



# THE HOURGLASS

## NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

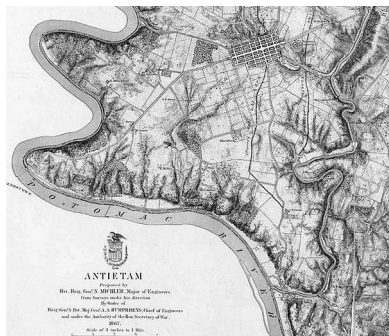
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Northborough Historical Society  
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

December 2016

## Northborough's 250th Year

### January 27, 2017 Program



**The Topographical Engineer and Civil War Era Mapping** by Greg Webster, Lt. Col. and Commander of the Northeast Topographical Engineers. Greg will present the historical role of the Topographical Engineer during the Civil War, the making of maps and surveys; from scouting and reconnaissance and making of field sketches, to finished map production and methods of map reproduction. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m., at the Society building, 52 Main Street, Northborough. The event is free and open to the public.



### History Corner

by Bob Ellis

#### Northborough: The Last 30 Years

Writing the history of the present is difficult. The historian knows more about now than about any past era—but not how posterity will judge the relative importance of these bits of knowledge. The writer may be unaware of matters that will loom large for later observers. One is more likely to try to judge sequences of events rather than single events.

Most of us probably agree that the computer has impacted everyone strikingly in the past thirty years, even if we are not dedicated to it. We have acquired the Internet, E-mail, and social networks of which we knew nothing thirty years ago. We perceive not only the possibilities of the computer, but how often we must depend on it. If the bank's computer system goes down, we can learn nothing about the funds we have there. If the garage mechanic cannot understand computers, he or she cannot repair our vehicle. Our dependence on the computer alerts us to possibilities of great perils awaiting a society in which vast computer-driven systems lie open to failures, including vicious attacks by hackers, whether true enemies or simply mischievous electronically-gifted pleasure seekers. The miniaturization of electronic components means that the next

person you meet may be taking your picture or performing some other hidden form of reconnaissance.

Consider the development of local transportation. Until 1991, when a longstanding request for downtown traffic lights was at last fulfilled, we could only barge out of South Street or Church Street onto Main and hope for the best. How did we ever do it? Northborough had had two chances in the 1980s, by the way, to bring those two intersections into one. A gap was created for a bank opposite Church Street on Main which, along with some troublesome land taking, might have been used for traffic instead. After the Town Hall was destroyed, the town with even less land taking could have made a connection through that gap. The main property that would have to fall ended up falling later anyway (for the sake of yet another bank which opened and soon thereafter closed).

#### Membership

##### Annual Dues:

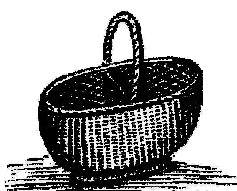
Single — \$20  
Student/Senior — \$15  
Family — \$45  
Lifetime — \$250

Send dues to:  
Northborough Historical Society  
Membership Secretary  
P.O. Box 661  
Northborough, MA 01532

*Please make checks payable to Northborough Historical Society*

Reminder: If there is a red dot in the address panel of this Hourglass, it is time to renew your membership.

*(continued on page 2)*



### Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

Although the Museum is closed for the season we do open up when asked. Last Saturday a cub scout den of 8, with their parents, held their meeting in the hall, viewed photos of Northborough in the late 1800s and then toured the museum. They were

most fascinated with the mastodon bone fragments, Civil War display and watching a video of Mark Fidrych pitching a baseball game. They are working toward their history badge.

Since it will be the hundredth anniversary of Northborough's involvement in WWI in 2017, we are planning an exhibit to remember that time in history. This will be ready for the museum opening in May.

My thanks to Paul Derosier for arranging and overseeing the repair of the sprinkler system in the museum,

and for everything else that he does behind the scenes.

#### Recent Accessions

Photos of Northborough's 250th Anniversary Applefest Parade from Forest Lyford

A 1940s dress from Arlene Marshall  
Umbrella and sweatshirt of WCIS bank with Northborough connections from Diane Guldner

1983 Middle School yearbook from Jeff Kazaras

**History Corner, continued**

That connection would have had to nip some of the bordering land on the east side of Church Street—but the family at 6 Church Street would not have had to face a road running virtually to their front doorstep, as they now will. But the town preferred the erection of a simulated Town Hall which, thereafter, nobody has succeeded in loving.

We will probably have those two intersections forever—but some improvements have been made. In addition to the traffic lights, the later widening of Main Street with the creation of turning lanes has reduced our driving agonies considerably. And the newer version of the midtown CVS is at least an improvement over the inappropriate mall.

Let’s consider the adoption of MIS/GIS. The cover and several pages of the town’s 1997 *Annual Report*, gave us aerial views of town. Two reports earlier, the town engineer at the time had introduced this venture presciently:

The Engineering and Planning Departments have been working on a proposal to obtain a Geographic Information System (GIS) for the Town. The system will allow us to access all land-based information from one source rather than having to manually retrieve

information from file cabinets and buildings throughout the Town. The speed, efficiency and accuracy of GIS far exceeds our present system and would be a huge benefit both to the Town and the economic development effort. Once installed GIS would be used by the Engineering Department, Planning Department, Conservation Commission, Water and Sewer Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Board of Health, Building Department, Assessors, and various boards and commissions.

This move to centralize and prudently manage great stores of information reflects a similar national preoccupation. Such changes do not solve all of our problems and inevitably create new ones in the process. Nevertheless we have devoted our efforts to the explosion and consolidation of information as a key to success.

In 2016, Northborough’s 250<sup>th</sup> year, the town took the bold steps of purchasing a distinctive structure of its past, the White Cliffs, and of endorsing the construction of something it has long lacked, a town common. With these initiatives we pass hopefully into the town’s next two hundred fifty years.

**Snapshot in Time**

Congratulations to the winners of *Snapshot in Time*, our photograph contest held in celebration of Northborough’s 250th Anniversary. Entries were judged in each of five categories, and there was a people’s choice award.

**Buildings**

Angus Gilbert for "White Cliffs"

**Sights and Scenes**

Helen Calverley for "Aqueduct Bridge"

**Northborough at Play**

Seth LoRusso for "2015 Applefest Parade"

**Northborough at Work**

Alexandra Molnar for "Davidian Bros. Farm"

**People's Choice Award**

Helen Calverley for "Aqueduct Arch"

**Northborough People**

Edward Bombard for "Fred George, Town Moderator, and Family"

Our thanks to all who participated and helped us capture Northborough at 250.

