

# NEWBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Newsletter  
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## THE LADY OF THE LAKE by George Birse

Histories of Lake Sunapee generally credit William Cutler and Timothy Hoskins for introducing the lake's first commercial boat when they operated a horse propelled craft on lake waters in 1854. Information found recently indicates that three other local residents, Ezra Cilley, Moses Cilley and Alva Wilkins recognized the recreational opportunities afforded by the lake some nineteen years earlier and launched two sailboats, one for excursionists and the other for fishermen, in 1835.

The Cilleys owned and operated an inn on the southern shore of Lake Sunapee at Fishersfield (Newbury) Harbor. At that time fishermen were discovering the abundant waters of the lake in increasing numbers and frequented Cilleys' convenient lakeside inn for meals and lodging. Aside from the patronage of fishermen, townsmen, and the steady flow of teamsters traveling through Fishersfield, the Cilleys also benefited from the three stage lines that passed the hostelry's door, providing transportation to those interested in sampling the lake's recreational pursuits.

The lake's growing popularity presented the Cilleys with the opportunity to expand their business in another direction. In association with Wilkins they would provide fishing and excursion sailings on their own boats moored at their waterfront location adjacent to the inn.

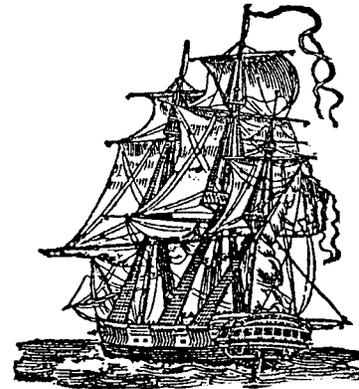
While the Cilleys would continue to tend them Wilkins would captain both sailboats. Wilkins described himself as:

...A son of old Neptune, and flatters himself that his long experience and skill in the management of water craft will give sufficient assurance of safety in navigating the lake in these boats...

The new business venture got underway in the spring of 1835 with the purchase of two new sailboats. The larger craft, christened the "Lady of the Lake", was thirty feet in length with a passenger capacity of fifty and outfitted for sightseeing cruises. The smaller boat, named the "Leader", was built to accommodate fishing parties.

(Continued on page 2)

## LADY OF THE LAKE



### WILKINS & CILLEY,

AT the Head of the Lake, Fishersfield, N. H. respectfully inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of this vicinity and the public at large, that they have purchased two

### S a i l B o a t s ,

For the accommodation of pleasure parties the ensuing season. These boats are completely rigged, in fine style, and are now in operation upon the Lake. The largest is

### THIRTY FEET LONG

Built of the best of materials, and copper fastened, and will accommodate

### 50 PERSONS.

The Leader is a smaller boat, and is calculated more particularly for fishing parties.

MR WILKINS has for many years been a son of old Neptune, and flatters himself that his long experience and skill in the management of water craft, will give a sufficient assurance of SAFETY in navigating the lake in these boats; and his

### PERSONAL ATTENTION

Will in all cases be given.

By giving notice a day or two in advance, these boats will take parties to any part of the Lake or, will be in readiness at Wendell Harbor, or at any other place on the borders of the Lake. No pains or expense has been spared to put these Boats in complete order. They will be constantly kept in the

### Neatest Manner,

And by unremitting attention the subscriber hopes to give personal satisfaction to all who may launch upon the pure waters of the beautiful lake.

ALVA T. WILKINS.

Fishersfield, June, 1835.

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When both boats had been rigged and their trials passed Wilkins formally announced the new enterprise on the pages of the New Hampshire (Newport) Spectator. The paper's editor, Simon Brown, was a longtime fisherman and a frequent visitor to the lake and Cilleys. The announcement appeared in the form of a display advertisement topped with an illustration of a boat under sail. The cut used by Brown showed not a modest sailboat but a vessel of ocean going proportions under full sail, and appeared formidable enough to challenge Cape Horn in heavy seas.

The National (Claremont) Eagle commented on the new venture, chiding the Spectator's depiction of the "Lady of the Lake":

We learn a very fine sailboat - not a full rigged seventy four as the advertisement might lead one to suspect - has been fitted on Brown's favored Sunapee...We'll soon be over there for pickerel, trout, and whatever...

In Concord, the New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette took notice:

Sunapee is one of the most beautiful sheets of water in the world, surrounded by grand and romantic scenery; it abounds with fine trout, and now that the Messrs. Cilley have provided the boats and the experienced hands to sail them, that cool retreat presents no ordinary attraction to the lovers of sport and the admirers of lake and mountain scenery.

With the well wishes of the Eagle and the Patriot, the "Lady of the Lake" and the "Leader" began the recreational season catering to both excursionists and fishermen. Captain Wilkins expressed his willingness to oblige both groups by offering to transport parties to any locality on the lake.

Whether the "Lady of the Lake" and "Leader" flourished or failed has faded into history over the ensuing years. No further mention of the two sailboats has been found in regional newspapers of that era, nor in Lake Sunapee reference material. The Newbury Historical Society solicits any information concerning the little remembered Lady, and expresses its thanks to the Sunapee Historical Society for forwarding a copy of the Spectator advertisement.

#### **Sherman Hall, South Newbury**

Sherman Hall, home to the NHS's collection, will be open to the public by appointment from May through October. For information check our website or contact Bill Weiler: 603-938-2892 or [wmcw@tds.net](mailto:wmcw@tds.net).

#### ***BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!***

The *We Remember Newbury* committee (Shelly Candidus, Chuck Crickman, Frank Perrotta, and Gay and Marty Sheary), have recently met to work out details for the second program in this series designed to present an up-close and personal look at life in Newbury as we – or our relatives – remember it.

The spring program will look at farming as an economic force and life on the farm as recalled by guest speakers and participants from the audience. Our first session proved to be highly informative and entertaining, and we can promise you more of the same. Set aside the date – May 2, 2010 – and place – the Town Office meeting room at 2 p.m.

The *We Remember Newbury* program gives the Historical Society an opportunity to capture individual memories of a way of life that helped shape the character of our town. If you have memories of any topic or incident that you would like to share (see related story by Lucille Davis Baker), please jot them down and send them to us. If you need help or would like to dictate your thoughts, contact Shelly Candidus at 763-8702.

#### **Annual Meeting**

Mark your calendars now for our 2010 Annual Meeting and program, *Wild Goose Waters from Above*, presented by Ron Garceau and Babe Sargent. This fascinating view of the entire shoreline has been assembled from hundreds of photos taken in 1949-50 with a World War II military camera. You will be amazed at the clarity of the photographs. Don't miss this program!

#### **Dates to Remember**

NHS Board meets (public invited) at 7 pm, Jan. 7, March 4 and May 6, 2010  
*We Remember Newbury*, May 2, 2 pm  
Annual Meeting, July 18, 2010, 2 pm

### Lucile Davis Baker *REMEMBERS*

*Lucile Davis Baker is the daughter of Florence (Holmes) and Everett Davis, builders and proprietors of Davis Cabins in Newbury. She has recorded memories of her extraordinary family, life at the cabins and events around the lake, and has provided the Newbury Historical Society with a wonderful chronicle of a vibrant era in Newbury. The following is an excerpt from her memoirs.*

My earliest and only memory of the steamboat era was just one sighting of the *Kearsarge* going by the cottage. Later it was pulled up on the marine railway [at Davis Cabins] by the laundry (originally the Woodsum steamship repair shed). Somehow the boat later tipped slightly on the platform beneath it. I remember that I was still able to climb aboard and walk around inside in spite of the "cant." Later Pop bought it and floated it down to the point and tied it to the big docks which were still functional. Then the *Ascutney* was pulled alongside with only the steel hull remaining at that time. After somebody pulled the plug on the *Kearsarge* and it sank to the bottom, Pop must have arranged for both boats to be cut up for salvage. Pop, being a scrounger, saved things he could use. The mirror over the fireplace in the "big" house came from the *Kearsarge* as did the folding doors going down to the basement from the kitchen. Pop also saved the large nameplates on the *Kearsarge* and Muriel later gave them to the Sunapee Historical Society where they are on exhibit attached to the salvaged wheelhouse.

The story of the retrieved engine from one of the steamboats is also of interest. One day, probably 50 years ago, a Mr. Woodward from Sutton came over here to the cabins and told Pop that when he was a little boy he came here with his Dad and witnessed the burying of a steamboat engine. He asked permission to try and dig it up and Pop quickly agreed. They walked out to the laundry and Mr. Woodward pointed to the spot where he remembered the burial. He said, "Right there," pointing to a sandy spot near the south side of the building toward the road. They dug and there it was! Pop gave it to him, and he took it to Sutton and completely refurbished it. Later it was on display in a showroom in

Sunapee harbor and then put in the museum there. I have heard the story that the engine was dug up in shallow water at the end of the marine railway tracks. That is ridiculous – how could they manage that feat? There is still a sunken spot in the sand to prove Pop's story, after all these years.

One day, when rummaging in the upper storage area of the laundry, I discovered a gem! It was a wooden ticket holder used at Lake Station for buying passage for around the lake to the various steamboat landings. I slid up the rolling panel on the front and inserted a sheet of glass to provide visibility and protection. Many tickets were still in the slots, which were slanted, and were held in place by clay marbles which could easily be stolen. One winter, after the office was broken into, Alison put it away for safe keeping.

The mail boat was another early fixture on the lake. In those days there were summer post offices around the lake at various steamboat landings. Twice a day, around 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. one of the long white motor boats would cut neatly through the water and deliver and pick up mail at the Newbury dock. The sound of the boat cutting through the water was unique and easily recognized every day. The mail boats, owned by Leo Osborne of Sunapee harbor, also took paying passengers on their route around the lake. Mail time at Newbury was always exciting. The postmistress, always the Mom of the Mom and Pop from the general store, would prepare a canvas mail sack with a draw string. Then an employee of the store (early on it was the Lake Sunapee Trading Co. owned by the Brook family) would come out at train time with the bag slung over his shoulder. In his hand he had a metal "Stop" sign with a long metal handle. He stood in the middle of the road with it held high and stopped all traffic as the train came through. The train stopped at Newbury Station and the mailbag was passed to the trainman and one received back. I think this bag was sorted by the postmistress for each of the summer post offices.

(additional excerpts will follow)

## **TAKING MR. HAY'S BODY TO CLEVELAND FOR BURIAL**

The Funeral to be Held on  
Wednesday Morning.

**PRESIDENT STARTS TUESDAY**

The Body of the Late Secretary of  
State to be Taken to the Cleve-  
land Chamber of Commerce.

NEWBURY, N. H., July 2. [1905]—A special train bearing the body of Secretary of State John Hay, who died early yesterday morning at The Fells, his Summer residence, on the shore of Lake Sunapee, left Newbury just before noon to-day for Cleveland, Ohio, where the interment will occur. The funeral car is due in Cleveland about 7 o'clock to-morrow morning.

The funeral party consisted of Hay, the widow; Clarence Hay, the son; Dr. Charles L. Scudder of Boston, who attended Secretary Hay during his last illness; Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Mather of Cleveland, the latter a sister of Mrs. Hay, and S. A. Raymond, a relative of Mrs. Hay.

After a distressing day and night the members of the Hay household were astir early this morning, preparing for the trip. The body of the Secretary, which had been placed in a coffin last night, was brought down stairs and was inclosed in a polished rosewood box, in which, it will repose until the funeral next Wednesday afternoon.

Mrs. Hay and Clarence Hay stood the trying ordeal bravely, although they showed plainly the effects of the strain.

The skies became overcast early and a drenching rain began to fall. The narrow, winding mountain/ road was transformed into a channel of mud and was in a wretched condition when the time arrived for the journey to the railway station.

### **Body Carried In Express Wagon.**

An express wagon was driven from the stable to the front door of the house at about 9:40 o'clock, and the coffin was borne out by the servants and placed in the vehicle. The rosewood box was covered with a rubber blanket and lashed to the wagon, the steepness of the hills making such a precaution necessary.

The body was attended only by the undertaker and Secretary Hay's coachman. Both men

walked the two and one-half miles to the station, the coachman leading the horse, while the undertaker followed behind. The rain fell in torrents as they trudged along for nearly an hour on their way.

Not a person was met along the lonely mountain road. The window shades of the few scattered farmhouses along the route were drawn. At the station, however, nearly all the residents of the little hamlet were assembled when the wagon with the secretary's body came. The persons on the platform stood with heads bared as a tribute of respect.

The special train, consisting of a combination baggage car, the sleeping car Konigsberg, and Funeral Car No. 111 of the Boston and Maine Railroad, was standing on the siding. The wagon was driven to the rear of the funeral car, and several Newbury citizens assisted the undertaker and coachman in transferring the coffin.

At this moment there was a rift in the clouds, and for the first and only time during the day the lofty hills were bathed in sunshine. Less than five minutes later the rain began to fall again.

### **Neighbors Salute Mrs. Hay.**

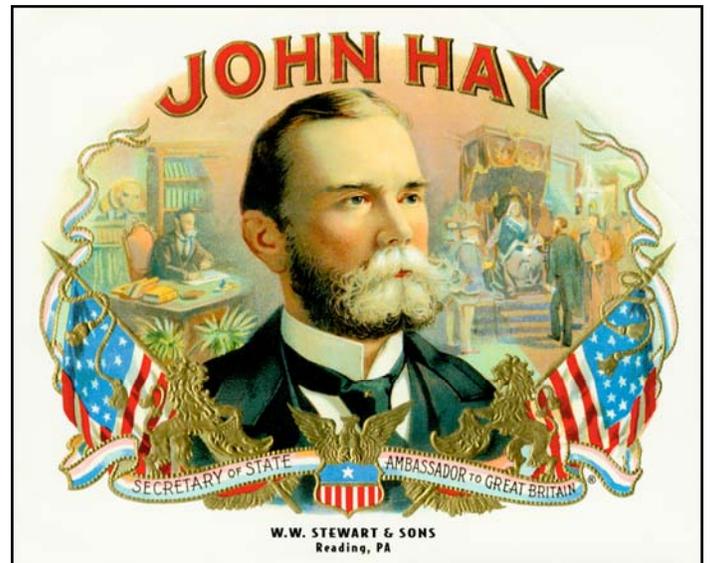
Shortly after 11 o'clock a closed vehicle belonging to the Hay stables was driven to the station. Clarence Hay, Mr. and Mrs. Mather, Mrs. Hay, Dr. Scudder, and Mr. Raymond alighted. Mrs. Hay was gowned in black and was heavily veiled. She walked unaided to the train, the men on the platform lifting their hats as she passed. Entering the sleeping car, she was shown into the stateroom, where she was quickly joined by her son. The other members of the party occupied a portion of the car.

Additional details regarding Secretary Hay's funeral were announced at The Fells to-day. The body will repose, but will not lie in state, in the Chamber of Commerce Building from the time it reaches Cleveland to-morrow until the hour of the funeral on Wednesday. The Hay residence on Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, has been rented for a long time, and Mrs. Hay accepted the invitation of the Chamber of Commerce rather than have the body of her husband remain in a receiving tomb.

The funeral service will be held in the Wade Memorial Chapel on Wednesday, although the exact hour has not yet been determined. The services will be conducted by the Rev. Hiram C. Hayden, pastor of the Old Stone Church, the Presbyterian Church which Mr. Hay attended in Cleveland, and he will be assisted by the Rev. Dr. Teunis Hamlin, pastor of the Church of the Covenant in Washington.

It has not yet been decided when Mrs. Hay and her son will return to Newbury. Until then Mrs. Raymond, a relative of Mrs. Hay, will remain at the Fells, where the two small children of Mrs. Payne Whitney, daughter of Mrs. Hay, now are.

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## MINIATURE 1871 DIARY OF MISS ELLEN FRANCES PERKINS

From the Sherman Hall Archives

born March 21, 1853, Newbury, NH  
died August 13, 1934, Boston, MA

This diary was found in front of the Sutton, NH Town Hall "a number of years ago". It was presented in 1990 to the Sutton Historical Society by William J. and Dorothy Eachus of Sutton. The following are excerpts for the month of January from a transcript by Laurance B. and Jean C. Bennett of Sutton, January, 1991.

Sunday January 1, 1871: Pleasant staid at home

Mon. Jan. 2: Pleasant but some windy Mrs Nea... cald in and stop awhile sewd for mother making shirt

Tue. Jan. 3: Did not note much worthy of remark Pleasant wash Mrs John Muzzy came up and took diner have not heard from father

Written upside down on pages for January 2 and 3: Mount Himalaya is 29,100 ft high

Fri. Jan. 6: Not verry pleasant Cil and her mother came in the morning

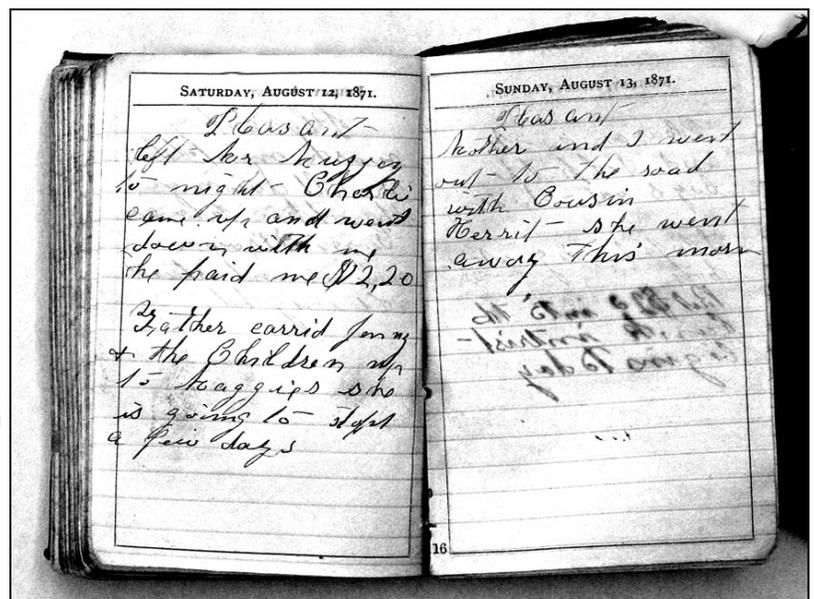
Written upside down on page for Jan. 6: Mont Himalaya is the highest Mont in the world & the next is Mont Everest & the next next is Chousion Gingar

Wed. Jan. 11: Pleasant went down to Mr Muzzey and staid till after noon Mother spund me yarn for a pair of white stockings went up on the hill and spent the day came home at night

Sun. Jan. 15: Rain and slet Charly went down to the vilige to get the male got a letter from father

Sun. Jan. 29: Not verry pleasant Wrote a letter to Mrs Lawrence and carred it to the ofice and when I got back Greeley came and wanted me to go over thare and so I went over

Mon. Jan. 30: Warm and pleasant wash Mrs Shargent was hear and help me Greeley carred her home tonight





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

**NEWBURY**

by  
Shelly Candidus  
with the Newbury Historical Society

Copies of this very popular book are available for purchase from the Town Clerk, at the Library or from our website ([www.newburyhistorical.org](http://www.newburyhistorical.org)). Photos, scanned by Bill Weiler with captions by Shelly Candidus bring alive the history of Newbury from the earliest days to 1978.

**NHS Board of Directors**

Term expires June, 2010:

Alice Lynn, Robert Morris & Mary Thayer

Term expires June, 2011:

Shelly Candidus, Dennis Pavlicek & Barbara Steward

Term expires June, 2012:

Deane Geddes, Margie Weiler & William Weiler

**E-mail: [info@newburyhistorical.org](mailto:info@newburyhistorical.org)**

**Website: [www.newburyhistorical.org](http://www.newburyhistorical.org)**

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