



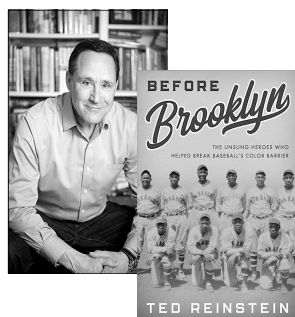
THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCIX

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

November 2022



Next Meeting & Program: Friday, December 2, 2022

Before Brooklyn: The Unsung Heroes Who Helped Break Baseball's Color Barrier.

Ted Reinstein, a reporter for "Chronicle" at WCVB-TV Channel 5, will speak about his latest book, a historical journal of little-known heroes who fought segregation in baseball. Hear this inspiring story of ordinary, everyday Americans who performed extraordinary acts to overturn historic injustices.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m., at the Society building, 52 Main St., Northborough, MA. The event is free and open to the public. Masks will be required.



History Corner

by Bob Ellis

Writings Endure; Readers Probably Won't

Education, we used to say, was "reading, writing, and 'rithmetic." The first and third are studied today, the second hardly at all. Elementary teachers have much to convey, and handwriting is scarcely needed. Teaching students what they need to learn means that some of the old things have to be cut out, and when cut out they are usually lost.

I suspect that one old habit of students, gathering each other's autographs, hardly exists today, although gathering those of famous people is still done. I enjoy looking at manuscript poems. Knowing my interest in literature, my wife one year gave me a fine two-volume work of autograph poems by 146 poets from six centuries. It has always seemed to me that I knew the poets a little better just from examining their handwriting.

Although not intended as such, the book also serves as a history of handwriting from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries. It has nothing in Chaucer's or Shakespeare's hand because no samples of their writing have ever been found, but many well-known poets are represented. Most

of their work, of course, can easily be read in printed editions.

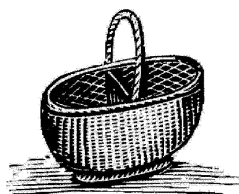
A number of writers continue to celebrate handwriting. One, Philip Hensher, playfully called his book *The Missing Ink*, but his subtitle demonstrates his seriousness: *How Handwriting Made Us Who We Are*. One reviewer valued the book because it shows that "our handwritten words are the perfectly individuated marks we make, and leave, in the world."

Letters by Rev. Joseph Allen and his wife Lucy Clark from 1820 illustrate how handwriting has persisted. He was in Boston on business, a trip that was a day's journey from Northborough, even for a mail deliverer on horseback. He wrote to her late in May. His closing words were rather formal. He hopes that on returning he will find "you and all in peace and prosperity." His writing style has surely deviated from what he had once been taught.

On the first page of her June 1 letter, she teases him: "You may feel a little mortified that I can be happy away from you." A few lines later, however, she admits that "I think much about you." Both writers mention their daughter Mary, who is about fourteen months old and when asked where her father is, will answer "allgone."

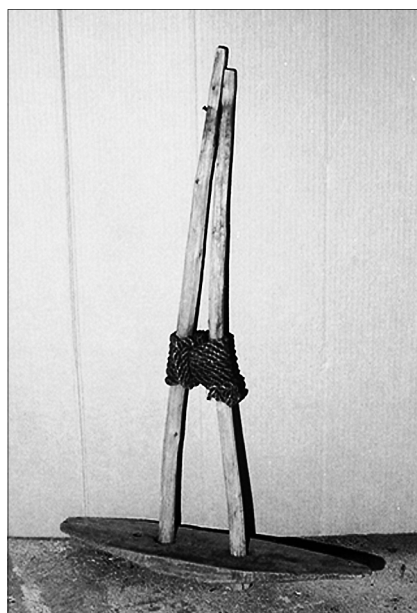
Lucy's letter reveals a habit of the day. Paper was expensive, and they used it all, including the margins. Sometimes writers would turn the paper ninety degrees and write

(continued on page 2)



Curator's News

by Ellen Racine



Do you know what these are?

Recently Dudley Darling of Juniper Hill Golf Course, donated a wooden oval loop that he found in the Brigham barn on his property. It is called a "poke", a collar, possibly for a sheep or goat, used to prevent the animal from jumping over or through the fence. Dudley's poke is the top photo.

The Y-shaped poke in the other photo belongs to our collection. Forest Lyford remembers his father saying that he had to use this style to keep his athletic wayward cow from jumping over the fence or stone wall.

across the text. Paper was something you didn't waste. Made from rags, it far outlasts most of what we produce today, and in two hundred more years it will still be readable - although Society members of that day will doubtless have forgotten how to read it.

Five of Mary's offspring died as children, but one, Harriet, lived from 1842 to 1929. She became an early and contributing member of our Historical Society. Her great granddaughter, Susan Booth, gave us those two letters along with many more in the year 2005.

Northboro: June 1st 1820.

My Dear Husband,

I was both surprised & pleased by receiving your letter this morning - I did not expect to hear till Saturday, as you bid me not expect to - you will, I hope, be pleased to hear from me, in return, that I have borne the tedious hours ^{of absence} better than I expected, but perhaps you may feel a little mortified & vexed that I can be happier away from you - Dear little Mary is so continual^{ly} source of care & amusement, that so long as I have her about me, I cannot think of looking & it is only when I pass by your deserted Parlor, & see our little empty breakfast & dinner tables, that during the hours or two after tea, that I think much about you - Mary has improved very much since you have been away - you will find her wonderfully altered - She holds up her hand & says "all gone" when "mash" "when Pa" is - sings like a nightingale to amuse the poor solitary turtle dove - well, to begin, to give you a more methodical account of things - it was rain & skin all the day you were at - no weather at all - & the men worked like brave fellows - the next day

[illegible]

At the Society building, the renovations continue.....



The new shutters are installed!

There are so many people to thank for the team effort that made this whole project possible.

Mike Duchesneau for preparing all the paperwork and applying for CPA funding.

Paul Derosier and Allyn Phelps, along with Chuck Liljestrand, Chuck Krouse and Peter Stone from the Property Committee for their tremendous efforts on this project.

Norm Corbin and the Historic District Commission, and John Campbell and the Community Preservation Committee, for their support of the project.

Town Planning Director Laurie Connors for her work on the project.

The crew from New England Shutter Mills

Finally, thanks to the wonderful townspeople of Northborough who voted to allocate CPA funding for the project - we couldn't have done it without you.

As we enter the season of thanks and giving, would you please consider making a small donation to the Society?

Any support would be greatly appreciated, and would help us to maintain our beautiful old building and care for our collection.

Please make checks payable to *Northborough Historical Society* and mail them to:

Northborough Historical Society Attn: HGTC
PO Box 661
Northborough, MA 01532

Northborough Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent provided by law.



The Northborough Historical Society is thankful for the support of all our members and friends. We wish you all a safe and happy holiday season!

Membership

Annual Dues:

- Single — \$30
- Student/Senior — \$25
- Family — \$55
- Lifetime — \$500

Send 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 each September

Welcome New Members!

Grace Millette
Keith & Sherry Nisbet

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

**Next
Board of Directors
Meeting**

Tuesday, January 10

This is the last Hourglass of 2022 - we do not publish a copy in December.

The Officers and the Board of Directors of the Society would like to wish all of our members and friends a wonderful Holiday season, and a happy and healthy New Year.



amazon smile

Northborough
Historical Society



It's that time of year again!

Did you know that you could support Northborough Historical Society while shopping for holiday gifts 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.

Whole Foods grocery orders placed online through AmazonSmile for pickup or delivery are eligible purchases.

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

When you follow this link you will be able to select Northborough Historical Society as your charity of choice - just follow the instructions 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

Custodian Needed

The Property Committee is looking for a custodian.

If you are interested in the position, or if you would like more information, please contact Paul Derosier at stude38paul@yahoo.com or phone 508-361-7321.