



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCLXXXIV

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

February 2020



Next Meeting & Program: Friday, February 28, 2020

The Scholar and the Slaves. Robert Ellis, past Historian of the Northborough Historical Society, will lecture on William Allen. The youngest and most brilliant of Dr. Allen's seven children, William went south during the Civil War to teach slaves. Along with two companions he later compiled the first book of slave songs. 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

Dr. Ball in Love

Dr. Stephen Ball II's family considered him an "old bachelor" when at the ripe age of 32 his life took an unexpected turn - he caught sight of 19-year-old Lydia Lincoln strolling along Main Street.

With February and Valentine's Day the traditional time to profess one's love for a sweetheart, this seems the perfect Hourglass for recounting the capture of the mature, Stephen's heart by the teen-aged Lydia.

Some Northborough history buffs may know the story of how Stephen and Lydia met on that fateful day. Now thanks to a trove of letters, photos and other documents donated by Ball family descendants Gilbert and Laura Graves of Middleton, N.H., we have two letters that Stephen wrote to Lydia in 1799 and 1800. In their old-fashioned, refined prose, they reveal Stephen's deep feelings for the young woman from Hingham.

The story of their first meeting appears in a memoir written by Dr. Henry Barnes, Ball's son-in-law, and presented to the Historical Society in 1913 by Barnes' daughter Marie



Stephen

Barnes. As the story goes, Dr. Ball came out of his house on Main Street that day (the fine yellow antique still standing just left of the Gale Library) and prepared to set off on business. As he untied his horse and buggy, he spied two female passersby across the street. One he knew, but the other, "a sweet-faced maid," was a stranger to him.

The family lore says he watched them enter a home opposite his, when "some strange prompting bade him refasten his horse, and then, lost in thought, our grandfather went (back) into the house....He soon came out again...and on some 'thought-up errand', this dignified physician walked into his neighbor's house across the street, a liberty which to the physician of that period was ever granted."

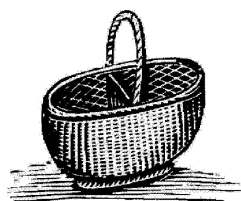
And so their courtship began. In a letter dated December 26, 1799, Stephen expressed openly his feelings for Lydia and also apologized profusely for his delay in writing.

"I converse with you at this time and distance only with pen and ink. The mind is pleased with the prospect of some future interview. I hope you forgive my negligence to you. I have not forgotten you.

When we parted, I was in hopes to converse with you in a different manner from this before this time. My desire (without flattery) is as great as ever and as great as I can express to approach your presence, but I tremble should it so happen that I should not come down, you would call me a flatterer and a deceiver and well you might, but I declare I never had it in my heart to deceive or flatter you.

My neglect would excuse you should you not accept me.

(continued on page 4)



Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

The Northborough Free Library has graciously added the Northborough Historical Society's holdings list to their History site. This outreach device will give researchers insight as to what we have available.

Jo-Ann Sullivan and I recently visited the Marlborough Historical Society to donate items with a Marlborough connection. Jo-Ann donated bottles and a crate from Bill's Beverage Company and I donated an 1866 Hotel Register from the Gates Hotel, for-

merly the Williams Tavern, and other Marlborough papers from the Society's collection. We also learned their approach to computerizing their collection records.

We are also collaborating with Jon Maynard in providing information on the former Westborough State Hospital/State Reform School. His group's goal is to create a memorial and produce a book for fund-raising. Jon was astonished to see our collection of Lyman School photos from the 1880s and a 100 year anniversary booklet of the Reform School, not found elsewhere.

Again I need to thank members of our Society who volunteer fre-

quently. Linda Corbin and Beryl Krouse were tour guides for the students from the Fitzgerald Institute in November. Ernie Racine provided ventilation for the large glass showcases as was recommended by a museum expert in a workshop that I attended. And thanks also to Forest Lyford for skillfully repairing Walter Peinze's fragile toy horse and wagon from 1905.

Welcome New Members!

Allan Bezanson
David Hunt

Northborough Historical Society

Second Annual Calendar Raffle!

31 chances to win!

One winner will be drawn each day in the month of March.
They will win all of the prizes listed for that date.

Tickets: \$10 each, on sale at:

Northboro Oil ▪ Northborough Senior Center ▪ Craft Works


Northborough Historical Society Wednesdays, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Northborough Historical Society February 28, 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Questions? Call 508-393-2828 or 508-393-3869

Don't miss out on this plethora of prizes - get your tickets now!

\$10 per calendar
one winner per day



NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 661 • 52 MAIN STREET • NORTHBOROUGH • MASSACHUSETTS • 01532
info@northboroughhistoricalsociety.org 508.393.6798

5 calendars
for \$50

MARCH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Qdoba 4 entrees & Northboro Contra Dance Pass & 99 Restaurant & Pub \$25	2 Casa Vallarta \$25 & Northboro Contra Dance Pass	3 Margarita's \$25 & Contra Dance Pass	4 PYOP Studio \$25, Uno's Westboro \$25 & Contra Dance Pass	5 Monti's \$25 & Contra Dance Pass	6 JPs \$25 & Contra Dance Pass	7 Not Your Average Joe's \$50 & JD Esteves Landscaping \$50
8 Level Up Your Home \$50 & JD Esteves Landscaping \$20 & Northboro House of Pizza \$25	9 Mainstream Boutique \$25 & Lowe's Variety and Meat Shop \$10 & Northboro Contra Dance Pass	10 Town Center Pizza \$25 & Northboro Contra Dance Pass	11 \$25 Gas Card & Vincent Picard American Legion \$25	12 Scrubs with Style \$25 & Chet's \$10 & Lowe's Variety and Meat Shop \$10	13 Tougas \$50 & Craftworks \$25 & Uno's Westborough \$25	14 Apex \$50 & Kathleen's Hair Kreation \$50 & Moe's Northboro Auto \$25
15 Al's Oil \$50 & Chet's \$10	16 Casa Vallarta \$25 & Lala Loot \$10	17 Vincent Picard American Legion \$25 & Archie's on a Roll \$10	18 Sasha Kartoon Clothing \$20 & Chet's \$10	19 Ted's Montana Grill \$20 & Chet's \$10	20 JPs \$25 & JD Esteves Landscaping \$20	21 European Auto Oil Change up to \$50 & Sachi Japanese Restaurant \$20 & JD Esteves Landscaping \$50
22 Jimmy John's \$50 & Northboro Area Community Chorus Concert Tickets & Moe's Northboro Auto \$25	23 Steakloft \$25 & Clean & Green Car Wash \$50	24 Ted's Montana Grill \$20 & Chet's \$10 & 99 Restaurant & Pub \$25	25 Steakloft \$25 & Lala Loot \$10	26 One free a month MOOYAH for a year & Uno's Westborough \$25	27 Core Connection 3 Class pass & Chet's \$10 & Archie's on a Roll \$10	28 Michelle Gillespie Realtors \$100 for Romaine's & Northboro Septic \$50
29 Al's Oil \$50 & Moe's Northboro Auto \$25 & Uno's Westboro \$25 & Moe's Northboro Auto \$25	30 Innovations \$50, Uno's Westboro \$25 & JD Esteves Landscaping \$20	31 100 Gallons of heating oil from Northboro Oil (local delivery only)				

NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

A Huge Thank You to All of Our Generous Donors!

- Core Connection

Uno's Westborough

JPs Restaurant & Pub

Level Up Your Home

Mainstream Boutique

Town Center Pizza

Scrubs with Style

Archie's on a Roll

Sasha Kartoon Clothing

Ted's Montana Grill

Northboro Septic

Innovations Hair Salon

Northborough Oil

Clean & Green Car Wash
- Kathleen's Hair Creations

Moe's Northboro Auto Service Center

Sachi Japanese Restaurant

Northborough Area Community Chorus

Michelle Gillespie Realtors

Vincent Picard American Legion Post

Paint Your Own Pottery Studio

Lowe's Variety & Meat Shop

Northboro House of Pizza

Northboro Contra Dance

Not Your Average Joe's

JD Estevez Landscaping

MOOYAH

Anonymous Donors
- Casa Vallarte

Qdoba

Margarita's

Tougas

Al's Oil

Chet's Diner

Lala Loot

Steakloft

Jimmy John's

European Auto

Craftworks

Monti's Pizza

Apex

Northborough Historical Society Fundraiser

Pancake Breakfast at Chet's Diner



Our Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser held at Chet's Diner on January 26 was a wonderful event and a great success. We are extremely grateful to Ann and Jessica Fidrych, and Mary Creedon for serving up their home-cooking for us in their historic diner!

Fifty-two guests, including Bob and Rhonda Van Buren, enjoyed a great breakfast with good friends.



Twelve gift baskets were donated for the basket raffle. Thank you to all of those who put together such a variety of baskets.

Chuck Liljestrand
Cindy and Dick Atwood
Lynne and Paul Derosier
Allan Bezanson
Norm and Linda Corbin

Janice and Rick Ferenchick
Karen Walsh
Forest Lyford
Pam and Joe Mondello
Ernie and Ellen Racine

Thanks to all who helped make the breakfast such a success. Special thanks to Lois Smith for chairing the event, and to Ken Bennett for all his planning. This fun event netted us \$800 to be used for a much-needed computer, printer/scanner, and software to facilitate our digitizing efforts.

New Membership / Dues Renewal

Dues are Due in September each year

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

☐ I am interested in volunteer opportunities

Areas of special interest _____

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

History Corner, continued

But I hope I shall apologize in a short time for my inattention."

The contrite suitor concludes his love letter with this strong declaration.

"Except (sic) this few lines as a pledge of love from him...who hath no other end then to declare myself thy faithful friend."

On January 14, 1800, he wrote her again with this greeting:

"My Dear Lydia, (Allow me to call you so, for I am sure you are dearer to me then (sic) any other person)"

It seems that by this date, he had a response from her to his December missive. After noting his "inexpressable (sic) pleasure" at receiving it, he wrote: "I remember our last conversation was that each of our desires was not to pitch on any other persons. I am yet of the same mind. Though I think it strange of me, one whose mind is so fluctuating." From the context, it appears "pitch" means that they agree not to pursue or court anyone else. According to the rules of courtship in those times, it would have been in very poor taste for either of them to do so once their intentions were known to each other.

He goes on to discuss a possible date for him to get to Hingham to see her and then concludes by noting:

"I lock your letter up safe in my chest without the perusal of any person but myself. So I wish you good night after I

have subscribed myself a true loving and sincere friend."

Dr. Steven Ball II and Lydia Lincoln became husband and wife in the spring of 1800. On an anniversary in 1848, he presented her with a gift and a note that read in part:

"Please accept this, my Dearest, as a token of our nuptial anniversary, and as a memorial of its prospective felicitous continuance. From your Stephen."

Swoon...so romantic. The couple was married for 50 years had 13 children. He died at age 83 in 1850. Lydia died in 1866 at age 86.

Dr. Ball II practiced medicine here for about 54 years, while also operating several businesses. He was preceded in practice by his father, Dr. Stephen Ball I, and succeeded by his son, Dr. Stephen Ball III. In one description, he is termed "a quiet man, never very merry, sorrowful or angry, with a gently, softly way with his patients." Lydia ran their large household which besides the children often included boarding medical students and patients, as well as frequent visitors. She is described as attractive, vivacious, musical, a good conversationalist and with much common sense.

It seems that brief Main Street sighting was truly serendipitous for Stephen and Lydia.



Did you know that you could support Northborough Historical Society while shopping at Amazon?

When you shop through this link the Society will receive 0.5% of your eligible purchases made at Amazon. This costs you nothing - the program is funded through the AmazonSmile Foundation. You access the same pages and pay the same prices - the only difference is that you will see a small banner if the item is Amazon Smile eligible.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/04-6156604>

Next Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, March 10

Renewal of Membership

If there is a red dot in the address panel below, it is time to renew your membership of the Society.

News from the Board of Directors

- Raising funds through an appeal to the public and the best way to achieve this
- The need to paint the outside of the building, the cost, and whether any grant funding is available
- Repairs to building systems and their cost
- Increasing the Society’s social media presence
- The pancake breakfast fundraiser
- The calendar raffle
- The feasibility of holding old movie nights at the Society
- Other potential fund raising activities