



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCLXI

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

June 2017

Next Meeting: September 2017 Enjoy the Summer!



History Corner

by Bob Ellis

Portraits and Paintings

The walls of the Northborough Historical Society Museum remind us that in the nineteenth century portraits often signified importance. Two members of the Davis family look out from the north wall, one from the south wall. Isaac Davis was important in several ways, one being that he established a tannery from which came the leather of the boots and shoes local people wore. The fifth of his five sons, John, became a Massachusetts governor and United States congressman and senator. His portrait by Francis Alexander on the south wall rates as the best in the collection.

On the east wall two portraits of Captain Cyrus Gale attract attention because they show us a young man and the same man in the late stages of a life that lasted ninety-four years. Between the two hangs a portrait of his second wife, Sarah, one of the few prominently portrayed women in the display. Further along we come to Caleb Chapin, whose factory made textiles out of reprocessed wool. He gave his name to a section of town important enough to deserve its own post office, the neat little frontage of which exists just around the corner.

On the west wall is an early portrait of John Crawford Wyman, the Northborough man who earned a spot on the staff of a new magazine, the *Atlantic Monthly*, in 1857, capped his Civil War service by serving on the honor guard that conducted the body of Abraham Lincoln back to Illinois in 1865, and later became one of the nation's most popular public speakers.

In the twentieth century we find not portraits but scenes of life. Marguerite Peaslee, born in Hopkinton, spent many years teaching Northborough students

“to develop in the child a love of beauty that he will apply to his own surroundings.” She depicted Northborough scenes in both oils and water colors. “Images of Marguerite Peaslee” on the web will give you samples of her work.

J. Thurston Marshall, born in Worcester, settled in Northborough. Although he could paint representationally, as his painting of the old town hall on the west wall of the museum shows, he favored a semi-abstract approach which is well-illustrated in the pen-and-ink drawings that he made for the 1967-68 *Northborough Annual Report*. (One example is a scene Marshall could have envisioned from his home studio at the corner of School and Summer Streets.) This approach also characterizes the painting that hangs next to the town hall painting. Up close it looks very abstract and unrecognizable to many people, but Marshall knew how to combine reality as it looks to our inartistic eyes and something more from his own vision. Standing back, viewers usually can see that it is the White Cliffs. What you see in a typical Marshall work is not a meaningless jumble but reality tempered by a vision.

Another artist born in Worcester was Sheldon Berlyn. Serving in the Korean War, he took to drawing military scenes. After the war, he developed his talent by studying at the Worcester Art Museum. Living then in Northborough, he made a number of drawings of local sites. He left Northborough at the age of twenty-nine for the University of Buffalo, where he taught and painted for forty years. His work, which appears in more than fifty collections, finally became more abstract than Marshall's.

In addition to the works in the museum, there are plenty more to see in the art shows in our meeting hall. If you missed the recent one, be sure to attend the next one. If you are not familiar with these shows, you will perhaps be surprised by the high quality of the entries. The Historical Society has become one of the great cultural attractions in this area and proudly displays works of the Arts Guild, more than a half century old and involving artists not only from this town but from many surrounding communities.

Dues are Due September 2017

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

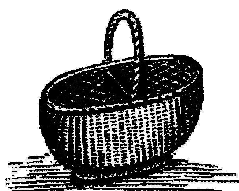
☐ I am interested in volunteer opportunities

Rates: ☐ Single--\$20 ☐ Senior / Student--\$15 ☐ Family--\$45 ☐ Life Membership--\$250

☐ An additional donation is enclosed \$_____ Thank you!

The Northborough Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Please give this completed form along with payment (cash, or check made payable to Northborough Historical Society) to any Society officer, or mail to: Northborough Historical Society, Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 661, Northborough, MA 01532



Curator's News by Ellen Racine

On a recent Saturday Ernie and I opened the Museum at the request of William Hosley from Enfield, CT. His mission, we discovered, is capturing information about

community-centered museums. He states, "Half of our cultural patrimony is preserved and presented in house museums and community-based historical organizations." Visit his Facebook page *Housing Our History* to view his comments on our Museum and our current WWI exhibit (posted Tuesday May 22; Monday May 21 and Sunday May 20).

Our summer student intern, a senior at Colorado State University, has started and will be focusing her attention on transferring our collection onto the PastPerfect computer software program. We are pleased to have her help.

Thank you!

The Board of Directors would like to thank our outgoing President Mark Bashour for his service during the last two years. We would also like to thank all of those who served as officers, board and committee members, and many individual members, for their contributions in making 2016 – 2017 another successful year for Northborough Historical Society. It takes a great team of volunteers to pull this off, year after year. We welcome our incoming President Bob Marchetta, and we look forward to two more successful years under his leadership, aided and abetted by our newly elected boards and committees.

Get Involved Stay Involved

Be an integral part of the Historical Society by offering your time and talent to one of our committees. New to the Society? Joining a committee is a great way to meet people, and find out more about Northborough's history. We still have vacancies on the following committees.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for conducting the routine business of the Society. The Board exercises its powers through the standing committees, and through special committees which may be appointed from time to time by the Board.

Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee is responsible for recruiting hosts to provide refreshments at regular monthly meetings.

Program Committee

The Program Committee, in cooperation with the Historian, arranges programs for monthly meetings for the coming year. The finalized program schedule is given to the Newsletter Editor in time for printing and mailing to members prior to the September meeting.

Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee is responsible for reviewing the Society by-laws each year and making any necessary recommendations to the Board of Directors. The Committee also acts as the interpretive and advisory authority on all questions concerning the by-laws.

Kitchen Committee

The Kitchen Committee is responsible for ensuring that the kitchen is kept in a clean and sanitary condition, and that it is stocked with necessary equipment and supplies.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible for preparing a slate of candidates for board and committee vacancies as laid down in the Society by-laws.

Interested? Please email Bob Marchetta at marchetta4@verizon.net

For full committee descriptions please go to www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org or email Hilary Wilson at hilarywilson@charter.net.