



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCXXVI

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

April 2025



Next Meeting & Program: Friday, April, 2025. Northborough During the Revolutionary War. Presented by Norm Corbin and Bob Licht of the Rev 250 Committee, this engaging program describes how Northborough's Citizens participated in the Revolutionary War. Speakers will also review the activities and upcoming events of the Northborough 250 Committee. 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.

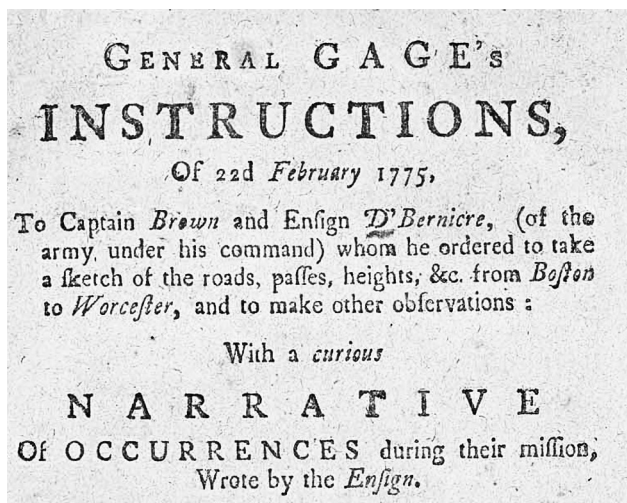


History Corner

by Norm Corbin, Historian

British Army Spies in Northborough

Starting in 1774 and into the winter of 1775, General Thomas Gage, the Commander of the British Forces in Boston, recognized that the colonists living in the countryside were storing cannons, ammunitions and large quantities of gunpowder. He was concerned this was in preparation for a possible conflict with British Authority. General Gage needed information about



General Gage's Instructions
(Image courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society)

the local geography west of Boston because he was planning to march troops through the area in the upcoming spring of 1775. The General assigned Capt. Brown and Ensign D'Bernier to investigate Worcester County. Their task was to make sketches of the countryside, including identifying roads, towns, rivers, travel distances and possible sites for military encampments. The spies were disguised as "countrymen".

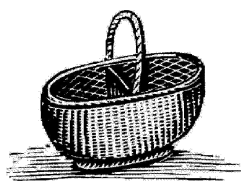
We are very fortunate that the Massachusetts Historical Society contains the detailed daily diary of their travels. They left Boston on February 22, 1775, with a servant named John. This was just 8 weeks before the battles of Lexington and Concord. Several times along the way, they were identified as British soldiers, which made their journey hazardous. They were warned the countryside may not be safe for them.

Their route to Worcester brought them to Mr. Jones's Golden Ball Tavern in Weston where they stayed one night and the next night at Buckminster's Tavern in Framingham, heading for Worcester the next day. They lodged in Worcester for several days where they made many sketches of the area.

Heading back to Framingham on Monday February 28th, Ensign D'Bernier wrote in the diary:

"We went on unobserved by anyone until we passed Shrewsbury, where we were overtaken by a horseman who examined us very attentively, and especially me,

(continued on page 4)



Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

The 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution is underway.



**Northborough
Revolution 250**

On April 19th there will be an exhibit of 27 photographs of "Witness Houses" that are still standing from the Revolutionary War period.

This will be held at the Library from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, with refreshments served by costumed hosts.

On May 3rd from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. there will be a program at the Town Common with appearances from Rev. Peter Whitney, Samuel Wood, and the local Minutemen, before they head off to Concord to engage in battle for our Independence.

On May 4th the Museum will be open from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. with the "Witness House" photo exhibit displayed in the meeting hall.



1775 period costumes donated
by Rick and Marie Nieber

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Underlined names are submitted to be voted on
at the May 16, 2025 Annual Meeting

Position	Person	Term Expires
President	<u>Ken Bennett</u>	2026
Vice President	<u>Rob Van Buren</u>	2026
Directors	Zenya Molnar	2026
	Alex Molnar	2026
	<u>Janice Ferenchick</u>	2027
	<u>Mike Duchesneau</u>	2027
	<u>Chuck Liljestrand</u>	2028
	<u>Mark Bashour</u>	2028
Treasurer	Nadine Proctor	2027
Membership Secretary	Jean Langley	2027
Recording Secretary	Hilary Wilson	2027
Museum Trustees	Carol Bostock	2026
	Linda Corbin	2026
	Jane Fletcher	2027
	Kathy Pierce	2027
	<u>Lynne Derosier</u>	2028
	<u>Allyn Phelps Jr</u>	2028
Publicity	Hilary Wilson	2026
	Zenya Molnar	2027
	Alex Molnar	2027
	<u>Laura Ziton</u>	2028
Hospitality	Cindy Atwood	2026
	Marcia Parsneau	2027
	<u>Carolyn Squillante</u>	2028
Program	Nadine Proctor	2026
	Suzanne Williams	2027
	<u>Arlene Marshall</u>	2028
	<u>Jodie Martinson</u>	2028
Property	Paul Derosier	2026
	Rob Van Buren	2027
	Peter Stone	2027
Kitchen	Jane Fletcher	2026
	Marcia Mills	2027
	<u>Debra Bennett</u>	2028
Legislative	Jean Langley	2026
	Hilary Wilson	2027
	<u>Michael Mills</u>	2028
Nominating	<u>Mike Duchesneau</u>	2026
	<u>Ernie Racine</u>	2026
	<u>Rhonda Van Buren</u>	2026
Ways and Means	Henry Squillante	2026
	Marie Spence	2027
	John Northgraves	2027
	<u>Mark Bashour</u>	2028

Submitted by the Nominating Committee
Rick Ferenchick ▪ Carol Bostock ▪ Carolyn Squillante

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 13



**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
REVOLUTION 250
PRESENTS

WITNESS HOUSE EXHIBIT

NORTHBOROUGH'S KICKOFF EVENT FOR
A STATEWIDE CELEBRATION OF MA250



**Saturday, April 19, 2025
10am-12pm**

*Northborough
Free Library
Meeting Room*
34 Main Street, Northborough

**REFRESHMENTS WILL BE
SERVED**

Colonial Witness Houses
are from the Revolutionary
War Era. Northborough
has 27 standing today!



250th Anniversary
of the American Revolution



Only members who have paid dues for the 2024 - 2025

Society year may vote at this Annual Meeting.

If you are not sure if your dues are current, please email Mem-
bership Secretary Jean Langley.

MembershipSecretary@NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

Proposed by-law amendments to be voted on by the members at the Annual Meeting to be held on May 16, 2024.

Proposed Amendment to By-Laws Concerning Nominations

The time frame and procedure in the current by-laws makes it difficult for the Nominating Committee report to be checked for conformance to the by-laws in time to meet the deadline for notification to the membership. This amendment will get the report directly to the holders of the records needed to check conformance earlier in the process.

Current Wording

ARTICLE VI - ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS, RESIGNATIONS AND TERMINATIONS FROM OFFICE OR COMMITTEE

Section 2. Nominations

- B. A slate to fill vacant and expiring positions shall be prepared by the Nominating Committee and submitted to the Board of Directors by April 1 for review to ensure that all candidates are paid active members and that the slate is otherwise in conformance with these by-laws.
- C. The slate with the approval of the Board of Directors, shall be presented to the Society one month before the Annual Meeting by presentation at the April meeting of the Society and by posting on the society website and in The Hourglass.

Proposed Wording

ARTICLE VI - ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS, RESIGNATIONS AND TERMINATIONS FROM OFFICE OR COMMITTEE

Section 2. Nominations

- B. A slate to fill vacant and expiring positions shall be prepared by the Nominating Committee and submitted to the Board of Directors, *and to the Membership Secretary and the Recording Secretary* by April 1 for review to ensure that all candidates are paid active members and that the slate is otherwise in conformance with these by-laws.
- C. The slate shall be presented to the Society one month before the Annual Meeting by presentation at the April meeting of the Society and by posting on the society website and in The Hourglass.

Proposed Amendments to By-Laws Concerning Building Rentals

The Board, along with an ad hoc Rentals Committee, has spent some considerable time reviewing all aspects of our building rental policy. Going forward the Board is proposing to handle rentals differently than we have done in the past. These changes should create a more streamlined rental process. The following by-law amendments are needed to enable these changes.

Current Wording

ARTICLE IV - ELECTED OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, TRUSTEES, NEWSLETTER EDITOR, OTHER PERSONNEL, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 6. Standing Committees

D. Property

- 5. Shall annually review the policy of rentals and specific fees for use of the Society facilities, and shall submit recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval by August 1. Rentals to individuals will be restricted to members only (approved by Board of Directors May 1995).
- 6. Shall delegate authority to the custodian to:
 - a. Inform renters of fees according to the approved rental policy
 - b. Approve all applications and make necessary arrangements with the party of the rental.
 - c. Shall exercise judgment in meeting requests, or in situations that are extraordinary, obtain approval of the Board of Directors
 - Uses that may have a detrimental effect on the property;
 - Groups or individuals that formerly used facilities and problems occurred;
 - Requests for uses involving sales; rentals of the facilities on a repeated basis during the year.

Proposed Wording

ARTICLE IV - ELECTED OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, TRUSTEES, NEWSLETTER EDITOR, OTHER PERSONNEL, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 6. Standing Committees

D. Property

- 5. Shall annually review the policy of rentals and specific fees for use of the Society facilities, and shall submit recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval by August 1. *Society members and non-profit organizations shall receive a discounted rental rate.*
- 6. Shall delegate authority to the *Rental Coordinator* to:
 - a. Inform renters of fees according to the approved rental policy
 - b. Approve all applications and make necessary arrangements with the party of the rental.
 - c. Shall exercise judgment in meeting requests, or in situations that are extraordinary, obtain approval of the Board of Directors
 - Uses that may have a detrimental effect on the property;
 - Groups or individuals that formerly used facilities and problems occurred;
 - Requests for uses involving sales; rentals of the facilities on a repeated basis during the year.

Current Wording

ARTICLE 5 - TERMS OF OFFICE

- E. Newsletter Editor. The Newsletter Editor shall be appointed by the Board of Directors to an indefinite term.

Proposed Wording

ARTICLE 5 - TERMS OF OFFICE

E.

- 1. Newsletter Editor. The Newsletter Editor shall be appointed by the Board of Directors to an indefinite term.
- 2. Rental Coordinator. *The Rental Coordinator shall be appointed by the Board of Directors to an indefinite term.*

History Corner, continued

whom he looked at from head to foot as if he wanted to know me again, after he had taken his observations he rode off pretty hard and took the Marlborough Road, but by good luck we took the Framingham Road.

Today, this intersection of the Marlborough Road (also called the Boston Post Road), and the Framingham Road, is where Old Colonial Road (the old Boston Post Road) intersects Davis Street (the old Framingham road) in Northborough. This intersection is not far behind the building housing Monti’s Pizza, Yama Zakura, and The Cellar Restaurant.

Returning to Buckminster Tavern in Framingham to spend the night, they felt very uncomfortable as the local patriot militia men were practicing their maneuvers very near the tavern. The next day they decided to walk to Marlborough from Framingham by way of Weston. Their goal was to walk west along the Boston Post Road from Weston through Marlborough and Northborough to the 37-milestone marker in Shrewsbury. Again, they were forewarned to not go further west into the countryside. Hearing that, they gave their servant John all their drawings and sent him on

his way to Boston. Approaching Marlborough, they were met by a horseman who asked many questions inquiring who they were, where they lived and why were they here. After the interrogation they met Mr. Barns, a loyalist, at his home in Marlborough and hoped to spend the night. Mr. Barns informed them that Marlborough was not safe for them and they should immediately leave. Leaving Marlborough near midnight, they made their way back to Boston.

Mr. Barns met them in Boston several days later and mentioned his home was searched looking for them. It appears the horsemen they met in Northborough several days earlier had spread the word of their presence in the area and the local colonists were waiting for them. It is conceivable that the report by Capt. Brown and Ensign D’Bernier discouraged General Gage from moving into Worcester with military force. As a result, he decided to make his next military excursion into Concord. In hindsight, if the revolution did not start in Concord, it would have likely occurred along the Old Boston Post Road toward Worcester.

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

Reminder: Dues are now overdue!

Please mail your check to the address above, or bring your payment, cash or check, to the membership table at the April 25 meeting. To ensure that your contact information is up to date, please complete a membership form (link below) and submit it with your dues.

<https://www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org/pdf/Membership.pdf>

Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for a few members who would be willing to print out a small flyer each month containing information about each program, and post it in a location around Northborough or the surrounding towns. If you can help us with this please email:

northborough_historical_society@charter.net

Information about future programs and more is available on our website.

www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

Scan QR code
to donate via
PayPal



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Donations can be made online at our website. www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org/donate.html