



October 2013

Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

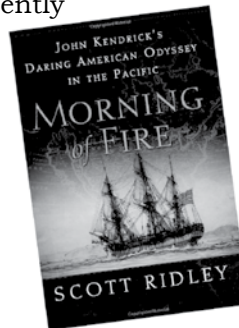
WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

AUTHOR SCOTT RIDLEY TO SPEAK AT 78TH ANNUAL MEETING

You may have heard about the ship *Columbia*--the first U.S. vessel to circumnavigate the globe. Built on the North River, the *Columbia* was captained by John Kendrick.

Massachusetts author Scott Ridley has a background in journalism and history and has become an expert on Captain Kendrick. Ridley recently wrote *Morning of Fire* about Kendrick, the *Columbia* and that famous voyage.

Speaking at the Society's Annual Meeting on Thursday, October 17th, Mr. Ridley will discuss how a daring plan was launched by a group of Boston merchants and ship owners to send two ships on a desperate mission around Cape Horn and into the Pacific Ocean. The man chosen to lead the expedition was John Kendrick, who opened a gateway for American ships in the Pacific a dozen years before Lewis and



Clark set out on their historic journey. Kendrick already held title to more than 1,000 square miles of land on what would become Vancouver Island. *Morning of Fire* follows Kendrick through each perilous turn of his adventures aboard the *Lady Washington* and the *Columbia Rediviva*. The book will be available for sale that evening.

If you would like to learn more about the *Columbia* prior to the meeting, the Society recommends reading pages 298-309 of Briggs' *History of Shipbuilding on the North River* (available to buy from the Society or to borrow at the Norwell Public Library or the James Library).

Taking place at the Grange Hall on Main Street in Norwell, the Annual Meeting & Dinner will begin with a Social Hour at 6:00, include a ham dinner at 7:00, and conclude with a short meeting and Mr. Ridley's talk at 8:00.

Tickets to the event are \$15, payable at the door. Please RSVP by October 11th at the Society website (on the "Upcoming Events" tab) or call 781-659-1888 and leave a message.

JACOBS FARMHOUSE TO BE FEATURED ON OCTOBER 3RD HOUSE TOUR

The Jacobs Farmhouse will be one of eight historic homes featured on the Norwell Historic House Tour to benefit Norwell Farms. The Tour, co-sponsored by the Norwell Historical Commission, begins with a Artisan Shopping Boutique at the Cushing Center (where tickets/maps can be picked up or purchased).

The museum side of the Jacobs Farmhouse (overseen by the Historical Society) will be cleaned and polished

and awaiting tour-goers. New wallpaper that replicates the old, water-stained paper in the Tin-Ceiling Room has been installed. Curtains have been washed, and the silver has been polished!

Homes on the tour will feature amazing period details and innovative renovations with fun, fresh designs. The Tour is open from 10 am to 4 pm and tickets are available on-line at www.norwellfarms.org. There is also a link on the Historical Society website.

DIRECTORS & OFFICERS

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CONTACTING US

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.

NORWELL MOURNS CALVIN COOLIDGE

by Sam Olson

Columnist Dorothy Parker, upon hearing of Calvin Coolidge's death, said: "How can they tell?"

In January 1933, the *Rockland Standard* carried an article on Norwell's sorrow on the passing of former president Calvin Coolidge. The Norwell Women's Republican Club noted his death with a resolution signed by its president, Isabelle Fogg, extolling his leadership and many homely virtues. In 1924, Norwell had given him 443 votes compared to 48 for the Democratic candidate, John W. Davis.

Coincidentally, Norwell had two residents who had known Coolidge intimately. Henry C. Wallbridge of Church Hill had been a schoolmate of Coolidge at St. Johnsbury Academy in 1891-92, and Professor Ephraim Wood, who lived near the town hall, had been Coolidge's Latin professor at Amherst College.

Covering Coolidge's funeral service in Northampton and burial in Vermont for *The Boston Globe* was Louis Lyons, a 1914 graduate of Norwell High School. Highlighting Coolidge's lack of pretension was his internment in the hill-side family cemetery. Later, a modest marble headstone was placed over the grave containing only the name Calvin Coolidge: 1872-1933. One would have to look closely to see the presidential seal etched at the top.



Nicknames: *Silent Cal, Cool Cal, The Sphinx of the Potomac, Cautious Cal*

Most of the material that follows on Coolidge's life and presidency comes from William Allen White's 1938 biography, *A Puritan in Babylon*. A major theme is that Coolidge's actions as president, as well as his values and lifestyle, appear to have come from an earlier time. "Silent Cal," laconic and taciturn, presided over a nation in which many of its citizens were rejecting the old conventions and living "high, wide, and handsome."

In the wee hours of August 3, 1923 (ninety years ago), cars sped from Ludlow to the tiny hamlet of Plymouth Notch, Vermont, unconnected by telegraph, with the news that President Harding had died suddenly in San Francisco. Vice President Coolidge and his wife were vacationing on his father's farm where he had been born fifty-one years earlier. The advice from Washington was that Coolidge be sworn in as soon as possible. Coolidge's father, a justice of the peace, administered the oath by the light of a kerosene lamp with only eight persons witnessing the homely scene.

Coolidge's rise to political prominence had led him from city councilor to mayor of Northampton, to state

legislator, to the lieutenant governorship and the governorship of Massachusetts. Now, he held an office he had not actively sought.

If it had not been for the Boston Police Strike of 1919, the governorship would likely have been the apex of his career. His hard line response in calling out the state militia (Co. A, 14th Regiment included several Norwell men) registered with the majority of citizens as well as his response to labor leader Samuel Gompers: "There is no right to strike against the public safety by any one, any place, any time." This response catapulted him to the Republican nomination for vice president in 1920.

No presidential marriage better typified the adage that "opposites attract" than did the Coolidge marriage. Grace Goodhue Coolidge, a teacher of the deaf, is remembered as one of the most lovely and gracious of the first ladies. Her father, thinking the couple mismatched, tried to discourage the marriage by telling Coolidge that Grace couldn't bake bread. Cal's response: "We'll buy at the store." Grace was bemused by her taciturn husband regarding him as a "sketch." They took up residence in a duplex in Northampton which rented for \$37 a month. It remained their home, where they raised two sons, until after the presidential years.

Coolidge brought respectability to the presidency after the scandals of the Harding years. He believed in fiscal frugality. Father Coolidge recalled that even as a boy, Cal could get more sap out of the maple tree than any other boy in the area. He also believed in a minimalist exercise of federal power. Historians now believe that a departure from a laissez-faire policy ("The business of America is business.") may have averted some of the worst aspects of the Great Depression that came after he had left office. Help for depressed farm prices, help for "sick industries" such as textiles, shoes, coal mining, and curtailment of rampant stock speculation might have been in order. Historians now tend to blame him rather than Hoover for the debacle that began in October, 1929. At best, "Silent Cal" is now viewed as a "below-average" president. His unwillingness to modify the payment of German reparations and Allied war debts can also be considered a factor in the rise of Fascist dictatorships.

Despite his dour personality, Cal was immensely popular. Homespun philosopher Will Rogers called him that "funny looking redhead who lives in the White House." Alice Roosevelt Longworth quipped that she didn't have to go to Egypt to see the sphinx since she had seen Coolidge.

His landslide election in 1924 as president in his own right ("Keep Cool with Coolidge") was blighted by personal tragedy. Fifteen-year-old Calvin Coolidge, Jr. died from blood poisoning from a blister caused by

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____ NAME _____

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: _____

CALVIN COOLIDGE, CONT'D.

wearing too tight tennis shoes. In his autobiography, Coolidge remembered his son asking him to help him. He recalled, "I could not." After that, Coolidge maintained the power and glory of the presidency now meant nothing to him. In fact, it's clear Coolidge was clinically depressed for the remainder of his life.

In the summer of 1927 while vacationing in the Black Hills of Dakota, Coolidge summoned the press and announced, "I do not choose to run for president in 1928." He never gave any explanation for what would have been a sure victory. Some historians speculate without any firm basis that he saw the coming depression.

Upon their return to Northampton, the Coolidges left their rented duplex and purchased an imposing mansion near Smith College called "The Beeches."

As the months and years passed, Coolidge's health failed rapidly. The once-a-day nap of the White House years

became two. He felt deeply about the failing economy. He made a few speeches but felt he had become irrelevant. Death due to a heart attack occurred just two months before Roosevelt became president and launched the New Deal.

Following are several more statements and anecdotes relating to this rare individual. Like many of those incorporated in the text, there remain some doubt as to whether they were actually spoken or to whom they are attributed. Nevertheless, they capture the essence of the man.

"I have never been hurt by what I have not said."
--Calvin Coolidge

A Washington socialite was to be seated next to Coolidge at a dinner party. She bet her friends she could get the president to say more than two words. After telling Coolidge of the wager, he turned to her and said: "You lose."

Early in their marriage, Mrs. Coolidge bought a medical dictionary from a door-to-door salesman. That evening, she noticed her husband leafing through it saying nothing. The next day she opened the book and on the fly leaf her husband had written: "Don't see any receipt here for curing suckers!"

One particular Sunday morning Coolidge attended church services alone as the first lady was not feeling well. Upon his return, she asked what the minister had talked about. His reply: "Sin." Mrs. Coolidge: "Well, what did he say about it?" Coolidge: "He was against it."

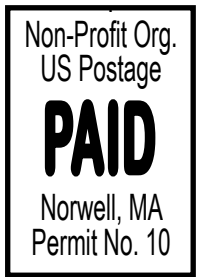
TRIVIA QUESTION: 2013 is the 152nd anniversary of the start of the Civil War. How many South Scituate (Norwell) veterans are memorialized on the Civil War Monument on the Common?

ANSWER: According to Chapter 7 in Sam Olson's *A Narrative of South Scituate & Norwell: 1849-1963, Remembering Its Past and the World Around It*, there are twenty-four soldiers and sailors listed on the monument.

Trivia Corner



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78TH ANNUAL MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17TH
AT THE GRANGE HALL, NORWELL

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA

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| <p>A NARRATIVE OF SOUTH SCITUATE-NORWELL _____ \$20
 by Samuel H. Olson
 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
 by Gertrude Daneau
 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
 by L. Vernon Briggs
 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
 by Joseph Foster Merritt
 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
 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
 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
 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
 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.</p> |
| <p>1879 MAP _____ \$3
 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
 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
 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 Wednesdays during the school year (2-3:00 p.m.), 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.