



Newsletter

Spring 2018

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

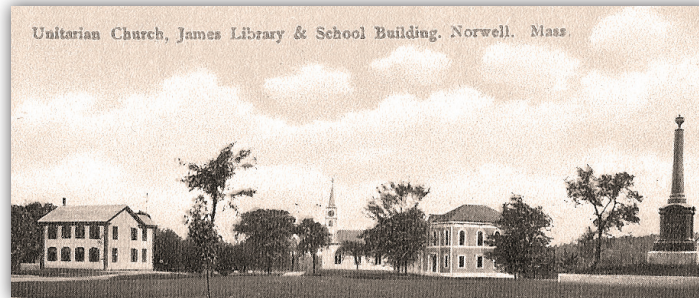
HISTORIC TALK: THE JAMES AND ITALIANATE ARCHITECTURE ON APRIL 17TH

When Rev. William Fish of First Parish Church and long-distance benefactor Josiah James decided to build a library in South Scituate Center in the early 1870s, they chose Leander Sherman of Marshfield Hills as their builder.

The Italianate design of the library included Queen Anne style windows, which had not been seen anywhere in the district. The building was dedicated at a service on May 1, 1874.

Today, the James is known as The James Library & Center for the Arts—

a non-profit library and arts center offering programs in music, art, and literature. The James features a concert hall with a Steinway B grand piano, a free lending library, and an art gallery offering new exhibits each month. Missing from the James' repertoire, however, is accessibility to all. Because of the Italianate design's tall ceilings and low and heavy stair rails, the building has never been welcoming to those with disabilities. Managing the long staircase to the second floor has become a challenge for many.



Thankfully, the James is undertaking a campaign to provide **Arts For Everyone**

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An antique postcard of Norwell Center shows the James Library (circa early 1900s).

WAKE UP THE FARM(HOUSE)!

The Norwell Historical Society will be partnering with Norwell Farms to "Wake Up the Farmhouse" on **Saturday, May 12th from 8:00 until noon.**

While Norwell Farms has hosted this event at the Jacobs for two previous years, this will be the first time that the Society will join in the festivities.

Norwell Farms will have their annual seedling sale and sign-ups for their Community Supported Agriculture program, they will also have a food truck and the Armstrong Brothers Band to provide live music.

The Society will host tours of the Farmhouse Museum and, given that

it is Mother's Day weekend, the tours will feature a special emphasis on the historic role of women at the Farmhouse. The Society's Damon-Waugh wedding dress, recently on display in Plymouth, will also be on view.

Also featured at the Wake Up the Farm event will be the North River Gardeners selling garden wares, plants, pies, and baked goods.

Norwell's Cross Street Flowers will also be present—selling their locally-grown flower bouquets for mothers and others.



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CONTACTING US

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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.

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW IN THE NORTH RIVER VALLEY

by Margaret (Dumas) Crowell

On occasion the Society will come across interesting pieces of history in our Archives that should be shared with our members. The following is an article from South Shore Life And Associated Papers of Rockland, Massachusetts that was originally published on Friday March 20, 1942. Society Archivist Bill Slattery has transcribed this article with parenthetical editorial notes, below is the second installment.

During the Revolution, the greater part of Massachusetts shipping was destroyed. One vessel built on our North River not only survived but was highly successful as a privateer. This was the *Grand Turk* built at Thomas Barstow's Two Oaks Yard in what is now Hanover on the Edmund Q. Sylvester property.

During the Revolution, the *Grand Turk* captured sixteen enemy vessels, thus helping amass a considerable fortune, not only for her crew but also for her owner, Elias Hasket Derby of Salem, a famous ship owner, often referred to as King Derby.

After the Revolution, maritime Massachusetts was in a serious plight for there were few ships, and besides, British ports were closed to her as well as those of the West Indies for the most part. However, her Yankee settlers cast about for new ports to conquer, and decided to invade the China trade, hitherto controlled by the British and Dutch. The glory of being the first Yankee vessel to enter the port of Canton almost fell to a Hingham ship, the *Harriet*. She set sail under the command of Captain Hallet with a cargo of ginseng, but when she touched at the Cape of Good Hope, a British captain, upon hearing of the project, offered to trade twice the weight of the cargo in Hyson tea.

It was too good an opportunity to let go by, so, the Yankee accepted, and so lost the honor of being the first Yankee ship to reach Canton. The British captain was eager to forestall Yankee competition in the Orient, and, while he succeeded in the case of the *Harriet*, another ship, the *Empress of China* from New York, soon entered the port of Canton. Samuel Shaw of Boston realized the opportunities for trade, and upon his arrival in the United States, had himself appointed consul to China, and returned to Canton on the *Hope* to act as representative of the new nation in that faraway land.

The success of this pioneer trip encouraged Elias Hasket Derby to send the *Grand Turk* to the Orient, and, accordingly, she too headed in that direction via the Cape of Good Hope, being the first vessel from New England to enter that distant country. Her captain, Ebenezer West, conducted his business through Pinqua, a hong merchant, as was the custom at this time. When the *Grand Turk* returned to Salem with a valuable cargo, it included not only tea, silk and china

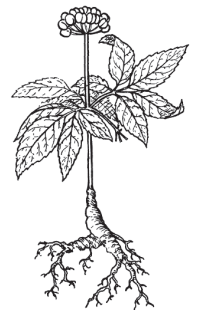
but also a huge punch bowl, a gift to Elias Hasket Derby from Pinqua in honor of this pioneer voyage. It is a beautiful thing with a picture of the *Grand Turk*, and now is on exhibition in the Peabody [Essex] Museum at Salem where it may be seen, a memento of the long voyage made by one of our North River ships.



The Grand Turk punchbowl on display at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

Trade at this time with China presented considerable difficulty, for, while the Yankees were eager to obtain the tea, silks and china from China, they had little to offer in exchange which interested the merchants there. Ginseng was acceptable, but other articles the Yankees had to offer did not appeal to the Mandarins. The British shipped various articles from India to China and also paid in silver for their purchases, but this course was not open to the Yankees so they had to devise other means. The fur of the sea otter found off the Northwestern coast [of North America] was also a product that appealed to the Chinese. So, a group of Boston men determined to try the experiment of sending a vessel around Cape Horn to procure skins, then continue to Canton to exchange them for tea and silks, thence, back to Boston.

It was a daring and expensive venture, but the Bostonians of that era were noted for their daring. Charles Bulfinch and several others subscribed the sum of \$50,000, a considerable amount for those days, and bought two ships, the *Lady Washington* and the *Columbia*. Legend has it that the former was built on North River, but of that we are not certain, but we have definite proof that the *Columbia* was built by James Briggs at Hobart's Landing, which is a short distance above Little's Bridge (although, at that time, 1773, there was only a ferry [and no actual bridge].)



American Ginseng root and leaves were traditionally used for medicinal purposes by Native Americans. Since the 18th century, the roots have been collected by "sang hunters" and sold to Chinese traders, who often pay high prices for particularly old wild roots.

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SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW, CONT'D.

(continued from previous page)

The *Columbia* was not a large vessel, only about 85 feet in length and 220 tons, while the *Lady Washington* was even smaller. These two vessels under command of John Kendrick of Wareham and Robert Gray of Tiverton, Rhode Island, respectively, set sail loaded with a variety of hardware and trinkets for barter with the Indians [of the Northwest coast of North America]. A number of medals in honor of this pioneer trip were struck off, some of which have been found in recent years along the coast of South America and our Northwest coast, and some are owned by local families. [Ed. note: The bill of lading for the voyage lists 300 medals "to be distributed amongst the Natives on the North West Coast of America, and to commemorate the first American Adventure on the Pacific Ocean." Considered the first die-struck medal issued after American independence, the *Columbia* and *Washington* token received considerable attention in contemporary newspaper accounts.]

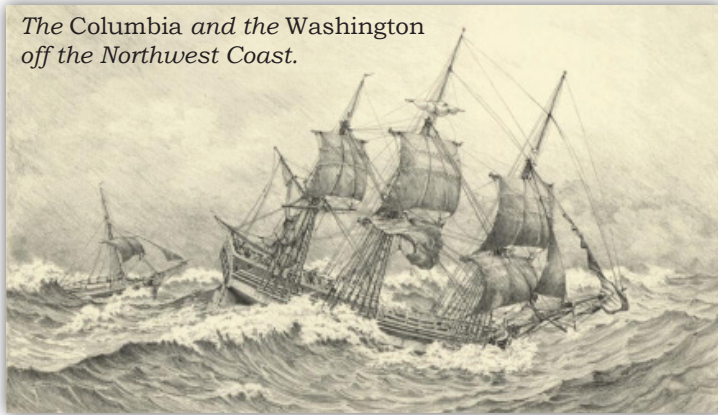


The front of the Columbia medals depict the ship and its sister ship, the Washington, and the words "Commanded by J. Kendrick." The back of the medal says "Fitted at Boston, N. America for the Pacific Ocean by J. Barrell, S. Brown, C. Bulfinch, J. Darby, C. Hatch, J.M. Pintard, 1787." Coins from the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society

In connection with the *Columbia* medals, it is interesting to note that recently Charles Bulfinch of Boston, a descendant of the architect and one of the owners of the *Columbia*, married Marjorie Kimpton, whose summer home, now enlarged, was the home of James Briggs, the builder of the *Columbia*.

Dr. Kimpton mentioned this to his son-in-law, whereupon he had his father show one of the original

The Columbia and the Washington off the Northwest Coast.



medals which the family cherished. Rather an interesting coincidence.

It took the *Columbia* and the *Lady Washington* about a year to reach the Northwest coast after the difficult passage around Cape Horn. They found the natives not entirely friendly as some of the crew were killed in one encounter.

Eventually, the *Columbia* had a full cargo of furs, the two men [captains] exchanged ships, and Robert Gray proceeded to Canton with the *Columbia* while Captain Kendrick returned to Boston with the *Lady Washington*. The *Columbia* touched at Hawaii where a native prince, Attoo by name, joined the party. At Canton the furs were exchanged for a cargo of tea, and, the gallant little ship set sail for Boston, passing through the treacherous Sunda and Banka Straits in which, at present [1942], so much fighting is taking place.

After leaving Java Head, the *Columbia* squared away for the Cape of Good Hope, and, thence, across the Atlantic to Boston after an absence of three years. Naturally, there was much excitement caused by the return of the *Columbia*.

Salutes were fired by the forts in the harbor, church bells were rung, and Governor Hancock gave a dinner party in honor of the owners and officers. Prince Attoo was the first native from Hawaii to visit Boston. He was a spectacular sight as he wore a feathered cloak of golden scarlet feathers and helmet of the same material, such as only royalty in Hawaii were privileged to possess. So, our North River ship, the *Columbia*, was the first vessel to carry the flag of our nation around the globe, and was the pioneer in opening the Northwest fur trade as a medium of exchange with Canton, China. Like many pioneer trips, it was not a successful project financially, but, on the other hand, it opened the way for others who followed this trade route for a number of years with great benefit to themselves and the new nation.

The *Columbia* made a second trip to the Northwest coast under the command of Robert Gray, and this time participated in another adventure of importance. At this time, California belonged to Spain, while the Northwest coast was claimed by both Spain and Great Britain. On this second voyage, Captain Gray noticed what appeared to be a mighty river, and, after considerable difficulty, entered its mouth and sailed about fifteen miles up its course. Captain Gray named this river *Columbia* in honor of the North River ship which had brought them so far, and claimed all the territory drained by the river for the United States, thus establishing the rights of our nation to this vast territory.

Thus, the *Grand Turk* of Salem and the *Columbia* of Boston, both built on our North River, helped open the East India trade which was to grow considerably and prove a great source of wealth to this young nation.

THE CANDY STORE

by Jody Vermette

When Hilliard's Chocolates moved into the old firehouse on Washington Street, I thought, "How appropriate!". Marsh's Liquor Store (now Kappy's) was, in the beginning, a candy store. Further along the street, there was a little stand that sold homemade lollipops. These thoughts triggered a memory of my childhood candy store in Maine.

I had a nickel. A whole nickel, and not a brother around (no sister yet) to call dibs, so off I went down the cement walk to the red brick sidewalk and turned right. I went past Honey's house, Janice and Lucy's, Marie's, the house where the people moved in and out so fast that no one ever got to know them, then Mrs. H's—she lived on the corner.

Mrs. H was an invalid who sat in her window from early spring until late fall. She was a neighborhood resource, because everyone who passed by was subjected to an interrogation that would have made a prosecuting attorney proud. If any child was late for supper, it was to her window the family went. She (God love her) always knew where the child could be found.

At her window:

"Hello, Joan!"
"Hello, Mrs. H."
"How's your mother?"
"Fine."
"How's your father?"
"He's fine, too."
"How did your brother do on his test?"
"Fine."
"Did he get an A?"
"Yes."
"Wonderful! He was worried about it when I spoke to him last. Where are you going?"
"To Jimmy's."
"To get candy?"
"Yes."
"How much money do you have?"
"A nickel."
"A whole nickel! My, that is a lot of money."
"Yes."
"Well, I won't keep you. Run along and be careful crossing the street. Be sure and come back and tell me what you bought." (As if I had a choice!)
"Yes, Mrs. H."

(Please note what an erudite child I was.)

Standing on the curb, I looked both ways and crossed to Mrs. K's house. It was a lovely house with a sleeping porch around the whole second floor, roses everywhere, and a fish pond. This was a slight stop to peer through the white pickets at all that beauty. Three more dwellings and then Jimmy's, up the three large stone steps to the large black door that was hard to open, then there it was: a large glass case filled with trays of candy that took up an entire wall.

Jimmy, seeing a customer, took up his position behind the case with the little flat bottomed brown bag, then the game was on. How to get the most candy for my nickel? Decisions, decisions. Three mint leaves for a penny was a must. Squirrel Nut Twins were a good deal. Chocolate snowdrops were a maybe, but oh, it was hard to choose.

There before me were Walnettos, gum balls, Tootsie Rolls, candy cigarettes, Boston Baked Beans, Red Hots, and huge red wax lips (which, when held to your mouth by a bar to bite onto, made you look like a demented doll). There were wax bottles that held a mysterious sweet liquid that, I am sure, would be banned in all fifty states today (you bit off the top, drank the contents, and chewed the wax). You could chew the wax lips, too, when you tired of wearing them. There were jawbreakers, tiny candy dots on paper rolls (you ate them off), licorice whips, Mary Janes, lollipops, and root beer barrels.

Jimmy had the patience of Job. He silently stood, taking my choices, putting them in the tiny bag and taking them out again if I changed my mind.

On occasion I had been known to blow my whole nickel on an all-day sucker. It would most likely last all day if one avoided the temptation to bite. Alas, I was weak; I bit. For a short time, these long-lasting confections had rhymes burnt into their wooden sticks. (*Hardly Henry W. Longfellow, but I will let you decide...*) The two that I remember were: "Corn and beans make succotash, but anything will do for hash.", and this gem: "Mama threw catsup at papa's head, boy did papa's face turn red."

On that literary note, I will make my choices, take my candy, leave the candy store of my childhood, and go home—after reporting back to Mrs. H, of course.





May Day Tea & May Basket Making

Sunday, April 29th
3:00 - 5:00
at the Jacobs Farmhouse

\$5/member
\$40/non-member
(includes a 3-year membership)

Drop in for tea and to make a May basket to hang on your neighbor's door on May Day!



CM Burd

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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AREAS OF INTEREST

Newsletter _____ Research Library _____

Tour Guide _____ Program Planning _____

ITALIANATE ARCHITECTURE AT THE JAMES, CONT'D.

(continued from page 1)

on the South Shore. This building project will include a new elevator at the back of the James (unseen from the road), a fully-accessible bathroom in the existing location, as well as a new accessible entrance at the existing side door. Passersby will never know the Italianate gem has been updated for the 21st century!

Jim Kelliher of Axiom Architects in Hanover has designed the new addition, and he will present a talk on Italianate architecture and the features of the James, in particular. This short lecture will take place at the James (4 West Street in Norwell) on **Tuesday, April 17th from 4:00 pm until 5:00 pm.**

While most people assume that the James is a Victorian-styled building, technically Italianate architecture slightly pre-dates Victorian and is considered of the "Romantic" architecture genre.

Jim will discuss typical features of Italianate buildings and note many of these in the James. Jim will also discuss other Italianate buildings in Norwell (such as the Norwell Grange on Main Street and the Groce family houses on High Street).

Finally, Jim will answer any questions about the upcoming building project and how he incorporated historical features in the new construction.

All Historical Society members are encouraged to attend this fascinating lecture on Tuesday, April 17th at the James. Why was Italianate architecture such a popular building style in South Scituate/Norwell? Jim has interesting insight on this intriguing question.

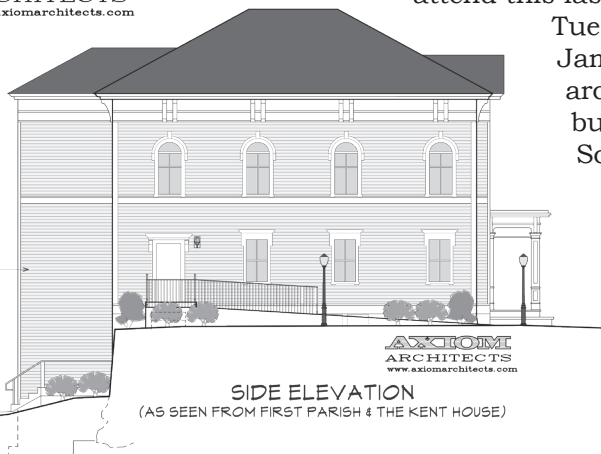
The talk will take place on the main floor of the James—requiring only three steps (with a railing) to access.



FRONT ELEVATION



The front and side elevations of the James Library & Center for the Arts depicting the new handicapped accessible entrance on the left side, and the elevator addition to the rear of the building.

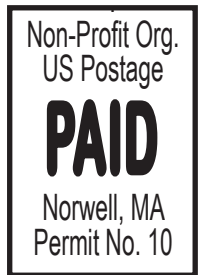


SIDE ELEVATION
(AS SEEN FROM FIRST PARISH & THE KENT HOUSE)





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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>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>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>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>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>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>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>MARYJANE CLARK-INSPIRED TRAVEL MUGS \$15
 Choose the Jacobs Farmhouse or the James Library. Artist Erica Vermette created these original pieces. (2 for \$25)</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.