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'Old House Whisperer' to speak at Newbury Library

NEWBURY — The “Old House Whisperer” will pay a visit to the Newbury Library next week.

Residents of Newbury are fortunate to be surrounded by many 17th- and 18th-century homes, yet most people would have trouble accurately dating when these classic antiques were built. Enter John Cole of Haverhill — a.k.a The Old House Whisperer.

At a free lecture hosted by the Newbury Historical Commission on June 15, Cole shares the tell-tale sign posts in discovering the true age of early homes in Essex County. His presentation, “Dating Houses in Essex County,” is slated for 7 p.m. at the library, located at 0 Lunt Street in Byfield. Cole, formerly a property manager for Historic New England, will focus on several historical homes in Newbury that he added just for this special lecture.

Founder of John F. Cole Associates, specializing in antique home sales, Cole handled the sale of the Lord Timothy Dexter mansion in Newburyport. He has rescued several historic homes, organized and oversaw a pioneer preservation covenant project

for the Ipswich Historical Commission, and was the founder of the Benton County Preservation Project in Benton County, Arkansas.

He founded Shaker Workshops, Inc., makers of reproduction Shaker antique furniture, in Concord, taught at the Harvard School of Design, and the University of Arkansas Graduate School of Architecture, and worked extensively with acclaimed American architectural historian, Abbott Lowell Cummings.

By studying the physical evidence of more than 100 First Period buildings to establish patterns of construction and decorative finish, Cummings determined links between building practices in Massachusetts Bay and earlier English prototypes, demonstrating the New World carpenters' and housewrights' adaptation of construction techniques to a new environment. His landmark studies, "Massachusetts and its First Period Buildings" (1979) and *The Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725* (1979), demonstrates that eastern Massachusetts contains the greatest concentration of First Period structures in the nation.

Today, Cole writes books and consults on the historical architecture of private homes and commercial buildings. For information about John Cole visit www.oldhousewhisperer.com.