

Bib Elliott's Tour of New Boston Village

October 2009

In 2008 Bib Elliott organized a walking tour of New Boston village for people interested in its history. This was so popular that the New Boston Historical Society asked Bib to repeat the tour in October, 2009 so that we might capture on videotape the information he'd shared the previous year.

The transcription which follows was typed by Lisa Rothman from the video recorded by Dan Rothman. Bib was interviewed by Historical Society members Nonah Poole, Polly Brendle, Betsy Whitman and Betty Poltrack. We regret that it was a windy day, by a noisy river, and a few of the words were inaudible.

Bib's wife of 62 years, Verna (Gregg) Elliott, has one copy of the video and another is in the Historical Society.



About our tour guide: Herbert G. 'Bib' Elliott (1928-2010)

Born May 10, 1928 in Milford, NH, he was the son of Herbert George Elliott Sr. and Avis (Maxwell) Elliott. He and his family moved to New Boston in 1940, and with Bib's help, his father ran a poultry business for many years.

Bib graduated from New Boston High School in 1946, continuing to work on the farm, and later was employed in general construction with his brother, Milton Elliott. He worked many years for various plumbing and heating contractors and finished his career as a welder with Union Local 131.

He and his wife were members of the New Boston Bowling League in the late 1950s and early '60s. He served the town of New Boston on the Planning Board in the mid 1970s, was a member of the Piscataquog Watershed Association, the 4th of July Association, the New Boston Historical Society, and the New Boston Community Church. Bib was very involved in the history of New Boston, hosting an historical narrative in 2008 of the town's center.

2009 TRANSCRIPT:

Bib Elliott: I grew up in Milford, twenty miles from here. I moved to town in 1940 to the farm on Route 136 with 12 cows. I moved here and I came up with the cows in the war years. A neighbor had to go into the service and he had twelve head of cattle. Nobody wanted to buy them and he didn't want to sell them for meat. So, my father said, "Well, I just bought a farm. I can take them." He bought them and brought them up to New Boston. To show the way, I was the guide to the farm that we had just bought.

Nonah Poole: How did you get them up here?

Bib: In a truck.



New Boston village center in the late 1980s (*aerial photo by Brandy Mitroff*)

- B – TD Bank building on the site of the Tavern
 - C – New Boston Community Church
 - D – Dodge’s Store; site of former Post Office
 - E – Old Engine House: fire house, Historical Society until 2011, now Recreation Dept.
 - F – Fire Station built after the High School was demolished in 1971
 - H – High Street
 - M – Parker’s Mill built in early 1800s
 - N – Nan’s House; now attached to the church
 - P – Pharmacy; now Tate’s Gallery
 - T – Town Hall rebuilt after the Fire of 1887
 - W – Wason Memorial Building: Whipple Free Library until 2010, now Historical Society
 - Y – Creamery built in 1888 to process milk from Whipple’s Valley View Farm
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TRANSCRIPT (continued)

Bib: I rode in the cab, not in with the animals. I sat in between two fellas in the middle of the seat and showed them how to get there. We unloaded the cows.

Nonah: How old were you in 1940?

Bib: Twelve years old. I had just had my birthday. I had graduated from Milford Elementary School to the **New Boston School** which is where the Fire House is now. It was practically a three story building. It contained the first (grade) through seniors in the whole school. It was one school. The one room on the left downstairs was first, second, and third. The next room next to it was fourth, fifth, and sixth. Upstairs, you went up the stairs, and the little room on the side which was junior high. And the one big room contained the other four classes through seniors. There was one little office space and that was for the principal. And that was it. Out back there was a shop that the boys enjoyed because it was an agricultural town. We were allowed to have shop courses and apple orchards to tend to and other things which made it quite interesting. But, I graduated in a class of four and I was one of the small classes. It was the beginning of the war years and, of course, and some of them graduated and went right into the service in the Second World War.

It's been quite a change. They took the building down in the early 60's. They built the Firehouse there. There was a big controversy in town over it. A lot of us didn't want to take the building down because it was a nice building with a slate roof. It could have been made into office space, but they weren't too far-thinking. They had to have the Fire Department in town. Instead of building it on a vacant piece of land, they tore the nice high school down. So, that's in bits and pieces here and there. They took the two doors that we went through up to it to my nephew's wife (Sherry Elliott) who has a shop up on Tucker Mill Road where they have dried flowers. I think if you go up there you'll see the two doors.

Betty Poltrack: "The Herb Gathering" (33 Tucker Mill Road)

Bib: Yes. I think you will see the two doors that we used to bang in and out of. I think she has them up there because they were in my brother's (Milt Elliott) collection. He collected things and he helped take the building down. So, that was that building.

New Boston Community Church

Bib: The church has stayed pretty much the same. It wasn't until the last few years that they've added on to it. That had a wood furnace in it. The men in town would take time and they would go out and cut all the wood that they needed for the year. They would bring it down and saw it up and throw it down in the basement to heat the furnace when they used it. Lots of times it was cold because they didn't need any heat because there was no running water. Ah, there was some running water, but they had a toilet with a tank up above and it would flush down when you pulled the chain and then out to the river. That was a direct pipe. That was discontinued back in the early 40's, early 50's. The church has been very active all these years. At one time it got down to quite a smaller number. It's quite crowded nowadays.

Dodge's Store

Bib: Dodge's Store has stayed pretty much the same except it has had different owners. This end of it (on the right as you look at it from the front: closest to the town common) was the Post Office and that was there for all the 40's and probably half way through the 50's. And on the other side, years before that was the library. But then they built the new library (Wason Memorial Building) about in the mid 30's. That was donated by the Wason family. Hopefully the Historical Society may come in and be able to use it when the new library is finished. (The new library is being built near the new post office and video store on Route 13.) There is a stipulation in it, in the deed, that if it went to anything else it would turn back to the original owners, to the children. So, being a historical library (the New Boston Historical Society) we're entitled to use it. Hopefully, that will come to pass when the new library is finished.

Drug Store

Bib: Across the bridge on the left hand, the building is still there. It has changed a number of owners. (In 2009 half of the building was an insurance agent's office; in 2015 the entire building is Tate's Gallery.) That used to be, when I was here, a small drugstore. They had a counter with about six stools. Kids could go in there and get a root beer float, a frappe, back then it was called a frappe. They served ice cream, and, of course, they had the prescription drugs. But they didn't use many back then; there were very few prescription drugs. So, that's changed a lot over the years.

Next door, what is now a jewelry store, I believe it was an IGA grocery store. That was run by a family down at the other end of town, Verna Purington's family. Kenny Purington ran that. That was back in 1940. I can remember that, because we used to pick up groceries there. There was that grocery store, Dodge's, and Marshall's.

Meat Market on Mill Street

Bib: Marshall's is where they call it the café now (Northeast Café). That was mainly a meat – before that is was strictly meat. [can't hear] Arthur Hill was the meat man. So, there's been a lot of changes.

Parker's Mill at 14 Mill Street

Bib: The Parker's – out on the end of the road, as you know – that was a grist mill and it later became a distribution center for Merrimack Farmers. We went into the poultry business, my father, and we used to buy all of our poultry needs there, which was substantial, because we had up to, usually about 15,000 birds a year. So, we bought a lot of grain, coal, and we heated all the, raised baby chicks with coal [stoves]. I think we had about 30 of them. So, those buildings are pretty much the same. They made it into a home. Of course, now the dam is out.

Water System

Bib: The water used to supply a water system over here at the creamery (to wash out the cans), where they had a fire system and also they provided for their other washing needs. I can show you where those pipes are if we walk that way. They had a hydrant system all around town, which was active back in the early 40's. It is not active any more. So, that pretty much covers the village itself.

Historical Society Building [Old Engine House]

[This refers to the Old Engine House between the Town Hall and the gazebo. In 2011 the Historical Society moved to the Wason Memorial Building as Bib hoped, and the Old Engine House was used by the Recreation department.]

Bib: The Historical Society Building, as you can see, that's where the two doors were (side facing the parking lot, with the two sets of windows under peaked roofs). It faced this way and was for the fire engines. They just had two engines. This addition wasn't on at that time. They added on to this end. Later, they needed more equipment. They took the doors out of there, and they added this on and put three doors. They didn't actually gain too much space. I guess they had a longer ladder truck was one of the reasons. So there were three doors here. And, of course, it's been remodeled since as a meeting hall and historical society. Of course, that was the tower for the hoses. They used to raise the hose up to drain them.

Town Hall

Bib: The Town Hall, it was very active in the 40's. Of course, you had meetings upstairs, and kitchen and meeting room downstairs. At one time it was part of the schooling. In years past they did have more people in town and I believe [they did have a schoolroom at that lower floor]. That was mainly a place to have bean suppers and spaghetti suppers. Now, because of the new regulations, you have to have handicap access, so the upstairs isn't handicap access, [can't hear] so the upstairs is offices for the recreation department.[can't hear]

House next to Town Hall (9 Meeting House Hill)

At one time this belonged to the Presbyterian Society. My daughter and some others in school started what they called the "Other Mother". It was a meeting place for children to get together [can't hear]. Since then, it has turned into a private residence. The Manse was the second house on the hill on the right. (Meeting House Hill where the Physical Therapy now is.) That was the manse of the Presbyterian Church (where the minister lived). That's pretty much it.

Baptist Church on the Town Common (where Gazebo now stands)

Bib: The Baptist Church was taken down, I think, about 1945. I remember that because I was in school and I had my license by that time. I would drive back and forth to the town and they were taking stuff apart and I was privy to get something once in a while for free to bring home.

The Tavern (where TD Bank now is at 2 High Street)

Bib: Across the bridge, used to be where the stagecoach used to stop there. The name is the Tavern. They took that down about the same time, as I recall. I use to stop there with my car, which I had a rumble seat in and pick up two bundles of lathes. They took the building all down and they saved the lathes. They shook off the plaster off of it and bundled them up into bundles, about yag big. They would sell them for ten cents. So my father needed them to build. When we built hoppers, which are made out of wood, about six feet long with six inch sides, they had to have a lip on them to keep the chickens from pecking the grain out of them. The lathes worked fine all along there. So, he bought all the ones that I could bring home. On the way home from school I would stop and pick up some bundles of them. They are still scattered here and there, all over the farm. So, I still have some pieces of it.

Baptist Church on the Town Common (again):

Nonah: Do you know any people who were still in the Baptist Church when it was torn down?

Bib: No, it had been vacant for quite a few years before that.

Betty Poltrack: So no one was using it.

Bib: Nobody was using it.

Nonah: Because we have never come across any minutes from that church or anything from that church.

Bib: What little history it does have was when it was used. There were quite a few. What happened was it was started in Amherst and moved to New Boston, because the only ones that were active at that time were in New Boston. Then they moved somewhere else and it became inactive and [can't hear] They turned the land over to the town. I don't know what the details are. When I was in school there was a building there. It was a nice church.

Nonah: From the pictures it looks like it was huge.

Bib: It was beautiful. At one time in the flood the water came down the ravine and washed it out on each side. There are pictures of it. Behind the fire house (historical society) were wagon sheds where they use to park their horse and buggies when they came (between Rita Manna's house, 8 River Road, and the common, where the side road now is). In along that wall at the edge of the wall there was another whole row of what they call them just open sheds where they pulled in. That was the church property also. When I came to town in the back of this where the booth is now (concession booth near the grandstand for the recreation department ball games), there was about three stalls and in one of them was an old Packard that had an engine in it about this long. [can't hear]. It was up on blocks. Soon that disappeared.

Bib: My brother (Milt Elliott) and I bought a Buick. When he got married, up in Weare that was a 1917 Buick and that was owned by Eastman, and it only had 10,000 miles on it. Henry Friedrick's son was the first one to buy it. He couldn't get it turned over. It was stuck. We bought it off of Henry for \$10.00. I got underneath with a crow bar and under the starter gear

and knelt. It had a battery, put a battery with a starter in it, and he's on that and someone else is on the crank and by the three of us, we got it turned over. Once we got it turned over we put gas in it, it started right up. I took him downtown and they got married at the church, he and his wife, Shirley. I was the chauffeur, down and back. But, it was quite unique. It had overhead valves, six cylinder, and you took an oil can and you squirted oil on the top of that to lubricate. It run nice and smooth and quiet. The problem was we parked it down at the edge of the woods, see, and some vandals came across it and broke all the windows, headlights, all the dash, and it went to the dump. We still have vandals today, doing stupid things for no reason at all. If you can figure it out, you are doing better than I am. I don't know why they do it.

Farming

Betsy Whitman: Did they have a farmer's market back in those days?

Bib: A farmer's market? No. Most everyone had a garden and raised their own. Bob Todd gave a talk on farms back at the Historical Society. As he recalled – his grandfather was Perley Todd – and at that time, most all times there were about 12 – 15 head of cattle. They all had a few chickens, a couple pigs, and sometimes a few sheep. Everyone had a little small farm and they were mostly self-sufficient with a little garden. They bought mainly spices and sugar and things like that. Of course, the farms are all, just about all gone out of New Boston. They still raise a few. I just stopped this morning on my way back from the breakfast up to Weare at Freddy Byam's, just across from Napa on Route 77, he wanted to show me his pigs. He's raising pigs there. He's got quite a nice little farm there. He's got some sows that gave birth to some little piglets. They usually have about 15 and so. They are quite little to look at. He's pretty proud of them. So, there have been a lot of changes.

[can't hear. Betsy Whitman asks something about the piggery that was in town.]

Betty: Now, Bib, I have just one question. The Tavern was where the bank was. Is that correct?

Bib: It was where the bank is.

Betty: Now what is the red building across from the bank?

The First Dodge's Store

Bib: Across the street from the bank was another store. It was also run by a Dodge, a different Dodge. That was actually I believe the first store in town was that one. As the road was much closer to that building and there was kind of a ravine there, between there and the river where the brook that comes down from across the street in that real swale [Swale: a low tract of land, especially one that is moist or marshy], there's a pipe that goes, a walkway actually, made out of stone and it's about ten feet deep. That was changed back in probably the early, late 1800's, when they put the state road through there.

They built a new tavern at that time, they built the tavern. There had been one there before, but they rebuilt it from what I have read about it. But, the bank itself is part of a barn that was a

wagon shed, more or less, or a supply house at that time. They tore the building itself down and moved that building over to the same area and changed it over to a bank.

Betty: But now this red building, a store, was this a grocery store? Because we have clothing and stuff, we have articles of clothing from Dodge's Store

Bib: That has been a residence since I have been in town. It wasn't a store when I moved here in 1940. It had already been changed over to a residence. It still had the front porch and stuff like that on it. The older pictures show, but I have no knowledge of what it was, it was a general store. But, when I moved to town, this (pointing to the current Dodge's Store) was the only store, the biggest store.

They carried other things like...a lot of hardware and you could order most anything there. When I built my house in 1949, I bought spikes and nails and all that by the keg, you know a 100 pound keg. I bought I think it was 17 kegs because my father used them also... of nails, spikes, 10 penny nails, 8 penny, 20 penny spikes, 30 penny spikes, 60 penny spikes for real big stuff. Everything was done by hand. Now they have guns that shoot everything in. Back then chainsaws weren't around. We did everything with a hand saw. We built all the buildings with handsaws and shovels.

Drug Store (Tate's Gallery by the bridge)

Betty: Was there a restaurant in the drugstore/pharmacy?

Bib: Yes, that was run by the Kanes, the Kane brothers. [Lionel Kane and Howard Kane] They ran kind of a variety store and a restaurant together. (Nonah thinks that Howard Kane lived in what is now referred to as "The Little Crooked House" at the corner of Meetinghouse Hill and Bedford Road.)

Betty: Some lady made wonderful pancakes or something I think.

Bib: That was [Matty's] wife, I think. (Nonah thinks that Matty was one of the Footes, who came from Frankestown.) She just passed away this last spring. Her name was Skibby and she was a [Bezanson] that married into the Kane family.

Creamery

Betty: Was the Creamery here when you moved here?

Bib: The Creamery building was here as it is now, but the Creamery itself had gone out of business. One reason that farming stayed in New Boston a little longer than some others because they did get rid of the milk by train.

Saltmarsh House (25 Mill Street)

Lisa: Did they have an apple cider business?

Bib: Paul Saltmarsh had the apple cider mill. He ran a freight business out of a little office on the other road. (Bib is referring to the tiny building across from the café on Mill Street, where the telegraph office once was.)

Dotey House on Mill Street (1st yellow house)

Nonah: Where did Mr. Dotey live?

Bib: (Points to first house on left, beyond the Saltmarsh house) That was Bill Dotey's house.

Nonah: We have a lot of pictures from him.

Waterworks

Bib: Before what they called the "Waterworks of New Boston Walk", it was led by Glen Dodge, no, Willard Dodge, this is one of the waterways that comes all the way up from the cemetery (on left before Morrisey's, 22 Mill Street). The run off comes down here and goes across the field into the river.

This house over here, (unclear which house this is) we had a meeting here years ago, it was just about dusk, all of a sudden, there was an abandoned chimney there and a hundred bats came flying out. It filled the whole sky with bats going off in every direction. It was quite a site to see.

Ice House

Bib: Out beyond here (near Parker's Mill) is where the icehouse was. I can show you if you are interested. Before refrigeration ice was the only way of keeping your food cold. In the 40's it was all ice chests. Refrigeration started in about '42 I think, electric.

This is the foundation (points to foundation near Mill Pond Conservation Area). On that there was an ice house back in the 40's and early 50's. Of course the dam made a nice mill pond there and they used to cut ice there for years and years. They stored it in that building and distributed it around town with ice for people. Eventually they took it down or burned it down. I don't remember what actually did happen to it. I think there was a fire there. I remember them putting ice in the building. They had an elevator that came from the lake run by an engine. An engine powered it up. It carried big blocks of ice which were about 300 pounds a piece about yea long (aprox. 3 feet) by whatever was the thickness of the ice, which is usually about 16 inches, and a little over 2 feet wide. It would come up with a chute and it would land. They took a pick and pushed it over to that fellow over there and over here. It was quite a dangerous place to be, slipping around on that ice. Someone would be hauling in sawdust. They put layers of sawdust, especially on the outside, all the way around the outside and some in between the layers to keep it from sticking. It was quite an operation. They would build the ice up until they filled the whole building with ice. It would last all year. Everybody had an ice box at their house. A man

would come around with a leather apron over his back and would carry it out. They would cut a piece to fit the owner's refrigerator, or an icebox rather.

Betty: You could sign up for how much you wanted.

Polly: Oh, I remember that.

Bib: Kids used to love it because when he chipped the ice off there were little pieces that would fall off. They would gather around them, grab them and suck on them, and think they had ice cream. You still hear them talking about it nowadays. They went out probably in mid 1940's when they started disappearing with all the refrigeration. In fact, I've got my father's first refrigerator he bought in probably 1944 or 5 in my storehouse. There's been a lot of changes.

We had a nice party here earlier this year. PLC (Piscataquog Land Conservancy) put on the lobster bake.

(Can't hear Bib talking; he is down by the river now, near Parker's Mill.) I swam across the river. I wasn't too much of a swimmer. This was back when I was in school. On the way back, you think you are close to shore, you know, well I'm going to touch down and I went down under. I started paddling. Unfortunately, you try it again and do the same thing. Well, about the third time I said, I better keep on going. One more and I won't make it. And I finally did make it to shore. It's just one of those little experiences you don't forget. You see, it drops off quite quick. That's one of the worst things when it goes out real gradual and then drops off. You think you are almost there because you can see people standing up, but you're not. You are still in deep water. When you do try to touch down, you go under. You're apt to get some water and (Bib demonstrates by floundering his hands) that tires you. So, I remember that quite often. I think about people drowning, because it's so easy to drown. Everyone can be around but not paying attention. It's quite a sobering thought.

Betty: Where was the dam?

Bib: The dam was (points). If we walk down this way I'll show you the pipe that goes to the creamery.

Parker Mill

There's the pipe that goes to the creamery. That was an intake. Of course, this was the spillway here and that's where the water wheel was behind the mill. That was down further. (Can't hear) As you can see, across the way (pointing to Maple Street) that one pipe, the water was above that at all times.

Nonah: We're going to have Randy (Parker) do a talk on the mill at the next historical meeting.

Bib: (touching the intake pipe) That's a real antique here. That fed the water to the fire pump. It pumped the water around to all the hydrants.

Nonah: Is that another pipe going through right there?

Bib: That was the sewer pipe coming out from that end of town.

Nonah: No, right here.

Bib: No, that was the foundation of the dam. The dam itself was there and that was topped off with wood.

(Looking at the front of the mill) This was one of the many along the Piscataquog. We had a lot of water mills at one time. This is one of the latest built. The Parkers made it into a real nice residence. We spent a lot of time down here hauling grain. I remember that. And coal. There was a building in between, open sheds, that had nut coal and soft coal. That was quite an industry in itself. A lot of people ran coal in their kitchen stove.

Bib Elliott's First Car

When we were here on one of the walks, I noticed across the river on the edge of the river here there's a... (takes us there) This is the spillway and the water wheel is inside. In there they had a turbine. Right here (pointing to wheel on stone wall near the mill.) I noticed this wheel and I said I betcha that went with a vehicle I bought. I bought it off a fellow that lives just over there in that house. His name is Jack Rabbit. I bought a 1928 Model A with 19 inch wire wheels, except there were no wire wheels. It was up on jacks. He had gone in the service and it didn't have any tires or wheels. So, I had to borrow them off my mother's car. She come down and get the car and towed it home with the tractor. I betcha that was one of the wheels that someone had thrown in the river. Someone rustled it out of the river and put it up there.

(Looking at stone walls) There's a lot of stone work around here.

(Repeats the car story again for the latecomers.) I bought my first car over there. It was up on jacks and the roof had caved in. It had a fabric roof. It was a 1928 Model A. I bought it from this fellow by the name of Jack Rabbit. That was his nickname, Rabbit. It was sitting on blocks. I gave him \$15.00 for it. We came down with our homemade tractor. We jacked up my mother's car at home and took all the tires and wheels off it. We towed it home. Then I went to the dump with it and looked for some wheels that would fit it. Down at Daniels they had a junk yard there over the [Stilmans Thompson]. (Nonah thinks this is the first house on the left as you first go up Molly Stark Lane from Route 13, River Road.) I found enough wheels. But you couldn't find tires because it was during the war. The only tires you could get was out of the dump. So I'd get tires out of the dump and I'd put one tire inside of another tire and patch it on that just to get a tire to maneuver it around.

I got picking apples and that gave me a job. That meant I could get a B card and with a B card I was able to buy a tire. Two tires, I bought two tires. Brand new tires.

Dan Rothman: How old were you, Bib?

Bib: I was 16. The day I was 16 I had my license.

Transportation Office (tiny brown shed next to Nan's House)

Bib: Over here is the office of the transportation company of New Boston. It was run by T.H. Saltmarsh in the 40's and the 50's. He had a freight business and he transported things in and out of New Boston, Goffstown, and Manchester. He also at that time had taken over the Cider Mill and ran the cider mill business up there. I think he made apple butter [can't hear]. He had products and so.

Of course at that time the Sargents had a bus service into Manchester. Goffstown they had to go a different way into Manchester because it was Manchester transit there, had dibs on the route. I guess they went in the back way. But he ran quite a business out of here.

Meat Market (a café now)

Of course this was the owners of the meat market. They lived in that house called Nan's House now. This was a meat market back in the 1800's. It became a grocery store sometime after. That was run by Cecil Marshall. His son was one of the last ones to contract polio in New Boston. That was when they first came up with vaccinations. He had a problem with one of his legs. His father had polio when he was a child. [Can't hear] My brother had polio, later in life though. He had it in his throat. He wasn't able to eat anything but mashed potatoes and gravy – it could slide down. He recovered. It was very strange. He had it but he did recover from it. It was diagnosed as infantile paralysis back then.

Dodge's Store

It was quite active years ago, but not since the 40's. I think they danced up there with one of the classes at one time. There is a picture, someone had taken a picture I believe.

Nonah: I went up there before Josh Dodge sold out and it was like walking back in time. There's a stage up there, the curtains are still hanging there and there's these beautiful lights.

Betsy: Where did they have the minstrels, though? Were they up here or were they in the old Town Hall?

Bib: They were in the Town Hall. Although now they can't have them anymore with the black face and all. Although, recently in the news lately in Australia they had some black faces with white faces. [Can't hear]

Betty: Wasn't there a barber shop, too?

Bib: The barber shop was on this corner (pointing to the left side) where those two windows are. That was run by Frank Church. He had a barber shop there for a number of years. They entered it on the end door and went up the stairs near that window there. And off of that was a

door leading to the Valley Hall. I've only seen it once myself. We had a tour of it one time. Last year during the parade they had some stuff hanging out the windows.

Betsy: When [New York City mayor] Giuliani was running for president, they let him go up the stairs. Yes they did, so he could make phone calls privately.

Bib: The library was downstairs on this end (to the left) where the (post) office is now.

Nonah: Where was the post office, before the post office was there (in Dodge's store building farthest from Town Hall in 2009, before the P.O. moved to a new building on Mont Vernon Road)?

Bib: In Dodge's Store, where that fellow is just coming out of the main entrance. From that doorway to the outside wall (nearest Town Hall), was another partition. That window looked into the post office. It was just in that corner. B. H. Dodge was the postmaster for a while and also ran the store.

Betsy: How long did Homer (Dodge) run it?

Bib: Up into the 50's I believe. The girls would go upstairs (to eat lunch) in the school, but the boys would all come over and go into Dodge's and buy something, go in the back room, sit on the kegs, bales, and boxes. I guess we had free reign.

Betty: I guess that was a different time, wasn't it?

The Creamery

Bib: This was the Creamery years ago. It lay idle all through the 40's and into the 50's before Fred Cann bought it and made it into an apartment. They had delivery of milk at a place on the side where the farmers came in and left off their milk and then they transported it from there to Boston to I think it was three hotels. Parker House and a couple others.

Nonah: Touraine. Young.

Bib: It was a thriving industry. It was in business for quite a while.

Waterworks

Bib: Up the hill from Heidi Palmer's place (pointing to High Street at the bottom of Clark Hill Road) the pipe goes underground and comes out here at that exit (pointing to a square hole in the riverbank stone wall opposite the creamery and under the current bank). There was a conflict about what was to be done about it and there still is as to who is in charge of it because it was put in years ago when by private... when that was a building... the Tavern... who's going to be responsible for it when it backs up again like it did two or three years ago when we had the Hundred Year Flood, that we've had for two years. If it does cause damage then who's going to be responsible for it. Willard Dodge got appointed to investigate it. During his walking tour...

we gave a walking tour of the water works... and he said that he walked the whole distance of that. There is really nice stone work that was put in probably back in the late 1800's.

Nonah: Where does it start?

Bib: It starts behind Heidi Palmer's building and there's an opening which needs to have a screen put over the entrance otherwise the same thing will happen. Even then the screen if somebody takes care of keeping the screen clean otherwise it will happen again. What happened is that a log and a stump floated down and blocked the entrance so the water backed up and flooded out Heidi Palmer's cellar. There was a problem there that has to be corrected eventually. That was built years ago and of course all this stonework. There is quite a ravine here apparently and that is why the road was closer to the other store (101 High Street). The catch basin opening is over ten feet long. (Can't hear.) When that was a tavern (where the bank is now) that was where the sewer went – it just dropped off into the river. (Can't hear.) That was their sewage. This was all flooded two years ago (pointing to parking lot behind the creamery and the hardware store). (Can't hear) It did a lot of damage here.

Roads and Walking Bridge

Years ago there was a road that went right up and entered where they got stuff off the train, loaded the passengers in the carriage, and let them off here to go into the tavern. It was across the river. If you look you will see a railing where people walked. There was a railing and a road where they were able to take produce from the train and bring it right into the tavern (between present TD Bank and river).

Of course, this building here (the bank) was right up there. (can't hear) When they took the building (tavern) down they moved it down here and made it into the bank building.

The train track came across the road so they were able to bring the train up even closer. There was a walking bridge across the river, so that the people could get off the train and walk over to the store. But that was down before my time.

I believe there was a footbridge across here (pointing to the river and some concrete landings in back of the creamery). That piece of land (pointing to the riverbank opposite the Creamery) goes to the train station that is under the control of right now the Playground Association. They are in the process of transferring it to the Recreation Department. Hopefully, maybe they might make it into a park eventually. I know they talked about it years ago. There is land that goes with it, I think as much as seventeen acres. The state barn (salt shed) is on their lot so they have to reconcile that. We had a meeting Tuesday night about it. We are in the process of turning it over to the Recreation Department.

Houses on High Street

Bib: There was a two car garage (it looked like it was big enough for two vehicles) and a fellow owned the house. I can't think of his first name now, Mr. Kane. He perished there in a fire.

That happened in probably about 1944. He was out in the garage apparently working on something with gasoline and it ignited and there was a flash fire and he burned to death.

Betsy Whitman: Was he related to Howard then?

Bib: He would be Howard's father. Howard and Laney and Eleanor's father.

Lisa Rothman: Do you mean this yellow house? (pointing to Lanzilotti's, 16 High Street)

Bib: That house is a lot like the others (on High Street). It had a lot of rooms. In the early 1900's people used to come up from Boston and stay in New Boston through the summer 'cause the air was so much better and they liked the atmosphere around here. So they rented rooms. That's why each one of those houses has maybe eight bedrooms, at least eight or ten. They were used mostly in the summertime. A teacher in New Boston (can't hear) Jean McCreary's house. I've been in that one. It was for sale and my cousin looked at it. That has eight rooms. The one above it had eight rooms. They all had porches on the back looking over the river. Of course, back then in those days there weren't any trees. This is what is so strange about New Boston, now there are trees everywhere. Years ago it was absent of trees. That's in the late 17, early 1800's. It's unbelievable how it has changed.

Lisa: I heard some of those houses on High Street were built for Mr. Whipple's family.

Bib: This one across the street was (referring to the brick-ended home on High Street). And this one here was.

Nonah: And wasn't that one the McLane? (brick-ended home on High Street)

Bib: Yes, that was the McLane. And the one with a star on it, that was a Whipple House.

I'll try to get together a pamphlet of all these pictures. It's in the Atlantic Monthly. I got a copy off the internet. It has a story about each of those houses.

Nonah: Several people gave us copies.

Bib: Someone is supposed to be working on the calendar.

Nonah: That would be easy. Different houses on the calendar. Good idea!

[End of video]

Note: I first met Bib when I was one of a dozen volunteers helping him set up the enormous tent he would provide for Town events. The steel pipe frame was designed by Bib and he welded its many connectors himself. Since he was not a tall man and some of the connections were quite high, he would show up with his pickup truck full of rusty stepstools he'd acquired at the town dump. We miss Bib Elliott! –Dan R.