interested in any of these activities please call Deane Geddes at 763-5104.

## Newbury Historical Society Co-sponsors Speaker Series With The Center Meeting House

### *"Its All About Newbury"*

The Meeting House will present a Saturday Speaker Series in June featuring presenters who are Newbury residents and members of the Adventures in Learning faculty. All programs are scheduled for 9:30 - 10:30 AM and will be held at the Meeting House.

**June 2: *Religions of Newbury* - Rev. Chuck Kennedy.** Chuck will cover both early and later settlers and will include a special piece on the Spiritualist encampment at Blodgett's Landing.

**June 9: *The Skies Over Newbury* - Tom Vannatta.** Tom will highlight the summer skies and events like the Northern Lights and Petsied Meteor Shower.

**June 16: *How Lake Sunapee Shaped Newbury* - June Fichter.** This talk will touch on both Newbury's natural and social history.

**June 23: *The Poets and Writers of Newbury* - Dianalee Velie.** While New London may claim to be Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," it was Newbury, our town, where Wilder and many other artists lived.

**June 30: *The Hay Family In Newbury* - David Bashaw.** Included will be the Hay Family settling in Newbury and their contributions ranging from The Fells to the bell at the Center Meeting House.



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

**NHS Dates/Events  
at the Newbury Town Office**

Board Meetings, 7:00 PM:  
January 12, March 8, May 10, Sept. 13 & Nov. 8.  
*We Remember Newbury*: Spring, 2012, date TBA  
Annual Meeting: Sunday, July 1, 2012, 2:00 PM

**NHS Board of Directors**

Term expires June, 2012:  
Deane Geddes, Margie Weiler and William Weiler  
Term expires June, 2013:  
Gay Sheary, Mary Thayer and one vacancy  
Term expires June, 2014:  
Shelly Candidus, Barbara Steward and Claire Vannatta

**E-mail: [info@newburyhistorical.org](mailto:info@newburyhistorical.org)  
Website: [www.newburyhistorical.org](http://www.newburyhistorical.org)**

**School Regulations 1891**

School regulations in the town of Newbury, New Hampshire

1<sup>st</sup> Scholars may be required to build the fires, keep the room of a suitable temperature, sweep and keep it clean.

2<sup>nd</sup> Scholars shall be answerable for all misconduct during school hours, in going to and returning from school, and for all acts which have a tendency to injure the school and subvert the authority of the teacher.

3<sup>rd</sup> No scholar shall leave the school grounds during school hours without the consent of the teacher.

4<sup>th</sup> Teachers may prescribe such rules for the use of the yard and school house as shall insure their being kept in a neat and proper condition, also in regard to deportment during school hours.

Witness our hands at Newbury this thirteenth day of November 1891

Daniel M. Perkins, Clarence B. Cheney, School Board

Copied from Town Record Book "K", page 32.

**Thank you to our Business Members.**

**Please join us in expressing your appreciation through your support.**

**Davis Cabins  
On Lake Sunapee**  
25 Birch Grove Road  
Newbury, NH 03255

(603) 763-4494  
Open late June to late September

**New Hampshire Historical Society**

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