



# Newsletter

Summer 2012

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

[WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG](http://WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

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## CONTACTING US

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P.O. Box 693  
Norwell, MA 02061  
781-659-1888  
[www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org)

## MUSEUM & LIBRARY HOURS

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

The Norwell Historical Society Library at the Norwell Middle School (328 Main Street--Route 123) is open on Wednesdays and Thursdays: from 1:30 to 3:30 during the school year, and 10:00 to noon during the summer.

The Norwell Historical Society Archives Center on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

## BREEZY BEND FARM--REMEMBER WHEN?

*The Norwell Historical Society recently received a number of items from Stonehouse Antiques' owner Marie Anderson. Prominent in her scrapbooks about Norwell are newspaper articles and memorabilia from Breezy Bend Farm--formerly on Route 53 in Norwell. The original Breezy Bend Farm sign, photos, old liquor licenses, and a breezy Bend hat are among the treasures.*

*The following is part of the final newspaper article in Marie's collection. From The Norwell Mariner, it re-tells the story of Breezy Bend and explains the circumstances of the current commercial properties on the site. By Pattie Hainer, it is reprinted from the April 25, 1998 paper.*

The last piece of Breezy Bend history was carted away in a dump truck Friday. The house that stood at the landmark farm on Route 53 since 1870 was smashed to the ground in an hour.

The only reminder of the farm's popular fruit and vegetable stand is two apple trees standing near the woods at the back of the site.

"It's kind of sad," Barbara Penezick said. "It's so hard to believe that it's all just disappeared."

Penezick's husband, Rudy, operated the vegetable stand next to the house for 45 years. A popular stopping spot on the old route to Cape Cod, the farm once was 20

acres that straddled both sides of the road. It originally included chickens and turkeys. In 1925, a 140 tree apple orchard was planted which was so picturesque and well-known that it was often featured on calendars and postcards.

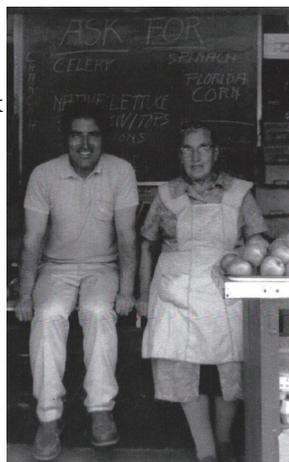
The farm was the last to do business in an area that was once known for its extensive farm land. Business at the vegetable stand started to decline in the 1960s when Route 3 was opened and Cape traffic was diverted to the highway.

Fourteen years ago [1984], Penezick closed the stand. He has been trying to sell the property for about five years and finally made a deal with George P. Williams of the Williamsburg Company as the site for the town's new post office. But that deal fell through in 1995 when residents objected to moving the post office out of the center of town.

The abandoned vegetable stand, which stood next to the house, was torn down in 1996 to make way for the Bronson-Brodie furniture store. The house was doomed when the Williams completed negotiations last year for a Kindercare Learning Center of the site.

Anticipating a temporary move to a house on Grove Street, the Penezicks held a yard sale two weeks ago. "Everybody who came said they were so sad that after all this time it was going to be gone," Barbara Penezick said. "No one can believe it."

After six hours of work Friday, there was no sign of the house or the site's long history in the town. The spot was filled and leveled off with piles of sand as the only clue to the new construction that is about to begin. [...]



Rudy and his mother at Breezy Bend

# ALONG THE NORTH RIVER

*Editor's Note: The following is the first installment of an article titled "ALONG THE NORTH RIVER: Stream of Indian Canoes, Pioneer Ships, and Modern Craft" by Margaret Crowell (later Margaret Crowell Dumas) written for the May 27, 1938 edition of The Hanover Branch and Norwell Advertiser (7th Annual Edition), and transcribed with parenthetical notes by Society Archivist Bill Slattery. The remainder of the article will appear in future editions of the Society newsletter.*

The early grants of land included not only what is now the town of Scituate but also what are now Rockland, Hanson, Hanover, Norwell and that section of Marshfield above Union Bridge running along the river for two miles. This last mentioned part was used for the growing of corn and a local name for that section is Two Mile or Corn Hill.

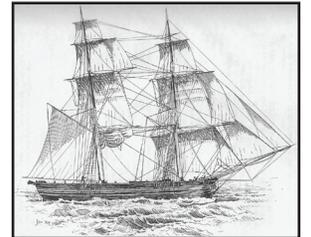
At various times portions of old Scituate were set aside for the other towns until in 1849 the southerly part was separated and became the township of South Scituate, the name being changed in 1888 to Norwell.

When the men of Kent, as the first settlers were sometimes called, came to Scituate from England, they settled what is now Kent Street from the new Catholic church [St Mary of the Nativity] towards Third Cliff. For the most part they had come from Kent in England and while Scituate is certainly attractive, I often wonder at their courage in making new homes for themselves in what was then an unexplored wilderness. At that time the Indians had cleared land for corn where Kent Street and Greenfield Lane now intersect, hence the name, and also on Third Cliff which was more extensive than it is now. It was also possible to travel from Third Cliff to Fourth Cliff as the mouth of the North River was located further south near what is now the summer colony of Rexham Terrace [Marshfield]. The water of the river was fresh, and,

while there was some current, except near the mouth, there was no decided rise and fall of tide as is the case today. The meadows aside the river were valued for the hay. Trees and flowers grew close to the water's edge including the lovely hibiscus or rose mallow. The river was the first highway, and, it was quite natural that the first houses were built near its banks. Life was quite different in those days, since the colonists had to produce all their food supplies. They found that the waters off shore teemed with fish which they could use themselves and also barter for articles produced elsewhere. As for the natural resources, there were many hardwood trees. Bog iron was found in Hanover where a number of iron forges were constructed on the upper reaches of the river.

Shipbuilding played an important part in the life of the towns bordering the North River Valley. The men connected to the industry were craftsmen of no mean skill, and the products of their yards were sought by prominent ship owners of Nantucket, New Bedford, Salem and Boston. In unexpected places, you often find reference to North River craft, and invariably, they played some important part in the maritime history of our nation. Over one thousand ships were built on the North River from the early 1600s until 1871, and they were real vessels too, not dories.

Probably, the best known North River ship was the "Columbia" built by James Briggs at Hobart's Landing on the Scituate side of the river, a short distance upstream from what is now Little's Bridge (although at that time, 1773, it was known as Doggett's



*Brig "Cronstadt" built in 1829 at Briggs' Yard*

Ferry, there being no bridge). James Briggs seems to have been a resourceful person full of Yankee gumption and "sprawl." At the time of the Revolution, the soldiers had to furnish their own muskets. James Briggs had none, but, quite undaunted, he reported for duty with a stick over his shoulder. When his superior officer asked him what he intended to do, James Briggs cheerfully replied that he was going to knock down the first British soldier he met and take away his musket. Whether he actually carried this out, history does not record, but we do know that when James Briggs returned to Scituate, he carried a British musket!

## The Ol' Riddler

Now summer was in full swing, and the Strawberry Festival was upon us.

Ol' Farmer Litchfield was bringing a load of strawberries down to the Festival. His horse, Chestnut, was feeling the heat and could only run 12 miles an hour with an empty wagon. For every bushel of berries, her speed was reduced by 0.5 miles per hour. Aunt Tat was expecting a banner crowd and thinks he better bring 14 bushels. The Jacobs Farmhouse, perennial host of the event, is 11 miles away. If the festival starts at 3 o' clock, exactly what time should Farmer Litchfield start cracking the whip on Ol' Chestnut?

The first and fourth readers who submit the correct answer will win five dollars! Send your answers to the Ol' Riddler at [contact@norwellhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:contact@norwellhistoricalsociety.org). Be sure to put "Ol' Riddler" in the subject line.

 **ancestry.com**

**NOW AVAILABLE AT THE  
NORWELL PUBLIC LIBRARY**

If you would like to do genealogical research, you can use the ancestry.com account at the Norwell Public Library. Please see the NPL website for hours ([norwellpubliclibrary.org](http://norwellpubliclibrary.org)).

# NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP

Individual (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_ Business (\$40) \_\_\_\_\_

Family (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_ Life (\$200) \_\_\_\_\_

Benefactor (\$500) \_\_\_\_\_

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

### AREAS OF INTEREST

Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Public Relations \_\_\_\_\_

Hospitality \_\_\_\_\_ Program Planning \_\_\_\_\_

Library Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Historical Research \_\_\_\_\_

Photo Cataloging \_\_\_\_\_ Process Archival \_\_\_\_\_  
Material

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## SAVE THE DATE

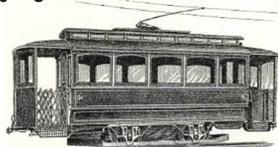
Thursday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm  
Historical Society Annual Meeting

The Norwell Historical Society will host its Annual Meeting at the Phoenix Lodge in Hanover Four Corners this coming fall. Our speaker this year will be Architect Brian Pfeiffer, an expert in historical renovations. Brian will speak about his experiences with renovating historic buildings and provide advice for historic homeowners. More information will follow in our September newsletter.



## Did You Know?

...the answer to the last issue's Trivia Corner Question? **The electric car line from High Street to Washington Street to Rockland, and from Norwell to Nantasket was built in the 1880s. When was it discontinued?**



**The answer is:** According to Gert Daneau's *ABCs of Norwell* the electric cars were discontinued in 1921. Around 1920, automobiles were being purchased by many families and they were more convenient to use than the electric cars. Fewer and fewer people were using the line, so it was closed in 1921.

## Of Note...

The Sergeant Samuel Stetson House has still not been moved from its original location on Stetson Shrine Road, although the Town is diligently working to have the house saved. Did you know that the house was the site of the birthplace of the Church Hill Methodist Church in 1844? Services were held in the home for 8 years until they were moved to the Schoolhouse on Common Street. If you'd like to donate to the houses's move, send a check to the Society at P.O. Box 693, Norwell, and note "Save the Stetson House" in the memo line.





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*Why are you getting this newsletter!?*  
 If you are NOT a member or past member of the Norwell Historical Society, but are receiving this newsletter... we are sending you a complimentary summer issue to introduce you to the Society. Please consider joining (use the Form inside).

**NOTE YOUR EXPIRATION DATE...  
 IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?**

## NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA

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|--|--|
| <p>A NARRATIVE OF SOUTH SCITUATE-NORWELL _____ \$20<br/>         by Samuel H. Olson<br/>         This book chronicles the life and times of our town from 1845-1963 through a collection of articles previously published in <i>The Norwell Mariner</i>.</p> | <p>THE ABCS OF NORWELL _____ \$10<br/>         by Gertrude Daneau<br/>         This coloring book is 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.</p> |
| <p>SHIPBUILDING ON THE NORTH RIVER _____ \$45<br/>         by L. Vernon Briggs<br/>         The definitive book on ships built on the North River and the shipyards that lined the shores. Written in 1889, and re-printed in 1988.</p>                      | <p>HISTORY OF SOUTH SCITUATE-NORWELL _____ \$25<br/>         by Joseph Foster Merritt<br/>         A recently re-published history of the town to 1938. A unique narrative considered to be an invaluable account of Norwell prior to WWII.</p>  |
| <p>HISTORIC HOMESTEADS OF NORWELL _____ \$15<br/>         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.</p>       | <p>MORE THAN JUST A COOKBOOK _____ \$5<br/>         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.</p>   |
| <p>HENDERSON MAP _____ \$3<br/>         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.</p>   | <p>THE WAY WE WERE _____ \$20<br/>         by Jeanne Garside<br/>         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.</p>   |
| <p>1879 MAP _____ \$3<br/>         This map is reproduced from a hand-drawn map of South Scituate in 1879. It shows the locations of road, homes and their owners. Suitable for framing.</p>   | <p>JACOBS MILLS PAINTING REPRODUCTION _____ \$25<br/>         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. (Framed copies available at the Society for \$75.)</p>                 |
| <p>NORWELL TILES _____ \$10<br/>         These 6" X 6" white tiles depict various scenes: Kent House, Cushing Center, etc. <i>Limited number.</i></p>  |  |

*All the above items are available at the NHS Library in the Middle School on Wed. & Thur. (1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m., see summer hours on front), or you may call Gert Daneau at 781-659-2226, 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.*