

“Glass Negatives Provide a Window Into the Past”

Speaker: David Woodbury, New Boston Historical Society

Thursday, May 9, 2019 7:00 pm at the New Boston Community Church

David tells the story of a treasure trove of glass negatives containing photos of New Boston circa 1890-1900.



DSC02794

Fire prevention had to be on everyone’s mind in the 90s, just after the great fire. Here are a bunch of New Boston lads with their miniature pumper Pin Ball, named after a local hill. They are posing in front of the new engine house. In the years since this photo, the building remains, but is a bit reconfigured. The doors are now windows and north façade has been extended to permit housing more modern fire engines. This building now houses the New Boston Recreation Department. Pin Ball and its full sized partner live at the New Boston Historical Society. The Baptist Church horse sheds in the background, in spite of being so close to the fire did not burn and lasted many years.



DSC02802 Whipple Stock Farm April 1890

The grandiose Valley View Farm was some time in the future in this April 1890 view. The barns and outbuildings were modest and typical of the time and place. See DSC02898 to realize what a year and generous funding can do.



DSC02812 Whipple Free Library June 1890

This is the brand new Whipple Free Library in the space adjacent the Solomon Atwood's store (now Dodge's). Lighting the oil chandelier on dark days and evenings had to be quite an operation.



DSC02814 School 11 Annie Atwood 1890

Annie Atwood, aged 17 had just received her teaching certificate in April. This photo is dated in June of 1890. Annie is barely older than her pupils. The #11 school was at the junction of what is now Rt. 136 and Tucker Mill Rd. It was discontinued in 1908, long after this photo was taken and Annie had left teaching to help run her father's store.



DSC02821 HW Carter Team 2 June 1890



DSC02823 Fireplace Whipple Lib July 1890

Sadly this plate is in poor condition, but it shows the fireplace and related structure still under sheet rock in the rental space adjacent to Dodge's store.



DSC02827 The Whipple Creamery, still very much the same today. The photo was taken from the area behind the Apple Barn.



DSC02833 Harold Hyde and his Cart II Aug 1 1890 Myrtle Atwood took many portraits of children. Boys were typically dressed like girls until about when they were potty trained; then they graduated to short trousers and long stockings. Putting little boys in skirts facilitated changing diapers.



DSC02850 Coon hunting in the 1890s. We have the coon, of course, with lanterns and a dog. Also a double action revolver. We had a hard time with the device slung across the chest of the man on the left. We finally identified it as a climbing iron used by linemen to climb telephone poles. Since coon hunting involved climbing trees after a treed coon, such a device would be very helpful.



DSC02876 Mr. King's Pie Picture Nov 27 1890

November 27, 1890 was Thanksgiving. Here the Atwood daughters are indulging in an ancient tradition of the pie breakfast on Thanksgiving morning. The pie looks like pumpkin or squash. We don't know who Mr. King was or why the Myrtie Atwood titled this plate as she did.



DSC02880 Emily and Warren Directly after their Wedding Dec 9 1890
Emily Atwood married Warren Skinner, of Lynn, Massachusetts, just a few days after the pie breakfast. We don't know how a country girl from New Boston met and married a man from such a distance away.



DSC02883 Emily and Warren Going to their New Home Dec 9 1890 Assuming their new home was in Lynn, getting there would have meant going by horse and buggy to Goffstown and changing trains several times. Warren must have cut quite a figure in his high silk hat.



DSC02888 J H McAlpine Res Apr 22 1891 This house remains on North Frankestown Rd. in very much this configuration. It has been saved from loss by fire twice in recent years thanks to prompt response from the New Boston Fire Department. It is the home of the late Richard and Elaine Hechtl. Mr and Mrs. McAlpine must have been very proud of the horse. Prized animals often figured in such views.



DSC02894 Prospect Cottage Atwood res Apr 23 1891 This is the Dr. Brenner Dental Office today. It appears to give the lie to the notion that Victorians painted their buildings in bright and contrasting colors. Many of the Atwood family photos were posed here.



DSC02898 Valley View Farm Apr 23 1891 What a difference a year makes! We've gone from Whipple Stock farm a year ago to Valley View today. The barns practically gleam with freshness. Whipple Farms are off and running.



DSC02900 Atwood Family Group June 5 1891 This is a typical family portrait of the period. Newly married Emily is second from the right. She was pregnant with her and Warren's first child, a daughter. Perhaps she felt more comfortable behind her sisters making her changing figure less obvious.



DSC02911 Valley View Farm Sept 29 1891 But that's not all. After only a few months, we have the equipment shed and the home to the rear, up the hill. Both are still there.



DSC02926 Tommie Hooper Feb 27 1892 Interior shots are rare considering the difficulty with available light. Perhaps that's the reason we don't see Tommie's mother, except for her hand. This was taken in the family home on Molly Stark Lane which burned circa 1980s and has since been rebuilt. Tommie lived until about 1970. Notice the match containers by the door. Imagine entering a room at night before electricity. You needed an immediate light source, hence the matches.



DSC02935 Mr C, Mr B, Annie and Flo May 31 1892 Tennis in New Boston in the 90s, didn't look like tennis in later years. No tennis whites or even lines. We know Annie and Flo Atwood, but we don't know Mr. C or Mr. B. In spite of these occasions, neither Annie nor Flo ever married.



DSC02943 This is entitled "Uncle Edd and the Boys" It's not clear which one is Uncle Edd, but it seems that they're at work putting the finishing touches on the Atwoods' Prospect Cottage.



DSC02950 Atwood Family Group Sept 23 1894 Here are the Atwoods again. Front and center are Emily and Warren with their, now, two daughters. Although they might not have realized it, this picture has a tragic aspect. In only a few weeks, Emily would die of causes now unknown. Perhaps, seated in her chair, she looks a little peaked? Her brother, at right, shows off his new bicycle, made possible in this form by the invention of the pneumatic tire.



DSC03056 Dilapidated House w/ Man on Barrel Joe English Behind This picture asks a lot of questions. Is that really Joe English in the background? Since the photographer Edwin Dodge lived on South Hill, it probably is, but this view today would be obscured by tree growth. What was the building? It doesn't look like a dwelling, but if it was, it would have been rudimentary at best. It was on its last legs in this mid-1890s picture. The man on the barrel waving a rifle is making a gag photo, we think. What is in his left hand? And what is the wire in the foreground. We're miles away from any generating source or from any phone service that we know of.



DSC03070 11 Mont Vernon Rd. 1895-1900 This house was recently, 2018, lost to fire, but is being rebuilt with two full stories on the same footprint.



DSC03076 Farley House River Rd. 1895-1900 Rebuilt after the great fire, this is the home of Charles Emery Farley. He was a luthier, making violins. The house today is largely the same, with one room upstairs with hemispherical ceiling, said to be useful for tuning violins. Over his career, Farley made over 400 violins, one of which is in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Another one resides in the New Boston Historical Society. One spring during high water, Farley's wife ventured out to the river bank and was swept away and drowned. Farley was so undone, that he moved, with his business, to Everett, Mass and continued there until 1927.



DSC03082 Depot Post Fire 1895 The New Boston depot was almost brand new when it burned in a winter fire. In spite of the damage, it was rebuilt and restored remaining today a town treasure.



DSC03109 Who is this young woman in a toga? We don't know who she was or what the occasion, but we can guess that she was going to participate in a costume event and judging from the paper in her hand, may have had lines to read.



DSC03116 The great fire is in the past and the town has been rebuilt. Just the time to take pictures of it. The photographer and his young assistants show what it took to take pictures in the 1890s. This camera would have taken glass negatives, just as Myrtie's would have. George Eastman of Rochester, New York has developed the Brownie Box Camera with celluloid film, but that innovation hasn't gotten to New Boston.



DSC03122 Training a young horse in winter. Just above the horse's rump is one of the hydrants put in for fire protection by Whipple after the great fire.



DSC03128 This house has been greatly altered and expanded, but it is the home of Peter and Maria Shea on High Street.



DSC03136 The Church on the Hill was erected in 1823, but was disused by the time this picture was taken sometime prior to November, 1900 when it was struck by lightning and burned. The town turned out to save it and thought they had only to leave the scene before it was quite dead. Hours later the fire flared up and the building was lost. A man volunteered to climb the belfry and saw off the steeple which was burning above. He was not allowed to risk his life in this manner.



DSC03141 This is Arthur Holt and his horse. The photographer is standing just in front of what is now Tate's Gallery. If you look closely in the background, you can see two street lamps that that would be at home on a big city street. They were originally oil and lighted each night. Later when the area received electricity, they were electrified, putting the lamplighter out of a job. Bob Todd wrote a piece on this in the New Boston Bulletin.



DSC03157 This unremarkable photograph showing a portion of the Baptist Church and the horse sheds has an importance perhaps not appreciated at the time. Two men in the buggy, are bringing horses to an unknown location perhaps to pasture or sale. In an era before trucks and trailers, if you wanted an animal to go to a new location, they had to walk there. The horses are clearly used to this and are almost walking along without guidance. New Boston had ample pasturage and local farms regularly boarded animals over the summer.



DSC03218 Lendell Dodge Farm South Hill, Burned If you go to the Christmas Tree lot at the top of South Hill, you will be standing about where the photographer is standing in this 1890s view of the Lendell Dodge farm taken by his son Edwin. The foundations are still there in the undergrowth. Trees have grown to the point where there is no view any longer. Frances Towne remembers the place in semi-derelict condition before it burned under suspect circumstances.



DSC03220 Morgan & Dennison Meat Market c 1895 This is now the Northeast Cafe. There is a more modern addition to the right. Before it became a bakery and café, it was Cecil Marshall's store, trying as best it could, to compete with Dodge's until about 1972.



DSC03227 177 Bedford Rd 1895 Burned Rebuilt 1916 This is the house at the “bad” corner on Bedford Road. It was one of three New Boston homes burned in a very severe thunder and lightening storm in August, 1916. That storm wreaked havoc all over southern New Hampshire and was widely reported in the press at that time. It is said that Joe English’s musket was lost in that fire.



DSC03230 Charles F. Dodge Farm c 1895 This house with attached barns remains very much the same on Tucker Mill Rd. The house is now apartments. Today it is known as the Welch Farm.



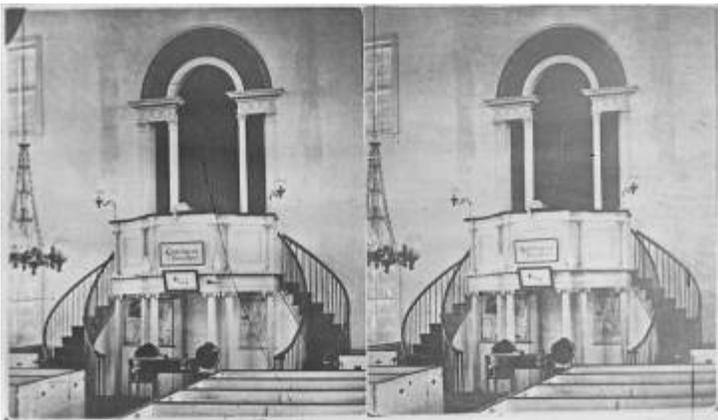
DSC03242 :Late winter always brings flooding associated with ice floes melting and breaking up. This shows an unusually severe example where the ice and water came up to Dodge’s steps.



DSC03276 Ice Dam, Mill This is a related photo to the one above although not necessarily taken the same year. This is upstream of the grist mill dam.



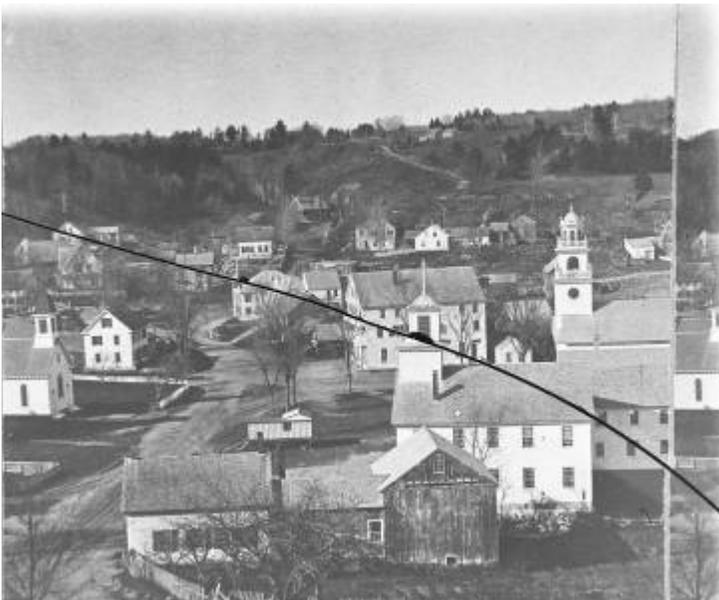
DSC03278 mill dam



DSC03294 Old Church Interior This is a stereopticon view of the interior of the church on the hill destroyed in the fire of 1900. We assume this was taken before use of it was discontinued. The altar in the present Community Church is a replica dating from about 1940. Before 1940, there was no altar, only a platform with chairs for the pastor or other officiants.



DSC03296 C. Marden House This house remains, but in very altered condition at the junction of Meeting House and Bedford Roads. At some point after this picture was taken, fire damaged the second storey. In response, the owner simply lowered the roofline to the point you see today.



DSC03301 Village pre-1887 This is one of the few scenes of the village predating the fire of May, 1887. All the buildings on this side of the river were lost, but the fire did not jump the river. In the foreground is the town hall. The Baptist Church is to the right and the small chapel which became the Community Church is to the left. The building behind the town hall spire is Atwood's store, now rebuilt as Dodge's.