



# THE HOURGLASS

## NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCXVI

Northborough Historical Society  
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

March 2024



**Next Meeting & Program: Friday, 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"*.

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

#### Dairy Farming in the 1950-60's

Growing up in the 1950's and 60's on our family dairy farm was an adventure for me. Our farm was at the end of Howard Street with over 100 acres in Northborough, and another 50 in Berlin, 25 of which was at the top of Mt. Pisgah and is now owned by the town of Berlin. The other 25 acres is now Bennett Woods. We also farmed three other pieces of land in Berlin.

We had about 18 head of cattle with around 12 milking cows. The cows were milked and fed twice a day. My father had 2 big work horses (Tony and Prince) which



Bennett Farm Barn

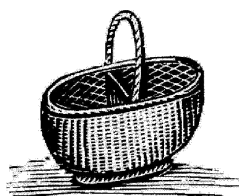
were used to cut and rake hay, to cultivate the corn, and do all the heavy work. The hay would be raked into rows by a horse pulling a dump rake and then loaded by pitchfork onto a truck. Then the hay truck would be

driven into the barn where a big 4-pronged fork would come down and would take up a big load of hay to the top of the inside of the barn. The hay would then go on a track and be dumped in the middle sections of the 2nd floor of the barn to be spread out later. This was done by a pulley system with power supplied by one of the horses. Our first tractor, a 1936 John Deere A with a top speed of 7mph, was bought when I was about 12 years old. With a tractor we started raising corn. We had a machine pulled by the tractor that would cut the corn and tie them into bundles of around 10 stalks which we would bring to the barn. There was another chopper machine powered by a pulley and belt to the tractor which chopped the corn up and blew it up into the silo.

Life on a farm can be dangerous at times. My father broke his back in a haying accident. Our truck with hay on it caught on fire. Our dairy business ended when a support post in the barn cellar let go. My brother and a bunch of the cows fell through into the cellar. Fortunately, neither my brother nor the cows were injured.

During the summers of 1963 and 1964, I worked for Danny Tyler whose dairy farm was on River Street in Berlin. Many years later this property would become Spooky World. He owned around 1000 acres including a big piece of land at the end of Whitney Street in

(continued on page 2)



### Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

#### Residents Returning

Sometimes it takes a few generations for Northborough's children to return home again. Elizabeth Loutrel sent us a letter, enclosing a photo of cousin Florence Felt to add to our collection. She is now reunited with her siblings, Mildred, Charles and William in our files. The family grew up on Pierce Street and later on Bartlett Street in a new house that George Herbert Felt built.



Florence Felt

George was a dealer in coal and lumber, which later became Proctor Lumber and lastly Northborough Lumber. The family in the photo is heading out in his "Thomas Flyer" about 1912. George was the third in town to own an auto-mobile, following Ezra Chapin, owner of Chapin Mills and Dr. Josiah Stanley.



History Corner, continued

Northborough. Floyd Kizer was Danny’s full time help at the time. Floyd’s father Frank Kizer had a dairy farm on Winter Street whose back fields are now the new section of the Northborough Cemetery. Both the Kizer and Tyler farms stopped farming by the end of the 1960’s. Also on Whitney Street was the Carlson dairy farm which, too, stopped farming in the 1960’s. Herman Sparrow, who had the large dairy farm in Northborough, started moving his herd to Vermont in 1969 due to I-290 taking a lot of his property.

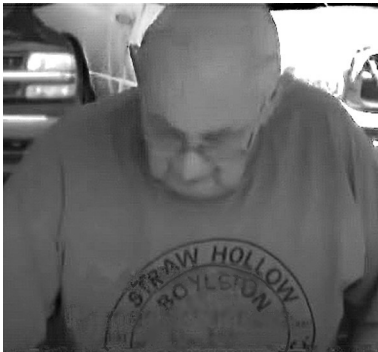
About 10 years ago Forest Lyford gave me the transcript of an interview that he and Alan Gustafson conducted in 1999 with former Northborough farmer Raymond Haitsma and his son Don. They said that their Stirrup Brook



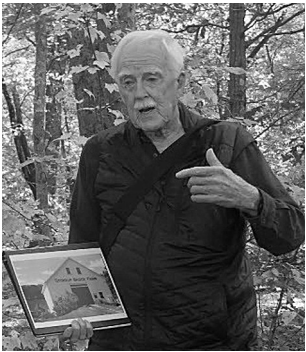
Stirrup Brook Farm Barn

Farm was a full-service farm or a producer dealer farm. This meant that besides having their own herd of 25 of cattle with 17-18 milking cows, they would pasteurize and bottle the milk and deliver it to retail customers. They were getting milk from several other dairy farms to combine with their own milk and delivering milk to around 300 customers. Besides having a team of horses, the farm also had a hay loader and a bailing machine.

During the interview, the Haskin and Rich farms were mentioned as being 2 farms that stopped farming due to the town taking their property to build the Lincoln Street Middle School and the Howard Street School. This interview was very interesting with many farms, people, places, and subjects being discussed.



Don Haitsma



Allan Bezanson

About seven years ago I had a very pleasant surprise in meeting Allan Bezanson who, it turns out, has been Don Haitsma’s step brother since they were 7 and 8 years old. They both used to drive a truck up to my father’s dairy farm to pick up milk to add to their own. They were doing this when they were still in high school in the early 1950’s when I was around seven years old. The Haitsma farm stopped selling milk by the end of 1950’s.

To read the interview with Raymond and Don Haitsma, go to <https://northborohistory.home.blog/farms-2/>

This link does not go to the Historical Society website.

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

Next  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, April 9

Information about future programs and more is available on our website.  
[www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org)

Membership

Annual Dues:

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

Mail 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 in September each year



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](mailto:stude38paul@yahoo.com) or phone 508-361-7321.

► 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](http://www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org/donate.html)

## Northborough Historical Society, 52 Main Street, Northborough



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Since 1906, the Northborough Historical Society has preserved our connection with the past. As the Society enters its 118th year, we ask you to consider contributing to our Annual Appeal. We rely on the contributions of members and friends to fund our daily operations, offer public programs, preserve the Society's building, and continue our commitment to collect and protect documents and artifacts that bring our historical past to life.

Member historians have written more than 200 articles and books about Northborough's past. Our curator has organized and catalogued thousands of documents and over 6,000 artifacts and is in the process of digitizing many of these records. Our archives are available for research by appointment.

The Northborough Historical Society Museum is located in the 164-year-old former Baptist Church at 52 Main Street. The Museum is open to the public, free of charge. It features artifacts dating from the 1700s to the present. Exhibits honor veterans from the American Revolution to the Iraq War, and commemorate notable sports figures, artists, inventors and business owners.

Our monthly meetings, which are open to the public, are held on the fourth Friday of the month.

Recent programs included:

- The Family Nurse: Home Medical Care in the Early Nineteenth Century
- The Great Boston Fire: The Inferno that Nearly Incinerated the City
- Landmark Legislation: The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Upcoming Programs include:

- April 26, 2024 The Blizzard of '78 presented by Michael Tougias
- May 17, 2024 The Worcester Whirlwind: 1899 World Cycling Champion, Major Taylor

Please consider a donation to the Society, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contribution will help us to continue our mission, and enable us to apply for grants that require matching funds.

Sincerely,

*Michael Duchesneau*

Michael Duchesneau, President, Northborough Historical Society

Scan to donate  
via PayPal



Thank you for your generous support of the Northborough Historical Society. Your contribution will help the Society to continue its mission of preserving and sharing Northborough's history



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me more information about membership, and the Society's programs

☐

I would like to donate: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ Other amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this completed form, along with your check made payable to  
*Northborough Historical Society*, to the address below.

Northborough Historical Society Appeal HG, P.O. Box 661, Northborough, MA 01532

Donations may also be made at our website: [www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org/donate.html](http://www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org/donate.html)

The Northborough Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.