

# Historic Newington



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## Nancy Drew House

Earlier this year, Sally Ford, of Durham, NH, asked about Newington's Nancy Drew House (photo above). Sally is related to Temperance Pickering (1731-1823), who married Ensign John<sup>4</sup> Knight (1727-1770) in 1759. Upon Temperance's death, the name "Knight" disappeared from Newington's tax rolls.

In 1702 Capt. John<sup>2</sup> Knight (1659-1721) acquired the 44-acre Carter farm at Bloody Point. Bloody Point is the location that gives Newington the honor of claiming it was settled in 1630.

In 1705 Knight also purchased the 14-acre Trickey farm, tavern, and ferry at Bloody Point from Zachary Trickey along with the gundalows and other equipment for the ferry. He operated the ferry from 1705 to 1725 between Bloody Point to Dover and Eliot, ME.

Knight became captain of a militia company during the French and Indian War. He lived in the house he built at Bloody Point about 1705 or 1706 that later became known as the Nancy Drew house.

In 1831, Nancy Drew bought the 44-acre farm at Bloody Point that had been acquired by Captain John<sup>2</sup> Knight (1659-1721) in the early 1700s. Taverns had been operated at this site from the days of the early ferries and later by Nancy Drew, who was also said to have provided adult entertainment, perhaps even a house of ill repute, we don't really know.

Nancy Drew died in 1889 at her residence, at the age of 93 years. Her homestead was sold at auction, May 31, 1890, to Charles and Mamie Dame. Later, Manning Hoyt acquired the property in 1925, and in 1934 the two-lane General Sullivan Bridge was built right beside the house.

An aerial photo (next page) shows the house and its ell in 1952 but the barn and the other attached building were no longer there.

In 1958 the Nancy Drew House was taken down. The State Highway Department sold it at auction for \$1 to Mrs. Walter Welch of Arlington, MA, who was the only bidder. The buildings were in extremely bad shape at that time and needed to be removed (*Portsmouth Herald*).

Sally Ford has a connection to this Newington landmark through her Pickering family tree.

Sally's great, great, great grandfather was Richard<sup>4</sup> Pickering

John<sup>1</sup> Pickering (1600-1669)

Thomas<sup>2</sup> (1656-1720)

Thomas<sup>3</sup> (1703-1786)

Richard<sup>4</sup> Pickering (1755-1831)

and Richard<sup>4</sup>'s sister Temperance<sup>4</sup> (1731-1823) was the second wife of Ensign John<sup>4</sup> Knight (1727-1759).

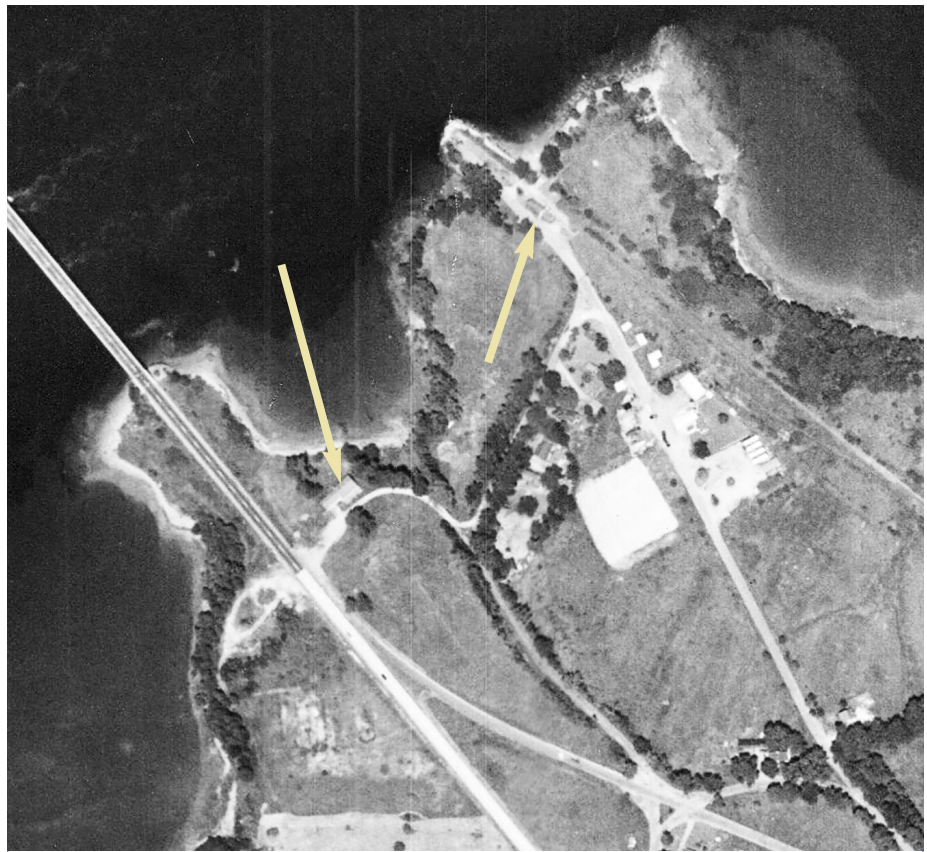
The Florence Watson (1889-1967) papers provide more information about the Nancy Drew House:

Built in 1705 for John Knight, who was an early pioneer of Newington, the house was located on the easterly side of the General Sullivan Bridge, formerly on the westerly side of the old Portsmouth and Dover Bridge, which no longer exists.

The family of William Hoyt and his wife, Charlotte Pickering Hoyt, were living in the Knight house in 1812. During the War of 1812, wealthy families of Portsmouth came out to bury their silver in the house cellar, fearing Portsmouth might be bombarded. The Hoyt's oldest daughter, Phoebe, married Joseph Nutter of Portsmouth in "the back parlor" (toward the river) of the house.

When Nancy Drew lived here it was a flourishing farm and market garden place. Bernice Nutter's grandmother remembered Nancy Drew very well and considered her to be an accomplished woman. Nancy Drew was well educated; she had studied navigation and was competent to command a ship. Martha and Mary Coleman sang at her funeral in the Newington Church and her nephew from Boston(?) attended.

When Mary Coleman married Charles Dame, they bought the Nancy Drew place. Mary Dame told Florence Coleman Watson that the corner cupboard in the dining room was built for her by Jack Cole. From her kitchen window she saw tugboats, sailing vessels and barges. She saw the bridge section go out when the



This 1952 aerial map of Bloody Point was taken before Pease Air Force Base was constructed. The Nancy Drew house (center yellow arrow) is located to the right of the two-lane Spaulding Turnpike and General Sullivan Bridge. The Drew house and extension were extant in 1952 but not the two attached barns. The railroad depot is shown by the yellow arrow on the right.

ice in Broad Cove broke up. She had a beautiful view of the river from her back door. One of Newington's beautiful elms between the house and the river was later struck by lightning.

Their daughter, Mildred was born there, and Charles died there. After his death, his widow stayed on for many years,

until she returned to her old home to live with her twin sister, Martha.

The place was then sold to J. Manning Hoyt, who lived there until he sold it to the State of New Hampshire and bought the former Benjamin Smith Hoyt Place (Nimble Hill Road) from J. Archie deRochemont.

The Newington Historical Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and is registered as a charitable non-profit organization with the New Hampshire Charitable Trusts Unit.

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608 INFORMER / WHAT DO YOU KNOW?



### The Hermit of Goat Island

He squatted over 20 years, and sometimes made the news  
STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARSHALL HUDSON



*New Hampshire Magazine* published a story about Newington's Goat Island Hermit in its December 2021 issue.

The article was written by Mark Stevens of Canterbury, NH under his pen name Marshall Hudson.

The photo of the hermit and his dog was taken from the Newington Town history book.



## Our Next Generation is Stepping Up!!

Many thanks to **Jay Wendell**, a Portsmouth High School senior who lives on Little Bay Road, for creating the Historical Society's first website (see the images of a webpage on the right. Please visit [NewingtonHistoricalSociety.com](http://NewingtonHistoricalSociety.com) to see his great work product.

Need a helping hand? **Matthew and Chase Coleman** are in their twenties (Gen Z?) and will help do what needs to be done. They helped decorate the town buildings for the holidays, moved furniture for the opening the Old Parsonage Tavern, stuffed insulation up three Tavern flues to prevent heat loss up the chimneys, and helped clean up ashes and debris after the bonfire. Thank you so much!!



## Newington's Unmarked Burials

Independent Archeological Consulting of Dover concluded that there are undoubtedly unmarked graves in the areas surrounding the Meeting House, particularly north of the building.

Based on a 2021 ground penetrating radar survey, IAC was able to ascertain the nature of 11 of the 161 GPR anomalies. This archaeological study found:

- No evidence of grave shafts or other funerary features in three of the "high probability" anomalies (EY, EU/EV and FC/FD) by the horsesheds that were bisected with hand excavated trenches to confirm the presence or absence of graves.
- A buried electrical line likely accounts for anomalies EQ1 through EQ4.
- GPR locations BG, BN, BM, CX, CW and CV correspond to marked graves.

- CV corresponds to the 1787 burial of J. P. whose fallen headstone has been buried under the sod.
- The nature of the remaining 150 anomalies remains undetermined.

Other than these anomalies assessed in 2021, IAC cannot rule out the presence or absence of unmarked graves underneath the horse sheds, in the road/parking area



by the meetinghouse, or south of the road on the library side.

Unmarked cemeteries/graves in New Hampshire are protected under RSA 227-C: 8 and the statute prohibits construction of any kind within 7.6 m (25 ft) of an historic cemetery (RSA 289:3 III).

The stonewall that now surrounds the burial ground post-dates the earliest graves and some of the GPR anomalies are in excess of the State mandated 7.6-m (25 ft) buffer.

IAC recommends the buffer zone be expanded to include all GPR surveys on the outside of the cemetery walls.

If proposed construction within the expanded buffer zone cannot be avoided, IAC recommends the Town of Newington work with NHDHR to develop a plan to avoid the inadvertent disturbance of unmarked graves.



## Newington Historic Bonfire 2021



It was glorious – a very hot, 15 to 20-foot high bonfire just before Christmas. Sixty or so folks came to celebrate. The event took place on Saturday December 18th from 4:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

It snowed for the first time this season, some kids made a couple of snowmen and then knocked them over, the Old Parsonage now has heat and more electrical outlets, so folks went in and out to get hot and cold drinks, and Santa raced by on a fire department float.

The fire put off so much light that the Christmas lights in front of the Old Stone School went off when their light sensors detected “morning!”

The Historical Society and Historic District Commission are having great fun hosting events in the old town center so people can come enjoy the moment and relax.

Special thanks to Will Gilbert & Will “Jamie” Pickering for stacking most of the pallets, Becky St. Germaine for opening the Old Parsonage Tavern, Larry & Mary Wahl for providing the holiday music, the Fire Department for rounding up Santa, Steve Poulin for helping with the postcard invitations, and Peggy Lamson, Jo Haskell, Laura & Charlie Coleman, and Lulu Pickering for decorating the historic buildings for the holidays.



## Old Knight Cemetery – More Unmarked Burials

We know that Temperance<sup>4</sup> Pickering Knight was buried in the Richard Pickering cemetery between the Newington malls; her headstone is still there, though broken by vandals. Sally Ford was wondering where her husband John Knight<sup>4</sup> (1727-1759) was buried.

Most likely he was buried in a Knight family cemetery close to Bloody Point, but where was that?

A little promontory below Bloody Point, once known as Pine Point, Pickering's Point, Furber's Point, and Birch Point, has numerous white birch trees. According to *Landmarks in Ancient Dover*, “On this

point, in a beautiful, wild, lonely spot, is the grave of John Knight, the exile, shaded by sassafras trees and tall white birches whose boles gleam afar off like shafts of polished marble. It is marked by a low, broad, three-lobed headstone of slate, on which, beneath an incised death's head and cross-bones, is this inscription: Here lyes buried the body of John Knight, Esq born August ye 30, 1659 and died May the 11th, 1721. So, this is where Capt. John<sup>2</sup> Knight was originally buried.

In 1917, the body of Capt. John Knight, which was then said to be located in an open field on land belonging to Charles W. Weaver, was disinterred and moved to

Hillside Cemetery in Greenland, NH. In 1909, Charles W Weaver had bought a ¾-acre lot of land with buildings (BK 642 PG 470) from Lorenzo D. Spinney, and later sold it to Shattuck Co, Inc. in 1917 (BK 712 PG 272).

Perhaps the grave was where a Knight family cemetery was located, and the body was relocated to Greenland due to the construction of the Shattuck Shipyard(?)

If so, there were likely many other Knights buried in the old family cemetery other than Captain John. If their graves were unmarked, they likely were not disinterred and relocated.