



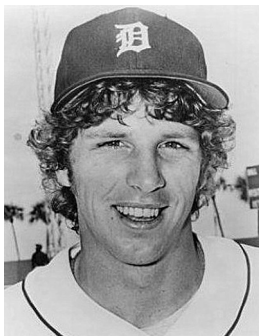
THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCV

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

May 2022



NHL / Detroit Tigers. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

Next Meeting & Program: Friday, May 20, 2022

6:30 p.m. Society Annual Meeting

7:30 p.m. Program. Mark Fidrych. Kevin Merchant, a lifelong friend of Mark, will present a fitting tribute to Northborough's professional baseball legend, sharing personal anecdotes, professional stats, memorabilia and career highlights. Be prepared to join in and share your own memories of the "The Bird". The event is free and open to the public, but donations to the Mark Fidrych Foundation will be accepted.

Location: Unitarian Church Parish Hall, 40 Church St Northborough.

Masks will be available, but mask wearing will be optional.



History Corner

by Kathy Pierce

Local Life in the Time of the Coronavirus

"It was a strange Easter for Northborough and most of America. It's about six weeks since the country began the shut down because of the pandemic caused by the raging, wildly contagious coronavirus, COVID-19. No church services, no egg hunts, no special restaurant dinners, no big family gatherings."

Thus began my first Coronavirus Chronicles diary entry on April 12, 2020. Curator Ellen Racine and I, as society historian, realized we were living through a historic period in the life of Northborough and the world. Much as some town diarists did during the 1918 Influenza pandemic, we believed it was important to record our experiences and those of other townsfolk during what was expected to be a short-lived health crisis.

Yet here we are two years later still dealing with the plague, albeit in a much less restricted and unprotected way thanks to vaccine developments. This month's History Corner looks at some reflections submitted for our pandemic record.

Membership Secretary Jean Langley wrote a detailed account of the virus's impact on herself and the world around her. It ap-

peared also in Worcester Magazine.

"February was pretty normal, with all my classes and appointments intact. There was more awareness of the virus in the first week of March. Recommendations at that point included avoidance of handshaking."

But that casualness soon changed. She kept an appointment to have her nails done in mid-March, but the salon had no precautions.

"I started to wonder if I should cancel an upcoming hair appointment. The decision was made for me. A rash of cancellations came out," she recalled. "The chiropractor and grocery stores are the only places I go now, except one more trip to the pharmacy."

For Jean, as with thousands of others, the world suddenly became a much smaller and lonelier place.

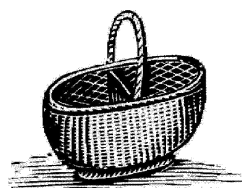
Society member Forest Lyford's Coronavirus Chronicle runs from March 2020 to June 2021.

"Diane and I were challenged to fill the time from the first. We played some games, mainly Mahjong (I am not an enthusiastic game player) and took daily 2- to 3-mile walks, which I have continued. I have been a lifelong woodworker so have a hobby that could occupy some spare time."



Jean Langley

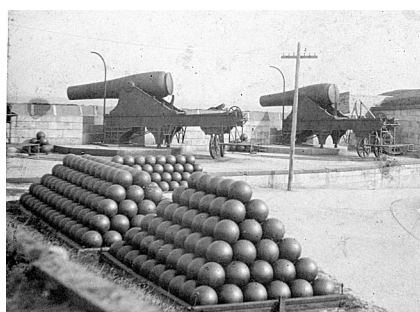
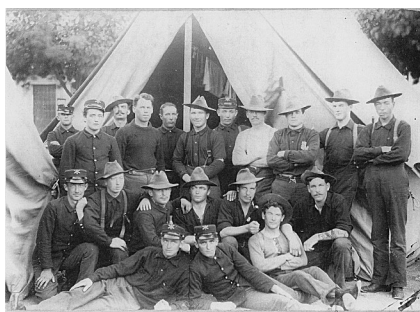
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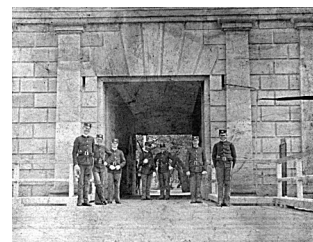
Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

The Museum is now open on Sundays through June 30. An art exhibit of Walter A. Peinze's paintings are on display downstairs in the meeting hall. Please stop by and see the exhibit and our museum upstairs. This month I was asked to scan a friend's early photographs. Twenty photos were from the Spanish American War and training of 1898. Although they don't have a direct Northborough connection, they are a piece of our history. Six men from Northborough served in this brief war including the two Kellette brothers. In our collection we have two uniforms of George B. Herrick.



Fort Monroe, VA, with 15 inch Lincoln Guns



Fort Monroe Main Gate

**Next
Board of Directors
Meeting**

Tuesday, September 13

Welcome New Member!
Patricia O'Hearn

History Corner, continued



Indeed, he did make creative use of his woodworking skills. Some of the whimsical wildlife sculptures Forest crafted from bits of trees and wood scraps were highlighted in the Curator’s News in The Hourglass last June.

The last paragraph of his chronicle notes that the Lyfords knew remarkably few people who contracted COVID. “Only one, (name omitted), died of the disease.”

This writer had two elderly relatives and one friend who were taken in the early days of the outbreak. Currently a young in-law is in Tufts Medical Center where he was transported by Life Flight two months ago and is still there, recovering from the onslaught of the disease. As of May 9, there were 73 new cases in Northborough, up 7.6 percent from the previous two weeks.



Beth
Ready for action!

Beth Wilson of Pleasant Street meticulously detailed and photographed accounts of how she dealt with grocery shopping, golfing and a hair-cutting appointment in the fearful beginning of the pandemic. She scrupulously quarantined groceries in the garage before allowing them into the house. An engineer by training, her elaborate scheme included a red and green zone and a many-layered cleaning process. She even wore a special outfit to do the shopping.



Beth

“I back into the garage and work as if everything is contaminated. I remove the outer shirt and place it and my mask in the red zone. I want to make sure that my sleeves won’t touch the groceries after I have cleaned them. I keep my outer pants and hat on.”

Anything that may have touched a contaminated store object - glasses, wallet, receipts, car keys - landed in the red zone until being sanitized with alcohol.

“I remove items one at a time from the trunk. If it is something that needs to come in the house right away, I clean it with isopropyl alcohol and place it in a “clean” bag in the green zone,” she wrote.

Curator Ellen Racine began her chronicle in April 2020 and continued to July 2021. “I must be the only one who is enjoying the home lockup. Though with thoughts of the Coronavirus threat, it is a little unsettling.”

Ellen made good use of her cloistered time by catching up on the heavy task of updating the society’s collection record. That took her three weeks. She also cleaned untouched corners of her 1823 house, darned 20 pairs of woolen socks and restitched a pair of leather baby booties for the museum.

Her 2020 jottings capture the mundane and often boring existence many of us lived during those long months. Here are few of her examples:

April 30: The guys at 102 Whitney Street are getting antsy and restless. I, on the other hand, am still finding joy in many projects...Ernie snuck out of the house at 7:30 a.m. to go to Wegmans grocery store. Jeff came bounding down the stairs, “Where’s Dad going? He shouldn’t be out. I’ll do the shopping.” Ernie got busted.



Socially distanced get-together in a parking lot

May 8: Called my friend and our “breakfast group” that has been meeting for some 20 years. We will get together next week for a tailgating visit in an empty parking lot.

July 22: Our younger son and fiancée have postponed their wedding of October 3 to the following September 5.

September 14: Ernie: “Another day of pain and frustration.” And, so it went. The Coronavirus Chronicles and photos can be viewed in the archive upon request.

NHS Annual Report is available at: northboroughhistoricalsociety.org/pdf/Annual_Report_2021-2022_Rolling.pdf

Donations

It is now easier than ever to make a donation to Northborough Historical Society
Donations can be made online at our website.
www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org/donate.html

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Northborough
Historical Society



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