



Newsletter

Spring 2017

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

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William Slattery, Secretary
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Joan Vermette
Janet Watson

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.

JACOBS FARMHOUSE RE-OPENED!

MANY EVENTS PLANNED FOR THE SPRING

On April 12th, the Norwell Board of Selectmen voted to re-open the Jacobs Farmhouse Museum to the public after shuttering the building for five months.

An article requesting \$53,050 from the Community Preservation Act funds will address four accessibility concerns at the farmhouse and will be voted on during the Special **Town Meeting on Monday, May 8th**.

The four concerns at the Farmhouse Museum raised by the Architectural Access Board (AAB) in Boston (the state agency that oversees accessibility issues) were 1) lack of handicapped parking, 2) lack of an accessible entrance, 3) lack of an accessible bathroom, and 4) lack of access to the second floor displays for those with mobility issues.

The solutions, now being assessed by the AAB, are as follows. 1) the addition of a handicapped parking area with an accessible pathway to an entrance to the museum, 2) a newly-widened accessible entrance at the rear of the building that can accommodate wheelchairs, 3) construction of a handicapped-accessible bathroom, and 4) the creation of a video presentation touring the second floor so that all may access the historical features there.

The Society encourages all Norwell residents to attend the Special and Annual Town Meetings and support this proposal which will allow everyone, no matter their ability, to enjoy the Jacobs Farmhouse and Norwell's rich history housed there.

Immediately following the Selectmen's announcement, the Society began planning events that had been

previously put on hold. The **Arbor Day** celebration on **Friday, April 28th** will continue as planned on the Jacobs' front lawn—the site of the former Silver Maple that was felled in a wind storm years ago. The Society was given funds in honor of Sam Olson to purchase a new Freeman's Maple (a fast-growing, but non-invasive and less brittle, maple cultivar).

The annual **May Day Tea** is scheduled for **Monday, May 1st**. This event celebrates the old-fashioned tradition of leaving a May basket on your neighbor's door as a welcoming symbol of friendship.

The **Cole School 3rd grade tour** of the Farmhouse (scheduled for **Friday, May 5th**) can now continue as usual inside the historic building.

Finally, the Society's annual **Strawberry Festival** will take place on **Sunday, June 11th**. This event will feature homemade strawberry shortcakes for sale, tours of the Farmhouse, old-fashioned games for children, and a Bake Table of hand-made goodies.

The Historical Society encourages members and non-members to come to these events and celebrate the re-opening of the Farmhouse and the history of our town.



Jody Vermette enjoys her May basket and cup of tea at the 2016 May Day Tea event.



NORWELL WEDDING DRESS TO BE FEATURED IN PILGRIM HALL MUSEUM EXHIBIT

What began as a simple textile inventory and assessment project at the Jacobs Farmhouse turned into a major find for the Historical Society during the summer of 2015.

During that summer, Textile Conservator Marie Schlag of Scituate—who had previously assisted both the Cohasset and Scituate Historical Societies with their textile collections—assessed and inventoried all of the textiles and "soft" items at the Farmhouse.

Searching closets, trunks, and dresser drawers at the Homestead, Marie discovered previously undocumented items. One of the most amazing discoveries during the inventory was the pristine wedding ensemble of Lucy Damon Waugh. Found were Miss Damon's wedding gown (*bodice shown at right, below*), her after-party gown, stockings, veil, ivory fan, wedding invitation, and a photograph of the minister who performed the ceremony.

Miss Damon's father, Alpheus (Alphonzo) Damon, was born in Scituate (Norwell) in 1839 at 82 South Street (known today as the Joshua Bowker house). Lucy Damon was born on October 12, 1866, and the Society believes she also lived on South Street—perhaps in one of the many South Street antique homes that have been demolished in recent years.

Miss Damon's wedding to Varnum S. Waugh took place on February 7, 1888 (**NOTE: the year South Scituate became Norwell!**) in Roxbury. The couple went on to live in Boston.

The quality and the handiwork of the wedding items found display the wealth of the Damon family and the importance of this occasion.

When Society Board members heard of the upcoming exhibit at the Pilgrim Hall Museum featuring South Shore wedding items, an email was sent to the curator describing the Damon-Waugh dress in the Norwell collection. Curator Rebecca Piccirillo immediately contacted the Society and planned a visit.

Society president Wendy Bawabe recalls the meeting: "The Executive Director and Archivist from Pilgrim Hall Museum met me at the Society Archives to view the Damon-Waugh dress. It was immediately clear from the look on their faces that they were very impressed with the quality of the piece and with the condition of the dress. It was a wonderful feeling to know that such a special piece is in our small collection."

The upcoming exhibition, **Wedding 396: Four Centuries of Wedding Fashion in Plymouth**, will open at **Pilgrim Hall Museum** (75 Court Street, Plymouth) on **Saturday, May 13th** and be on display through December.

Curator Rebecca Piccirillo noted that a number of dresses in the collection are colorful and the Damon dress is one of the few white/cream-colored gowns. She also said there was a "lack of beading on many of the gowns chosen for the exhibit." The Damon dress—with its extensive pearl appliqué and beaded embroidery—will certainly fill that niche!

The Damon dress has never been on public display. Norwell Historical Society members are encouraged to "visit" the dress at the Pilgrim Hall Museum during this wonderful exhibit.



The original Damon-Waugh wedding invitation.



WEDDING 396 MAY 2017

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



The bodice of the Lucy Damon Waugh wedding dress. The gown will be on display at the Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth until December.

RESEARCHING SOUTH SCITUATE CIVIL WAR VETERANS AND THEIR HOMES

by Janet Watson

On an exceedingly hot summer day, July 3, 1878, the marble monument that stands on the Norwell Common was dedicated to the memory of 24 men from South Scituate (Norwell) who died in the Civil War that had ended 13 years before.

In the intervening years, the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Post (formerly located at what is the Ridge Hill School on High Street today) and the town of South Scituate had collected sufficient funds—\$3500—to erect the monument, and the dedication was attended by dignitaries, townspeople and surviving South Scituate Civil War veterans.

The monument was unveiled by 17 year old Carrie Simmons who was only 15 months old when her father left for the war and not even 3 when he died in 1864. For many years afterward, members of the G.A.R. Post remembered their fellow soldiers on Memorial Day and their widows and family members continued to grieve their loss for some time.

But as the last surviving Civil War veterans died, older generations of the town passed away and new generations took their place, the memories became less vivid. Today, although the Civil War Memorial is a

prominent feature of the Common, many people don't know much about the monument and some don't even realize it honors men who died in the Civil War. Even fewer people probably know *anything* about the 24 men whose names are engraved in the marble.

The Norwell Historical Society has decided to undertake a research project to learn as much as we can about these men, and to find out what traces of their lives we can find in Norwell today. So far we have identified 11 houses still standing where these men lived in the mid-19th century and found 15 of their graves in the First Parish, Pinehurst and Union (Assinippi) cemeteries.



Would you like to join this project? The first goal of the project is to produce a self-guided tour brochure of the former homes of these Civil War heroes. Assistance with genealogical research to help find descendants is greatly needed—please contact Society Board member Janet Watson (watsonje@comcast.net) to "adopt a soldier or sailor" and begin research.

There is a lot to learn and many avenues to explore so that we can continue to remember the South Scituate men who sacrificed their lives for the Union cause.

The Names on the Monument

Henry Currell
Joshua Damon
Edward Dover
Beza W. Drake
Abial Farrar
Lemuel Freeman
Walter Foster II
Henry H. Gardner
Sidney Gardner.
Herbert Graves
Henry H. Harlow
Gustavus Jacobs
George Merritt

Addison & Elias Oliver Nichols, brothers
D. Willard Robinson
Joseph Simmons
Samuel Spencer
Charles L. Stoddard
Josiah Stoddard, Jr.
William T. Sylvester,
Clifton Vose
William Whitcomb
Nathaniel Winslow

Drop in to the
Jacobs Farmhouse
for the

May Day Tea

AND
May-Basket Making

Monday
May 1st
3:00-5:00

Jacobs Farmhouse Museum
4 Jacobs Lane, Norwell

Drop in to make a May Day Basket
to leave on your neighbor's door.
Drink a bit of tea from an antique cup.
Celebrate Spring at the Farmhouse.

\$5
Historical Society members

\$20
non-members
(3-year membership included)

FARMING IN NORWELL

by Bill Slattery

In Norwell/South Scituate, as in most New England towns, people had their own gardens producing food for consumption by their families. Only a few homes had surplus food to sell as “truck farmers” as they were known—this was largely a development of the 20th century. While most of the larger “truck farms” were in Scituate, those in our town included Cushing O. Hatch at the old Thomas Briggs Farm on Cross Street, and Charles A. Litchfield on the former Charles Cole Farm.

Charles Berry erected several large greenhouses for crops of cucumbers, lettuce, and rhubarb that he sold in Boston. Others imitated his use of greenhouses as well. [Source: Mary L.F.N. Power]



This undated photo shows C.A. Berry's greenhouses located on Main Street.

More important economically in town was poultry farming, which began in earnest in South Scituate/Norwell in the 1880s. The largest poultry farm in town (and one of the largest statewide) was that of **Joseph Tolman** of River Street. On his over 200 acres, he raised chicks for market and shipped thousands of them annually throughout the country. [S.S. Life-1936]

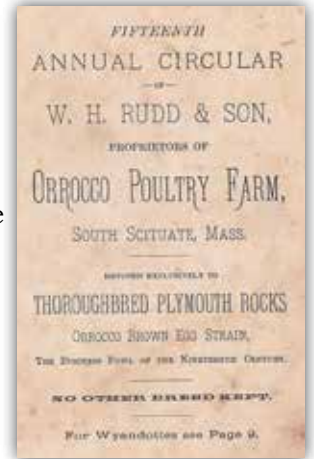
Tolman invented a box brooder intended to bring in fresh air to his chicks. In January 1909, he exhibited his plans and a small model of a new-style chicken house at the Madison Square Garden show in New York City. One end of the brooder house was left open to maximize fresh air to replace the enclosed dusty conditions that bred bacteria and ill health among the chickens of his day. While this was considered a revolutionary idea by his contemporaries, Tolman built such a house on his own property and enjoyed great success. His incubators held 60,000 eggs at a time.

Tolman was one of the leading employers in Norwell in the early 20th century. His odd construction designs



did not stop with chickens—Mr. Tolman designed and built an octagon-shaped house for his family (demolished now, but formerly residing on River Street at the base of what is today Tara Drive). While no longer in existence, it is one that has been remembered down the years. [S.S. Life-1936]

Also, in town was the Orrocco Poultry Farm of **W.H. Rudd & Son**. It advertised that it exclusively raised a breed of chicken known as “Plymouth Rocks.” This farm ran a thriving egg business for its Boston store in the 1880s. All told, in 1937, the Town of Norwell was the birthplace of 25,000 chickens. [Merritt] **(Note: The State Police barracks was placed in Norwell to combat the vicious crime of chicken theft.)**



In more recent times, farming cranberries has been profitable in Norwell. Three-quarters of the cranberries grown in Massachusetts come from Plymouth County. Nationally, Massachusetts is usually first in production of the fruit, but sometimes comes in second to Wisconsin. Locally, Donald LeClair and Howard Cole of the Webster Cranberry Company on Cross Street have been involved in this. Their property contains thirteen and one-half acres of cranberry bogs. Later, their company expanded to produce Christmas trees and pick-your-own blueberries. [Norwell Mariner]

As many may recall, Norwell even had a winery on Mount Blue Street that produced a local vintage for the bicentennial year of 1988.

Of course, as a former Society president, I must mention our headquarters at the Jacobs Farm. While mostly known for their granary and later their saw-mill, the Jacobs family also produced apple cider.

In more recent times, townspeople will affectionately remember Jon Haskins as the last farmer at the Jacobs Farmhouse in the 1980s. He planted oats and hay for the many animals that used to delight visiting children. Jon found the land quite rough from being neglected, but he rejuvenated it, doing so in the old-fashioned way, by using draft horses and oxen and a wooden plow. Jon's legacy is undoubtedly now enjoyed by those planting vegetables there today, and alive in the memories of those who have visited the farm and its house when he was there tending it.

Jon Haskins and his oxen, marching in a Norwell Town Parade.



NEXT NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY PARTY: RIDGE HILL

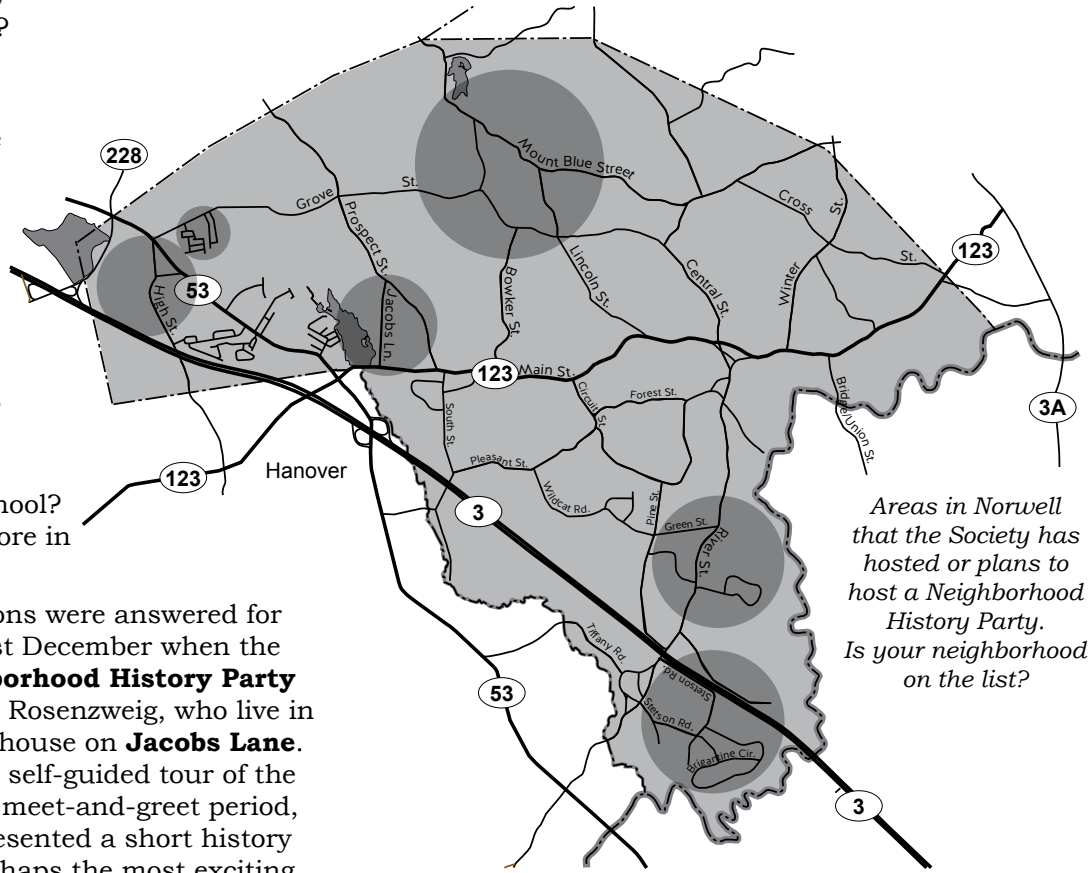
Ever wonder about the history of your Norwell neighborhood?

The Norwell Historical Society Board realized that even if most of its members don't live in historic houses, many are fascinated by the history of the area surrounding their home.

- Were there Native Americans in their area?
- When did the first settlers arrive and who were they?
- What was the primary industry?
- Where was the nearest school?
- Was there a tavern or a store in the neighborhood?

These and many other questions were answered for the Jacobs Pond area this past December when the Society hosted its first **Neighborhood History Party** at the home of Katie and Seth Rosenzweig, who live in the historic Joshua Jacobs II house on **Jacobs Lane**. Neighbors were treated with a self-guided tour of the beautiful home during a brief meet-and-greet period, then the Historical Society presented a short history on the Jacobs Pond area. Perhaps the most exciting portion of the event took place during the Q&A, when residents shared their own stories of neighborhood history and recalled the tragic death of Laura Jacobs (after whom Laura's Lane is named) in the 1980s.

Because of the success of the Jacobs event, another **Neighborhood History Party** is planned for the **Ridge Hill area** in May at the home of Jeff and Kelly Gould, who live in the historic David P. Robinson House on High Street. The Society is looking forward to sharing the history of this wonderful street and of the "West End" of Norwell with the Gould's Ridge Hill neighbors.



The following areas are on the Society's "wish list" for sponsors (note the map above showing these areas):

- Mount Blue
- Norwell Homes
- River Street/Green Street
- Stetson Meadows/Church Hill

If you are interested in hosting one of the future Neighborhood History Parties or would like to see a Party initiated in *your* neighborhood, please contact us via email at info@norwellhistoricalsociety.org.



Wilbur L. "Bill" Garside
February 11, 1931 – March 26, 2017

Bill Garside was past president of the Norwell Historical Society, a past member of the Norwell ZBA, Commodore of the Cross Street Regatta, and co-recipient of the the Norwell Citizen of the Year award with his wife Jeanne. Bill's life was celebrated on Monday, April 3rd.

Spencer A. "Skip" Joseph
February 11, 1931 – March 26, 2017

Skip Joseph was voted Norwell Citizen of the Year in 2010, served as a Call Fireman and Building Inspector, and volunteered for many Town committees: Advisory Board, Disability Commission, ZBA, PBMC, By-Laws Committee, and School Building Committee. Skip and his wife Fay's lives were celebrated on March 16th.

Answer from page 7: This machine has leather straps to go around a farmer's neck. It is a winnowing machine for either grain or blueberries: to separate the stems and sticks from the blueberries or to remove the chaff from wheat. It will be on display at the upcoming Strawberry Festival!

HISTORIC NORWELL SAMPLER ON LOAN FOR HANOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXHIBIT

by Wendy Bawabe

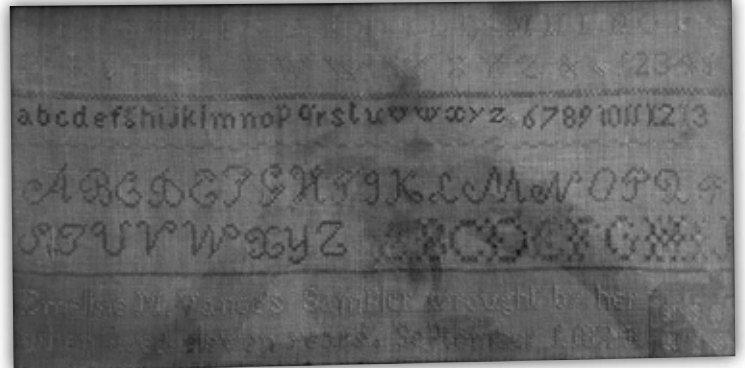
The Hanover Historical Society recently contacted me, inquiring about any needlepoint samplers of note in our Norwell collection.

I immediately thought of the Emeline Vance sampler, which is usually displayed at the Jacobs Farmhouse (see photo at right).

Commonly made by young girls as a way to learn sewing, samplers are prized today for their artistry and their history. Like other craft traditions, samplers were taught by women who were experienced needleworkers to young girls and teenagers. Samplers are sometimes simple, just letters and numbers in silk sewn onto a linen canvas, but sometimes they show remarkable skill in creating flowers, decorative borders, architectural elements, and sayings similar to the epitaphs on gravestones.

The bottom section of the Vance sampler says "Emeline M. Vance's Sampler wrought by her when aged eleven years, September 1, 1824."

Who is Emeline Vance and why does the Norwell Historical Society own her sampler? A quick investigation on Ancestry.com shows that Miss Vance was born in Orleans, Massachusetts in 1813, married



The Emeline Vance sampler will be on display at the Stetson House in Hanover until May 29th.

to a George F. Crosby, and died in Boston at age 86 in 1899. The provenance of the sampler is unknown. Perhaps a relative of Emeline Vance Crosby lived in town and donated the piece to the Historical Society for display and preservation?

The sampler, remarkable for the small house depicted in the bottom right corner, was reframed three years ago with an archival UV-resistant glass so that it would not fade further.

This sampler and many more are currently on display at the Hanover Historical Society's "Needlework Samplers" exhibit at the Stetson House. Please visit!

Norwell Public Library
presents in partnership with the
NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NORWELL COUNCIL ON AGING

Author
MICHAEL TOUGIAS

MICHAEL J. TOUGIAS
with ALISON O'LEARY

SO CLOSE TO HOME

A True Story of an American Family's Fight for Survival During World War II

Wednesday
MAY 10th
6:30 p.m.

Norwell Public Library
(64 South Street)

So Close To Home chronicles the harrowing adventure of the Downs family, who pulled up stakes and moved to South America in the lean post-Depression years. When the Downs boarded the coffee- and banana-laden ship *Heredia* to return home after a year in Colombia and Costa Rica, the country was at war. German U-boats were stalking the Atlantic coast—but no one was saying much about it. Meanwhile, German sailors gladly tolerated horrible conditions aboard U-boats rather than suffering on the Eastern Front. Using the U-boat captains' own words from their War Diaries and the Downs' family journals, *So Close To Home* discusses the U-boat war from both sides of the conflict.



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

The Society recently received a donation of a "bone crusher" (used to make bone meal for chicken feed) from a local member. This tool was given along with many photographs of the construction of Route 3 and of the former "Morton Farm"—which, according to this member's recollection, was demolished for the new highway. Or was it? Do you recall the Morton family of Stetson Road? Do you recall the Morton Farm? If so, please email the Society at info@norwellhistoricalsociety.org.

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 _____

The Norwell Historical Society's Annual Strawberry Festival
Sunday, June 11th
3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
at the Jacobs Farmhouse in Norwell

- ✓ Tour the Jacobs Farmhouse
- ✓ See the weaving loom in action!
- ✓ Learn about arrowheads & antique tools
- ✓ Buy homemade Bake Sale treats
- ✓ Eat Strawberry Shortcake!
- ✓ Compete in sack races, egg relays & games

THROWBACK
PHOTO OF THE MONTH

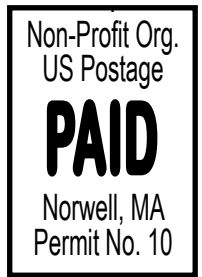
Norwell Conservation Agent Nancy Hemingway was scouring a tag sale recently and came across this antique agricultural tool. Intrigued and curious as to what it could be, Nancy purchased the item to donate to the Norwell Historical Society. With the help of Norwell Farms Farmer Scott Franklin, the purpose of this farm tool was finally discovered!

Can you guess what this tool is and what it does?

(Location/ Answer at the bottom of page 5)



NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 P.O. Box 693
 NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061
 WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL
 SUNDAY, JUNE 1TH
 AT THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA

- | | |
|---|--|
| <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 with a collection of articles previously published in <i>The Norwell Mariner</i>. Each chapter is its own story!</p> <p>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.</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>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>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.</p> <p>NORWELL TILES \$10
 These 6" X 6" white tiles depict various scenes: Kent House, Cushing Center, etc. <i>Limited number available.</i></p> | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</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>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>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.</p> |
|---|--|

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.