

History of Newfound Lake Area
from the Newfound Area Chamber of Commerce
By Kathi Caldwell-Hopper

Newfound Lake is a gem. To all who have visited it, the experience is unforgettable. Much is known and written about Lake Winnepesaukee and Squam Lake, but Newfound remains the quiet little lake.

This body of water, which some say is among the cleanest in the world, is 4,106 acres in size and is considered one of the deepest lakes in New Hampshire (168-feet deep at one point, and at another, 180 feet deep.) This pristine lake is about 2 1/2 miles wide and seven miles in length.

Unlike the names of many other lakes and towns in New Hampshire, Newfound is not an Indian name. No one knows for sure when the lake was named Newfound, but one can surmise that it may have been early settlers, who had "newly found" the lake.

In the mid 1800s, it was becoming increasingly popular for the wealthy to spend the summer at a resort. Some chose to leave the heat of the city for such idyllic spots as the White Mountains or the seacoast. For others, the search for peace and quiet ended at a summer hotel near a lake. In bygone days, if you wanted a restful summer where the biggest entertainment was a rousing game of croquet or a good nap in a hammock, Newfound Lake was the place for you.

By the 1870s, city folk were migrating to the Newfound Lake area. How the word had gotten out about the beauty and peace of the area is unknown. Perhaps word-of-mouth had sung the praises of the lake.

This was the era of such genteel pursuits as nature walks and boating. Such Newfound Lake towns as Hebron and Bristol offered outdoor recreation in abundance.

As in other areas of New Hampshire, farmers began renting rooms and offering meals to tourists. For those who loved the countryside of the Newfound area, a summer spent on a farm seemed heavenly. In his book *Newfound Lake*, Charles E. Greenwood wrote that Hebron residents George S. Smith and his wife began taking in boarders in the late 1870s, following the example of John Sanborn who owned the local Grove Hill Farm. These farms offered boarders riding, boating, fishing and swimming.

In 1880, the first true summer boarding house was built in Bridgewater on the eastern side of Newfound Lake. Originally called Lake View House, the structure must have caused quite a stir in the area. Three stories high, with a dining room, dance hall and 75 bedrooms all comfortably furnished, the Lake View House was reminiscent of the big hotels being constructed in the White Mountains at the time. As with most of the boarding houses, the view of Newfound Lake was superb.

Soon other hotels sprang up in the area: Elm Lawn, Bayview House, and later, Pasquaney. Large farms continued to help meet the demand, and just a few were Ackerman House, the Silas Brown property known as Newfound Lake Farm, and the Norman Smith Farm. The largest town in the area was Bristol, and it boasted the Hotel Bristol and the G. G. Brown Hotel in the mid-1800s.

Cottages were also springing up around the lake in the 1880s. Up until this time, vacationers who vetoed hotel accommodations pitched tents on the beaches. At times, the shores were covered with tent colonies. Eventually, those who loved the lake probably decided that a cottage was preferable to a tent, and purchased land to build their summer home.

One area on the eastern side of Newfound Lake near Bridgewater became known as "Cottage City." Owned mostly by professional and local businessmen, these summer homes were at the time the largest grouping of private cottages.

Interestingly, one farm in the Whittemore Point (Bridgewater area) locale was bought by E. P. Lindsey of Boston. Refurbished from top to bottom, the farm soon had a cottage for the hired help, a modernized barn. Many renovations were made to the brick farmhouse. Lindsey may have been originally from the Newfound area, and it is known that as a young man he worked as a common laborer in Bristol. Eventually, he amassed a fortune, and when his wife died in the 1930s the estate was valued at over \$1 million. The estate became part of Camp Tomahawk, a boy's camp.

Longtime local residents may have been amazed at the influx of summer tourists and those buying up property around Newfound Lake. One notable was Dr. Thomas Watson, who was an assistant to Alexander Graham Bell in the invention of the telephone.

By the early part of the 20th century travelers came to Newfound Lake for its peace and recreation. To meet the demand, housekeeping cottages sprang up, rented to visitors for a week, or sometimes for an entire summer.

W. F. Darling of Bristol built a large group of cottages in the 1920s. The colony was first known as Hiland Park with about 100 cottages. Guests could rent a cottage, cook their own meals, remain undisturbed by other tourists, and best of all, sit on their porch and take in the wonderful views. Eventually this cottage colony would become known as Bungalo Village.

About this time, at the foot of Newfound Lake, Walter Prince bought over 1,000 feet of shore property, on which he built a cottage colony. Ahead of his time, Prince saw further opportunities for income by building a store, restaurant and gas station. Everything the vacationer could want—from a nearby dip in the lake, to dinner in a restaurant and gas for the family car—was at Prince's.

Other cottage groupings followed, and by the 1930s, many who could afford a summer vacation made their way to Newfound Lake.

During the 1930s and 40s Newfound Lake was a magical place, as much so from the many cottages and resorts as from the lake itself. Woodbury's, built in the 1930s on the western side of the lake, had many cottages, a store and recreation hall. Cottagers probably gathered on someone's screened porch for an evening of card playing. Perhaps a Victrola cut the evening summer air with a tune from Benny Goodman. Canoes and early motorboats plied the warm Newfound Lake waters.

Today, many of the wonderful cottage colonies and hotels are gone. A trip around the lake, however, shows the beautiful Pasquaney Inn in Bridgewater remains as a symbol of what vacationing once was.

What it means to vacation may have changed over the decades, but Newfound Lake has not. Its clear, clean water, beautiful views and promise of serenity is as real today as it was many years ago.