



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

March 2021

COVID-19 Closure Information

At this time there are no Friday meetings planned at the Society. The museum and archive will remain closed until further notice. Enquiries regarding the museum and archive should be directed to Historian Kathy Pierce and Curator Ellen Racine. They can be reached by e-mail:

Kathy: Historian@NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

Ellen: Info@NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

Stay safe and well!



History Corner

by Kathy Pierce

There Was a Hot Time at the Old Town Election That Year

Town election time is upon us again. We'll know soon enough if any of the voting is as contentious as the 1911 School Committee race. Not unlike some political contests today, ethnicity, religion and women were a factor in that heated event.

Following is an edited account of that battle as recorded by the Rev. Josiah Kent in his journal of current events on March 6 of that year.

"The town meeting of this spring, held today, was a memorable one, and will long be remembered because of the animosities excited during the preceding days," Kent wrote.



Annie Eames

The warring began on Feb. 19 when a citizens caucus nominated Mrs. Frank (Annie May) Eames for school committee, defeating Frank M. Harrington, the current chairman, by a large vote.

Despite his defeat by the caucus, Harrington went ahead and took out nomination papers for the election - an action Kent says he "may now wish he hadn't."



Frank Harrington

Soon after the caucus, a rumor began circulating that the Rev. Thomas Smith, the priest at St. Rose of Lima Church, had commanded the women of his parish to register to vote so they could

cast a ballot for Harrington.

Though women didn't get the national vote until 1920, they could in 1911 vote for, and be elected to, school committees in Massachusetts. Whatever the actual reason for the surge, just over 120 women registered to vote that spring. Almost all signed up on February 25, a week after the citizens caucus.

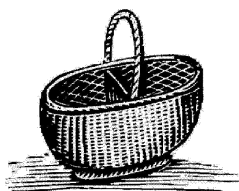
An outraged Rev. Smith vehemently denied the charge that he had ordered his female parishioners to vote for Frank Harrington. Since neither Mr. Harrington nor Mrs. Eames were Catholic, it is puzzling why the priest would have urged such an action. The outraged Rev. Smith set out to find the source of the alleged lie. Kent says the priest found the culprit to be town resident Edwin S. Corey. So, the Reverend sent off a letter to Corey demanding an explanation for his false story. Corey replied that he was just repeating something he had heard.

The Rev. Smith was not satisfied with Corey's explanation and wrote a second letter. This one to the Worcester Telegram denouncing the originator of the spurious rumor. The paper published the letter with Rev. Smith's name attached.

The fight for school committee raged on, Kent commented "After Mr. Harrington took out nomination papers, and there was every indication of an active campaign in his behalf, some of the ladies registered as voters on the Saturday afternoon preceding voting day."

But, according to Kent, the flurry of registrations became a tug-of-war between Catholic and Protestant supporters of the two candidates, Harrington and Mrs. Eames. He claimed that on Saturday evening before registration closed carriages ran for

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Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

We received ten photos of the Bailey, Flagg, Goddard, Pierce, Tyler farm of 450 Whitney Street.



This picturesque farm burned in early 1970 and now is an industrial complex.

These photos were donated by Walter Bickford of Berlin who actually worked for the farm in his younger years.



The new scanner works very well. I am now digitizing slides from the former Historical Commission, most likely taken by Dave Benton. I have also scanned photos from three of the Dr. Barnes' family albums, 1800 - 1919. Most are not identified but there are great photos of Mr. Pisgah, 30-38 Main Street, 150th anniversary parade in 1916, etc.

We also received a booklet, *Northboro Business Association*, from 1890 which advertises our town and what it has to offer. It describes the land, roads, R.R., water privileges, education, library of 7,346 volumes, 4 churches, organizations, bank, telegraph, telephone, express companies, and with a population of 2,000. At that time there were two woolen mills, manufacturers of paper boxes, bone and fertilizer, heel stock, horn tip buttons, shell and horn goods, brick yard, hotel, grist and saw

mills, violin parts, piano keys, bakery, leather door mats and a planing mill. There are photos of major buildings in town that are all familiar to us. Carl Weber of North Attleboro also included a New Year's card from Rev. Charles S. Pease of our Baptist Church, 1909. In his note Carl added: "I've been collecting for over 50 years...this is history and needs to be saved by someone. My turn is over; please make sure someone saves them." I responded with a grateful reply.

The Trustees wish to thank Ken Bennett for his generous donation for the purchase of the PastPerfect Multi-Media Upgrade software. This program allows installing object photos directly into the record sheets. I have taken many photos of the collection over the years but now they will be stored digitally.

History Corner, continued

"several hours bringing in women (Catholic women)."

"The injection of religion into town politics had the inevitable result of arraying Catholics against Protestants, and the matter has raged warmly ever since," writes Kent. He then notes that a similar instance occurred in 1910 when an Irish contingent campaigned for, and succeeded in electing, two of its candidates to the posts of town moderator and school committee member. A Mr. Lonergan became moderator and Martin Ryan toppled school committee incumbent Samuel Maynard. In 1911, however, the Irish bloc was not as victorious in electing its chosen candidates. In the end, Mrs. Eames won the school committee election by a landslide, with 251 votes against 189 for Harrington.

"But why this opposition to Mr. Harrington?" asked Kent. The candidate was a "reputable citizen, has been on the School board several years, and has been town clerk for a dozen years."

Apparently, Harrington blamed Edwin Corey for his defeat. Harrington contended that Corey opposed him because as a school committee member, he had been against raising the salary of Corey's daughter, who was a teacher. Corey denied that accusation.

Kent postulated that Harrington "created this situation for himself by allying himself with the Irish element." In Kent's view, the race was a struggle between newer Irish residents trying to stake out a role in town affairs and the "staid old citizens of Northborough."

That Mr. Harrington should line up with newer residents was not relished by his old-time friends, who "for many years have been electing him to all sorts of offices," concluded Kent.

That is one observer's opinion. Ethnicity and religion were certainly controversial issues at the time, but the fact that an unprecedented number of women voted in the race could also have tipped the scales in Mrs. Eames favor. Again, not unlike recent elections.

Membership

Annual Dues:

Single — \$20
Student/Senior — \$15
Family — \$45
Lifetime — \$250

Mail dues to:

Northborough Historical Society
Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 661
Northborough, MA 01532

*Please make checks payable to
Northborough Historical Society*

Dues are due in September each year

Renewal of Membership

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

Next

**Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, April 13**



Northborough
Historical Society



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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.

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When you follow this link you will automatically select Northborough Historical Society as your charity of choice - just follow the links to start shopping. You will also be able to open an account with Amazon if you do not already have one.

For the Society to receive your contribution you must access Amazon via <https://smile.amazon.com> so add it to your bookmarks now!

0.5% of your purchase may not seem very much but when all of the purchases of all of our members and friends are aggregated, this donation from the AmazonSmile Foundation can be a significant contribution to our funding.

Questions? Email: northborough_historical_society@charter.net

Northborough Historical Society
52 Main St
P.O. Box 661
Northborough, MA 01532

March 2021

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

At the Northborough Historical Society, we like history so much that we have been preserving Northborough's History for more than a hundred years, and sharing it with others. Generations of Northborough families have visited and enjoyed the Society. In normal times, our museum is open to the public, and we offer monthly programs which highlight local, regional, and national history. And individuals can research local history with help from our Curator and Historian in the archives.

But these are not normal times. We need your help.

Our beautiful old building has been closed since March 2020. We have lost almost three quarters of our income this past year, with a decline in donations from visitors, and loss of fees from the various groups that rent our meeting room.

Despite being closed, our expenses continue. There are maintenance costs, repairs, security and utilities, inspection fees, insurance premiums, and plowing, to name a few. We also need to restore the shutters on the front of the building.

We have submitted a grant application to the Community Preservation Committee to restore the exterior of the building (not including the shutters). The Committee has unanimously voted to recommend funding of this grant. We are hopeful that Northborough citizens will vote to authorize this allocation of Community Preservation Funds at Town Meeting this spring.

As we look forward to reopening as soon as it can be done safely, we hope that you will consider a generous donation to the Society. Even a modest donation would help.

Sincerely,

Ken Bennett, President (kbenne34@hotmail.com)

Rick Ferencick, Vice President

Dale Williams, Treasurer

Hilary Wilson, Recording Secretary

Jean Langley, Membership Secretary

Director

Mike Duchesneau

Director

Chuck Liljestrand

Director

Michael Mills

Director

Allyn Phelps, Jr.

Director

Lois Smith

Northborough Historical Society Donation Form

Thank you for your generous support of the Northborough Historical Society. Your contribution will help the Society to continue its mission of preserving and sharing Northborough's history

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I would like to donate:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ Other amount \$ _____

Please mail this completed form, along with your check made payable to
Northborough Historical Society, to the address below.

Northborough Historical Society Appeal HG
P.O. Box 661
Northborough, MA 01532

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

