



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCXXXII

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

February 2026



Next Meeting & Program: 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.

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

Historic CPA Projects - Part 2

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of Northborough utilizing Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funding. Over the past few months, several Select Board members have questioned if Northborough should continue participating in this funding program. Without CPA Funding, the many Historic Preservation Projects conducted over the last 20 years **would not have occurred.**

This month's Hourglass article will highlight the use of CPA funding for historic document preservation, documenting Northborough's historic assets and installing historic site markers. As of 2025, CPA has funded these projects to the tune of \$255k. A subsequent Hourglass article will review the use CPA Historic funds on historic structure restorations.

What is Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding?

The Community Preservation Act allows communities to create a *Local Community Preservation Fund* for funding projects in the following categories: historic preservation, open space protection / outdoor recreation, and affordable housing. It was signed into law by Governor Paul Cellucci and Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift on September 14, 2000.

CPA funding was adopted in Northborough through a successful vote at the Town election in November 2004. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was formed at the April, 2005 Town Meeting, with the first grants being funded in 2006. All funding requests are reviewed by the CPC to make sure the requests follow CPA guidelines before being presented at Town meeting.

The CPA monies come from two sources:

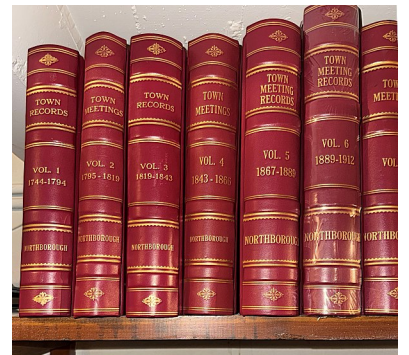
- A local surcharge on property tax within the community. Northborough's surcharge on property tax values over \$100,000 is 1.5%. Low-income residents are exempt from the surcharge.
- State matching funds come from a trust fund derived from a surcharge placed on all real estate transactions at the State's Registries of Deeds. The State match to Northborough's local surcharge revenue has averaged 35% over the 20 years of CPA in our town.

The Projects being highlighted in this article are:

Document Preservation.

Andrew Dowd, the previous Northborough Town Clerk, requested CPA funding over several years for a project to preserve old historical documents.

These documents start from 1744 when Northborough lands became the North Precinct of Westborough. The Town Clerk's project included digitizing old town vital records (birth/death/marriage) and Town Meeting records, deacidifying paper documents, placing the original records in archive quality mylar sleeves and binding them into new books. The image is of some of the preserved documents.



Preserved Historic Town Records
Courtesy: Daymian Bartek Town Clerk, Northborough

Historic Assets Inventory. The first project requested by the Northborough Historical Commission was for funding to conduct a thorough inventory of Northborough's historic pre-1910 assets. In addition to the pre-1910 assets, the current Northborough Town Hall Building at 63 Main Street, and the Vera Green house at 333 Howard Street were included, considering their history and architectural design. Documentation requires following very specific Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) procedures. The results are compiled into the statewide database *Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System* (MACRIS). Historical asset categories include: burial grounds, historic areas, individual buildings, structures. and objects. The project was contracted in two phases to companies experienced in preparing the required documentation. Each inventoried asset document includes information such as Address, Historic Name, an Architectural Description, Historical Narrative, and photographs. Once inventoried, the properties can be protected with a 180 day demolition delay so that alternatives to demolition can be considered. The Final Reports for both phases and links to each inventory document can be found on the Northborough Historic District Commission website.

The database contains information on;

- 2 historical Burial Grounds
- 19 Historic Areas (neighborhoods)
- 6 Historic Objects
- 18 Historic Structures
- 322 Individual Historic Buildings

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Historic Markers

In order to recognize and highlight historic locations within Northborough, the Historical Commission used CPA Historic funds over several years, to install sixteen bronze historic markers. The sign list includes:

- Meeting House Common Historic District
- John Brigham Mill Site
- Assabet Hill
- Wachusett Aqueduct
- Chapinville Mill
- Assabetville Mill area
- Woodside Mill
- Peter Whitney Parsonage Historic District
- First Parish Meeting House
- Mark Fidrych Marker
- Cold Harbor Brook Bridge
- Gale Store
- Gale Library

Northborough Historic District Commission Website
<https://www.northboroughma.gov/historic-district-commission>

Change of Program May 15, 2026

Our program on Timber Frame Construction scheduled for May has been cancelled.

Detail of the replacement program are below.

From Northborough the way north ran straight across the Nashua River Valley through West Boylston. That all changed with the coming of the Wachusett Reservoir in 1895.

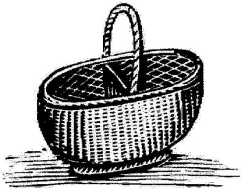


Come with Paul Marrone as he takes you on a colorful tour by river, road and rail through the once beautiful and peaceful valley as it appeared... **Before There Was a Dam.**

<https://www.beforetherewasadam.com>



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



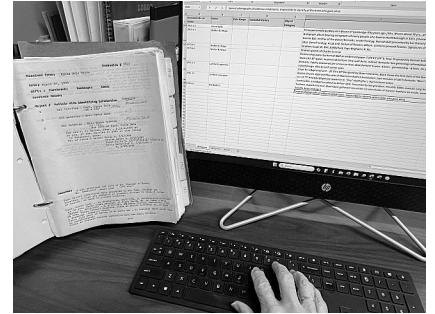
Curator's News
by Ellen

for her involvement. She is moving along quickly, entering accessions into Excel, and she has also written a quick guide for first-time museum visitors. Other projects may be dismantling an exhibit and creating a new one, or an independent research and writing assignment.

Curator's News, February 2026

We have a new intern for this spring semester. She is a senior at Algonquin Regional High School and is receiving credits

She is a very capable and pleasant young lady – very important attributes in a work environment. We are enjoying her and the contributions she adds to the Society.



▶ 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

Membership

<u>Annual Dues:</u>	Mail dues to:
Single — \$30	Northborough Historical Society
Student/Senior — \$25	Membership Secretary
Family — \$55	P.O. Box 661
Lifetime — \$500	Northborough, MA 01532

Please make checks payable to Northborough Historical Society
Dues are due in September each year

Scan QR code to donate via PayPal



Next Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, March 10