



# The Hourglass

CCVII Northborough Historical Society January 2012

## Meeting January 27, 2012- 7:30 Program -

### Wachusett- The Building of The Reservoir. Eamon

Earls will discuss how Boston's quest for water changed four towns and a way of life.

*Hosted by Jodie Martinson and Judy and Frank Bissett*

## The Burning of the Church

The following is from a book of recollections by Dorothy Hayes Wild, who on December 22, 1945 lived with her family at 25 Church Street. She was nine years old at the time and obviously reconstructed the event later with the help of other family members. "Ev" is her father and "Maggie" her mother. Changes that I've made in Mrs. Wild's account are few and minor.

"Ev, get up, our church is on fire! Call the fire department, hurry! I'll wake the girls and make sure they're kept inside! Hurry, we must call Gordon too, so he can help!" Maggie gasped. [Her brother, Gordon Walker, lived at 10 Church Street and was a Northborough selectman.]

"Maggie, help me get my clothes and boots and I'll get some help," Ev replied, stumbling crazily from bed. "Oh, we have to get Andy and Billie alerted. We don't know if it'll spread down the hill, and it's so cold out! Get over to Andrew's, Maggie, and help Billie." [The references are to minister Andrew Rosenberger and his wife Williamena.]

"Oh, please, Lord, let it stop. The whole thing looks like it's going to tumble." Maggie was hysterical by now and sobbing uncontrollably.

Maggie rushed around, yelling at the girls to stay inside by all means not to leave the house. She

## 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

Director's Meeting  
Historical Society Building  
Jan. 17, 2012  
7:30PM

## Kent's Current Events

### Jan. 26, 1916.

For a week past we have been having some pretty warm weather, as the following figures will show. They are taken from the published statement of the Boston Weather Bureau, and are therefore accurate:

Thursday, Jan. 20 41 °

frantically phoned the firehouse and her brother. May and Dottie awoke in stupor, trying to sleepily digest the chaotic state around them and hushing each other for fear they too would awaken Donna-Jean. The girls traipsed into a front bedroom and could hardly believe their eyes. They had never witnessed anything like it! The old church was engulfed in shooting flames and tumbling down onto the surrounding snow-covered ground.

"Oh, May, what are we going to do? Our church is burning all down!" Dottie, full of sobs, cried.

"I know. Where is Daddy? Oh, my goodness, why is this happening at Christmas," May replied in convulsive tears.

"Girls, girls, please come on downstairs with me now." Maggie quietly and weakly spoke as she ushered them down the front stairwell. "Daddy is helping put out the fire, and we cannot do anything but pray, and we'll do that down next to the Christmas tree you both helped decorate, OK?"

As fate would have it, of course, the beloved old Meeting House did burn to the ground. The firemen and every resident around turned out to help. But the hoses were frozen, Mill Pond too far away to pump water uphill to the church, so the huge old timber structure tumbled in a huge heap. . . On top of the smoldering black pile of burnt embers lay the strong Paul Revere bell, resting on its side.

The congregation gathered immediately, renting the local Grange Hall, and put forth a plan for reconstruction with Andrew at the helm. 'All things were possible' was what Andy reassuringly said, appraising the situation like a businessman as well as a minister. . . . Maggie, her old patriotic and Christian faith prevailing, offered to chair the Building Fund for the Second Meeting House. . . .

"Come on, May, get yourself going. We're running up to help uncover the church silver," Dottie yelled soon after the embers had sufficiently

Friday, " 21,	52°
Saturday, " 22,	66°
Sunday, " 23,	45°
Monday, " 24,	41°
Tuesday, " 25,	59°
Wednesday, 26,	66°

### **Jan.4, 1918 Frank Carey's Fire**

Frank Carey's house, in the west part of town (the Rubber Mill Property) burned to the ground this afternoon. House and furnishings a total loss. Mr. Carey has a wife and eight children. The weather was excessively; cold for several mornings past the mercury has been from 10°to 26° below zero.

cooled. A renovation plan was already in place and, being the closest neighbors, the girls wanted to help dig up some treasures. Everybody will be done by the time we get there." She knew the local boys were going to be there and wanted to show them that girls could do it too.

Rummaging through heavy burnt timbers was a dirty and smudgy job for girls and boys. However, Andrew knew this was a great way for the youth to gain some valued time together doing something very worthwhile. He appointed a few able-bodied churchmen to oversee them and left it up to the older youth to see that no one got hurt. The church kitchen's silverware and salvaged goods became a huge pile over the months of recovery. Then all had to be cleaned. The youth of this vigorous church with its charismatic leader worked diligently alongside its many members for what was to be five years towards a monumental goal.

*The picture, showing the result of their work, appeared in the October 9, 1950 issue of Life magazine.*

Bob Ellis, Historian

