



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCXI

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

September 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 first part of Bob's article appeared in the June 2023 Hourglass; the following is second part.

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, 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.

Cyrus Gale Jr. (1824-1907)

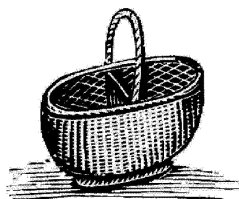
It is difficult to name any benefactor of Northborough equal to Cyrus Gale Jr. The son of a prominent man, he continued a number of his father's activities, including the management of his general store and the administration of the Gale Fund, which supported the town's poor. He became town treasurer, but he was best known for what he did with his own funds.

He made the largest gift to the town library established in the Town Hall in 1868 and became the first of its trustees. When the need for library building grew, he built it in 1895. He also endowed Assabet Park near the town center. Both remain well-functioning testimonials to his generosity. His wife Ellen M. Gale, active in all his endeavors, made contributions of her own, including a gate for the cemetery, after his death in 1907.

Alice Kimball (1878-1975)

Like her father, Alice Louise Bowes exhibited musical talent. After studying voice at the New England Conservatory, she taught music in the town's schools, directed many local musical productions, and for over

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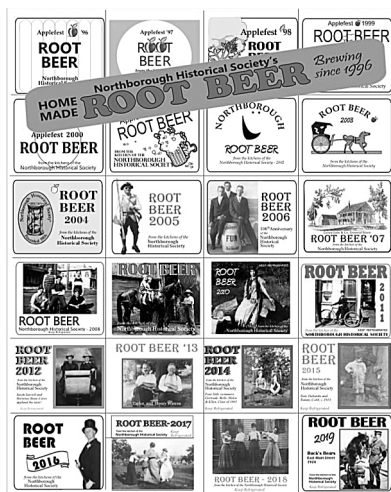


Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

New accessions included two folders of materials and a soldiers song book from 1919 from Norm and Linda Corbin. Cindy Fawcett donated additional family and Fawcett Farm photographs. We also received an engraved pewter bowl awarded to Paula Moore by the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1985 for her relentless work in establishing the Ellsworth-McAfee Park on South Street along with a binder of newspaper articles and letters relative to achievements.

This year's Applefest brought in 139 visitors to the museum and many more came just for the art show, ice cream and home-made root beer. Our poster displaying previous labels from 1996 to 2022 was also a hit with the crowd.



Arlene Marshall, Jean Vitale, Paul Derosier, Janice Ferenchick and Carolyn Squillante ready for the rush at the Ice cream Social



Peter Stone and friends displaying the 1923 Maxim outside the Society

History Corner, continued

50 years, played the organ in three Northborough churches at various times.

In her 60s, she, in effect, began a new career. The first woman elected president of the Northborough Historical Society, she served 11 years, longer than anyone before or since. Many of its meetings took place in the home she shared with her husband, Herbert Kimball, at the end of School Street. She energized an interest in Northborough history that had grown dormant. With some friends she began to reclaim the long-neglected early churchyard on Brigham Street; finally the town pitched in to complete the job. After her long presidency, she became the first curator of the Historical Society. Some of her many talks on historical topics have been gathered in a booklet, *Alice Kimball's Northborough*.



Alice Kimball

Edwin W. Proctor (1887-1977)



Edwin Proctor

As a member of the pedagogical Proctor family and student of his sister Fannie at the North School, he inevitably became a teacher. He graduated from Harvard University, studied at the Sorbonne, and taught French at schools in Chicago and Santa Barbara, Calif., and later at the Choate School in Wallingford, Conn., where his students included John Fitzgerald

Kennedy, who, Proctor claimed, “had a mind like a sponge.”

Retired and eager to preserve some of the beauty of his town, he gave 73 acres, including the Edmund Hill woods, now a favorite hiking area, to Northborough. Active in the Historical Society, he endowed the construction of its archive as a memorial to Harriet Proctor, another of his sisters. He joined many local organizations, among them the Lions Club, the Youth Commission, the Northborough Public Library trustees, and, reflecting his interest and skill at horticulture, the Worcester Horticultural Society.

Bessie Murray (1902-1979)

Bessie Smith, born in Rindge, N.H., graduated from the college now known as Framingham State University, married Wilfred Murray, and lived in Northbor-

ough for over a half century. Of her many interests, the farming life appeared early. In her teens she won a national 4-H canning demonstration championship. She became both master and lecturer of the Northborough Grange and held several offices in the state organization. She served as president of the Northborough Women’s Club and the Garden Club.

In recent decades a number of women have distinguished themselves in Northborough government, but Murray, who held the post of town auditor, was the first woman to represent her district as state representative from 1956 to 1958. One achievement, probably not shared by many of her colleagues, was her record of never missing a session or meeting of a committee to which she was assigned. Thinking that a citizen from another district town needed the opportunity, she declined to run for re-election.

Gregory Goodwin Pincus (1903-1967)

A native of New Jersey, Gregory Pincus demonstrated his versatility at Cornell University, where he founded and edited the Cornell Literary Review while majoring in genetics. He earned his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1927 and, after further study abroad became an assistant professor there. Disappointed at not being granted tenure, he was hired as a visiting professor at Clark University by Hudson Hoagland.

After working there together, the two men founded the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology. In 1954 he purchased a brick building at 30 Main St. that had already been the home of several important local men. During the 1950s and ’60s, he and M. C. Chang, with help from Dr. John Rock, developed the first practical birth control pill. There can be no doubt that the pill changed the course of American society as few other scientific achievements have done. Once denied tenure at Harvard, Pincus was elected to the National Academy of Science in 1965.

A few notes on the author Bob Ellis: Shortly after joining the Northborough Historical Society in 1988, I was named to a group planning an historical picture book on the town. We failed at the time (a dozen years later such a book appeared), but the preparation for it awakened me to the rich history of Northborough. In 1995, although without a strong historical background, I thought that 35 years of teaching English language and literature, chiefly at Worcester State University, had made me reasonably familiar with historical research and might prove me acceptable as its historian. It has been for me a most enriching and rewarding experience.

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.

**Next
Board of Directors
Meeting
Tuesday, October 10**

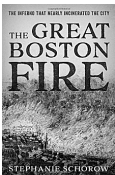
Northborough Historical Society

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 Civil Rights Legislation of the Mid 1960s** This lecture by Mark Bashour will examine the respective roles of Martin Luther King, Jr. and President Lyndon Baines Johnson in bringing about landmark legislation that would change this nation permanently.



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*".

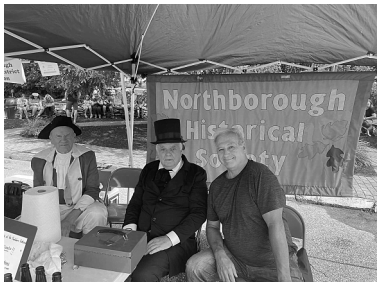
April 26, 2024 **The Blizzard of '78.** Michael Tougias, author of *The Storm of the Century*, recounts how New England was knocked to its knees on February 6th and 7th, 1978, by the incredible snow and wind referred to locally as the worst storm of the century. This history, combined with stunning photographs 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.



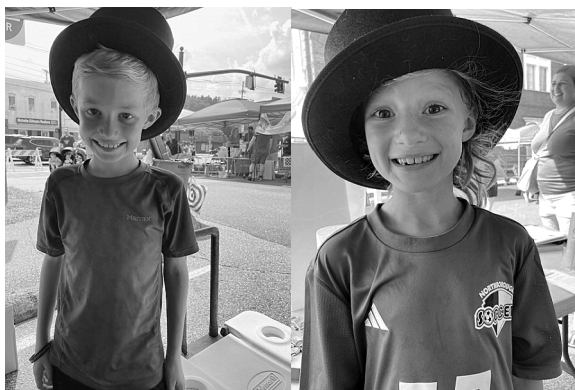
May 17, 2024 **Major Taylor: The Worcester Whirlwind.** Lynne Tolman, president of the Major Taylor Association, will present an illustrated talk about 1899 world cycling champion, Major Taylor. She will detail Major Taylor's remarkable life on and off the racetracks of the world at the turn of the 20th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

Welcome New Members!

Jane Reilly
Sam Thorat



Ken Bennett, Rick Ferencick and Mike Duchesneau at the Street Fair



Rick's grandchildren, Avery and Alex, ready to take over from Grandpa Rick as Abe Lincoln



Enjoying the Sundaes!

Applefest 2023 at the Society

A great time was had by all who participated in Applefest 2023 at the Society! 139 history enthusiasts kept our hosts busy when they visited our Museum on Saturday and Sunday.

The Ice Cream Social was a huge hit – countless sundaes, homemade root beers and root beer floats were consumed by our happy visitors.

George Washington and Abe Lincoln, aka Ken Bennett and Rick Ferencick, manned the information booth at the Blake Street Fair, while soda jerk Mike Duchesneau sold bottles of our ice-cold root beer. Between the Ice Cream Social and the Street Fair we sold 250 bottles of our signature beverage.

A special treat was the 1923 Maxim on display outside the building.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers and visitors who made Applefest 2023 such a splendid weekend!



Helen Garcia and Laura Ziton



Janice Ferencick and Carolyn Squillante ready to take the money



Amelia Ziton displaying the homemade root beer

► 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