



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCLXVIII

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

April 2018

Next Meeting & Program: Friday, April 27, 2018

The Cuban Missile Crisis: 13 Days at the Brink of Nuclear Warfare. Mark Bashour will focus on the day-by day response and measures taken by President Kennedy and his cabinet. 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. Refreshments will be served after the meeting.



History Corner

by Bob Ellis

Gale Store, March 4, 1846

I have left us at the entrance of the Gale Store on a date rather arbitrarily chosen from ones available at that time. It is morning, and the first nearby customer is Samuel Fisher. He purchases 8¼ pounds of beef at eight cents a pound for 66 cents. He is followed by Mrs. Munroe. Does she live as close to the store as Fisher? I can't place her location, but the Munroes own several lots in the middle of town. She buys raisins and nutmegs.

To illustrate the variety of items for sale at our country store, we'll review a few more early customers. Columbus Eames is a 28-year-old farmer who will gain a reputation as a woodworker. Now, though, all he wants is a four-foot length of wood. Lewis Fay, one of several local men who style themselves "captain," buys two gallons of molasses, perhaps poured out of a hogshead into a couple of jugs which I

suggest he has brought along with him. He also purchases a quart of "W. S. Oil." It will be some years before the first underground oil is extracted in the nation; what does "W. S." stand for. Does "W" mean whale? He also purchases some wicking, which is a loosely woven fabric material used for various purposes.

Rev. William Houghton, pastor of the Orthodox church, comes along for a half-pound of tea. The Fay house just a few doors east of the store has not yet become the home of its minister, and his church is the building still existing inside the corner of Church and

(continued on page 2)

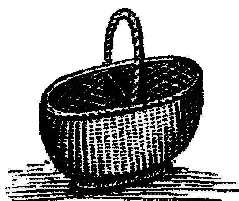
Membership

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*



Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

The Museum will open again on May 6th from 2 to 4:00 and on the following Sundays throughout May and June. The Trustees will soon be dusting and sweeping to freshen up the Museum and exhibits for another season. If you would like to become involved as a museum host, please sign the clipboard at the April meeting. Each Sunday an experienced Museum Trustee member will also host so you will have a "professional" along with you. This is a good opportunity to learn about Northborough and its history.

I will be attending the third Workshop for writing a Disaster Plan on April 11. Our assignment is to complete a comprehensive rough draft that will be tested for effectiveness at this workshop.

The Library has again requested a donation of a basket of "historical goodies" for their upcoming Raffle. This will also include two free memberships to the Historical Society.

Recent Accessions:

Reproduction Colonial men's shirt, 1918 Liberty Bond certificates, St. Rose of Lima parish book, Democracy in America I & II by Alexis de Tocqueville, a book on Early Gravestone Rubbings and several Town Annual Reports donated by Kevin Carroll.

Welcome to Our Newest Members!

Arthur Bailey
Catherine Waugh
Millie Milton
Nancy Kimball
Robert & Rhonda Van Buren
Paula & Larry Hogan
Jody Barnard
Fran Habib
Diane Keating
Chuck Liljestrand
Michael Volk



Get Involved Stay Involved

Be an integral part of the Historical Society by offering your time and talent to one of our many committees.

New to the Society? Joining a committee is a great way to meet people, find out more about the community and more about Northborough's history.

Elections to fill Society boards and committees are held each year at our Annual General Meeting. This year's AGM will take place on Friday, May 18. The Nominating Committee is looking for members who would like to be nominated for these positions.

Details of boards and committees are below.

Filling these roles is essential for the smooth and efficient running of the Society. If you would like to volunteer your services to help the Society, or if you need more information, please contact President Bob Marchetta.

marchetta4@verizon.net 508-393-1421.

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.

The Board meets **monthly (usually the second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.)**, September through May, and consists of six elected Directors, Chairperson of the Museum Trustees, Property Committee Chairperson, the President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Membership Secretary, and Treasurer. Three directors are elected each year to serve for **two years**.

Ways & Means Committee

The Ways & Means Committee is responsible for raising funds for the support of the Society and its projects.

The Ways & Means Committee has three members. One new member is elected each year to serve a **three-year term**.

Publicity Committee

The Publicity Committee is responsible for publicizing all activities of the Society, including regular meetings.

The Publicity Committee has three members. One new member is elected each year to serve a **three-year term**.

The Property Committee

The Property Committee is responsible for overseeing the use and maintenance of the society buildings and grounds, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors and/or the Museum Trustees.

The Property Committee meets at least **four times a year**, and consists of three to five members. One member is elected each year to serve for **three years**.

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.

The Legislative Committee has three members. One new member is elected each year to serve a **three-year term**.

Museum Trustees

The Museum Trustees are responsible for the policies governing maintenance and use of the collections, and for the care, use and maintenance of the Museum. They also recruit members to act as Museum hosts on the days that it is open to the public.

The Trustees meet **monthly**, and the group consists of six elected members. Two Trustees are elected each year for a term of **three years**.

Program Committee

The Program Committee, in cooperation with the Historian, arranges the 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. The Program Committee has at least three members but not more than five.

One new member is elected each year to serve a **three-year term**.

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. This slate shall be presented to the Society members one month before the Annual Meeting.

This is a three member committee, two of whom are elected each year for a **one year term**.

The third member is the immediate past-president. The elected members are not eligible for immediate reelection

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.

The Kitchen Committee consists of three members. One new member is elected each year to serve a **three-year term**.

Hospitality Committee

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

The Hospitality Committee has three members. One new member is elected each year to serve a **three-year term**.

A Visit to the

Willard House and Clock Museum

*A Members-Only Event
of the Northborough Historical Society*

Sunday, June 3, 2018

- Rain or Shine -

11 Willard Street, North Grafton

Guided tours: 12:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Indoor Picnic: 1:00 p.m.

Members and their guests: \$15*

Space is limited, so please sign up ASAP.

Tickets may be purchased:

At the Welcome Table at the Society's meetings at
7:30 p.m. Friday, March 23, April 27 and May 18;

OR, by calling Norm Corbin at 508-393-0181;

OR e-mailing 77norlin@charter.

Checks may be mailed to: Norm Corbin, 35 Whitney Street.

Please make checks payable to Northborough Historical Society.

*If transportation is an issue, please let us know when you
make your reservation.*

* Membership Annual Dues: \$20 single-\$15 senior-\$45 family



<u>Choose a sandwich:</u>	<u>Choose a tour:</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ham	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 Noon
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:30 p.m.
<input type="checkbox"/> Roast Beef	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian	



Benjamin Willard began making clocks in his small, rural Massachusetts workshop in 1766. His three younger brothers, Simon, Ephraim and Aaron, quickly learned the trade and began a three-generation clockmaking legacy.

Today, over 80 Willard clocks are exhibited in the birthplace and original workshop of the Willard clockmakers, along with family portraits, furnishings and other Willard family heirlooms. Works by all three generations of Willard clockmakers, including famed clockmakers Simon Willard Jr. and Benjamin Franklin Willard, are also displayed.

History Corner, continued

Pleasant Streets. Probably he has walked over from that neighborhood. Later in the day he will be back for several more items. He is the first of six consecutive customers who purchase one item each, an indication that nearby neighbors run to the store frequently.

The next visitor with a longer list is James Rich, apparently not a Northborough person, and his surname is not a common one in the area. Here is a customer who has probably come by horse and wagon (at this time, it has been estimated, only about one of every seven families in the northeast owned this combination). He spends \$6.60 for twelve yards of alpaca, some items that because of abbreviations are difficult to identify, two yards of ribbon, a paper of needles, and three yards of cambric. Mr. Rich is surely a man whose business involves fabrics. He also spends one dollar for two pairs of shoes, “4” and “5,” presumably sizes for children.

But he’s not through. After John Stone buys a gallon of molasses, Silas Haynes some ribbon, Isaac Davis calico and salt bags, and Mrs. J. Maynard a quantity of “linsey” (presumably more fabric), Rich, who has been hauling his booty to the wagon or browsing, returns for two quarts of “R. Oil”, and three combs in this notably comb-making village.

Now on the scene are Samuel Seaver and his mother, whom I conveyed along Main Street last month. He needs only six ounces of yarn for 38 cents, she two balls of thread for 16.

No one orders liquor on March 4, but several kinds are available. The most popular product today is beef. Twelve of the last thirteen customers buy it, some at eight cents a pound, some at five. Clearly they know that slaughtering has just been going on. They purchase it in quantities from 4 pounds up to 35½. The exception is George Hutchinson (again not a local name), who spends 88 cents for 12½ pounds of pork.

A few of the purchases are marked “paid.” Do the others have accounts? Did they bring in items for exchange? There are many questions difficult to answer. John Miller is associated with “ry bread,” but there is no indication of payment. The 1855 map of the town shows Miller as a baker, and the Northboro Bakery as located on West Main Street opposite the present Bigelow Nursery. It is also known that store owner Cyrus Gale grows rye on his farm. Was there an agreement that involved Miller buying Gale rye, baking loaves, and bringing them back for sale in the more convenient middle of town?

In the walls of the Gale store hundreds of receipts have been found: some whole, some dated, some fragmentary, creating another major curatorial task for our painstaking curator. Do not worry, members, I will not be presenting all of this material to you—but it is a holding that promises great source documents for a future social historian studying the economic life of America during the time of this store, from around 1820 all the way to the 1880s.

Bob Ellis can be reached by email at rpje1@aol.com

News from the Board of Directors

- Technical difficulties prevented the showing of the video for our September program *50 Years on the Rails as a Conductor on a Steam Train*. This program will be rescheduled for a Sunday afternoon this spring, date to be decided.
 - It was decided to set up a Dropbox where Society forms and documents can be stored to facilitate easier access by the Board.
- We have our Honorary Members and updated Past Presidents boards ready to hang. Our thanks to Jenifer Bakkala for bringing this project to fruition, and to our anonymous donor whose generous contribution made this possible.
 - Replacing our broken flagpole is on the to-do list for the Property Committee this spring / summer.

Save time. Save money. Save space. Save a tree.

Would you like to receive the Hourglass by email?

Please email your request to northborough_historical_society@charter.net

