



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCX

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

June 2023



Next Meeting & Program: Friday, September, 22 2023

The Family Nurse: Home Medical Care in the Early Nineteenth Century.

Christine Higginbottom will lecture on the role of home-grown, wild-gathered, and purchased herbal remedies in treating common health problems in Early American households. Christine will describe plant varieties and preparation methods, including infusions, decoctions, ointments, poultices, fomentations, and tinctures. 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 optional.



History Corner

by Ken Bennett

Former Society Historian Bob Ellis wrote an article for the Community Advocate which appeared in the December 10, 2014 issue. The following is the first of two parts of Bob's article.

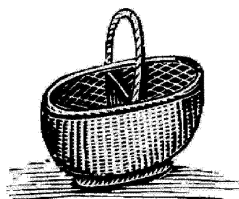
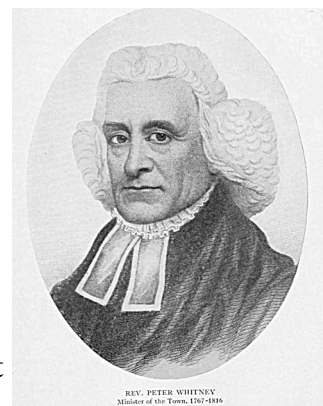
Ten Noteworthy People of Northborough

Everyone's list of 10 achievers will be different in part at least. A list completely different from the following might represent the town of Northborough very well. Of the individuals described, four did much of their work in the 18th century, three in the 19th, and four in the 20th. Almost never in the past and not often even today have women enjoyed the opportunities of men, but the two on this list, who will feature in the second part of this article, demonstrated a degree of leadership uncommon in women of their time that may have inspired the success of younger people who might be considered to have done more.

Peter Whitney (1744-1816)

No one in the colonial era exceeded town ministers as influencers of townspeople. Reverend Whitney urged patriotic duty from Northborough's new soldiers and supported the Revolution enthusiastically. An example of his dedication to his congregation comes down to us. While he was preaching April 26, 1780, someone thrust a note before him. His house was on fire. Continuing until finished, he found upon returning that his home was no more. He rebuilt, and his carefully preserved parsonage remains at 62 Whitney St.

Whitney also ranks as Northborough's first historian in one chapter of his history of Worcester County, which he dedicated to Vice President John Adams in 1793. Among the topics he considered were religion, geography, schools and other public institutions, and industries, including one by our next worthy. *(continued on page 4)*

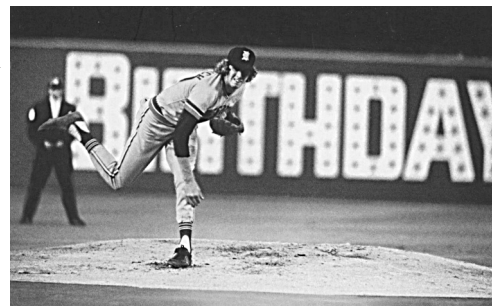


Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

A surprise addition to our collection was from Jean Dargie, formerly of Northborough. She spotted a greeting card from 1976 in a local store in Vermont and sent it along to us.

This past weekend there were plenty of activities about the town and inside the Historical Society. In costume, Ken Bennett and Rick Ferenchick worked at the CultureFest promoting our organization, while the combined efforts of three groups brought in many visitors to our building. The Northborough Art Guild held its annual Art Show with 60 paintings from 23 local artists. The Northborough Garden Club members created flower arrangements to enhance the exhibit, and the Museum had about 75 visitors during the two days. Our collaboration paid off.



AMERICA

MARK "THE BIRD" FIDRYCH

Veterans Stadium, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • July 13, 1976

With a "Happy Birthday America" message on the outfield wall, Detroit Tiger Mark Fidrych became only the second rookie pitcher ever to start an MLB All-Star game. While Americans celebrated the nation's Bicentennial, the summer of '76 also belonged to the beloved lanky 21-year-old who electrified fans with his boyish enthusiasm and quirky habits, including getting down on his knee to manure the mound with his hands and talking to the ball. After winning 19 games, Fidrych was selected as the American League Rookie of the Year while leading the AL in complete games and the majors with a 2.34 ERA. Nicknamed "The Bird" after Big Bird because of his resemblance to the Sesame Street character, Fidrych brought an energetic, free-spirited joy to the game, becoming the first—and still only—baseball player to appear on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine.



Photo: Dan Bellotti (cover)
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To continue Mark's legacy, his family and friends established a charitable organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals with special needs through sports.
Learn more at MarkFidrychFoundation.org



2022, 5, 9

Officers, Board & Committee Members
2023 - 2024

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Directors	Mark Bashour
	Kathleen Howland
	Rob Van Buren
	Paul Derosier
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	Rob Van Buren
	Jean Langley
Nominating	Rick Ferenchick
	Hilary Wilson
	Rob Van Buren
Ways and Means	Mark Bashour

Henry Squillante



George Washington and Abe Lincoln, aka Ken Bennett and Rick Ferenchick, at the Northborough CultureFest 2023

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



**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.

Thank you to those who
have volunteered to serve
the Society for the next year.

**Next
Board of Directors
Meeting
Tuesday, September 12**

Northborough Historical Society

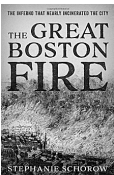
P.O. Box 661 · 52 Main Street · Northborough, MA 01532

Program Schedule 2023 - 2024

Meetings start at 7:00 p.m.

September 22, 2023 **The Family Nurse: Home Medical Care in the Early Nineteenth Century.**

Christine Higginbottom will lecture on the role of home-grown, wild-gathered, and purchased herbal remedies in treating common health problems in Early American households. Christine will describe plant varieties and preparation methods, including infusions, decoctions, ointments, poultices, fomentations, and tinctures.



October 27, 2023 **The Great Boston Fire: The Inferno that Nearly Incinerated the City.** Stephanie Schorow, a journalist and author of nonfiction books, will share the harrowing story of how close Boston came to total destruction in 1872. Her talk will capture the drama of life and death as the heroic firefighters battled the flames as they worked to protect the city.

December 1, 2023 **Byzantine and Russian Icons.** Dennis Sardella, a docent at the Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, MA, will present an informative lecture on the topic of religious icons and the role they play in Eastern Christian spirituality.



January 26, 2024 **Underground History at Blackstone National Park.** Susan Franz, a history professor, will describe her experience working to gain National Park Service designation for Underground Railroad locations in the Blackstone River Valley, which led to recognition by the African American Heritage Trail.

February 23, 2024 **Landmark Legislation: The Civil Rights Act of 1964.** Mark Bashour's lecture will describe the indispensable relationship between Lyndon Baines Johnson and Martin Luther King, and how their dynamic relationship brought this amendment into law



March 22, 2024 **Summer of 1787: Writing the US Constitution.** John Northgraves's lecture will delve into the dysfunctional state of what could hardly be called a "nation" at that time. He will describe what issues, arguments, and compromises went into writing that document. Great Britain's William Gladstone later described it as "*The most remarkable work known to me in modern times to have been produced by the human intellect, at a single stroke, in its application to political affairs*".

April 26, 2024 **The Blizzard of '78.** Michael Tougias, author of *The Storm of the Century*, recounts how New England was knocked to its knees on February 6th and 7th, 1978, by the incredible snow and wind referred to locally as the worst storm of the century. This history, combined with stunning photographs and riveting text, will reawaken memories of the "Blizzard of '78." The lecture will follow the storm through its progression, chronicling the period before the storm, the commuter nightmares, and the devastation wreaked.



May 17, 2024 **Major Taylor: The Worcester Whirlwind.** Lynne Tolman, president of the Major Taylor Association, will present an illustrated talk about 1899 world cycling champion, Major Taylor. She will detail Major Taylor's remarkable life on and off the racetracks of the world at the turn of the 20th century, and explore how the legacy of this African American pioneer is shaping cycling and communities today.

Abraham Wood (1752-1804)

This younger brother of Samuel Wood, Whitney noted, dressed 7,000 yards of cloth annually. Abraham Wood was a fuller: a man who scoured, dyed and treated loose webs of fabric to produce woolen cloth. He did this in a building by the Assabet River, the stream assisting in the beating and cleaning of cloth. In the Revolution, after 22 days among his fellow minutemen, he returned home. In July of 1777, however, he joined with forces called to reinforce the colonial army near Bennington, VT., where he was discharged one month and 10 days later.

Wood, one of Northborough's two composers of music in its small population, dedicated his compositions to religious and patriotic subjects. Some of his manuscripts remain part of the Northborough Historical Society collection. His works continue to be studied and performed. A reference to his name and the word "composer" will bring up over 10,000 references on Google.

Samuel Wood (1743-1818)

Captain Samuel Wood, at 32, was older than most of the minutemen who gathered at his home, the present 97 Main St., upon learning of the attack on Lexington April 19, 1775. They had been preparing for conflict but had been officially organized only recently. After praying under their minister, Peter Whitney, they marched off to serve seven days. Wood and a number of his men then enlisted for three months and 13 days under General Artemus Ward. On May 25 he was commissioned a captain in the provincial army at Wataertown. The 50 minutemen formed a considerable part of the active men of the town. A few of them served longer, but many, like Captain Wood, returned to their duties in town, he as mill-owner and farmer. Later he served as town clerk, treasurer and selectman.

John Davis (1787-1854)

After receiving his earliest education at the South School in Northborough, John Davis studied at Leicester Academy and Yale College and then developed a law practice in Worcester. Elected to Congress in 1824 for the first of five terms, he earned the appel-

lation "Honest John." He served two terms as governor of Massachusetts and then spent most of one term in the United States Senate in the 1840s, where he was one of only two men to vote against the Mexican War. He supported the Wilmot Proviso, a controversial but eventually very influential bill that sought to ban slavery from any territory gained in that war. Later he served again as governor. During much of this time he was vice president of the American Anti-quarian Society. Upon his retirement from politics, the institution named him president. Despite his long absence from his hometown, he remained in touch with it. He donated a cut-glass christening font to the First Church. His wife was an aunt of Cyrus Gale Jr., whose contributions to Northborough will appear in the next issue.



John Davis

Joseph Allen (1790-1873)

Reverend Joseph Allen spent the years from 1816 to 1873 as pastor of Northborough's First Church. Taking seriously his position as an intellectual leader, he lectured on educational subjects – the first talk, in 1824, on astronomy. Out of these lectures came Northborough's version of the major adult educational program of 19th-century New England, the lyceum, a movement that began in that decade in Millbury and featured lectures and debates. During most of these years he served as chair of the Northborough Board of Education. Allen and his wife Lucy operated a private school, chiefly for non-residents. One of its students' achievements was Northborough's first newspaper, *The Meteor*.

Allen belonged to the American Peace Society, promoted the temperance movement, and established an admirable relationship with his own children and the others of the town. Like Parson Whitney, the man he replaced, he wrote a history of Northborough. In his spare time, he practiced gardening in the parsonage lot on Church Street.

► 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