



December 2017 Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

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The Norwell Historical Society
P.O. Box 693
Norwell, MA 02061
781-659-1888
www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org

MUSEUM & LIBRARY HOURS

The Jacobs Farmhouse is open by appointment only. Please contact the Society for further information or to schedule a tour.

The Norwell Historical Society Library at the Norwell Middle School (328 Main Street) is open on Wednesdays from 2:00 to 3:00 during the school year or by appointment.

The Norwell Historical Society Archives Center on the 3rd floor of the Sparrell School is open by appointment only.

The purpose of this Society shall be: a.) to plan and arrange for the promotion of knowledge about the Town of Norwell by discussion, research, meetings and publications; b.) to collect, solicit and preserve documents, manuscripts, charts, maps, records, photographs, relics, and items of local interest; c.) to arrange, index, catalog and file/maintain such material for use by the members of the Norwell Historical Society and other interested parties; d.) to work with and cooperate with other entities, groups, organizations, and individuals directly and indirectly.

A LOCAL CHRISTMAS CAROL

by Bill Slattery, Society Archivist

As one ages, there is ever the propensity to reminisce. And, it is probably a happy fault for someone interested in history.

I remember the first school library book I read from cover to cover in grade school: *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. It is a sentimental story that I make a habit to reflect upon at this annual holiday—but its message is one that should permeate the days more generally. As Dickens had Scrooge's nephew say about Christmas, it is "a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time... when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely..."

Our Society's first president, Joseph Foster Merritt, before publishing

his history of our town, published a collection of news articles he had written for the *Rockland Standard* in a book called, *Anecdotes of the North River and South Shore*. In this collection may be found a story illustrative of this "charitable, pleasant time" of year— Mr. Merritt called it "Parson vs. Deacon" and it goes as follows, in Merritt's words (the bracketed parts are my insertions):

In old times [around 1830] Fast Day was a holiday by proclamation in this state and was observed by the older Orthodox people with the same respect as Sunday. Nathan Oakman tells a good story of Rev. Mr. Leonard of Marshfield and the observance of the day.

It seems that Mr. Leonard was in the habit of exchanging pulpits quite often with Rev. Edmund Q. Sewall [1796-1866] of Scituate. It was their usual custom to drive to Little's Bridge [now on Route 3A in Scituate], hitch their horses and walk across. Mr. Leonard would then take Mr. Sewall's horse and continue on to the [Second Parish] church at Scituate [now First Parish, Norwell] and Mr. Sewall would proceed to East Marshfield with Mr. Leonard's horse.

At that time Little's Bridge was a toll bridge and a fee was charged for each vehicle that passed over it, but the stockholders had ceased to charge people for walking across. By this arrangement the gentlemen [the two pastors without their horses] saved four toll charges.

Up in the "Two Mile" district [North Marshfield nearest the North River] lived Deacon Joel Hatch [1771-1849] who owned a saw mill. The season had been very dry and the mill yard was filled with logs with not much

(continued on page 2)

2017 Christmas at the FARMHOUSE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

Open House from 2:00 'til 4:00
at the Jacobs Farmhouse Museum



Tour the Jacobs Farmhouse decorated for the holidays, enjoy old-fashioned victuals and mulled cider, chat with fellow historical buffs, buy Historical Society items as holiday gifts, and enjoy Christmas caroling around the antique home organ!

For more information visit www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org

A LOCAL CHRISTMAS CAROL, CONT'D.

(continued from page 1)

water [power] to saw them. The day before Fast Day there came a big rain and filled the pond and it was running over the waste-way. This was too much for the Deacon. He went into the mill, lifted the gate and put in a good day's sawing.

His scruples would not allow him to take the money made by working on such a day so he sent it to one of his poor neighbors who was having a hard struggle to get along, and felt very well satisfied with himself. Meeting Parson Leonard a few days later he was surprised when the Parson upbraided him for his conduct, but with the ready wit which characterized the people of those days, he answered, "Now Parson which is more sinful, for me to work on Fast Day and give the money to the poor, or for you and Parson Sewall to swap horses twice on Sunday and defraud the Bridge company?" [end of Merritt's story]

We do not know whether or not the Parson ever repented of his "sin" against the bridge company, but we do know that the Deacon exposed him to the Christmas spirit and the biblical inspiration of prophet



The Hatch Mill today—once owned by Deacon Joel Hatch

Hosea, i.e. "It is love I desire, not sacrifice." While the Parson was absorbed by a desire for uniform self-denial, the Deacon had shown more love.

So may the Deacon's spirit be with us at this Christmastide and other times of year. And, "as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, Every One!"



The James
Library &
Center for the Arts



jameslibrary.org

presents

Robert Frost: Light & Dark with Actor J.T. Turner

At First Parish Church of Norwell
Parish Hall (next door to the James)

Sunday, January 21st at 3:00 pm

Robert Frost was described by a friend as "a good poet, but a bad man." America's great poet comes to life in this highly-praised one-man show. Robert Frost relates stories of his life, the tragedy as well as the humor, and reads some of his most popular poems, including Mending Wall, Birches, Nothing Gold Can Stay, Late Walk, Desert Places, Road Not Taken, and Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening. For fans of Frost's work this is a remarkable and intimate journey through the life of the Pulitzer Prize winning poet.

Sponsored by HUB International, the Estelle Mosher Memorial Fund, and the Norwell Historical Society



LOOKING FOR A HISTORIC HOLIDAY GIFT?

The Norwell Historical Society hired artist Erica Vermette to study the Maryjane Clark Decorative Arts Collection in our Archives. After reviewing the many stencils in Mrs. Clark's collection, Erica designed three travel mugs with the images of the Jacobs Farmhouse, the James Library, and the First Parish Church.

The Society chose to manufacture the James and Jacobs designs first, and they are available for sale for \$15 each or 2 for \$25.

If you are interested in purchasing a mug, please email the Society at info@norwellhistoricalsociety.org.

Mugs will also be available on Saturday, December 2nd at the James Holiday Marketplace and later at the Christmas at the Farmhouse event.



THE ICE MAN COMETH!

by Jody Vermette

Against the wall in my childhood kitchen sat a lovely appliance made of oak—the family ice box. It was about five feet tall with brass fittings. On the top was a closed off, galvanized compartment that held the ice. This had a lift up cover with a brass handle, and the door had a brass latch and hinges. Inside this area—also galvanized—were shelves for food storage. Under the shelves was the infamous pan. (I'll get back to that in a minute.)

Almost every week the ice man came to bring us ice. How did he know how much to bring, you may wonder? This was communication at its simplest: in the window facing the street was placed an 8x10-inch card—each side had a different bright color with a number in the middle (10-25-35 lbs, etc.). This card told the ice man how big a piece of ice you wanted. You had only to turn the card so the amount you needed was on the top.

His ice truck would drive up, he would glance at the window, cut the piece, put on his rubber cape, capture the piece with his huge ice tong, and—throwing the block of ice across his back—he'd deliver it. One of us would have alerted Mother of his arrival and she would open the ice box door, lift up the cover, and he would put it in.

After a short friendly conversation and payment, he would be off. Meanwhile, the kids in the neighborhood would be helping themselves to ice slivers from the back of the truck. We would immediately stick them in our mouths after we brushed off the sawdust that it was packed in. (That worked until my mother caught us and made us come in and wash the sliver off.) "Germs, what germs," she would say. It was frozen wasn't it?

Back to the infamous pan... it was connected to the ice compartment by a drain that sent the water from the melting ice down to the pan under the ice box—hidden behind a lift-up door. The pan had to be emptied

religiously or you were greeted by a stream across the linoleum!

Waking up early and stepping in the ice cold stream in your bare feet was an experience. Enter... my oldest brother (he of the gifted hands). When it was realized that the pan was overflowing, my brother was called into service. We would all gather to watch him because he could sneak that pan out from under the box, pick it up, walk over to the cast iron sink, and empty it without spilling another drop! We were in awe. He eventually became a physicist and went on to do marvelous things, but his skill with the pan was truly amazing.

In the early fifties, we got our first refrigerator at my brother's insistence. He had a feeling that if we didn't get one, Mother wouldn't let him go to college or get married! She couldn't stop WWII or his joining the Air Force, but when he was home, he was on pan duty. The refrigerator arrived, my brother was set free, the show was over, and he left for college. I have to say that refrigerators are no fun at all!



A 1930s icebox similar to Jody's



NOTE:
The Wedding 396
Exhibit closes on
December 30th.

Be sure to see
Norwell's own Lucy
Damon Waugh dress
before it's too late!

At left, the bodice of the Lucy Damon Waugh wedding dress—on loan from the Norwell Historical Society to the Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth.



WEDDING 396

A New Exhibition at Pilgrim Hall Museum

What do you wear on the most important day of your life? Trace the evolution of wedding fashion from the first Plymouth Colony wedding in 1621 to today! Over two dozen vintage wedding gowns and hundreds of South Shore wedding images are gloriously displayed to reveal the interplay of tradition and innovation over 396 years of New England wedding history.



COMING SOON!

*WEDDING 396:
Four Centuries of
Wedding Fashion
In Plymouth,
1621-2016*

A New Exhibition at
PILGRIM HALL
MUSEUM

Opens MAY 13th
through
DECEMBER 30, 2017

Featuring a stunning
array of Plymouth
area wedding gowns!

PILGRIM HALL MUSEUM
75 Court Street
Plymouth MA 02360

508-746-1620

pilgrimhallmuseum.org

Open daily
9:30 am to 4:30 pm

HOLIDAY RECIPES FROM THE SOCIETY ARCHIVES

Historical Society Board member Janet Watson recently stumbled upon a letter to the Society from Governor Bill Weld from 1993. The Governor wrote with three recipes to share in the Society's soon-to-be-published cookbook. Unfortunately, according to the note in the file, the book had already gone to print when the letter was received and the recipes were not included.

We would be remiss to not pass these recipes on to our members—especially given that Governor Weld wrote:

"Please note that 'Eggs à la Bill' is my own invention—requiring years of toiling over a hot stove and much research and development to perfect. Please note, I expect heaps of credit and praise. All positive reviews should be send directly to me at the State House."

Although correspondence through the State House will no longer work, you may email Governor Weld all of your praises at bweld@mlstrategies.com.

The Weld Family Apple Cake

1½ c vegetable oil
2 c sugar
3 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
2½ c flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. cinammon
3 cups chopped apple

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Pour into a greased and floured 9" x 9" pan. Bake at 350° for 1 hour.

Eggs à la Bill

2 eggs
2 T of milk
salt to taste
pepper to taste
2 T of orange juice (really!)
1 T of butter or margarine

In a medium bowl add all ingredients, except butter, and mix well.

Heat a skillet, melt the butter and pour in the egg mixture. Scramble with a fork until well cooked.

Serve with two pieces of toast and some sausages or bacon.

Serves 1

Janet Watson recently hosted a Board meeting at her home this past summer and made the Double Strawberry Bavarian Cream for the occasion. It was delicious!

Double Strawberry Bavarian Cream

1 package (3 oz.) strawberry flavored gelatin
1 c boiling water
1 package (10 oz.) frozen sliced strawberries in syrup
1 cup whipping cream (whipped)
whole strawberries

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water in a large mixing bowl. Add frozen strawberries to ot gelatin mixture; as berries thaw, break up with a fork. Mixture should be partially set by the time the berries have thawed; if not, place bowl in freezer for 5-10 minutes.

Fold whipped cream into gelatin mixture. Pour into a 4-cup mold. Refrigerate several hours or overnight. To serve, unmold onto a serving plate. Garnish with whole berries.

On a recent tour of the Jacobs Farmhouse, new Society member Caroline O'Riordan shared a recipe that "came with her house" (Laura Jacobs' former home located at 96 Jacobs Lane). A chimney repairman who had worked on the home for years passed on Laura Jacobs' blueberry muffin recipe to the house's new owners.

Mrs. Jacobs' Blueberry Muffins

1 box of blueberries
½ c butter (has to be butter)
1¼ c flour
2½ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
½ c sugar
1 egg
½ c milk

Wash and dry berries. Melt butter. Fold dry ingredients with butter. Add unbeaten egg and beat until smooth. Add floured berries.

Sprinkle sugar on each muffin. Bake at 375° for 18-20 minutes.

The discussion of old family recipes brought out an old family favorite from former Society Board member Sam Olson and his sister, Virginia. They have fond recollections of their grandmother, Isabel Osborne Olson (1880-1966) making Cracker Pudding at special occasions. Mrs. Olson wrote out the recipe in her own hand for Virginia in 1965—at age 85.

(continued on next page)

HOLIDAY RECIPES, CONT'D.

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Cracker Pudding needs to be made with a traditional "hard tack" cracker. G.H. Bent Company in Milton makes an old-fashioned cracker on traditional machines. The company began in 1801 selling "water crackers" (biscuits made of flour and water that would not deteriorate during long sea voyages). The company later produced hardtack crackers used by troops during the Civil War.



Samuel Olson (1865-1931) and Isabel Osborne Olson (1880-1966) in front of their Mt. Blue home, grandparents of Sam and Virginia Olson.

Today, the company has an online business—selling often to Civil War reenactors. The online store (as of our print date) has been closed until further notice because of a broken drive chain on a piece of their old machinery. The website states "our machines apparently pre-date standardization of chain sizes, we are in the process of future-proofing the machines with new standard cogs and chains"! Hopefully, the G.H. Bent Company will be back on line soon and hardtack crackers will be available so that we may try Mrs. Olson's famous pudding!

Cracker Pudding

½ package crackers
2 qts. milk
4 eggs
1 c sugar
butter, nutmeg, seeded raisins

Using a good-sized bowl, split crackers in half and put in bowl with half of the milk. Soak until soft.

Grease individual pudding dishes or one large dish with butter. Lay crackers in a layer and on each layer sprinkle nutmeg, add raisins, and dot with butter.

Add another layer and continue using the same ingredients until all of the crackers are used.

Use the milke the crackers were soaked in and add other quart, the beaten eggs, and the sugar. Pour over the crackers.

Bake at 250° for 3-4 hours. (Or, Virginia notes, start the oven at 325°, then reduce to 300° and bake for about 1½ hours.

THROWBACK PHOTO OF THE MONTH



This small building stood on Oak Street in Norwell. It was not a shoe shop, it was not a shed. Utilized by all residents in the West End, it served an important purpose—one that is still vital today. Ridge Hill residents who attended the Neighborhood History Party know all about it!

Can you guess what this small building was?

(Location/Answer at the bottom of page 6)



Give the gift of MEMBERSHIP

Buy a membership in the Norwell Historical Society as a gift and receive (December ONLY!) either a NORWELL TOWN SEAL PIN or a NHS COOKBOOK as a FREE GIFT. Please indicate whether you would like the membership card and gift mailed directly to the recipient or mailed to you for direct giving.

VIA MAIL: Fill out the enclosed member form and note your choice of free gift on the form

ON-LINE: Go to www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org, choose the "Become a Member" tab and donate, then use the "Contact Us" tab to note gift choice, and recipient name and address.

"GIVE ME THE SIMPLE LIFE"

by Samuel Olson

"Some find it pleasant dining on pheasant,
those things roll off my knife.
Just serve me tomatoes and mashed potatoes.
Give me the simple life!"

—Reuben Bloom



Norwell in 1910—below are some news notes from the *Rockland Standard*.

Vast changes had taken place in America during the previous decade—automobiles, airplanes, motion pictures—a more sophisticated lifestyle for many. But in Norwell, the basic

essentials of life had barely changed during the past half century and would not change much for several decades to come.

Jan. 7, 1910: Icing has begun at Jacobs Pond—ten inches thick and of the best quality. Joseph Briggs has begun construction of 40' X 30' ice house at the head of the pond.

Jan. 7, 1910: George White and George McCue have a contract to cut wood on Wood Island. [Note: location?]

Jan. 7, 1910: Sparrell brothers are cutting ice which is 14" thick.

Jan. 14, 1910: H.E. Fairbanks has closed his grocery store near Jacobs Pond and has moved his goods to his home on Washington St. He will continue to run his order cart.

Jan. 18, 1910: A special town meeting was held last Saturday evening. One of the matters discussed was the claims of Samuel Ward of Scituate against the town. Mr. Ward claims that while driving on one of Norwell's roads, his carriage went over a rock and he was thrown out. it was voted not to honor his demand for \$900.

Feb. 18, 1910: Preparations have commenced for spring hatching at the Fessenden poultry plant. Several hundred eggs are now in the incubators.

Feb. 25, 1910: Three French Canadian woodworkers employed by Gilbert West to cut wood in the town were found one day last week lying in the snow near the corner of River and Common Streets. They were taken to the lockup and appeared in Abington Court and fined five dollars for drunkenness.

March 11, 1910: The Monday morning Town Meeting was well attended despite the bad weather. The

bowling alley and the Adams Express license to bring intoxicating liquor into town were revoked. [Note: Temperance was a popular cause in Norwell.] Money



This undated postcard may be one of those taken in 1910. Interestingly, the back of the card reads: "Dear Sister, Had I known the taking of house, I would have removed the garden stakes. Am seated at the bedroom window. M."

was appropriated for spraying the elm trees to protect them from the elm beetle.

May 20, 1910: Workmen are now busy setting electric light poles along River Street. [Note: among the first to be erected in Norwell!]

May 20, 1910: Many pretty views in town have been taken for postcards by a photographer who was through town last week.

July 18, 1910: The GAR post received a visit from 86 year-old David Robinson, father of D. Willard Robinson for whom the post was named. He presented them a life-sized painting of this son enclosed in a gilded frame.

July 22, 1910: Frank Alger [Note: well-known blacksmith in the Assinippi section of Norwell] celebrated his 64th birthday. Mustered into the service on September 6, 1862, he served in Virginia and in the Siege of Charleston. He was severely wounded in the Union defeat at Olustee, Florida, and left on the field for dead. He later was picked up by the Confederates and sent to Andersonville, Georgia where his weight dropped from 165 pounds to 90 pounds. Later, he was transferred to the rebel prison at Florence, South Carolina. [Note: he was the last survivor of the Norwell GAR.]

Aug. 26, 1910: The Stetson Kindred met for their sixth annual reunion with 200 converging. Residents along
(continued on next page)

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____ NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP

3-Year Membership (\$35) _____

Life Membership (\$350) _____

Please make checks payable to the *Norwell Historical Society* and mail to: NHS,
P.O. Box 693, Norwell, MA 02061

OR YOU CAN JOIN ON-LINE 
www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org

AREAS OF INTEREST

Newsletter _____ Research Library _____

Tour Guide _____ Program Planning _____

“SIMPLE LIFE,” CONT'D

(continued from previous page)

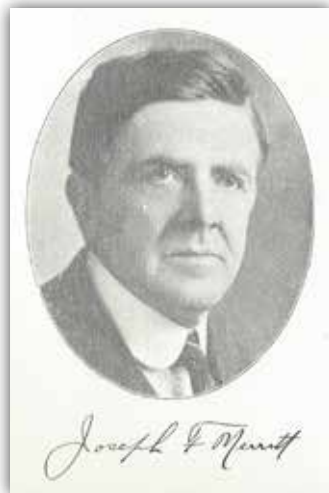
the streets leading to the Shrine decorated their places with flags and bunting. A large floral sign—“Welcome Stetson Kindred of America”—was placed at the corner of River and Elm. [Note: Elm Street was later renamed Stetson Road and, later when Route 3 divided the street in half, Stetson Shrine Road.]

Sep. 30, 1910: Tuesday evening the Democrats of Norwell held a caucus at Town Hall. The candidate chosen for the General Court [Massachusetts State Legislature] was Dr. H.J. Little.

Oct. 7, 1910: Last week, an inmate at the Almshouse died leaving only one other inmate.

Oct. 14, 1910: The Old Scituate Brass Band will have a reunion. Organized in 1872, it flourished for 19 years with about 40 members. David H. Stoddard was its leader.

Oct. 14, 1910: [Democrat] Joseph F. Merritt was elected to the General Court over his Republican rival by one vote. [Note: He served for only one term. Merritt said he preferred serving in the town government. He was Norwell Town Clerk for 40 years.]



Long-time Norwell Town Clerk Joseph Foster Merritt was the first president of the Norwell Historical Society and wrote the book A History of South Scituate-Norwell, Massachusetts.



**New research...
can you help?**

The Society recently found a number of pictures (like the one of Civil War veteran Walter Foster shown above) that are not listed in our photographic archives.

Would you be willing to sort through photographs and compile a list of names that could be catalogued? Ability to meet Society staff at the Research Library on Wednesdays from 2:00-3:00 would be preferred. If interested, please email the Society at info@norwellhistoricalsociety.org.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



at the **CHRISTMAS FARMHOUSE**
Sunday, December 2nd
2:00-4:00 pm

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA

A NARRATIVE OF SOUTH SCITUATE-NORWELL

\$20

by Samuel H. Olson

This book chronicles the life and times of our town from 1845-1963 with a collection of articles previously published in *The Norwell Mariner*. Each chapter is its own story!

SHIPBUILDING ON THE NORTH RIVER

\$45

by L. Vernon Briggs

The definitive index of ships built on the North River and the shipyards that lined its shores was written in 1889 and re-printed in 1988. Lists interspersed with an occasional tale.

HISTORIC HOMESTEADS OF NORWELL

\$15

Learn more about our stately houses and the people who lived in them. This book, well-illustrated with drawings, discusses architectural features and includes genealogical information.

HENDERSON MAP

\$3

Interesting hand-drawn map suitable for framing. Drawn by Anne Henderson and first issued in 1967, it is a favorite depiction of the location of historic homes.

NORWELL 1903 MAP

\$25

This 16" X 20" reproduction of the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas map of Norwell is a high quality digital copy of the original hand-colored version. Suitable for framing.

MARYJANE CLARK-INSPIRED TRAVEL MUGS

\$15

Choose the Jacobs Farmhouse or the James Library. Artist Erica Vermette created these original pieces. (2 for \$25)

THE ABCs OF NORWELL

\$10

by Gertrude Daneau

A coloring book perfect for children of all ages! This illustrated book can be used as a text for teaching budding historians, or as a quick guide to Norwell's many famous personalities and historical features.

HISTORY OF SOUTH SCITUATE-NORWELL

\$25

by Joseph Foster Merritt

This history of the town to 1938 was republished in 1988. A unique narrative written by Norwell's Town Clerk, it is considered to be an invaluable account of Norwell prior to WWII.

MORE THAN JUST A COOKBOOK

\$5

This book is full of time-tested favorite recipes submitted by locals. Beyond the gastronomic delights, we have included sketches, interesting narratives and accounts of historic events.

THE WAY WE WERE

\$20

by Jeanne Garside

This book is a series of articles written for Norwell's Centennial Celebration in 1988. Illustrated with old photographs, it tells what times were like in 1888.

JACOBS MILLS PAINTING REPRODUCTION

\$25

This 8" X 10" reproduction of the 1830s Jacobs Saw and Grist Mills painting is canvas-mounted on board and ready for framing. The original hangs in the Jacobs Farmhouse.

All the above items are available at the Society Library in the Middle School on Wednesdays during the school year (2-3:00 p.m.), or you may call Wendy Bawabe at 781-659-1464, or you may request a publication using this form and enclosing a check (made payable to NHS). Mail to: NHS, P.O. Box 693, Norwell, MA 02061.