



# The Hourglass

CCXXXI NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY May 2014

www.Northboroughhistsoc.org

NHS1906@verizon.net

May 16, 2014 –(Pot luck supper at 6:30, Annual and regular meetings at 7:30pm.)

**Program: History of Civil War Songs** – Luan Crosby presents a discussion of the role music played during the Civil War. She talks about specific songs, who wrote them and why, and gives some background and context in terms of what was going on in society at the time. Accompanied by guitar, she sings the songs she speaks about.

*Hosted by Board of Directors and Program Committee.*

## Hunt-Hunting

In March of 1908 Rev. J. C. Kent visited the oldest member of his flock, Stephen Hunt, who had just turned ninety. He told Kent that he had been born on the same site, the present 130 Main Street, not in the house that has recently disappeared, but in a one-story, three-roomed house. He probably would have known a girl who lived across the street, Cynthia Hawes. Later in his life the White Cliffs sprang up across the street—the summer home of Cynthia, by this time the wife of Daniel Wesson. Before that happened, however, that property served as the home of Columbus and Susan Eames.

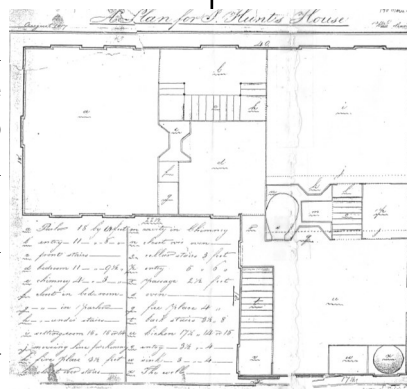
Before he was born, his father (also Stephen) and his uncle, Jeremiah Hunt, made shoes. It is likely that the details of that business in Kent's book, *Northborough History*, which he was writing at the time of his visit, came from that interview in that late day of Stephen's life, for he died about a month later. The Hunts were, Kent wrote, perhaps the earliest shoe manufacturers to employ in Northborough a force of apprentices and journeymen. . . . They owned a license to manufacture in Worcester County under a patent for fastening bottoms to shoes with nails or begs instead of sewing. It is now difficult to learn definitely about patents, as Washington records were burned in 1836, and this industry dates probably earlier than 1820.

We know in fact that in 1817 Jeremiah built the house which continues to stand at 140 Main between Maple and Brigham and began making shoes there in the eastern ell of the house, while the elder Stephen, helped from about 1830 on by

his son and probably a few others, continuing at 140 Main. So for nearly the whole nineteenth century people could order boots and shoes at the two addresses.

By 1850 Jeremiah had his son Winthrop working with him. Of his daughters, Maria, had an interesting life. She became a teacher, and one of the students to whom she issued a certificate of merit was a neighbor across the street: Warren Eames, the first son of Northborough to die in the Civil War. In 1853 Maria married Jothan Bush, from Boylston, who died a few years later, still a young man. In 1865 she wed Charles A. Winn. The two were traveling in Tennessee when Maria's baby was born, and a black woman was quickly summoned as midwife. As a result of this experience the Winns brought the woman's son, Newell Ensley, to live with them while Ensley studied at Newton Andover Theological School. He became a college professor at Shaw University in North Carolina, where he taught rhetoric, natural sciences, and music.

Another of the Winns' activities was erecting, along with Nathaniel C. Whitaker, the brick building at the corner of Main and South Streets in 1882. The building originally had three floors, and the third floor contained a gymnasium where, early in the twentieth century, boxers, including some quite famous ones, trained. Among the boxers was a young man named James Burke, and the Winns' daughter, Evangeline, she who had been born in Nashville, fell in love with him. Maria was not at all happy that her daughter had chosen an Irish boxer as her companion, but the two married, and so far as I can tell, lived happily. Their granddaughter, Helen Burke, provided some of the



information for this article.

Maria's own marrying was not over. In 1886 Charles Winn died, and five years later she married a third husband, Henry H. Cooke of Barre. She continued to own the building, then the Assabet Hotel, along with Whitaker. Whitaker operated several businesses in town with various partners, one of them a button business in the present Sawyer's Bowladrome building with Josiah Proctor. An undated business card in our archive lists N. C. Whitaker as the Northborough distributor for Smith & Wesson firearms—most likely in the brick corner building that he owned with Maria. Her parents probably went to school with the girl who became Mrs. Wesson (it would have been the Central School, at that time the building on School Street that subsequently became the home of the Northborough Grange).

In those days everybody in Northborough—Hunts, Haweses, Eameses, Wessons, Winns, Whitakers, Proctors, whoever—seemed to be connected.

*Bob Ellis, Historian*

**News from the Curator**

The Museum will open for the season on Sunday, May 4th from 1:00 to 4:00. Downstairs in the meeting hall, members will display their talents with projects, hobbies, crafts, etc. in an exhibit and sale, "Made in Northborough". There will also be a Raffle Table and Bake Sale. To reserve a space or for more information, please call Beryl Krouse at 508 - 3 9 3 - 6 5 0 4 o r e m a i l h e r a t berylkrouse@yahoo.com. Our new web site is up and running at www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org. Many thanks to Cathy Cairns for all her creative and thorough work.

The "Meet and Greet" table is doing a

wonderful job of enlisting new members: ten in March and six in April. Again our thanks go to hosts Jenifer Bakkala and Hilary Wilson.

**Accessions:**

Wedding gown accessories from Danielle Wilson  
Many articles and news clippings of Northborough history from Bucky Rogers  
News clippings from Bob Trimble  
Books, genealogy, tea cup and jewelry of the Carruth family from Marjorie Allen

*Ellen Racine, Curator*

**Director's Meeting**  
**May 13, 2014**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Northborough Historical Society Building**

**Membership**  
**Northborough Historical Society**  
**Membership Dues:**  
**Regular \$15.00; Student and Seniors (65 and over) \$10.00; Family \$35.00; and Life \$250.00.**  
Dues should be sent to  
Judy Bissett  
300 Ball St.  
Northborough, MA 01532  
Checks should be made out to the **Northborough Historical Society**  
**Red square on your label indicates that it is time to renew your membership.**



Change service requested  
**Northborough Historical Society**  
**300 Ball Street**  
**Northborough, MA 01532**

