



The Hourglass

CCXIX Northborough Historical Society March 2013

www.Northboroughhistsoc.org

NHS1906@verizon.net

Meeting March 22, 2013, 7:30 PM Northborough Historical Society

Program: The History of Our Landscapes-Ron McAdow, Sudbury Valley Trustee, will give a slide presentation describing the evolution of Massachusetts' landscape and it's population of flora and fauna. Changes caused by natural events and those brought by human occupation will be discussed.

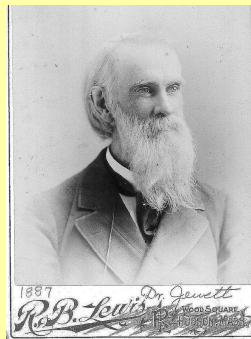
Hosted by Lynne and Paul Derosier and Carol and Buzz Bostock

Dr. Henry A. Jewett, 1820-1895

Of the three or four men who served Northborough as physicians in the middle of the nineteenth century, the one we can know best is Dr. Henry Jewett, because, thanks to one of his descendants, we have the two big volumes in which he recorded his appointments. Born in Pepperell, Massachusetts in 1820, he graduated from a school which the woman identified as "a medical

school in Philadelphia." Perhaps it was the oldest medical school in the nation, established well back in the eighteenth century at the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania). After practicing briefly in New Hampshire, he began practicing in Northborough in July of 1849.

In the early years he charged twenty-five cents, sometimes fifty cents, sometimes more. On August 17, 1849 Calvin Hastings paid three dollars. The entries in the doctor's record identified the nature



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

Curator News

Though the museum is cold and uninviting during the winter months, we still have occasional brave visitors and cub scout troops eager to learn of our history. Work

of the case briefly; in Hastings's case I spotted the word "labor." Sure enough, the vital records of the town show that on that date John Calvin Hastings was born-to Calvin's wife Betsey. Being the second of seventeen appointments on that day, the delivery of young Mr. Hastings probably occurred very early in the morning.

How long a trip did the doctor make to the Hastings house? He built the house which is today 60 Main Street, but in those early weeks in town it most likely would not yet have been ready. There is evidence to suggest that at first the Jewett's lived with Dr. Henry Barnes in his house immediately west of the public library. The Hastings family lived in the approximate location of today's medical building at 112 Main Street.

Seventeen patients was a long day's work. In his first six months in Northborough he made more than one thousand entries in his book, about 175 per month or 25 per week, and the numbers do not change much over the years. The entries often read simply "to visit," sometimes "medicine," sometimes a brief description of an accident or illness. He also was called on to view dead bodies, including a rather shocking number of people who died in railroad accidents.

There were fewer than two thousand people in town, and some of them, such as Milo Hildreth, a prominent industrialist who lived at 64 Main, next to Dr. Jewett's house and directly across from the present Town Office Building saw him frequently. Dr. Jewett marked each patient as "paid" or-more often-"on the ledger." Although he made entries for later payments, the relative infrequency of these payments suggests that many patients never did pay. Some paid with products: a bushel of apples, cabbages, fish. One paid with one pear tree and two ash trees, one by lending the doctor a buggy for one day. Columbus Eames, who lived where Daniel Wesson later built his mansion and was a relative of the doctor, for he had married a

is beginning on a new Business/Industry display for the front showcase, which should be completed by our May opening.

New Accessions:

1986 graduation dress of Susan Atwood Bessom from Cindy and Dick Atwood
45 bottles retrieved from the old Crawford Farm by Lora E. Grady and Linda and Philip Grady-Backholm
1950s Yellow wool spring coat and white hat from Llanda Richardson.
Ellen Racine, Curator

Kent's Current Events

March 23, 1915. Special Election.

A special election was held today for the choice of representative for this district. At the November election the vote was tie between Mr. Whitney and Mr. Cobb - both of Clinton. At today's election Mr. Cobb declined to run, so a Mr. Kittredge was put in his place. Mr. Whitney, the republican, won by more than 400 votes.

March 25, 1915. A lecture.
Judge Jonathan Smith of Clinton gave a most interesting and instructive address this evening at the Historical Hall, the occasion being the regular meeting of the Northborough Historical

Pepperell Jewett, characteristically paid with a bag of meal. The doctor usually entered his income for the year, about one thousand dollars in the early years, something over two thousand dollars later in the century.

When Dr. Jewett came to Northborough, he was probably clean-shaven. Beards started to sprout on men in the 1850s, and by the 1880s old men almost invariably boasted long white beards. In those bearded later years he sometimes consulted with other, younger town physicians-Ira Guphill and Josiah Stanley. On his seventy-fifth birthday in 1895 his friends gave him a walnut bookcase. Unfortunately he did not use it long, for he died seven months later.

Dr. Jewett's two volumes, now on display in our archive, permit the study of a number of topics, such as the history of health in Northborough during his decades in town, especially if combined with other sources, such as Dr. Joseph Allen's record of deaths and town records, which often give details about causes. Such investigations would take much more research than any I have done here.

The doctor's house at 60 Main Street retains a connection with him. Betty Proctor, his great granddaughter, married Robert Gray, and family members continue to operate Gray's Carpet Center in the house that their ancestor built in the mid-nineteenth century.

Bob Ellis, Historian

Society. His subject was "Toryism in Worcester County".

**Director's Meeting
Historical Society
Building
7:30 PM March
12, 2013**

**Our mailing address has
changed
Northborough Historical
Society
300 Ball St.
Northborough, MA 01532**