New Castle Poetry:
Volume 2
New Millennium, After 2000

Jim Cerny
New Castle Historical Society
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Introduction.

Much of this poetry is inspired by the millennial anniversaries of two historical events:
(1) The December 14-15, 1774, Gunpowder Raid on Fort William and Mary in New Castle.
(2) Building the Walbach Tower in summer 1814 as a defense in the War of 1812 in New Castle.

There is no attempt to judge the style or content of the poetry. Except as noted, none of these has been formally published, though sometimes read in public or circulated in email. The text is taken from Microsoft Word files when available, otherwise by copying and pasting PDF pages.

The poets and their poems are listed in order as:

Elaine Nollet.
Michael J. Geanoulis, Sr.
Joan Bigwood.
Jim Cerny.
Portsmouth friends

Elaine

Michael

Joan

Jim

Elaine Nollet.

Elaine is a retired teacher who lives in New Castle and is an active supporter of town history and history projects.

New Castle's Message from Paul Revere.

Listen my children and you shall hear
New Castle's message from Paul Revere.
On the 13th of December in seventy-four
Paul Revere knocked on Portsmouth's door.
On a cold and snowy 4pm day
His horse ride to Portsmouth was his way
To tell us all of a British plot
Would the Patriot "Cutt's" give it a thought?
It was very late by the Church's clock,
Revere saw a herd of flock....
And sounds of birds among the trees.
He felt the cold breath of a late day breeze.
A hard 60 miles rode Paul Revere,
To bring alarm and warning, not fear.
Will the leaders stop and listen to hear
The important message from Paul Revere?
"Yes, said Cutts, beat the drum, go to King's Fort!
Let's take the Castle at New Castle's Port!"
That Castle held arms, munitions, supplies,
British artillery of every size.
They stored gunpowder in that Fort.
The King of England wanted the Port.

So on December 14th, 1774, the Friend's of Liberty,
With John Langdon, Tom Pickering marched to be free.
Sounds of fifes and drums to Fort William and Mary,
On gundalows and boats, they didn't tarry.
Batson, Langmead and White near at hand
Those Liberty men took a strong stand.
They took Revere's message of peril and need
To take that fort, " A Freedom Creed".!!
The signal was given to storm and go!
Commander Cockran was a brave foe.
But Langdon's raid put the fort in place
For Patriot soldiers quickly to face
The 100 barrels of gunpowder, theirs to be
Back to their boats and out to sea.
They left them one barrel and rowed to shore
Each clasping a strong but weathered oar.
Some barrels to Exeter into the night,
Some barrels to Dover, hidden from sight.
One year later in seventy-five
Hardly a man is now alive
But You must remember Paul Revere
Who rode horse in Boston that famous year.
He gallantly rode and spread the alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm.
And people at midnight in Boston did hear
The Famous and again...message of Paul Revere.

Michael J. Geanoulis, Sr.

Mike is a retired electronics technician, living in New Castle. Mike has self-published three books, most recently on the 1774 gunpowder raid on Fort William and Mary.

SHOTS NOT HEARD ROUND THE WORLD

Listen my children, and be aware,
The sins of King George were everywhere.
He sought to enslave and tax beyond reason,
To seize powder and arms in a snow-driven season.
But the spirit of patriots was all that George wrought.
For it's true, they then knew, a war must be fought.

It mattered not, to Liberty's Sons and Paul Revere,
That problems could rise and prove quite severe.
That ye olde Portsmouth and New Castle's fort,
Were three score miles distant from ye Boston port.
And they but least cared, that travel on horse,
In the snows of December, was risky of course.

Most vital it was, if freedom be got,
New Hampshire be told, about the King's plot.
They should if they could, preempt the King's dash,
And seize for their own, that New Castle stash.

Not long after the arrival of Paul,
With his call for all to rise and stand tall,
Drummers drummed and runners ran,
To spread the news of his honorable plan.

From Kittery and Rye, from Dover and Brentwood,
By the hundreds they came, to help where they could.
They schemed and contrived to befuddle the Master,
Who sought to control those barrels of powder.
To ensure that instead, they'd be able to fight,
The upcoming war they thought proper and right.

So too, they knew, with gunpowder needed,
And knowing King George will likely advance,
To Fort William and Mary, they quickly proceeded.

Their future success they would not leave to chance.

It was freezing and snowing, that day in December,
When three hundred and more, rose as a member.
At first, they began with a subtle demand,
But the fort's captain rejected the plan,
Firing braces of balls as his deadly rejoinder.

At that signal they came, like bees in a swarm,
Some wading ashore in waters not warm,
To face cannon and musket as possible fodder,
But since no one was hurt, 'twas trivial bother.

That all escaped death, seemed like a clue,
Divine intervention came out of the blue.
To be candid and honest and perfectly frank,
Cannons and muskets fired at them point blank.
But the creator of lights was supportive, they said,
When the Crown was unable to paint the ground red.

Return fire came not from the rebels who saw,
Brute force would suffice though substantially raw.
They demanded and failed to get keys to the store,
But access was gained with the leverage they bore.

One hundred barrels of gunpowder they won,
With more arms next day for another ton.
From two days of raids at His Majesty's fort,
Their quest for freedom had much more support.
This initial assault on the much-hated Crown,
Gave birth to America, a place of renown.

And so it is, we're proud to remember,
And ever be glad to repeat this report,
That on two snowy days of '74 December,
The people had taken His Majesty's fort.

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Joan Bigwood.

Joan describes herself on Facebook as a playwright, novelist, motivational speaker, and coach.
Located in Durham, NH.

The Day-long Ride of Paul Revere.

2024, published online. After Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Listen, my children and you shall hear
Of the day-long ride of Paul Revere,
December thirteenth in ‘Seventy-Four,
Not ‘Seventy-Five: several months before,
With news that British warships drew near.

King George foresaw an emergency
As colonists, with increasing ardor,
Fed his fear of insurgency
From Boston on up to Portsmouth Harbor
Civic distrust spread like chokecherry;
Rage in the colonies grew by the hour
Exposing unduly Fort William and Mary
Stocked with a surplus of firepower,
And thus at greater risk of a raid.

Just guess how many provincial soldiers
Guarded the cannons and muskets and kegs,
Including the dutiful Captain Cochran,
Six men stood watch on twelve trembling legs.

Now was the chance to challenge the fort
The Boston Committee came up with a task
To take orders to bring the British up short
There was, in Boston, but one man to ask
None braver, none fleeter no one with less fear
Than the silversmith’s son, name of Paul Revere.

Sixty-six miles he covered that day
Freezing and urging his hard-charging steed
Galloping miles with no time to delay
To perform his patriotic deed
Langdon and Cutts met him past four
General John Sullivan also was sent
To Portsmouth to plan their act of war
With the help of a man of African descent.

While Cochran was warily manning the fort;
From up in the ramparts, he studied Great Isle
And eyed the horizon, when after a while

A sea of transgressors sailed in from the port
Hundreds of men, armed and bloodthirsty
Rushed the old fort; *Damn them all*, cursed he.
Through the narrowest chink in the fort's wooden wall,
He couldn't see any way out, none at all
Shots were then fired – *Don't come any closer!*
They couldn't reveal how few they were, no sir,
For country and King they'd sacrifice all.

Four hundred townspeople breeched the stand!
Four hundred townspeople swarmed the place!
They gathered all the munitions on hand
Back to their gundalows, hauling apace
While Captain Cochran and his five men
Were forced to surrender, there and then
As out of the fort armaments flew
With little the British soldiers could do!*

After the colonists left with their haul
It felt like the fort had no further to fall
Such thinking was wishful, for miles away
A bold Wentworth Cheswill had answered the call
Militia was gathered to launch the next day!

Day Two after dark steered a new gundalow
General John Sullivan led the assault
Invading the fort in a second blow
Handing the British another insult
Returned on the tide, led on by the moon
The men all sat barefoot and frozen
Their marching boots would serve them soon
Aboard, they'd kick off an explosion.

And so, dear children, should ever you hear
Of Longfellow's *Midnight Ride*
Remember the hours that Paul Revere
Had to spend on his steed astride,
This was no mere reverse commute
Sixty-six miles, a flag torn down
Was hardly a mere property dispute
Months before the Battle of Lexington.
The events of Day Two and the day before
And the long ride the day before then
Can only be seen as the first act of war
Of the American Revolution.

Jim Cerny.

Jim is retired in New Castle, spending much time with digital photography and historical research, writing extensively for the magazines *Rye Reflections* and *New Castle Islander*. Jim's poetry talents are imitative rather than creative, as these examples show. They mostly date from our 200th anniverary, in 2014, of Walbach Tower from the War of 1812.

Walbach Haiku.

Describing Walbach Tower, built quickly
in summer of 1814 as a martello design.

Perfectly round,
But very bad mortar.
A ruin.

Walbach Limerick.

About Col. John Walbach, commander of
Fort Constitution from 1806 to 1821.

There once was a man from Alsace,
Who wore uniforms fitted with brass.
He built a round tower,
To make the Brits cower,
And to shove the war up their a**!

The Song of Walbach.

Inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's
"Song of Hiawatha," a much abridged version,
as his poem runs to 5,314 lines
rev. 2015-01-21

Should you ask me whence this story,
Whence this lore and truth
With the tale of great battles
With the hardy fisher-folk

I should answer, I should tell you,
By the rocky crags and seaweed,
By the silent Sandy Beach.

By the shores of the Pis-ca-taq-ua,
By the shining Gulf of Maine,
Tall beside it rose the lighthouse,
Rose the beacon of the light,
Rose the white and slender guide.

Bright before it beat the waves,
Beat the clear and sunny waves,
Beat the shining Big-Sea-Water.

There was peace along the shore,
Unmolested sailed the ships,
All around the village happy,
Waved the soft and sunny breezes.

Then the war came and the British,
Sailing war ships over the water,

Colonel Walbach called to villagers,
To gather at night to build a tower,
Round and high above the sea,
Cannons pointed at the waters,
Ready to fire upon the British,
Ready to drive them from the shore,
Stood the tower of Colonel Walbach.

[... forward in time ...]

Came the call to serve in Boston,
Thus departed Colonel Walbach,
In the glory of the sunset
In the purple mists of evening,
Riding o'er the Big Sea Water.

Ain't Dere No More.

rev. 2018-10-14

This is a New Castle rap song, recognizing the frequency of tear down of houses to create building lots. The inspiration is a YouTube video of Benny Grunch and the Bunch, singing about New Orleans businesses replaced by hotels over the years.

The average house is a megabuck,
So you are welcome here if you've had good luck!

The Fred White house—ain't dere no more.
The Betty Priestley house—ain't dere no more.
The Gene Morrill house—ain't dere no more.
The Joan Dwyer house—ain't dere no more.

Building lots, building lots,
More are on the way.
Lotsa bucks, lotsa bucks,
And people gonna pay.

The McDonough house—ain't dere no more.
The Rita Brothwell house—ain't dere no more.
The Peg MacDonald house—ain't dere no more.
The Millie Bruce house—ain't dere no more.

Building lots, building lots,
More are on the way.
Lotsa bucks, lotsa bucks,
And people gonna pay.

The Janet Macomber house—ain't dere no more.
The Rardy Amazeen house—ain't dere no more.
The Joe Sawtelle house—ain't dere no more.
The Donald Moore house—ain't dere no more.

Building lots, building lots,
More are on the way.
Lotsa bucks, lotsa bucks,
And people gonna pay.

The Varrell house—ain't dere no more.
The Stringham house—ain't dere no more.
The Andres Borden house—ain't dere no more.
The Doc Quinn house—aint't dere no more.

Building lots, building lots,
More are on the way.
Lotsa bucks, lotsa bucks,
And people gonna pay.

The Sonny Holt house—ain't dere no more.
The Poucher house—ain't dere no more.
The Hugh Clark house—ain't dere no more.
The Bill Drew house—ain't dere no more.

The average house is a megabuck,
So you are welcome here if you've had good luck!

Friends in Portsmouth.

Several friends in Portsmouth have produced playful doggerel about New Castle. They've chosen to remain unidentified.

By the Salt Air.

from Anonymous 1.

New Castle, New Castle, by the salt air
So many people with money to spare
Second house? Third? A pied-a-terre?
No inch is sacred--they've got to be there!

But there is one problem
With this paradise
A problem that's caused
By warm glacier ice
New Castle, New Castle, the rich folks'll flee
Who'll buy a house when it's under the sea?

Torn Down.

from Anonymous 2.

Roses are red,
Dog poop is brown,
Oh my God,
Another house is torn down.

The Common.

from Anonymous 3.

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
I go to the Common,
To enjoy the view.

Sources.

For historical context of people and events, see the bibliography in Volume 1 of New Castle Poetry.

Ineluctable Modality Press
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Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane.

- James Joyce, ***Ulysses***, at start of the Proteus chapter.

Essay No. 1.
New Castle Motifs: Piscataqua Street from Atkinson to Walbach. April 2023.

Essay No. 2.
Remembering David Borden in Photographs. June 2023.

Essay No. 3.
Analysis of a Postcard: Third New Castle Bridge ca. 1904. August 2023.

Essay No. 4
Fall Wildflower Reflections. September 2023.

Essay No. 5
New Castle Poetry: Volume 1 Traditional. May 2025.

Essay No. 6
New Castle Poetry: Volume 2 New Millennium, After 2000. May 2025.