



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCXXXI

Northborough Historical Society

September 2014

www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org

An impressive list of programs is planned for the 2014-15 season. Please see the program schedule attached to this e-mail.

The next meeting of the Northborough Historical Society is scheduled for **Friday, September 26**, when Mark Bashour will present “**1912-1920 and the Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.**” Learn about the events that took place from 1912 to 1920 and meet the main figures involved in passing the amendment that gave women the right to vote. The evening will begin with a pot luck supper at **6:30 p.m.**; the program will start at **7:30 p.m.**

Dues are Due! September is the time for members to renew their memberships and pay annual dues. Please stop by the welcome table at the next meeting, or mail a check to: *Membership Secretary, Northborough Historical Society, PO Box 661, Northborough, MA 01532.*

The Board of Directors will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, October 14.

History Corner

by Bob Ellis, Historian

Where Is Rutland Road?

Shortly after moving to Northborough in 1966 Christine and I drove about investigating the town. One day on Pleasant Street we came to a sign that said "Rutland Road." Soon after we started up this new avenue we realized that Rutland Road was nothing more than the driveway of a home which we soon learned belonged to the Rich family. Those of you who have been around Northborough for a while know that the Riches lived directly behind the site of the Middle School, which in 1966 was an empty field.

Some years later, after the Rich property had been abandoned, I went to take a look at the property and saw that Rutland Road had proceeded up the hill beyond the house. Walking along its route, I saw no signs of any long-abandoned building sites. None of the nineteenth-century maps of Northborough show any signs of habitations or even of the road itself, but it certainly was a road proceeding westerly over the hill, emerging at Cherry Street. As a road, it had apparently been out of use for a very long time, but I could imagine that it might have continued on to Rutland. The hill seems to have been called Bartlett Hill.

What reminded me of these experiences lately was something I read in a 200th anniversary booklet that the Historical Society issued in 1966. It gathered together several papers, most, if not all of them, the subjects of Historical Society programs between 1906 and 1957. They were the work of a variety of contributors: Clarence Buckley, Edwin Proctor, Rev. Charles Pease, Pease's daughter Elizabeth (a paper read at her high school graduation in 1927), Edith Valentine, Mary Evelyn Smith,

Membership

Annual Dues:

Single \$20
Student/Senior \$15
Family \$45
Lifetime \$250

Send dues to:

Northborough Historical Soc.
Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 661
Northborough, MA 01532

*Please make checks payable to Northborough
Historical Society*

Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

The Museum opened on September 7th for the fall season. Glen Campbell, organist at the Church of the Nativity entertained us with an organ concert. Along with other selections, Glen played patriotic songs to commemorate the 240th anniversary of the Worcester revolution of 1774, in which the Northborough militia marched to Worcester to join other towns in the protest.

Northborough's 250 anniversary is coming up in 2016. We will be starting a sewing group at the Historical Society on Monday, October 6 from 1:30 to 4:00 to work on our period costumes. Bring in some ideas and we'll help select a pattern and fabric and get started.

The Zeh and Proctor School third-graders visited the museum in

who lived at the Allen parsonage for thirty years, and Alice Kimball.

The earliest was composed by John Davis Estabrook, who, as you might guess, was related to the Davis family. His paper, "The Meeting House Common," tracing aspects of Northborough's history, was presented to the Historical Society shortly after its organization. It is thirteen pages long and must have required a couple of hours to read. What struck me, though, was the demand such a talk made on its audience. Well-researched and well-expressed, it nevertheless imposes the necessity of very careful attention by anyone *reading* it today. To follow it in its oral presentation on the evening of November 25, 1906 must have been quite a task.

I was much puzzled to read therein that "Rutland Road crossed Cold Harbor Bridge and thence ran northwest along the south end of the pond-hole and joined Brigham Way at the same Southwest corner of the Brigham farm." I had already gleaned that Brigham Way, near Whitney Street (and probably including the existing road immediately behind the Unitarian church), linked John Brigham's late seventeenth-century sawmill and his home, the Brigham "farm" on Church Street, a little beyond the Howard Street intersection (to name several structures that didn't exist in his time).

But what was Rutland Road doing way over near the common on which the Unitarian church stands? Well, I had skipped over Estabrook's answer. Rutland Road was the road into town now known as Pleasant Street. At one time you could have come right into the heart of Northborough over Rutland Road. In the eighteenth and perhaps the very early nineteenth century you could not have come there via Church Street, two strips of which were divided by a swamp. Later the section from Fay Lane to the outer Pleasant Street connection had to be elevated, as it is today. To proceed from the Holloway house (the present Maney house), where the future town of Northborough was charted, to the location of the new

June. My thanks to the tour guides who entertained them with Northborough's history: George Hamilton, JoAnn Sullivan, Linda Corbin, Bob Ellis, Arlene Marshall and Kathy Pierce.

Recent Accessions:

Photographs from Rick & Marie Nieber

Wedding gown from Mary Kennerly

Northborough-made buttons from Carol Bostock

Many items and papers from Jane Fletcher

Photographs taken by Laurie Ann Mathes Frederick

Algonquin banner and vintage paper dolls from Paul & Shirley Dwinell

Parks Department log book and "The Stylus" from Craig Schofield
O'Brien's crayons and booklet from JoAnn Sullivan

Army uniform and Northborough Manor menu from Bob Marchetta
Photos of the Sparrow family from Joyce Sparrow Prosser

Photos from Donna Morelli taken by her father T. L. Agos

Our Newest Members

Mary and Paul Desautels
Joseph and Patricia Benedict
Larry Beatty
Charles and Marie Frankian

church (the ancestor of the present Unitarian church in the 1740s), the best way would have been by "Rutland Road," to the present Church-Howard Street intersection.

Pleasant Street was simply a way around the swamp, just as East Main Street was a way around another swamp between the White Cliffs and Bartlett Street through which Route 20 did not proceed until about 1930. You didn't wade through swamps, you went around them. If you live on Pleasant Street short of that turn that takes you back out to Church Street beyond its swamp, you live on Rutland Road.

You are receiving The Hourglass newsletter because you are a member, or have expressed an interest, in the Northborough Historical Society. If you no longer wish to be on our mailing list, please send an e-mail to hourglass@northboroughhistoricalsociety.org with the word "Unsubscribe" in the subject line.