



NORTH RIVER PACKET

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Come Visit the Jacobs Farmhouse!

After years of accessibility and restoration work, the Farmhouse Museum will be open to celebrate “Christmas at the Farmhouse” on Saturday, December 9th. How did this beautiful house come to be built? What industries financed the Jacob/Jacobs family’s home? After reviewing old ledgers and state agriculture reports, Board member Alan Prouty compiled this summary of the Jacobs family industries.

by Alan Prouty

David Jacob (1664-1748) saw potential in using the streamflow of the Third Herring Brook to power a sawmill and appreciated the value of the timber on the surrounding land. He also had a vision for farming of the land there on the Third Herring Brook (called Assinippi by the Wampanoag).

Jacob proceeded to buy up over 200 acres in the area, and in 1720 he and his partners invested in the construction of a causeway, dam, spillway, and sawmill on the site. The dam created a lake of 62+ acres on land that had been a cedar swamp—today called Jacobs Pond.



An undated photo of the Jacobs mills taken from what was the site of the Assinippi General Store.

The Jacob’s sawmill yielded a profit, and David Jacob was able to help his son Joshua establish a homestead on the eastern shore of the lake in 1726—what is known today as the Jacobs Farmhouse.

Seven generations of the Jacob/Jacobs family maintained that property for the next three centuries while earning their incomes and sustenance by engaging in various enterprises and farming the land. The following were the industries in which the Jacobs family engaged.

Sawmill and Grist Mill: The Jacobs sawmill provided the main sources of income for the family for many years. Around 1730, they built a grist mill on the opposite side of the spillway from the existing saw mill. They used the grist mill to grind the grain produced on their own farm (as well as grain produced by other farmers in the area) to make flour.

spill·way \ spil-wā *noun*
a canal built to direct water and turn a water wheel to power a mill.

Livestock: The Jacobs at various times had cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, and chickens at the Jacobs Homestead. Horses were used to draw their wagons. Devon cattle were raised from the earliest times for beef and milk, and males were trained as oxen to plow and draw wagons to transport timber from the forests to the sawmill and grain to the gristmill. The oxen also were used to bring hay from the Jacobs salt marshlands on the upper North River to be stored in the barn for forage for

the animals in the winter. In the early 1800s the Jacobs were among the first in the area to purchase a Devon bull, and they built up their own herd with a breeding program to take advantage of their larger size and greater milk production. The family also made their prize bull available to neighbors for breeding purposes at 50 cents/cow.

“ The family made their prize bull available to neighbors for breeding purposes at 50¢ per cow. ”

Sheep, hogs, and chickens were raised by the Jacobs for home consumption purposes. Wool was woven at the homestead to produce blankets and clothing. The Jacobs were proud of the flannel they produced—weaving together wool and the linen they produced on the farm. Ichabod Jacobs won a prize for the best flannel at the Plymouth Exposition in 1830!

Food Crops: The first crops grown by the Jacobs included corn, beans, and squash—the same crops the Wampanoag had grown at that same site along the Third Herring Brook. The Jacobs also planted wheat on their most fertile plot of land which they call the “Wheat Field.” But wheat was difficult to grow in Massachusetts,

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Treasures known and treasures found in the Norwell Historical Society Archives and in the Jacobs Farmhouse Museum are featured here in each issue.

These rubber boots sit by the back door of the Jacobs Farmhouse Museum kitchen (near our new accessible entrance door!). Their provenance is unknown, but they would have been a typical boot worn by New England farmers in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This advertisement is from 1891. The boots' slogan "Best on Earth and in water" was truly fitting. Perhaps Mr. Turner (the resident farmer at the Farmhouse in the early 1900s) was also enamored by the novelty of waterproof boots?



Between 1870 and 1900 manufacturers and businesses began to give away "trade cards" to advertise their businesses. These small pasteboard cards had colorful images printed with the company's name and address. Victorians loved collecting the cards—often putting them in albums and scrapbooks.

The Society Archives is fortunate to have a scrapbook of trade cards collected by Annie Turner beginning in 1881. Annie, born in 1861, was the daughter of William Turner (a shipwright and carpenter) and Sophronia Ford. Her father died in 1865 when she was only 4, and the 1880 census finds Annie and her mother living in Scituate in the household of an elderly farmer where Sophronia was the housekeeper. Annie's job was working in a clothing store, possibly Bicknell's Dry Goods in East Weymouth since there are about 30 trade cards from this establishment in the scrapbook.



Just The Facts

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Museum & Research Library

The **Jacobs Farmhouse Museum** is open at scheduled events and by appointment only. Please contact the Society to schedule a tour.

The Norwell Historical Society **Research Library & Archives Center** on the 3rd floor of the Sparrell School (322 Main Street) is open on Thursday mornings from 10:00 am until noon or by appointment.

Administrative Consultant

Rachel Wollam

Mission Statement

The mission of the Norwell Historical Society is to discover, preserve, and celebrate Norwell history through stewardship, education, and awareness—engaging our community, both present and future, to be vested in its history.

Mailing Address & Phone

The Norwell Historical Society
P.O. Box 693
Norwell, MA 02061
781-561-1161



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Look for the magnifying glasses or the QR codes in this issue to discover more online.

Discord & Dissension: St. Andrew's Church at the Eve of the Revolution

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church currently stands in Hanover, but the original building was erected in 1731 in the Church Hill area off River Street in present day Norwell (then part of Scituate). In preparation for the 250th birthday of the U.S.A. in 2026, the Historical Society is ramping up its research on the activities in Norwell circa 1776.

by Daniel Neumann

The history of St. Andrew's Church at the eve of the Revolutionary War offers a fascinating local lens on the zeitgeist of the time, when rising discord led to increasingly flagrant expressions of revolt against established norms.

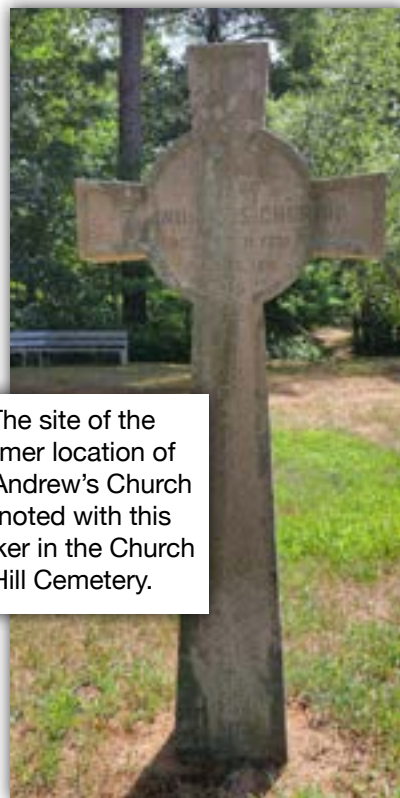
During this period, the Anglican Church was an exemplar of the British establishment, where priests, at their ordination, swore a solemn oath declaring their allegiance to the British king. Church and state were inextricably linked under this strict code, landing many ministers in hot holy waters in parishes throughout the colonies, when church members began distinguishing between loyalist and patriot. Because of their professed faithfulness to the Crown, Anglican priests likely found it more difficult than many other groups to navigate and adapt to the rapidly changing ideas of the time. Those who remained loyalist ran the risk of mob violence, having their house ransacked, or the loss of their personal wealth (among other indignities). Four of the earliest resident ministers of Saint Andrew's Church were embroiled in this turmoil!

Ironically, despite British rule, the Church of England did not have a particularly large following, especially in New England, where those colonies were founded with religious freedom

in mind. Massachusetts had early roots in Puritanism, and by the time of St. Andrew Church's founding, there were several denominations of Christianity active in the region, with Congregationalism making up a large portion. For the Anglican church, this was missionary territory, populated largely by "dissenters." The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in

Foreign Parts (SPG) was established by the church in 1701 and was responsible for recruiting young Englishmen to become Anglican priests in the American colonies. The original goal of St. Andrew's was to convert people, including Native Americans, that lived in Scituate and nearby towns.

In 1735, Addington Davenport became the first resident minister of St. Andrew's. According to local historian L. Vernon Briggs, he had an inauspicious start. Davenport's first services were well attended, but the flock was quickly disbanded by "other religious teachers" who warned that "the Church of England could not prevail without the destruction of their civil as well as that of their religious liberty." Apparently, this was a persuasive argument, since only three people were said to have received the first administration of communion. His job was further complicated by the church tax system of the day, where the government assessed levies to support the established church. Failure to pay could lead to imprisonment. Briggs describes the tale of "two of the churchwardens, who for not paying their rate towards the Congregational Meeting House at Hanover... were put in jail" and how a communicant nearly avoided a similar fate for not paying his due to a non-Episcopalian minister in Marshfield. The taxes were onerous on the population and limited Davenport's ability to grow his church, which did not receive government support. Even the building itself was incomplete, four years after construction began.



The site of the former location of St. Andrew's Church is noted with this marker in the Church Hill Cemetery.

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Jacobs Farmhouse, cont'd.

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so the family grew rye, oats, and buckwheat, and they also produced flax.

Of course all the grains grown by the Jacobs and some of the other farmers in the area were milled in the family's grist mill. From the earliest years of the Jacobs Homestead, the Jacobs baked their own bread, with a preference for bread made from a mixture of Indian corn, wheat, rye, and flax.

Vegetables: All generations of the Jacobs family planted vegetables for their own use. These vegetable crops included root crops like potatoes, carrots, parsnips, and turnips—all were stored in the “root cellar” with squash and cabbage. These vegetables would be used for consumption during the winter months and early spring.

Their garden also included strawberries, raspberries, rhubarb, and a grape arbor (still visible today!)—all used for making tarts and preserves.

Fruit: The Jacobs maintained an orchard which was planted with apples, pears, peaches, and plums. The largest number of trees were apple trees which were used to make cider.

In the early 1800s the family built a cider mill to mill their own apples but also those of their neighbors. The cider was stored in wooden barrels and turned into hard cider. For many people in the area and across New England, hard cider was a common beverage as it was considered healthier to drink than water.



This photo of the Jacobs mills (at right behind the crowds in the Union Cemetery) shows the Jacobs family orchards on the far side of Jacobs Pond. Taken during a Memorial Day ceremony in the late 1800s, it depicts a number of the Jacobs industries.

Other Enterprises: The Jacobs family was involved in other economic activities, including the production of bricks, shingles, and boots. They earned additional income by renting the oxen for plowing and hauling, and the family's wagons were available for hire, drawn by either their horses or oxen. 🍃



More Than Just a Cookbook will be available for sale during the holiday season at the Society Archives (Thursdays from 10:00 am to noon), at the Norwell Council on Aging, and at the Christmas at the Farmhouse event on December 9th.

Recipe

The *Norwell Historical Society's* MORE THAN JUST A COOKBOOK is full of time-tested favorite recipes, historical sketches, interesting narratives, and accounts of historic events. This recipe below, contributed by Sally Mederos (president of the Society from 1991-1994) is perfect for the holiday season.

CRANBERRY COFFEE CAKE

by Sally Mederos

2 c flour	½ c sour cream
1 tsp. baking powder	1 16-oz can of “whole berry” cranberry sauce
1 tsp. baking soda	almonds
½ c unsalted butter, softened	GLAZE:
1 c sugar	½ c confectioners sugar
2 eggs	2 T warm water
2 tsp. almond extract	2 tsp. almond extract

Mix together flour, baking powder, and soda and set aside.

Cream together the butter and sugar, add the eggs (one at a time) and beat well. Add almond extract, sour cream, and flour mixture. Mix together until combined.

Put half the batter into a heavily-greased Bundt pan. Cover with half of the can of sauce. Cover with the rest of the batter. Swirl in the rest of the sauce. Sprinkle with chopped almonds.

Bake 45-55 minutes in a 350° oven. While cake is baking, whisk together glaze ingredients. After cake has slightly cooled, remove from the pan and pour the glaze over the cake.

Massachusetts: Myth v. Fact

Massachusetts, like any historically rich region, has its share of myths and misconceptions. Having a white painted chimney on his own historic home, Historical Society Board member Karl Swenson wondered if he lived in a “Tory” house. Further research on the topic revealed the truth... along with other myths to be debunked.

by Karl Swenson

MYTH: Chimneys were painted white with a black stripe to indicate a Loyalist to the Crown lived there.

TRUTH: Chairwoman of the Sandwich Historical Commission and a real estate agent specializing in historical homes, has a problem with that logic. First off, she said, there’s no known historical record.

Secondly, “If that were true, and you didn’t paint your chimney, people would know you were a patriot (in favor of independence). I don’t think people would want to announce that to the world because that was treason at the time.”

Plus, when power shifted, it would identify the losing British loyalists to the winning patriots.

Another thought is some homeowners painted their houses white and included the chimney, adding the black band to cover smoke stains. But it’s unlikely many people did this in the 1700s and 1800s, because while the impermeable paint of the time would have offered some protection from the elements, it would have kept in moisture from the inside and damaged the chimney.

There is a consensus that more white chimneys with black bands were made in the mid-1900s, when it became a popular trend of Colonial-era décor.

MYTH: Paul Revere’s Midnight Ride: *The popular 1860 poem “Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow suggests that Revere rode alone to warn of the British arrival. The poem gives the impression that he successfully completed the entire ride without being captured.*

TRUTH: Paul Revere was not alone; there were other riders, including William Dawes and Dr. Samuel

Prescott. Additionally, Revere was captured by the British before completing his mission. Dawes and Prescott continued the ride, with Prescott being the one who successfully reached Concord to spread the alarm. (*masthist.org, Letter from Paul Revere to Jeremy Belknap, circa 1798*)

“...it was customary in 18th century England for protestors to “crossdress” in one way or another... to create an atmosphere of misrule.”

MYTH: The Boston Tea Party: **There is a common myth that the participants in the Boston Tea Party dressed as Native Americans to disguise their identity.**



TRUTH: While it’s true that the participants in the Boston Tea Party dumped tea into Boston Harbor in protest of British taxation without representation, historical evidence suggests that they did not actually disguise themselves fully

as Native Americans. Tea Party protestors dressed as Indians, but not convincingly.

The Sons of Liberty famously masqueraded in Native American dress on the night of the Tea Party raid (complete with tomahawks and faces darkened with coal soot). But were they *really* trying to pass themselves off as local Mohawk or Narragansett tribesmen?

“Not likely,” says historian Benjamin Carp, a history professor at Brooklyn College and author of *Defiance of the Patriots: The Boston Tea Party and the Making of America*. For starters, it was customary in 18th century England for protestors to “crossdress” in one way or another—blackening their faces, dressing as women (or even Catholic priests!)—to create an atmosphere of misrule.

Secondly, the Sons of Liberty were cashing in on the image of the Native American as an independent spirit, the epitome of anti-colonialism. “By adopting that identity, they’re saying, ‘We are defiant. We are unbowed. We won’t be defeated,’” says Carp.

And thirdly, there was the practical reason for masking their identities. *They were committing a crime!* Even if they knew that no one would believe they were actual Native Americans, the disguise sent a clear message to anyone who would dare to snitch: don’t you dare! (*history.com*)

MYTH: Corned beef is a classic St. Patrick’s Day dish:

TRUTH: On St. Patrick’s Day, merrymakers in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere savor copious plates of corned beef and cabbage. In Ireland, however, a type of bacon similar to ham is the customary protein on the holiday table. In the late 19th century, Irish immigrants in New York City’s Lower East Side supposedly substituted corned beef (which they bought from their Jewish neighbors) in order to save money. That’s not to say salt-cured beef isn’t a traditional Irish dish; pork, however, has historically been more widely available on the Emerald Isle. (*history.com*)

St. Andrew's Church, cont'd.

(continued from page 3)

Paranoia about the intentions of the Anglican Church in America was pervasive at the time. For over a hundred years, the colonists enjoyed degrees of religious freedom and feared losing it, as they witnessed the erosion of other liberties—both civil and economic. In fact, there was even considerable apprehension that the Church was “plotting” to appoint a bishop in America and cement an authoritarian regime that had the power to persecute non-believers. From a managerial standpoint, the vacancy of a local bishop impeded the church's ability to execute a plan of growth more effectively.

In 1774, England instituted the Quebec Act, which “pledged the British government to tolerate the Roman Catholic religion in Quebec.” Even though it did not apply to the American colonies, tensions were very high, with concerns that some autocratic style of “popery” could become a reality at home.

Rev. Davenport remained at St. Andrew's for only two years, then moved on to preach in Boston. It appears that he left Scituate on good terms, even donating his house and seven acres of land to the church. His replacement did not fare as well. Rev. Charles Brockwell became the second resident minister, but held that position for only one year. From Briggs, it is unclear why he struggled in the role, but “from the communications made by both Mr. Brockwell and the mission in Scituate to the Secretary of the Venerable Society, it appears that their mutual relations were exceedingly inharmonious and unpleasant.” So acrimonious were the feelings for Brockwell that he was unceremoniously removed from St. Andrew's. In a harshly worded parting blow, the church wardens of Scituate declared “that they would rather lose the Mission than Mr. Brockwell should be their minister.” Brockwell packed his bags for reassignment to Salem.

Given the times, it is possible that Brockwell stoked an angry patriotic response among the congregation.

Perhaps there was a different insult. There is little doubt, though, that his successor, Rev. Ebenezer Thompson, became a lightning rod for the anger directed against church and state.

Thompson preached

“that we should always be possessed with an easy, peaceable disposition, and that we study to be quiet and mind our own business, and as much as lies on us to live peaceable with all men, and pay a ready and dutiful obedience to the lawful commands of our superiours.”

“ [There was] a belief among many that their inalienable, God-given rights were being trampled upon by the British government and, by extension, the Anglican church.”

This pacifist, subservient stance ran completely contrary to the belief among many that their inalienable, God-given rights were being trampled upon by the British government and by extension, the Anglican church.

It is impossible to know precisely what portion of the population considered themselves ardent patriots, loyalists, or somewhere in between. The Library of Congress estimates that between 20 and 30 percent were loyalist at the time of the war. Indeed, many historians consider The Revolutionary War to be a civil war since much of it was fought on America's soil among the

same citizens. Also, not all Anglican ministers were loyalists—many converted to the patriot cause. One of the most famous was ‘Fighting Parson’ John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, who became a major-general in the Continental Army. According to legend, the climax of his 1776 sermon in Woodstock, Virginia came when he cast off his preacher's garb, revealing his ‘superhero’ military uniform. Among the laity of the Anglican Church were several high-profile revolutionaries, including Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and George Washington. The lines of division were blurry.

Unlike the short stints of his two predecessors, Rev. Thompson prevailed in Scituate for about thirty years, also preaching in Marshfield. During that time, it appears that he remained a steadfast loyalist. There is evidence that he was quite dismissive of the patriot movement. Thompson in 1766 stated that he “had preserved his people from the murmurs and disorders that had lately prevailed in some parts of the Province.” He also referred to patriotism as “that spirit of political enthusiasm,” which essentially likened it to a form of infatuation, madness, and delusion. Unfortunately for Thompson, he would ultimately learn that this was no flash in the pan.

The rector of King's Chapel in Boston reported that Thompson's death in 1775 “was owing partly to bodily disorder and partly to some uncivil treatment from the rebels in his neighborhood.” He also added “The Parish are earnestly desirous of being re-supplied; but I hardly think any Gentleman would undertake the Mission in these troublesome times.” There is no further description of how Thompson died, so we are left to wonder just how much was attributable to the “rebels.”

Throughout the colonies, there were many cases of Anglican ministers receiving rough treatment from the rebels. Rev. Daniel Batwell of

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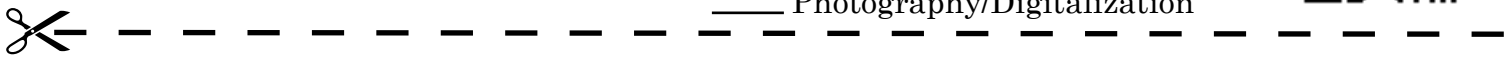
_____ Organizing at the Archives

_____ Farmhouse Tour Guide

_____ Farmhouse Maintenance

_____ Event Planning

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St. Andrew's Church, cont'd.

(continued from page 6)

Pennsylvania had been dunked several times in a river with 'savage cruelty.'

Christopher MacRae of Virginia was seized, bound to a tree, beaten, and left naked in the woods.

More locally, in Dedham, William Clark's church was stoned and taken over as a military storehouse. He was charged by the town's Board of Selectmen of being a traitor, and after refusing to swear allegiance to the Commonwealth, was sent to a prison ship for ten weeks.

Jonathon Boucher of Maryland, fearful of the risks of his job, preached with a pair of pistols on a nearby pillow.

Some priests left altogether, fleeing to England or other parts of the colonies that were considered more friendly to the crown, including New York City.

Following the death of Rev. Thompson in Scituate, and considering the experiences of his two predecessors, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that this was an ill-fated position. Yet a man named Edward Winslow boldly entered the fray. Soon after his appointment, and just one month before independence was formally declared, he held a service before a large congregation from the churches of Scituate and Marshfield. According


to local historian L. Vernon Briggs, he "was surprised by a citation to appear the next morning before a Committee of Safety, at a distance of two miles from this spot, to answer to a charge of sowing discord and dissension." There he was asked if he recited Anglican prayers at his service the prior day. He affirmed unapologetically, was berated, and then sent to another committee in Braintree where he was presented to the General Court as "a contumacious fomentor of alienation from the United Colonies, and an avowed enemy of his native country."

con-tu-ma-cious / kǎntōō'māSHəs / adj.
(especially of a defendant's behavior)
stubbornly or willfully disobedient to authority.

It is unknown what punishment was administered, but it was said that the Anglican churches in the region were shut down. One historian wrote that Winslow fled to New York City and that the report of his death noted "there is reason to believe that... his fate was not a little hastened by the calamities of the time."

Following the Revolution, the Anglican Church in America shed its direct ties to the crown, survived and successfully evolved into an organization that counts 1.5 million living American souls as of 2021.

Perhaps the first four ministers at St. Andrews and the rest would have been surprised by how the American public has re-embraced British culture.

After all, who wouldn't choose Diana over discord and Dickens over dissension? 

WANTED

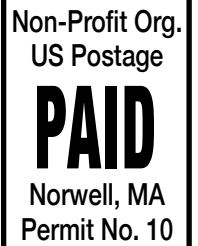
The Historical Society often says "History Happens Every Day." This means that recent and current items are often not considered historical, but they are!

Visit the "Donate items" page on our website to see if you have anything to contribute.





NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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December 2023

Upcoming Events

For an up-to-date listing of events, please see the Society website [“Events”](#) page or use the QR code at right.



Christmas at the Farmhouse

1:00-3:00 pm at the Jacobs Farmhouse Museum on 4 Jacobs Lane

Sat., December 9th

The Norwell Historical Society is thrilled to welcome the public back into the Jacobs Farmhouse Museum! Enter the Museum through our new accessible entrance (NOTE: door is 6' 1" high) adjacent to the parking area. Celebrate the season with organ-playing, festive bites, and mulled cider. No RSVP required. All ages are welcome for a tour of the newly-sparkling first floor, and a guided (or video) tour of the second floor.

North River Pop-Up Museum

At the Cushing Center in Norwell Center

Sat., March 2nd

The Historical Societies of the North River (Scituate, Marshfield, Norwell, Hanover, and Pembroke) will all have displays at this one-day exhibit focused on our beloved river. Learn about shipbuilding through interactive exhibits and hands-on activities. Perfect for budding shipbuilders of all ages.

Election Day Tea with Juliette Hammond

3:00 to 5:00 pm at the Jacobs Farmhouse Museum, 4 Jacobs Lane

Tue., March 5th

Who was Norwell's first female voter? In 1900, Juliette Hammond cast her ballot for School Committee—19 years before all Massachusetts women were able to vote. Listen to Juliette's story and enjoy tea and treats. This event is \$10/adult member, children are free.

Antiques Roadshow-Style Appraisal Event

1:00 to 4:00 at the Phoenix Lodge in Hanover Four Corners

Sun., April 28th

Join the appraisers from J. James Auctioneers & Appraisers of Plymouth to learn more about your antique treasures and find out what they are worth. \$25/item appraised and proceeds benefit the Norwell and Hanover Historical Societies. Online sign-up will be required and available in March.