



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCXXIX

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

September 2025



Next Meeting & Program: September 26, 2025. Hidden Illness in the White House: Patient Confidentiality vs. the Public Good. The presidency of the United States is a demanding job that requires intellectual, emotional, and physical strength. The world depends on a stable executive running the United States government. What happens when they are ill? Dr. Dale Magee will explore 3 presidents: Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Dwight David Eisenhower, to look at the specifics, the uncertainties and the deceptions during their presidencies and their candidacies.

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.



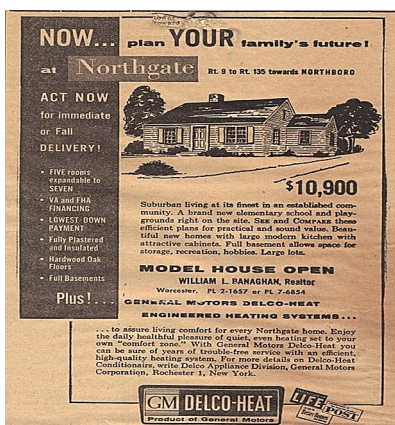
History Corner

by Norm Corbin, Historian

Northborough's Mid-20th Century Population Growth - Part 1

From 1940 to 1975 the population of Northborough grew 4.4x. This rapid growth changed the character of the town and required significant town investments. In this article, I'll review the effects of population growth on schools and water demands. Information in Chapter 11 of William Mulligan's book "*Northborough: A Town and its People, 1638-1975*", was used for this article. I highly recommend reading this chapter because it gives details about the challenges facing the town as the population exploded.

Population - After the Second World War, Northborough, like many communities, built large housing developments to attract new homeowners. Several of the largest developments include the Northgate, Pine Haven, Cedar Hill, and Crestwood neighborhoods. An advertisement for the Northgate development, vintage mid-1950s, is shown. As a result, Northborough's population grew by 4.4x from 2,382 in 1940 to 10,561 in 1975. The number of dwellings grew from 743 in 1940 to 2662 in 1975. Between 1950 and 1960 alone, the population more than doubled from 3,122 to 7,183. The resulting population increase changed the town from a predominately agricultural community where people lived and worked in town, to a bedroom community, where people



Advertisement for the Northgate Housing Development

lived in town but worked in surrounding communities. Easy highway access (Routes 20, 9, and I-290) played a key role for enhancing Northborough as a commuter's town.

Schools - A significant impact on population growth was the need for more schools. The initial plan was to expand the Hudson Street School. However, new state regulations did not approve of the site. A new site was then selected on Howard Street (the current Zeh School) and built in **1954**. Even with the opening of the Howard Street School, it became clear that additional school buildings were required. A school was opened in **1956** on Jefferson Road (the current Proctor School), which serviced the new Northgate development. A school on Maple Street opened in **1962** (the current Peaslee School), and the Lincoln Street School opened in **1965**. The decision was made that a Middle School would help alleviate the crowding in the grammar schools so a Middle School was built on Lincoln Street in **1971** (current Melican School). Northborough joined with Southborough to open the Algonquin Regional High School in **1959**. It then joined with several local communities to open the Assabet Valley Regional Vocational School in Marlborough in **1973**. Clearly Northborough was up to the challenge for expanding school construction as its population increased.

Water Supply - In **1883**, Northborough built a reservoir for its water supply. The reservoir still exists today and is located in Shrewsbury. A photograph of the spillway is below. It is currently

(continued on page 4)



Spillway for the Northborough Reservoir

Historical Society Happenings for Applefest

Saturday and Sunday September 20 & 21, 2025

Saturday only

Costumed Society members and REV250 members walking in the Applefest Parade
Society Information Booth on Blake Street

Saturday and Sunday

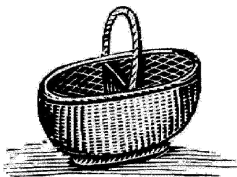
Museum Open 12 noon - 4 p.m.

Ice Cream Social 12 noon - 4 p.m.

Ice cream sundaes and root beer floats

Northborough Art Guild Art Show 12 noon - 4 p.m.

The Northborough Art Guild in collaboration with Northborough Garden Club will host an art show with floral arrangements by the Garden Club. This will include a bake sale and a silent art auction.



Curator's News by Ellen Racine

I am always amazed at the knowledge, talent, and experience of our members seated among us at our monthly meetings. They are generous in sharing their time and energy to keep our mission afloat, and this has always been so since our founding in 1906.

One of our long-time members, Alan Gustafson, has recently passed away. Alan Gustafson, and his wife Judie, spent every fall serving hotdogs and root beer at Applefest. They helped at our flea markets for many years, worked at our community suppers, and obtained a grant to have a portrait professionally restored in the 1990s.



Alan selling root beer at Applefest

In 2006 - our 100th anniversary - Alan and Judie were part of 100th Committee. They lent out their barn, talent, and time to build a float – a giant birthday cake - for the Applefest parade.



Alan and Paul Derosier moving the cake base from the Gustafson barn to the Derosier barn



Adding the finishing touches



The finished float in the parade



Building the Gustafson Wing

Alan also found storage space in the Society's shed by rebuilding the attic, stairway, and flooring, and also adding a removable wall. I call it "The Gustafson Wing".

Alan and Judie Gustafson at our 100th Anniversary Dinner at White Cliffs.
November, 2006



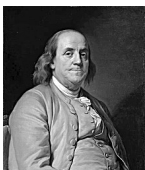
Northborough Historical Society Programs 2025-2026

52 Main Street Northborough, MA 01532

www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org

Programs take place at the Society building **Fridays at 7:00 p.m.** They are free and open to the public. Please check the Society website to confirm the location near the time of each event

September 26, 2025 **Hidden Illness in the White House: Patient Confidentiality vs. the Public Good.** The presidency of the United States is a demanding job that requires intellectual, emotional, and physical strength. The world depends on a stable executive running the United States government. What happens when they are ill? Dr. Dale Magee will explore 3 presidents: Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Dwight David Eisenhower, to look at the specifics, the uncertainties and the deceptions during their presidencies and their candidacies.



October 24, 2025 **Ben Franklin and the Road to Independence.** Portrayed by Tim O'Connor, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, thrice a Postmaster in America, will discuss the importance of the Post in America's growth, political discontent, revolution, and eventual freedom. Colonial letters will be shown illustrating these points in a very granular approach.

December 5, 2025 **History of the Juniper Hills Golf Course.** Built on the old Brigham farm, the Juniper Hills Golf Course has been in operation for 95 years. Originally built in 1931 by Homer C. Darling, the golf course has remained in the family. It is now run by Dudley Darling who will present a review of the history of this Northborough institution.



January 23, 2026 **You'll Get a Bang Out of Henry Knox.** How did a 25-year-old bookstore owner become the hero who launched the American Revolution without firing a shot? Steven Glovsky explores the improbabilities and inconsistencies of Henry Knox's story, leading up to his undertaking the transport of urgently needed cannon in the winter of 1775 -1776.

February 27, 2026 **The Battle of Bunker Hill.** Although a loss for the American patriots, this battle showed that they could hold their own against the powerful British Army. The patriots were led by three colonels:- William Prescott, John Stark, and Israel Putnam. Robert Hubbard's talk will include coverage of the contributions of Capt. Samuel Wood and the Northborough Militia.



March 27, 2026 **The Legacy of Inventor Thomas Blair.** Zenya Molnar will speak about Thomas Blair and his role in Northborough's history, as well as his inventions and entrepreneurial pursuits related to photography and other industries. She will also provide context about photography during that point in history in the late 1800s / early 1900s.

April 24, 2026 **How Isaiah Thomas Brought the Revolution to Worcester.** Ashley Cataldo will tell us how Isaiah Thomas, revolutionary printer and founder of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, traveled with his printing press from Boston to Worcester in April of 1775. Hear how Thomas made the journey and what he did to promote the Revolution in Worcester.



May 15, 2026 **Timber Frame Construction in Early New England.** Tom Kelleher discusses how people in early America built their houses, barns, and sheds long before power tools. This presentation will explore the materials, tools, techniques, traditions, and considerations that went into making a forest into a home.

Program Change

Please note the change from our previously published program list.
Our February 27, 2026 program will now be *The Battle of Bunker Hill*, **not** *Massachusetts' Paranormal Past* as previously listed.

Please refer to this list in future.

a beautiful, natural area. However, the dam is considered to be a high-risk of failing so there are plans to drain the reservoir in the near future.

This link is to a Community Advocate article about the dam removal. [Northborough begins planning process to remove ‘hazardous’ dam | Northborough communityadvocate.com.](#)

By **1945**, water quality issues started to arise with the reservoir and were difficult to address, as the town lacked control of the watershed which is within Shrewsbury. The Water Committee at that time recognized water as a long-range problem as the town population grew. It was decided that building town wells could solve both the water quality and volume problems. In **1956**, the Brigham

Street Well was brought on-line, followed by the Lyman Street Well in **1964**, the Crawford Street Well in **1970** with a fourth well off Howard Street in the early **1990s**. In addition to the wells, the town connected to the Metropolitan District Commission’s (MDC, now The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority MWRA) Quabbin / Wachusett reservoir water to provide additional water on an as-needed basis. A one-million-gallon storage tank was installed on Edmund Hill in the mid-1960s with an additional tank constructed on Assabet Hill. Due to several well contaminations during the following years, Northborough switched to being fully supplied by the MWRA.

Welcome New Member!

Willian J. Stanney, Jr.

**Next
Board of Directors
Meeting**

Tuesday, October 14

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

Building Rental

We have changed how we handle rentals of our building.


If you are interested in renting, regularly or for a special event, please contact our Rental Coordinator at rentals@northboroughhistoricalsociety.org

Or submit the information request form at:
https://www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org/rent_new.php

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

www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

Scan QR code to donate via PayPal



▶ 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