



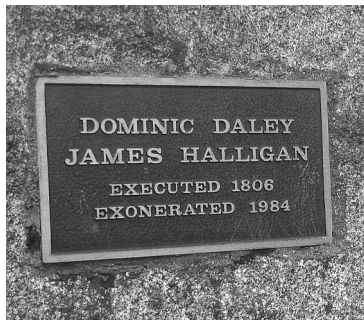
# THE HOURGLASS

## NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCLXXVII

Northborough Historical Society  
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

April 2019



### Next Meeting & Program: Friday, April 26, 2019

**They're Irish, They're Catholic, They're Guilty** – presented by Bill O'Riordan, a founding member of the Halligan & Daley Foundation which was formed in 1982 after Gov. Michael Dukakis exonerated Halligan & Daley for their crimes. This presentation covers a notorious 1806 court case in Northampton, MA, involving Irish immigrants, James Halligan and Dominic Daley, who were convicted and executed for the crime of murder which it is now believed they did not commit.

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 Kathy Pierce

### The Life and Times of a Historic Northborough Meeting House by One Who Loves It: Part III

It has been a church and it has been a boarding school, but in between those uses, the Evangelical Congregational Meeting House has been home to dozens of town residents. Among those, besides my family of nine and my daughter's family of seven over 45 years, two other former residents stand out.

First is Lewis Fay, born in 1794 into the prosperous and prolific Northborough Fay family. At one point, the Fays, one of the town's founding families, owned most of the land between the Unitarian Church green and Ball Hill, according to records. One of their farmsteads was in the area of what is now Fay Lane.

Lewis's father, Asa, donated the triangular plot of land at Church and Pleasants streets on which the nascent Evangelical Congregational Society built its meeting house in 1832. Asa and Lewis were among the group of dissenters who broke away from the Unitarian Church across the way due to doctrinal issues. Lewis served on the nominating

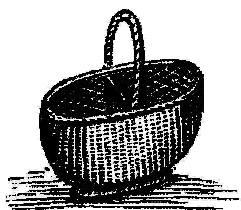
committee that chose the building committee for the new church. The first minister of that church was Rev. Samuel Fay.

Lewis married Anna Tilton, with whom he had 10 children. Active in town affairs, he served as a selectman in 1839. He was an original subscriber to the Northborough National Bank, established in 1854 as the town's first such institution. His affluence is noted in several town assessor's reports. In 1878, he owed \$117.50 in taxes, a tidy sum then compared to other taxpayers on the list. His holdings at various times in the listings included \$7,000, stocks and bonds worth \$4,400, three houses, a steam mill on Church Street, a barn, pasture land and cows. His crops included Irish potatoes, corn, oats, rye, peas and beans as well as hay for his horses and cattle.

*Kent's History* of 1907 reports that "Capt. L. Fay lived for many years in the old homestead, but retired from the farm in old age and died in the house which he had purchased from the Congregational Society, formerly used as their meeting house, later as the E.H Allen Home school." Lewis died in April 1880 at the age of 84.

Clearly the spirit of the Fays inhabited the meeting house from the beginning. Knowing that Lewis died in the house rather spooked my children as their imaginations turned every creak and groan in the old place into visits from his ghost.

(continued on page 2)



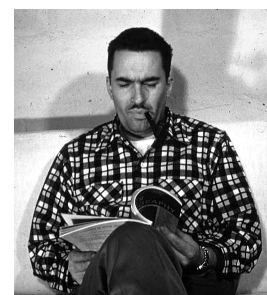
## Curator's News by Ellen Racine

We are preparing the Museum for the spring opening on May 5th. New this season is an exhibit of the Robertson family and their military involvement designed by our intern Elizabeth Gitschier. Although not a formal recital, Glen Campbell has agreed to play the organ while the museum is open on Saturday, June 1st at 2:00 and the Art Guild's Art Show is open. For Mother's Day on May 12th, roses will be given to the first twenty Moms who visit the museum.

We are continuing to transcribe diaries, and Beryl Krouse has joined in on the project along with Lois Smith, Carolyn Squillante and intern Elizabeth who volunteers on Wednesdays. Scanning continues with Dave Benton's slide collection. He was a former historian and took some 1,000 slides of Northborough during three decades. This is a real treasure to our repository. The archive is open Wednesdays from 1 to 5:30 and other times by luck or appointment (508-393-2343).

### New Accessions:

Stirrup Brook Farm milk can with an acrylic painting of the dairy farm by Elinor Rowe who grew up there.



Former Society Historian  
Dave Benton

Next  
Board of Directors  
Meeting  
Tuesday, May 14

Nominating Committee Report 2019

President	<u>Ken Bennett</u>	2020
Vice President	<u>Richard Ferenchick</u>	2020
Directors	Paul Derosier	2020
	Rob Van Buren	2020
	Peter Stone	2020
	<u>Mike Duchesneau</u>	2021
	_____	2021
	_____	2021
Treasurer	<u>Dale Williams</u>	Indefinite
Recording Secretary	Hilary Wilson	Indefinite
Membership Secretary	Jean Langley	Indefinite
Museum Trustees	Cindy Atwood	2020
	Richard Atwood	2020
	Carol Bostock	2021
	Lois Smith	2021
	<u>Beryl Krouse</u>	2022
	<u>Bill Webster</u>	2022
Hospitality	Linda Corbin	2020
	Marcia Parsneau	2021
	<u>Cathy Duchesneau</u>	2022
Program	Janice Ferenchick	2020
	Suzanne Williams	2021
	_____	2022
Property	Ernie Racine	2020
	Chuck Liljestrand	2021
	<u>Paul Derosier</u>	2022
Publicity	Melissa LeSage	2020
	Carolyn Squillante	2021
	_____	2022
Kitchen	Lynne Derosier	2020
	<u>Diane Guldner</u>	2021
	<u>Debra Bennett</u>	2022
Legislative	Hilary Wilson	2020
	Jane Fletcher	2021
	<u>Mark Bashour</u>	2022
Nominating	<u>Bob Marchetta</u>	2021
	<u>Carol Bostock</u>	2020
	<u>Ernie Racine</u>	2020
Ways & Means	Mark Bashour	2020
	Mike Duchesneau	2021
	<u>Henry Squillante</u>	2022

Congratulations to Our Calendar  
Raffle Prize Winners!

Alex Fleischman  
Amanda Maddox  
Bernadette Dempsey  
Beryl & Chuck Krouse  
Brian Bakkala  
Cheryl Noronha-Viswanathan  
Christine Cobb  
Christine Escobedo  
Constance McCormack  
Dax Ziton  
Deana Rollins  
Ed Davidian  
Ernie Racine  
Gary Hays  
Gayle Kellicker  
Laurie Bender  
Lawrence Hogan  
Leslie Homzie  
Lynne Derosier  
Mary Fossey  
Michele Wheelock  
Nancy Robbins  
Pat Lesage  
Patty Henningson  
Paul Derosier  
Paulene Gustafsen  
Peter Stone  
Phyllis Tougas  
Ray Wach  
Rhonda VanBuren  
Henry Squillante  
Hillary Wilson  
Jean Langley  
Joe Chamberlain  
Jonathan Rayburn  
Julie LeBeau  
Kelly Plouffe  
Larry Schafer  
Richard Robbins  
Sandy Farrell  
Sheila Wenc  
Stacy Archibald  
Suzanne Familo  
Tina Lee  
Wendy Kelly

# Northborough Historical Society Members Event

Blackstone Valley Visitor Center – Worcester

Sunday, May 5, 2019

3 Paul Clancy Way (Exit 12 off Rt. 146 via McKeon Rd.)



**Arrive:** After 12 noon  
(when Center opens)

**Lunch:** 12:30 p.m.

**Talk & Tour:** 1:30 p.m.

**Cost:** Members\* and their  
guests: \$13

\*Not a member? Join us!  
Membership Dues:  
\$20 single • \$15 senior • \$45 family

The Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center in Worcester just opened last fall, on the site of the former Washburn & Moen Manufacturing Company. It is near the headwaters of the Blackstone River, which was an important part of Worcester's business and manufacturing development.

One of the Visitor Center's guides will talk to us about the history of the Blackstone River Corridor, as well as features of the new building. A bike and walking trail connects to the Center. There is also a boardwalk across from the Center where one can observe wildlife and plants along the river.

When driving to the Center, use 115 McKeon Rd. on your GPS (though the address is 3 Paul Clancy Way). It is located off the McKeon Rd. exit (Exit 12) on Rt. 146.

Reserve tickets:

By e-mailing Jean Langley at [jeanlangley8@gmail.com](mailto:jeanlangley8@gmail.com)

OR by calling Jean at 508 869-6138

At the Welcome Table at the Society's meeting on Friday, April 26, 7:30 p.m.

Make checks payable to *Northborough Historical Society*. **DEADLINE April 29**

Mail checks to Jean Langley, 609 Edgebrook Drive, Boylston, MA 01505

Note: Parking is limited. Carpooling is encouraged. Let us know if you need transportation.

Choose a Mexican Burrito (Cinco de Mayo!)

- ☐ Chicken
- ☐ Steak
- ☐ Vegetarian

or Choose a Sandwich:

- ☐ Turkey
- ☐ Beef
- ☐ Ham

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**History Corner, continued**

Next we meet Ellen Williams, a refined and learned woman by all accounts. She bought the old meeting house in 1913 and lived there until her death in 1917 with her longtime friend, Annie Fairbanks.

Ellen was born about 1839 and grew up in one of the town's oldest homes, the Holloway/Maney house further up Church Street. Her grandfather and then her father raised prized cattle on that farm. As a young woman, Ellen migrated to Syracuse, N.Y., where she taught in a state school for the mentally handicapped. It was probably in Syracuse that she met the unfortunate Mrs. Fairbanks. Annie grew up in Syracuse and in 1861 at the age of 17, married sea captain, George Fairbanks, who was 17 years her senior. Tragically, George's ship was wrecked at sea the following year and no trace of him was ever found. The couple had one child, who sadly also died very young.



Eventually Ellen returned to her family's manse along with Annie. In 1898 she sold the farm and bought the historic old meeting house. Records indicate she bought the house for \$1 from Margaret Allen of Boston. Margaret was a member of the Allen family, another notable Northborough clan in the 19th century.

Apparently Ellen was a woman of independent means as the 1910 town census lists her as "having her own income." After Ellen's death, Annie donated her collection of oriental art objects to the Worcester Art Museum. Ellen's family also owned a painting by the renowned artist Gilbert Stuart.

Ellen was active in historical and literary circles in town, being a founding member of the Northborough Historical Society and a library trustee for 30 years. In 1885, she created the first card catalogue at the library, making it much easier to update the listings every year. Rev. Kent terms Ellen "a reader of the best literature and her literary judgment was very keen."

Of the companionship between Ellen and Annie, Rev. Kent wrote: "For many years, the friendship of these two women has been very beautiful and will long remain one of the precious traditions of this town."

Thus ends my trilogy recounting the life and times of the Evangelical Congregational Meeting House, the town's second church. It has been my pleasure to have once called it home.

**Don't forget the Pot Luck Supper before the May 17 meeting!**

Come along and enjoy sharing a meal with fellow members.

***Not been to a Society supper before?*** Bring a dish to share, a plate and silverware, and you'll be all set.

Tip: Paper plates and plastic cutlery mean nobody has to do dishes!

***What kind of food?*** Your choice.

***No time to cook?*** Store bought is fine.

***What time?*** We eat at 6:30 p.m.

Desserts, fruit punch and coffee will be provided by the Board of Directors and the Program Committee.



**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*

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