



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCXVIII

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

May 2024



Next Meeting & Program: Friday, 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 his 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.

The meeting will be held **at 6:30 p.m.** at the Society building, 52 Main St., Northborough, MA. The event is free and open to the public. Masks will be optional.

Please note the time change. Business meetings will start at 6:30 p.m. Program will follow.



History Corner

by Ken Bennett

Northborough History



Josiah Coleman Kent

In the past 6 years I have read about Northborough history by 3 different authors. The first is Kent's book "Northborough History" which was published in 1920. Josiah Coleman Kent served as the minister of the Northborough Unitarian Church from 1895 to 1921. His significant contributions led to the establishment of the Northborough Historical Society in 1906. The book is comprehensive, tracing back to the 1600s, and includes 539 pages, 34 chapters, and 40 illustrations. The chapters encompass the railroad, the bank, the town hall, the churches, the schools, the aqueduct, the library, and the early industries of Northborough. The book remains accessible online at no cost.

One of my favorite purchases from the NHS museum is the blue booklet which was the official program for the Northborough 1766 - 1966 Bicentennial. It is filled with information about Northborough with pictures of buildings, local ads, town information and the events that were going to take place. I was thrilled to see a full-page ad for Machinery Electrification, which is where I was working when I got drafted into the army.

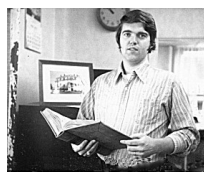
The booklet contains approximately 100 pages, half of which comprise a condensed history of Northborough authored by Janice Parmenter. In a 1972 article in the

Northborough Star there was an article about Janice Parmenter becoming the new assistant town clerk. It said that she had been a resident of Northborough since 1943 and had four children and ten grandchildren. It also said that she was the historian at the Northborough Historical Society.

This book will be available for sale in the museum which will be open May thru June on Sundays from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.



Janice Parmenter



William H. Mulligan Jr.

The third book that I have read on Northborough history is a book written by William H. Mulligan, Jr. titled "Northborough: A Town and Its People".

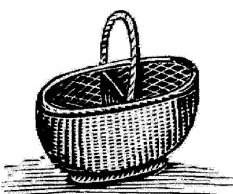
In a 1974 article in the Northborough Star it says Mr. Mulligan was a native of Brooklyn who graduated magna cum laude from Assumption College in Worcester, and received his masters degree in history at Clark. At the time he was living in Worcester with his wife and child. He was hired by the Northborough American Revolution Bicentennial Committee to write an article on the history of Northborough during the Revolutionary period for a pamphlet to be published that fall.

The biggest change pointed out in the book was population growth. In 1900 there were a little over 2000 living in Northborough and by 1950 it had increased to 3000. In 10 years by 1960, the population had more than doubled to over 7000 and 15 years later in 1975 increased another 3000 to over 10,000.

Northborough History: Kent, Josiah Coleman.

Free download at

<https://archive.org/details/northboroughhist00inkent>



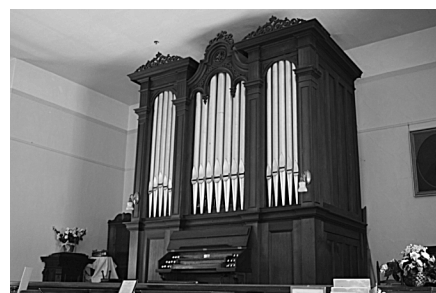
Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

It's the month of May and the Museum is open for the spring season. Stop by and see what's new and take a closer look at our many exhibits. We are open Sundays in May and June from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. There is no charge.

On June 8th and 9th, the Northborough Art Guild will be hosting their 61st annual art show from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The museum will be open on both days 12 noon - 4 p.m.

For music lovers, we will be hosting an organ recital with Robin Jubinville on Saturday afternoon, June 15th. Admission is free but donations are always welcomed.



Our 1874 George Stevens Pipe Organ

Bob Ellis 2024 MHA Star Award

In April this year, former Society Historian Bob Ellis became the recipient of an award from the Massachusetts History Alliance (MHA). Bob was selected to receive a 2024 MHA Star Award.



MHA Star Awards are granted to Massachusetts people who have made outstanding contributions to the research and interpretation of, as well as increasing access to, history of their communities. MHA Star Award recipients are recognized for long term commitment, outstanding work with concrete results, exemplary innovation, local leadership for change, or contributions to equity and justice.

Norm Corbin, Mike Duchesneau and Ellen Racine met with Bob to tell him about his award. Norm reported that Bob was surprised and very appreciative that he has been recognized for his efforts.



Bob’s service to the Society as Historian was the epitome of excellence. In celebration of this accolade and in appreciation of Bob’s service, a planter of spring flowers, along with cards from members, was delivered to Bob in April.

After this article was written, we received the sad news that Bob had passed away on Wednesday, May 8th. Our condolences to Christine and his family.

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

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

If there is a red dot in the address panel of this newsletter, it is time to renew your membership.
Your dues are not current for the 2023 - 2024 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 or phone 508-361-7321.

Northborough Historical Society Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting Society will take place on Friday, May 17, 6:30 p.m., at the Society Building. We will be electing officers, board and committee members, and we will be voting on a by-law change.

Only members who have paid dues for the 2023 - 2024 Society year may vote, at this Annual Meeting. If you are not sure if your dues are current, please email Membership Secretary Jean Langley.

MembershipSecretary@NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

Please note the time change. The business and annual meetings will start at 6:30 p.m.. The program will follow the meetings.

► 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

Letter to the Northborough Historical Society from Bob Ellis

I would like you to know what the Historical Society has meant for me. In the late 1980s our children were in or out of college, and Christine and I decided to join the Society. Quite soon I began to serve on the Museum Trustees and thus got to see the archive. Bob Kennerly was then the chairman, and he showed me certain items in particular. One that fascinated me completely was the accessions book. It told of how and when thousands of donations of physical objects arrived.

Everybody knows that everything has a history, but I hardly realized how much history Northborough, a town I had never seen until I was about twenty-nine, possessed. In the late 1980s more materials were pouring in than the curator could promptly process. I wanted to help, especially with documents. I also noticed that some of the existing documents required a more usable arrangement. The curator seemed to agree with my ambition. So off I went. Things like my continuation of the historical record as it was appearing in *The Hourglass* followed.

I was in a position to help the many people from near and far who want to know things about their family, their house, and certain other things no longer available to them. I really enjoyed helping those people, for they were invariably pleased.

I also learned things that helped me in my private life, such as the past life of my paternal grandmother, who did extraordinary things to make my childhood happy. My grandmother, born in the late 1870s, lived a rural life very similar to one like Northborough people's lives in the same era.

You will probably recognize another thing that always interested me. Think of how often the various members can and do contribute their skills and talents to the Society. I don't need to name anybody, there being so many. These contributions help to increase its value to the community, which seems to me have made it in my time a great instrument of progress.

But most of all, thank you for those wonderful flowers and the card. You all mean so much to me.

Forever in my thoughts,
Bob Ellis