



The Hourglass

CCIV Northborough Historical Society October 2011

Meeting October 21, 2011 - Program -

"Harry Truman" and the perilous times he entered and endured as President of the United States. Presented by Mark Bashour.

Hosted by Sandra Chaurette and Mary Mahoney.

Walking Through History: Ridge Road

On some past Octobers I've invited you to take a walk along a Northborough street. This year we will walk with a group of people who are from six to twenty-one years old-but all long deceased, for it is a crisp winter day in 1860.

We gather at the corner of Ridge Road and Lyman Street, which you will observe is south of the railroad tracks, in front of the Bemis house. Approaching from Lyman Street we see Mary Brigham, who is 13, and her brother Francis, 8, along with Mary Walker, 15, and her brothers Henry, 13, and Frank, who is only six and probably in his first year of school. They have been joined by 11-year-old Moses Green. Now the Bemises spill out of their house. Seven of the ten Bemis children are ready for the trek to school, from 17-year-old Adelbert down to Justin, who is 7. With these children is an older person, essentially a young man. Shortly after we set forth, Adeline and Dorace Lever, both teenagers from Ridge Road's only other family, are at hand.

Membership
Northborough Historical
Society

Membership Renewal Time

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

Director's Meeting
Historical Society Building
Oct. 11, 2011
7:30PM

Historical Preservation

The Worcester Clock Tower, a landmark on the local horizon for over a hundred years, is very close to being demolished. The Commonwealth has no money for its preservation. No private developer has yet come forward to take it on. I urge everyone to support saving

When Elijah Bemis settled here, there were no railroad tracks, but those of our group at this end of Ridge Road must now cross them, which means passing over the ridge on which the tracks lie. This is not the ridge, however, that gives the road its name. (People destined to live here in the twenty-first century will, If they look carefully, pick out this earlier path, where their Ridge Road will make a sharp turn and eventually intersect Lyman Street north of the tracks.)

Now we pass over Stirrup Brook. In the section of the 1855 map that you can see, Bartlett Pond is much smaller. At some point before 1870 a new dam near Bartlett Street enlarged it. If our group is walking close to the pond in 1860, we are seeing what is a quite new topographical development.

No one lives along this stretch of Ridge Road. Trees are dominant as we come to the ridge itself. At the juncture of the road that will be named for the Collins family who live just past its other end, we may meet ten-year-old Catherine, who speaks somewhat differently from the rest of our group who hale mostly from Massachusetts,

this fine old building. Please visit the Facebook site, Save the Worcester Clock Tower, and sign the petition from Preservation Worcester. It is estimated that it would cost \$3 million to tear it down. How much better it would be to use that money to stabilize it and give it a potential future.

Melanie Magee

for she was born in Ireland.

Now we are on the ridge, which is an esker, or "a narrow ridge of coarse gravel deposited by a stream flowing in or under a decaying glacial ice sheet." A hill populated mainly by trees rises to our left. As we descend towards the road that will eventually be named Maple Street, we see ahead of us a one-story building to which our group and other young people from other roads in the eastern part of town are headed. It has no grounds, for these children get most of their exercise on their journeys back and forth rather than at recess. To our left is farmland, and to our right we see a red brick house not far away. A man is hurrying along towards the school.

"Here comes Old Sargent," one of the children says, and they start singing:

Sargent's coming, Sargent's coming,

Look out! Look out!

See him running, see him running,

School begins, school begins.

Old Sargent is not very old. He is a student at Dartmouth College and teaches these students-there are fifty overall-in this one-room schoolhouse. One of these students is almost certainly older than Caleb Sargent. He is the man who came out of the Bemis household. He is twenty-one, and like Catherine Collins in one respect. He is not a native of the United States but of Canada, and his native language is French. In season he is Elijah Bemis's hired man; in the winter he attends school full-time. He, like many of the children in this group has not missed a day of school this winter, and will not, despite the inevitable coldness, snow, and ice, and the fact that illnesses, including scarlet fever and chicken pox, are ravaging Northborough this winter.

Caleb and Peter and the children are about to kick the snow off their boots and troop into the East District School, School #3 as it is also known, but their further adventures will have to wait for another Hourglass.

Bob Ellis, Historian

Curator's News

Applefest was a huge, successful fundraiser this year with many participants at our luncheon, organ concert with Allyn Phelps III, ice cream social and the Museum. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped out and especially to Forest Lyford who does

a fabulous job of organizing the events.

One more file cabinet has been squeezed into the archive to help relieve our on-going storage problems. My thanks to Paul Derosier for donating it.

We had a pleasant visit from two nieces of Rev. Josiah C. Kent recently. He was one of the founders of our Historical Society and author of Northborough's History, 1921, and he also kept several journals which we refer to frequently. They donated photographs and filled us in on his personal life and surprised us with his rocking chair! It was great to learn more about the man to whom we are greatly indebted.

New Accessions:

Several 3-ring binders of former music teacher, James Scott, his students and programs, etc. from his wife, Olive Anne Kimball-Scott

Photos of Northborough teachers, 1930s and clothing from 1890s from Dr. Mary Ann Breault

Copies of photos and several enlargements from Rick Nieber

Hoop petticoat from the Bicentennial from Claire Swan

Rev. Kent's rocking chair, photos, and copy of a journal donated in honor of the Spear family by Suzanne Lacey and Linda Earp.

Ellen Racine, Curator