



November 2006 Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 693
NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

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Jody Vermette, Secretary
Robert Pashkowsky, Treasurer

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Joyanne Bond
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Tom Hyslop
Karen Joseph
Donald Spradlin
Gail Storm
Harold Tuttle

CONTACTING US

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

MUSEUMS & LIBRARY HOURS

The Jacobs Farmhouse is open by appointment only. Please call the Society for further information.

The Norwell Historical Society Library at the Norwell Middle School (328 Main Street--Route 123) is open from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday each week.

The Norwell Historical Society Archives Center on the 3rd floor of the Norwell Town Hall (345 Main Street--Route 123) is open by appointment only.

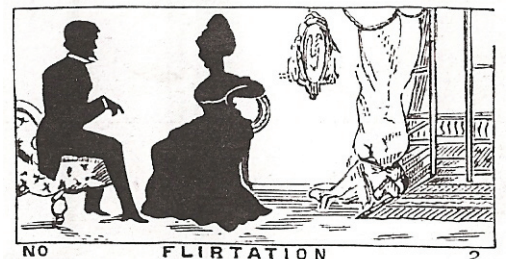
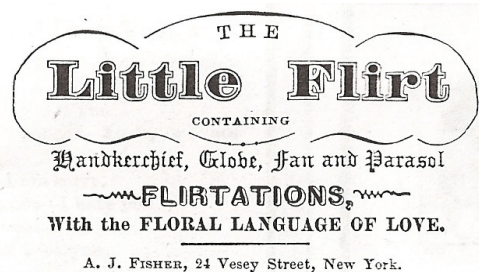
The purpose of this Society shall be: 1.) to plan and arrange for the promotion of knowledge about the Town of Norwell, Massachusetts by discussion, research, meetings and publications; b.) to collect, solicit and preserve documents, manuscripts, charts, maps, records, photographs, relics, and items 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.

CHRISTMAS IN NORWELL

Please mark your calendars:
Sunday, December 10th will be the traditional Christmas party of the Norwell Historical Society at the Jacob Farm House. The house will be scrubbed and polished and decorated in a traditional fashion for the holidays. The public will be invited to tour the house during the party, from 3:00 until 5:00 in the afternoon.

The Society is always looking for volunteers to decorate and clean the farmhouse prior

to the event, and to clean up after the party. If you are interested in helping, please call the Society at 781-659-1888 on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 4:00, or call Wendy Bawabe at 781-659-1464. Donations of greenery, antique Christmas finery, or edible treats are also appreciated!



HANDKERCHIEF FLIRTATIONS.

- Drawing it across the lips--desiring an acquaintance.
- Drawing across the cheek--I love you.
- Drawing it across the forehead--Look, we are watched.
- Drawing across the eyes--I am sorry.
- Drawing it through the hands--I hate you.
- Dropping--We will be friends.
- Folding it--I wish to speak with you.

The *Little Flirt* and other historical booklets are available to review at the NHS Library on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 - 4:00.

PUT IT ON YOUR CALENDAR: JUNE 17, 2007
 **STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL**

ANNUAL MEETING, POST-MORTEM (FROM THE PRESIDENT, ROBERT NORRIS)

It did not look good for the Mudville Nine that day. There were at least three major local meetings on October 19th, other than the Norwell Historical Society's Annual Meeting. I was late getting out the newsletter describing the event, efforts to publicize the evening to Harvard graduates met without success, and the gubernatorial debate was beginning at 7:00 p.m.! What reason had we to believe *anyone* would show up? We knew better. Annual meeting dates are special: two years ago the Red Sox dispatched the Yankees on the evening of our Annual Meeting, and the week prior it was announced that October 19th had been designated "Massachusetts History Day."

October 19th turned out to be a perfect time to enjoy good fellowship, fine food, Masonic hospitality, and a fascinating lecture on novel discoveries and mishaps in the process of inventorying Harvard University's possessions (given by Emilie Norris, a Curator of University Cultural Properties at Harvard).

The business portion of the meeting (brisk being the code word for its formalities) disclosed a modest decline in the Society's fund balances. I simply noted that I thought it was

important to use the funds we had for the Society's missions of education and preservation and look for additional funds when our modest balances ran out. The news of the year in review mentioned some hits and some misses: I thought it was key to continue to explore ways of getting feedback from members and friends regarding future activities, as we search for the balance among programmatic, informational, and archival opportunities. The recently-elected slate of officers and directors reveals a more numerous, younger group, as the Society foregoes the customary quest for the mature and the moderate in favor of the energetic and entrepreneurial!

The Board of Directors will meet every third Wednesday of the month (November 15th next) at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Norwell Middle School to review upcoming projects, programs and opportunities.

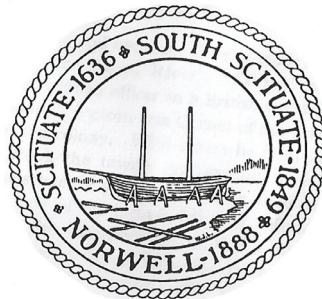
These monthly meetings would be an ideal time for anyone to broach an inquiry, discuss the archives, or identify items for inclusion in the newsletter. You are most welcome to attend. It is likely that these meetings will become more frequent as specific projects are approved and begun.

Did You Know?

... that the boat in the present Norwell town seal (shown at left) is a **pinkie**? Many pinkies were built on the North River and used in the fishing and coasting trade.

The pinkie on the seal was sketched from a model made by Joseph Merritt about the year 1888 (In 1871, Merritt had built the *Helen M. Foster*, the last ship to be launched from a North River boat yard.)

There are records of 1,025 craft being built on the North River. The greatest year was in 1801 when 30 vessels were launched.



TRIVIA QUESTION:

What Norwell resident designed the first Massachusetts state seal (used from 1780 until 1898), and where is his memorial in town?

ANSWER: in the next issue!

Trivia Corner

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 _____
Research Library _____ Historical Research _____
Photo Cataloging _____ Process Archival _____
Material _____
Other: _____

PILOTING

ON THE NORTH RIVER

Piloting boats on the North River was a hard, demanding occupation. Kedges (light anchors) were buried along the river for the boat crews to heave toward in order to avoid running aground. The channel was extremely crooked in certain areas. Near the mouth of the river there was a dangerous sand bar and large vessels often had to cut their keel right through the bar with 15 men heaving from the shoreline.

Timothy Williamson was an interesting pilot who had a violent temper. Whenever he wished the draw at Little's Bridge (the present 3A bridge) opened, he would fire his flint-lock and those near could always tell it was Williamson coming by the rapid succession of "bangs". He once engaged in a terrible fight with a shark near the bridge (he killed the great creature!). Later, he accidentally shot himself, becoming crippled for life.

Excerpts from an article by Edward Rowe Snow

LEARN FROM HISTORY...

Today, when gasoline prices make us review the need for each trip we take, we can learn from history when trips throughout the South Shore were infrequent, difficult *and* expensive.

Joseph F. Merritt (first president of the Norwell Historical Society), writing in *Stage Coach Days*, tells of the hardship of travel before the "luxurious" coaches of the 1800s--either by horse-back or packet (river boat).

In 1810, there was a Sandwich-Plymouth, a Pembroke-Scituate, and a Weymouth-Quincy-Boston line provided by Leonard & Woodward. To travel to Boston cost \$1.25--quite expensive!

In the 1840s, it cost 37½¢ to go to Hingham from Norwell via stagecoach!



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NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA

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. Second reprinting in 1981.

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.

HISTORIC HOMESTEADS OF NORWELL _____ \$15
published by NHS, 1992

We are proud of our lovely town. 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.

HISTORIA _____ \$7.50

A gem of local history for the people of the Norwell/Scituate area. George C. Turner's six pamphlets, written in 1898-99 have been re-printed for our enjoyment. Read about Norwell 100 years ago from the man on the scene.

THE WAY WE WERE _____ \$18.88
by Jeanne Garside

This book is a series of articles written to preview Norwell's Centennial Celebration in 1888. Read what times were like when Norwell came of age. Illustrated with old photographs.

MORE THAN JUST A COOKBOOK _____ \$5

This book, expectably, is full of time-tested favorite recipes submitted by local people. Beyond the gastronomic delights, we have included historical sketches, interesting narratives and accounts of historic events. In his amply illustrated by local artists.

NORWELL PLATE _____ \$25

Limited edition plate with the town seal. Each plate is numbered, suitable for hot and cold use, and may be hung. Handcrafted in the USA.

HENDERSON MAP _____ \$3

Interesting hand-drawn map suitable for framing. It was drawn by Anne Henderson and first issued in 1967 by the NHS. A favorite depiction of the location of historic homes.

All the above items are available at the Norwell Historical Society Library in the Middle School on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m., or you may request a publication using this form and enclosing a check (made payable to NHS). Mail to: Norwell Historical Society, P.O. Box 693, Norwell, MA 02061.