



New Castle Historical Society

The mission of the New Castle Historical Society is to ensure the preservation of and stimulate interest in the heritage of the Town



ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE
Tuesday, October 21, 2014
7:00 p.m.

Please join us for our 2014 Annual Meeting, Tuesday evening, October 21, at 7:00 p.m. We will review this year's events and accomplishments and highlight upcoming programs.

The Annual Meeting will be followed by a presentation entitled "Growing up in New Castle," stories from a few local "70-somethings" about their admitted youthful adventures. It promises to be a most entertaining evening!



Children of the New Castle Elementary School: 1940's

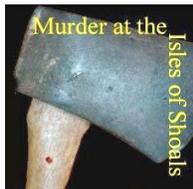
The New Castle Historical Society invites you to join us to celebrate the

200th Anniversary of **Walbach Tower**



Sunday, September 28, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.
Ocean Side Pavilion
at U.S. Coast Guard Station
25 Wentworth Road, New Castle, N.H.

*D*edication of
Walbach Tower Historic Marker



Mystery on the Isles of Shoals

J. Dennis Robinson on September 16, 7:00 pm, "**Closing the Case on the Smuttynose Ax Murder of 1875.**" Yellow journalists, modern historic fiction and armchair detectives have offered many theories on the "March, 1873" murder at the Isles of Shoals. Those who prefer the facts come and hear what Dennis Robinson had to say on the matter, and in his words, "for the last time."

SEE THIS NEWSLETTER ... IN COLOR ... ON OUR WEBSITE

New Castle Historical Society, 120 Main Street, P.O. Box 89, New Castle, NH, 03854-0089
Phone: 603-436-4440, Email: oldgreatisland@gmail.com , www.newcastlenhhistoricalsociety.org



New Castle Historical Society
Board of Directors

P.O. Box 89
120 Main Street
New Castle, NH, 03854-0089

Officers

President: Nancy Borden
Vice President: Joan Hammond
Secretary: Irene Bush
Treasurer: Jim Cerny

Board Members

Pam Cullen, Bill Drew,
Bill Hall, Joan Lockhart,
Jerry Marvin, Nancy McArdle,
Ken McDonald, Barbara Moore,
Elaine Nollet, Jane Sweeney,

Kathy Richards

BJ Riordan, Andy White

Ex Officio

Phyllis Crosby,

Deb Schulte-Town Historian
Ruth Lanham, Rodney Rowland

Newsletter Co-Editors:

Nancy Borden and Jane Sweeney

Publisher: Bill Drew

Photos: Jim Cerny and Bill Drew

Hours of Operation

May – September
Wednesday, Saturday

1:00 -3:00 pm.

October - April

Saturday: 1:00 – 3:00 pm.

(above hours subject to change)



Town Seal - 1693



JIM CERNY

Newly appointed Town Historian, Jim Cerny walks the streets of New Castle 365 days a year. As a photographer he likes to see the town in every light. His investigative skills have yielded articles in *Rye Reflections*, our New Castle Historical Society and this past year, *The Islander* magazine.

He is currently working on projects in which history is being made; The Wentworth Bridge Project, the Town Hall Project and many others. In his many emails titled "Jimmygrams," sent to other board members, he presents a diversity of historical information. At the New Castle Historical Society, Jim's work and knowledge is invaluable and we treasure his time, talent, wisdom. THANK YOU JIM.

A collection of Jim's photograph skills, *Rye Reflections* Covers: October 2007-September, 2010, found HERE:

<http://tinyurl.com/mnjrlwq>. A Resume for *Rye Reflections*, by Jim, can be found HERE: <http://tinyurl.com/lp9cs56>

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

RETREAT: The board began the year in February with a daylong retreat at the "Island Club of New Castle" on Goat Island. The board reviewed the last year and planned programs and special events for the future.

PROGRAMS: 2014 was a successful year with a myriad of programs that brought record crowds of both young and old to the Museum.

In **April** Maude Trefthen School students opened the museum's season with four presentations of "Pourquoi Tales." Colorful scenery, created by the children, framed each presentation. They finished with "The Legend of Walbach Tower" which served as an introduction to our season of celebrating The Walbach Tower. (see last page)



In **mid April** Author Jeff Bolster engaged the audience with information how overfishing through the centuries is depleting our seas of fish. His talk was based on his newly released book *The Mortal Sea: Fishing in the Atlantic in the Age of Sail*"

In **May** board members Jim Cerny and Kathy Richards brought to life the history of Walbach Tower and the man behind the legend, Colonel John B. Walbach. It was well researched and the presentation fascinated an attentive audience.

In **July** New Castle Historical Society joined the 4th of July parade.



In **July** Author Sharon Hanley Disher discussed her book *First Class*. She grew up in New Castle and went on to graduate from the United States Naval Academy in the first class to graduate women. She gave a powerful talk about this experience.



In **August**, the **New Castle Fire Department** graciously hosted a program for New Castle residents. Three former chiefs, Reggie White House, Dick White, Carl Roediger and the current Chief David Blanding, described how the Fire department has developed during the last half century with many interesting stories and anecdotes. Our hats are off to our professional and courageous group of firemen.



200th Anniversary of Walbach Tower

This year, the New Castle Historical Society is celebrating Colonel Walbach and the 200th anniversary of his tower, The Walbach Tower. The tower is one of New Castle's more interesting but nearly forgotten fortifications. Jean Baptiste de Barth, Baron of Walbach, was born in France. He escaped the terrors of the French Revolution via Haiti and served in the newly formed Continental Army under Alexander Hamilton. He was posted to Fort Constitution in New Castle in 1806.

During the War of 1812, British warships attacked Eastport, Maine and threatened the whole coast. In 1814, fearing attack at the harbor entrance, Colonel Walbach mobilized his small militia and the men and women of the Town of New Castle to build a fortification in the form of a round Martello Tower, 58 feet in diameter. The tower was hurriedly built – the myth tells us it was built in one night – on Jordan's Rock to defend Fort Constitution from the British warships.



Unfortunately the tower was built with mortar made of local sand from the nearby beach called "dead sand," rounded and salty which contributed to its early deterioration. Battery Farnsworth, built in 1899, also impinged on the tower. It was further destroyed by the U.S. Army during World War II. Today, it remains as a ruin atop Jordan Rock. It has been all but forgotten.

On the other hand, Walbach's urbanity, charm and the fine leadership, as well as the splendid marching band he created here in New Castle, were remarked upon for generations. New Castle Historical Society member, Bobbie Sweet, spearheaded the movement to celebrate Walbach Tower and to make it accessible to the public. She has commissioned a descriptive historic marker (shown below) to be posted below the Tower on Sullivan Lane. The marker illustrates the story of Colonel John Walbach, the Tower and its role in the war of 1812.

We will celebrate and dedicate the Tower and it's marker on **September 28 at 2:00 p.m. at the Oceanside Pavilion** at the Coast Guard Station. Please join us!

Unfortunatly the tower was built with mortar made of local sand from the nearby beach called "dead sand," rounded and salty which contributed to its early deterioration. Battery Farnsworth, built in 1899, also impinged on the tower. It was further destroyed by the U.S. Army during World War II. Today, it remains as a ruin atop Jordan Rock. It has been all but forgotten.

On the other hand, Walbach's urbanity, charm and the fine leadership, as well as the splendid marching band he created here in New Castle, were remarked upon for generations. New Castle Historical Society member, Bobbie Sweet, spearheaded the movement to celebrate Walbach Tower and to make it accessible to the public. She has commissioned a descriptive historic marker (shown below) to be posted below the Tower on Sullivan Lane. The marker illustrates the story of Colonel John Walbach, the Tower and its role in the war of 1812.

WALBACH TOWER

From a Colonial town through World War II to the present day, this tower has played a strategic role in the defense of our coastline.

Walbach Tower, built in 1814 during the War of 1812, was one of the first towers constructed for coastal defense in the state of Maine. The fortification was made in a matter of weeks.

During the war of 1812, the great Fort Constitution protected Portsmouth Harbor from a British naval attack. However, in 1814, British warships entered Eastern Maine and threatened the whole coast. Fearing attack, Colonel Walbach mobilized his small militia and the women and children of the town to build a fortification in the form of a Martello Tower. It was built in one night in a remarkably short time. The British never did attack.

Unfortunately the tower was built with mortar made of local sand from the nearby beach called "dead sand," rounded and salty which contributed to its early deterioration. Battery Farnsworth, built in 1899, also impinged on the tower, and it was further destroyed by the U.S. Army during World War II.

An aerial photograph of Walbach Tower showing its location on Jordan's Rock, a small island in the harbor entrance to New Castle, Maine.

Walbach Tower

JEAN BAPTISTE DE BARTH, BARON OF WALBACH

His father was a French nobleman and he was born in France in 1754. He was educated in France and served in the French Army. He was a member of the French nobility and was a close friend of Alexander Hamilton. He was a member of the French nobility and was a close friend of Alexander Hamilton. He was a member of the French nobility and was a close friend of Alexander Hamilton.

His father was a French nobleman and he was born in France in 1754. He was educated in France and served in the French Army. He was a member of the French nobility and was a close friend of Alexander Hamilton. He was a member of the French nobility and was a close friend of Alexander Hamilton.

THE ORIGIN OF MARTELLO TOWERS

A round tower built at Martello (Mediterranean) Point in Corsica inspired the design of these circular fortresses. The Corsicans had constructed towers along their coast during the 1700s to help ward off North African pirates. The towers were square, only four to five feet high, with thick stone walls. They were built on rocky terrain. The towers were built on rocky terrain. The towers were built on rocky terrain.

THE WAR OF 1812

The war of 1812 was fought between the United States and Great Britain. It was a conflict over territorial disputes and trade rights. The war was fought between the United States and Great Britain. It was a conflict over territorial disputes and trade rights.

WALBACH TOWER CONSTRUCTION FACT SHEET

- Circular design - Martello type
- Built summer 1814
- 58 foot diameter
- 11-16 feet high - varying with terrain
- Central pillar to support roof
- Three gun casemates - 4 lb. guns
- Naval cannon on roof - 32 lb. gun
- Powder magazine
- 80,000 - 70,000 bricks
- Local stone quarries
- Flat, tiled roof (screepin)



KIDS RE-ENACT HISTORY

To open the New Castle Historical Society’s celebration of the Walbach Tower, third and fourth grade students of Maude H. Trefethen School presented A Night of Readers Theater.



“The Legend of Walbach Tower,” a script adapted from a poem of the same name published in 1883 by George Houghton, brought history alive. It portrayed the legendary story of the townsfolk of New Castle fending off an impending attack by three British warships during the War of 1812. As the legend goes, Walbach called the town “to arms” and under his

leadership, and with the help of a supernatural power built the tower overnight. As the new day dawned, a warning shot was fired, the British warships turned around, set sail and the town was spared. Mr. Purcell’s class presented this legend with all the drama, urgency and imagination the story calls for.



“The Knights of Pythias” Chair.

The *Knights of Pythias* was an active fraternal order in New Castle in the first decades of the twentieth century. They built what is now the Town Hall and sold it to the Town in 1927. We recently restored and reupholstered two original Pythias ceremonial chairs.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES: Our notable building is now beginning to show her age. It continues to require repairs. The back wall and door showed major signs of rot. The back wall has been repaired and the door replaced. The furnace prematurely failed and a new energy efficient model was installed under warrantee. The front porch and its columns are fast giving out and will be entirely rebuilt this fall. We are focused in maintaining the structure and appearance of the building far into the future.

WEBSITE: Through our website, you can now **donate**, **join**, or **renew** your membership. www.newcastlenhhistoricalsociety.org.

New Castle Historical Society, 120 Main Street, P.O. Box 89, New Castle, NH, 03854-0089
Phone: 603-436-4440. Email: oldgreatisland@gmail.com, www.newcastlenhhistoricalsociety.org