Kimball Webster: A “49er”

In 1849, some 80,000 prospectors from the United States, Europe, South America, Australia, and China made their way to California in search of fortune.

Among them was Kimball Webster, who later became a town historian and author and recorded his journey in *The Gold Seekers of ’49*, published posthumously in 1917.

Webster’s account is rich in detail about the hardships of the journey. He joined a group of men from Pelham who combined with a Boston company, brought their total number to about 70. While other prospectors traveled by sea, Webster’s company made the journey overland. Each man paid $300—approximately $13,000 today—to cover provisions. Their trek to California took nearly six months, and on some days they advanced only a few miles.

Webster describes the harrowing conditions he endured, including the deaths of company members from cholera, severe weather, and food shortages. Later in the journey, Webster himself fell ill but survived. Upon reaching California, the men discovered that the promised gold was not readily found. He later travelled to Oregon and became a surveyor.

Webster returned to the northeast with no fortune and later settled in Hudson where he became an active member of the community and an author.



Kimball Webster 1849, 21 Years Old

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Kimball Webster

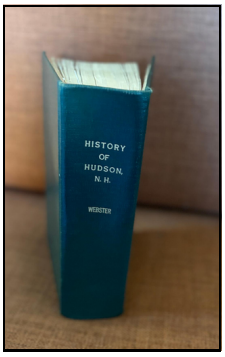
Member Profile

Old Home Days Recap

Contact Us!

History of Hudson NH 1913 by Kimball Webster

For readers who love local history, this nearly 600-page volume offers a comprehensive account of Hudson’s history from 1673 to 1913.



It’s available at the Library and the Historical Society has some in stock for sale!

It can also be found online along with *The Gold Seekers of ’49*.

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Kimball Webster in Hudson

Kimball was born November 1828 in Pelham to John Webster and Hannah Cummings. He was educated in the schools of Pelham and Hudson.

In 1854 he returned from seeking gold to New Hampshire via the Isthmus of Panama. In the next few years he was employed as a surveyor in Vinal Haven, Maine. By 1857 he returned to Hudson, married Abiah Cutter of Pelham and they settled on a portion of his great-grandfather Cumming's farm.

Kimball and Abiah had 10 children; 3 boys and 7 girls. Of these, only 5 girls survived into adulthood. They had 2 sets of twins who died young and one daughter Latina Ray who passed at the age of 22

Professionally Kimball was a surveyor and an engineer . He served the town as selectman and as a member of the school board. On two occasions he served on a committee to re-appraise property in town. In 1881 he chaired the committee responsible for building the new iron bridge across the Merrimack to Nashua; and then as a member of the committee in 1909 when it became necessary to replace that bridge with the concrete bridge.

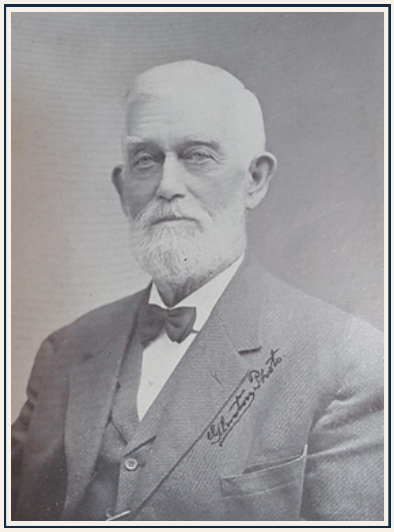
He served in the state legislature and he was a Justice of the Peace for about 50 years. Fraternally he was the first Master of Hudson Grange and served the grange at the county and state levels.

One of the Webster's daughters Mary, married George Abbott. The Abbott Family has placed a number of Webster's works at the Historical Society. Among them are his 1849 journal while traveling to California, notes on some Hudson houses built in the 1800's, vital records he copied from the ancient town records, and details of various estates that he settled. The Martin and Leslie families donated some of his household items; some native relics found along the Merrimack, and the painting of him made from an 1853 Daguerreotype while he was in Oregon. Webster died in 1916 at 87 years.

Biographical information with the help of rememberhudsonnhwhen.com



Five daughters of Kimball and Abiah (Cutter) Webster taken c1920 on the front porch of the Robinson Homestead on Old Robinson Road. In the front row from the left are Julia Anne, Mary Newton, and Eliza Ball. In the second are Lizzie Jane and Ella Francis (order not certain).



Kimball Webster 1912

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Member profile:

Laurie Jasper

Clerk 2025-2026

I am Laurie Jasper. I grew up in Andover, MA. I married Shawn Jasper in Oct. 1992 and moved to Hudson. In Nov of 1992, Shawn (a life member of the Hudson Historical Society) encouraged me to attend the meeting with him as something to do together. I was elected clerk at my first meeting (the position was open) and remained clerk for nine years that FIRST term! Imagine my surprise!

I graduated from the Univ of Lowell with a BA in English, with a writing and marketing concentration. I was contacted by Arcadia Publishers in 1998 to write a book about Hudson for their Images of America Series, which has been used by third graders each year for their unit on Hudson History. I have been a part of the Hudson History Tours for 30 years and love inviting the students into the Number 9 One Room School, which has been owned by the Jasper family since 1935. I also accompanied many classes on the school bus to see the hot spots in town for years!

Shawn and I co-wrote a book with Acadia Publishers in 2015 entitled, *Legendary Locals of Hudson New Hampshire.*
Currently, I am the Hudson Historical Society clerk once again.

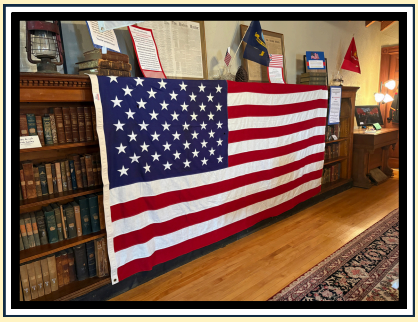
With my love of books and history, cultivated by my parents and my reference librarian Aunt Chrissie, I enjoy learning new things about Hudson and New Hampshire.

Summer Fun and Hometown Heroes at the Hills House

Old Home Days brought plenty of summer fun to the Hills House this August! We were delighted to welcome so many visitors, and our always-popular scavenger hunt was once again a crowd favorite.

This year's exhibit honored our military members and first responders as part of the 250th celebration. Visitors enjoyed a display featuring uniforms, flags, and fascinating facts.

Be sure to make the Hills House part of your Old Home Days plans next year—we look forward to seeing you!

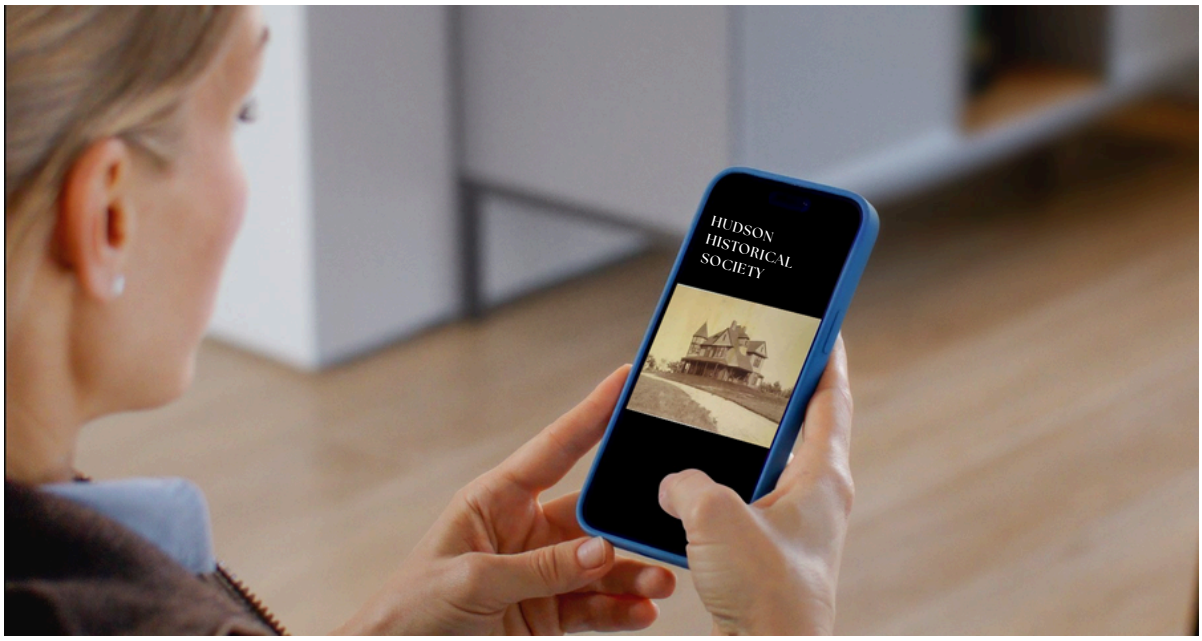




Remember to check our social media frequently (see page 4) to stay up to date with all the latest happenings!

We look forward to seeing you at our events and sharing these wonderful experiences with you. It pays to become a member! Members will receive emails of all upcoming events before they are posted on Social Media.

FOLLOW US!





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