



The Hourglass

CCIV Northborough Historical Society November 2011

**Meeting December 2, 2011 - 7:30 Program -
Hats, Heroism and Hospitality - first lady Dolley**

Madison. Janet Parnes will portray Dolley Madison, highlighting her life in the context of the Colonial and Federal eras.

Hosted by Carolyn and Henry Squillante

The East School Students of 1860

On a January day in 1860, you may remember, we accompanied a group of East School students to the schoolhouse on Maple Street opposite the Ridge Road intersection. The school occupied this position as far back as 1780. Our companions were attending the second building on that site, constructed in 1795 "of gigantic proportions (for that day), being 27 by 22 feet," according to Rev. Kent, the Northborough historian.

Sarah Bartlett, a student in the 1830s and a teacher there in 1865, left an account of the building.

"I remember the large fireplace on the east side and the long rows of seats [apparently two deep] on the north terminating at the teacher's desk. . . . The old-fashioned desk was closed at the front, open on the teacher's side. A very nice place underneath to shelter unruly boys. One of them escaped and ran out of doors, when a larger boy gave chase, caught and returned him to durance rule." On another occasion several boys were caught carving initials (rashly their own, it seems) on their seats. Called in, the school committee ordered a whipping of the guilty boys. The teacher tried to mitigate the punishment by allowing the boys to whip each other, but they proved too gentle, and he was forced to administer "a few cuts."

Membership

Northborough Historical
Society

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
Nov. 15, 2011
7:30PM

Member News

Welcome to new members
Ms, Diane Keating Cox, Mr.
Robert Marchatta and Ms,
Jennifer Bakkala.

Curator's News

Although the Museum has
closed for the winter
season, we will always

Whether boys were so contained and constrained by 1860 we do not know, but Sarah in her later days as teacher gained a reputation as an outstanding disciplinarian. As a student herself, she had maintained a position at the head of the third grade class because she was shortest-until a shorter boy showed up. "I never forgave him for usurping the place and spoiling my class," she claimed.

Kent's research on the East School turned up the fact that in 1860 "the average attendance reached nearly 93%. Twenty-six scholars were not absent from school a single day of the winter term." The

first seven names on Kent's perfect attendance list were Warren Eames, William Warren, Charles E. Warren, Joseph Proctor, Albert Bemis, Peter Gamache, and Gustavus Richardson. Except for William Warren and Gamache, all of those teen-aged boys, students in the upper grades of the school in 1860, died a few years later in the Civil War.

Unlike seven other Northborough men who served in the 42nd Infantry Regiment, Warren survived his duty, was discharged in 1864, and the following year married Rosa Crosby. They had five children. Because our archive contains many volumes of Rosa's diary, the rest of William Warren's life is well-documented. Many of Gamache's recollections of his nearly three years in the 34th Infantry Regiment are also in our collection. In 1868 he

open up for special groups, visitors, researchers, etc. so please feel free to call us. During the off season, exhibit changes are being planned for the May opening. My thanks to all the volunteers who served as hosts on Sundays. With good newspaper announcements that brought in many visitors, we had a busy season and received nice reviews of our Museum.

New Accessions:

Historical Society papers from Dick Atwood

News articles and book on Mark Fidrych from Connie Patch

Bicentennial tile and N. National Bank advertising clip from Kevin Carroll

Metal signs from Proctor Lumber Co. and N.E. Coke from Arlene Marshall

White knit evening dress from Claire Swan

Ellen Racine, Curator

married Orianna Bemis, one of the children in whose house he had lived. They also had five children. He farmed in Northborough, and they later settled in Shrewsbury, Peter and Orianna both living into their late eighties.

On December 21, 1865 the seventy-year-old East School building burned to the ground. Another building was quickly erected (across the street, according to Sarah Bartlett), opening a mere fifteen days later. The final version of the East School rose at the far end of Maple Street, which in the late nineteenth century stretched for a short distance beyond Bartlett Street, on the site of the present Algonquin Regional driveway.

In 1881 several members of this class were among the leaders of an alumni group, the East School Association. About two hundred graduates of the East School gathered at Wood's Grove near Bartlett Pond on September 1 for the first of thirty-seven annual summer meetings. The members shared lunch and exchanged reminiscences, with games and water sports for the younger members. One of the younger Bemises, Justin, served several times as president of the group, and Peter Gamache attended regularly until he was an old man, invariably memorializing the veterans who had fought in the great war.

The district schools were replaced by the new Hudson Street School in 1895. By 1918, with few graduates attending the meetings, the East School Association finally disbanded. The picture shows the group at their usual picnic spot near Bartlett Pond in the early years of the twentieth century.

Bob Ellis, Historian