



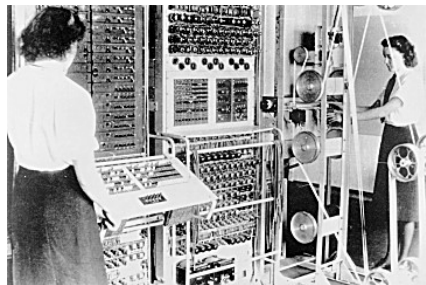
THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCXI

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

February 2023



Next Meeting & Program: Friday, February 24, 2023

Code-Breaking. Chuck Pross, a retired NASA engineer, will present the intriguing history of code-breaking and the role it played in significant WWII events including the pivotal role coding played in the Allies' final victory. He will further enlighten us on the vital role codes play in today's society.

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 required.



History Corner

by Ken Bennett

Our class was the beginning part of the baby boom years when a lot of schools were being built in Northborough. Marion Zeh was my first-grade teacher at the Howard Street School. I had double sessions at the Hudson Street School in fourth and seventh grades. Eighth grade was at the current town hall and our class of graduates was the second class to go all four years through Algonquin. Alexandra and Zenya Molnar wrote a fact-filled article for the December 9, 2014 issue of the Community Advocate. The following is first of three parts of their article.

A History of Northborough Schools

Northborough's school history began shortly after the town was incorporated in 1766. The town strongly believed in its duty to educate its citizens by providing public schools, starting with grammar schools and eventually opening a high school.

Grammar Schools

Though only some of the original schoolhouses remain standing in Northborough today, there were once school houses for each district dispersed throughout the town. Now a town of 14,753 (according to the 2013 annual report), in 1770, there were 85 families in Northborough with children who needed schooling. Therefore in 1780, the

town voted to build a schoolhouse in each district into which the town had been divided: North, East, South, and West.

The first four schoolhouses were each 18 square feet and initially constructed entirely of wood. Later, after many of the original structures had burned down, they were all, with the exception of the East District School, rebuilt with brick. Despite the existence of schools, people were still taught in private homes until 1780.

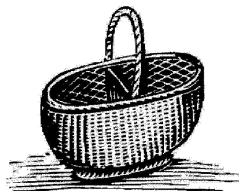
East District

The East District operated from the late 1770s to the 1890s and existed as three different schoolhouses at three different times: The first building was erected near the corner of Maple Street and Ridge Road and burned down Dec. 21, 1865; the second building was built Jan. 9, 1866 on same site as the original; and the third building was located on the corner of Bartlett and Maple streets.



According to one pupil's school recollections, the East District schoolhouse had a "recitation room" which served multiple purposes. In this room, teachers would listen to students' recitations as well as administer corporal punishment. Students used slates, which they washed with sponges, and slate pencils. In addition to rote learning, the students learned songs, enjoyed recess, and ate lunch at school which they brought in "full dinner pails," according to the former student's notes.

(continued on page 2)



Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

Ten students from the Fitzgerald School came to the Museum on January 17th. Their assignment was to learn about the Native Americans in this area, and Northborough's part in the Revolution. They also needed to compose a list of their favorite artifacts, and upon returning to class, to draw their favorite and write a short paragraph about it. Several boys liked "cooking" on the 1940s stove and the girls liked trying the portable typewriter. Very interesting.

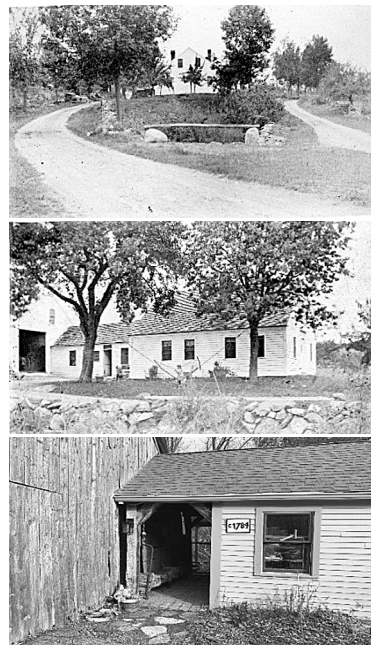
New Accessions:

Chad Moore has donated a history of the development of Ellsworth / McAfee Park that his mother Paula Moore initiated in the 1980s, including photos and newspaper clippings.

Two members of the Historical Commission and Historical Society were invited to tour the house and barns at 6 Reservoir Street – the former Fawcett Farm. Lisa Orr, the new owner, has done extensive restoration work on the house, barns and outbuildings from the foundation up. It was great to see the 1784 farm brought back to a good use. Lisa has her pottery studio in the former apple cold-storage room. She teaches, lectures and exhibits nationally and internationally.

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West District

The West District also existed in three locations: The first school was erected on Ball Hill Road; the second schoolhouse was built in 1795 on Boylston Road (which is now Church Street); and in 1837 a third schoolhouse was built on the corner of Boylston Road and what is now Brewer Street. The building burned and was replaced by a brick building in 1847 which still stands today as a private residence, 264 Church St.



Recollections of Alice Kimball written in September of 1964 describe the inside of the West District schoolhouse, which she attended: There were two entrances to the school, one for boys and one for girls. The school contained a mix of ages, so seats were assigned according to age and size. The classroom contained a water pail with a

dipper that students shared. Students and teachers kept warm with a large black box stove located in the middle of the room.

North School District

The first schoolhouse in the North District was built in the early 1780s. When the first structure burned, a second was built in 1792 on the same site. The third schoolhouse was built around 1841 and served as a school until 1895. It is located at 310 Whitney St., which is a different site from the first two, and still stands today as a private residence.



Part 1 of an article written by Alexandra and Zenya Molnar, originally published in the Community Advocate. Parts 2 and 3 to follow in the coming months.

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.



A hawk checking out our flags and flagpole last week

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

Committee Vacancies

The Nominating Committee is looking for volunteers to fill vacant positions on Society committees. If you are interested in serving, please email Jane Fletcher at jfletcher07@verizon.net

To find out more about committee positions, please read *Get Involved, Stay Involved* at:
www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org

**Next
Board of Directors
Meeting
Tuesday, March 14**

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

► 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