



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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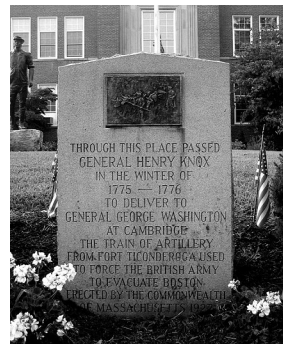
Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

January 2019

Next Meeting & Program: Friday, January 25, 2019

Northborough's Historical Markers – In Plain Sight but Unseen, presented by Normand Corbin, a member of the Northborough Historical Society and the Chairman of the Northborough Historic District Commission. This program highlights some of the town's historical markers, shows their location and manner of installation, and thus increases our awareness of local history as we go about our everyday business.

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

Howard Street and Howard Brook

(My first Hourglass essay appeared in the January issue of 1996. The following is my last. Thank you for your continuing attention and comments.)

A newcomer to Northborough recently asked about the origin of the name of her street, Howard Street. On the older maps of town (1830 and 1855) no street names are given. When names began to appear, they often referred casually to their destination: Whitney Street was Berlin Street, Church was Boylston Street. Today's official names fell into place at an 1894 town meeting. Howard Street was probably so-called because it passed over Howard Brook. But how was Howard Brook named?

Sometimes streets were named for a person, perhaps one who lived on the street, but *Howard* was a name seldom found in early Northborough. Page 57 of Kent's *Northborough History* informs us that Gideon Howard served in the French and Indian Wars in 1758. A single reference to Simeon Howard in 1744 appears on page 14, the time the future of Northborough was being worked out at the home of Lieutenant William Holloway. But elsewhere in the book this same man is identi-

fied as Simeon Hayward, a fact noticed by Christine Ellis in her index of Kent's book.

Howard or Hayward? Well, it was both. According to Westborough vital records, William Holloway married Mary Howard in 1720. Both were from Concord. In a carefully-researched history of the Holloway house (now the Maney house) by John A. Bigelow, apparently made in 1962, Mary "was born in Concord Mar. 19, 1696, the daughter of Simeon and Elizabeth Hayward." Mary and other members of her family seemed quite willing to drift back and forth between *Howard* and *Hayward*. Mary's brother Simeon was thus the son-in-law of Lieutenant Holloway.

If we return to page 157 of Kent's book, we find John Brigham, the town's first European settler, acquiring "a

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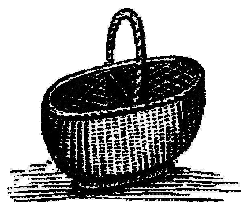
Send dues to:

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P.O. Box 661
Northborough, MA 01532

*Please make checks payable to
Northborough Historical Society*

**If there is a red dot in the address
panel of this newsletter your dues
are past due!**

(continued on page 2)



Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

It's a new year and we have a wonderful young intern, Liz, a senior at Southern New Hampshire University majoring in history. She will be with us for 20 hours a week until March for course credits. Hopefully we will

give her a good exposure to museum and archival work

by calling in some of our members to work with her. She is accessioning a large donation that we received last summer and reading a full box of letters from the WWI and WWII eras through the 1960s, and will be digitizing other areas of our collection as well.

From the Museum Trustees

After many years of faithful service as Historian of the Northborough Historical Society, Bob Ellis has submitted his resignation.

We thank him for the years of work and countless hours of research and writing.

We are pleased to announce that Kathy Pierce has graciously accepted the position of Historian; and we wish her the best.

History Corner, continued

large tract of land” on which he built a sawmill on a brook near the present Whitney Street and that “in 1713 he sold to Simeon Hayward the above grant.” Simeon is referred to as “Cornet Simeon,” a cornet being the lowest commission rank in the U. S. cavalry. Simeon’s house (the present 66 Green Street) was probably within the bounds of the land he bought. Since much of the brook that fed Brigham’s mill ran over his land, it undoubtedly was named for him.

Howard Brook rises in the high land near Mount Pisgah and finally flows into Cold Harbor Brook on the site of the former Country Candle business. For many years the part of the brook between Howard and Whitney Streets was called Bush’s pond, but the 1830 map of Northborough, before the comb-manufacturing Bush family ever came to town, shows the pond. Both Brigham and Hayward would have required a substantial mill pond on that site.

In an essay by one of the Historical Society’s most notable members, Alice Kimball, which I reproduced in a booklet called *Alice Kimball’s Northborough*, she wrote: “You may find it hard to realize that there was a good-sized mill pond on the left side of the road just after passing Ruth Webb Lee’s house [now the Corbins’ house at 35 Whitney Street]. This pond (which I can re-

member) was made by building a dam on the left-hand side of the road to hold the water that came down Howard Brook.” It required, she thought, “probably great timbers ten or twelve inches square, anchored to the stone foundation underneath with iron bolts [to] withstand the stress of storms and the carrying on of the business for which it was built.”

Information about the pond has been difficult to come by. In the December 2001 *Hourglass* I quoted a letter by an 1877 resident mentioning “the neighborhood of 50 out on Bush’s pond skating.” In the early twentieth century Thomas H. Blair, the first man to install electric lights on Northborough’s streets, proposed one at Bush’s Pond, although it is not clear whether or not the light was installed.

A couple of odd features of Howard Street stand out. Because no one built on it between the Church Street intersection and the brook crossing until well into the twentieth century, this area near the center of town turned out to be available for the expansion of the cemetery and the building of the Zeh School and the *Church of the Nativity*. Also, the street is the only important one interrupted by Interstate I-290.

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

From the Board of Directors

We would like to extend our gratitude to Bob Ellis who stepped down from his position as Society Historian on December 31, 2018. Bob was our Historian for 23 years and his resignation is a huge loss to the Society.

Bob's insight, research, presentations, articles, books, and historical reports have kept us informed and entertained for over two decades, and his materials will be used and enjoyed for many years to come.

On behalf of the entire Society, we thank Bob for his decades of yeoman service, and we wish him well for the future.

Welcome New Members!

Jeanne Cahill

Rebecca Ingerslev

Arvind Naidu Thatikonda

**Next
Board of Directors
Meeting
Tuesday, February 12**

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