



February 2014

Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

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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.

By Samuel Olson

One of the most outstanding beauty spots of Norwell is Delano Hill topped by a Federal-style mansion built in the style similar to those designed by Samuel McIntire for China trade merchants on Chestnut Street in Salem, High Street in Newburyport and in other New England port cities.

It's a monument to William Delano ("Lord North"), the most prolific of early nineteenth century North River shipbuilders. Yet, I'm often taken aback when many older residents refer to the site, which in earlier times had a sweeping view of the wide river valley and the ocean that lay beyond, not as Delano Hill but as "Gutterson Hill." Who was this individual who not only owned the property but practically preempted the revered Delano name?

In 1894, Prudence Delano, the last survivor of the four unmarried daughters of William Delano and Sarah Hart, passed on. Toward the end of her life and for twenty years thereafter, caretaker Alonzo Tolman held lifetime tenure to the property. During many of those years, the mansion was a boarding house for summer visitors. It began to show signs of needing more care.

In 1916, it was purchased by Brookline residents John Gutterson and his wife, the former Mae Holland, heiress to the Cortecilli silk thread fortune. Earlier, Gutterson had been a teacher of music exhibiting a "rare knowledge and discrimination." In addition, the family circle included daughter Elfrieda and Mrs. Gutterson's mother. Also, there was a large staff of maids, groundkeepers and a nurse for Gutterson's mother-in-law.

Representing the Delanos in the sale was the attorney for Franklin Delano, the only direct heir. Unfortunately, the young man, son of former naval contractor Edward Delano, had spent nearly his whole life in a home for the mentally ill.



An old photograph of Hillcrest on Gutterson Hill

The new owners possessed exquisite taste and began extensive remodeling of both the house and grounds. Lovely rhododendrons and specimen roses abounded. The Guttersons called their new property "Hillcrest." Since Mr. Gutterson was a devotee of the popular touring cars and roadsters, garages were built for his veritable fleet. When the United States entered the World War in 1917, Gutterson purchased a flock of sheep to keep the grass controlled, thus releasing grounds keepers for war jobs.

As music director and organist at First Parish Church, he provided music for many occasions such as the 1930 centennial observance of the erection of the meetinghouse. Over the decade and a half of his residence here, he was at the organ for high school graduations. He continued to give music lessons to children, even to those who could not afford to pay.

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ALONG THE NORTH RIVER, CONT'D

Editor's Note: The following is the seventh and final installment of an article titled "ALONG THE NORTH RIVER: Stream of Indian Canoes, Pioneer Ships, and Modern Craft" by Margaret Crowell (later Margaret Crowell Dumas) written for the May 27, 1938 edition of The Hanover Branch and Norwell Advertiser (7th Annual Edition), and transcribed with parenthetical notes by Society Archivist Bill Slattery. The article is available in its entirety on-line under the "Newletters" link on the Norwell Historical Society website.

River Street was really a street of shipbuilders. ... Cummings Litchfield lived on the south side of Scrabble Lane, now known as Green Street. The house is vacant at the present time, but is in good condition with its excellent interior woodwork and fireplaces. Cummings Litchfield was one of the North River carpenters who went with Benjamin F. Delano on the ship building expedition on the Niagara River. Later, he built the schooner, "Only Son" in his own yard at the head of Scrabble Lane. It was named for his only son, and, when completed, eighteen yoke of oxen were used to drag it to Union Bridge for the launching, a distance of about three miles. The "Only Son" was used as packet between Scituate and Boston. She also made several trips to Grand Manan [island of New Brunswick, Canada], where she was eventually sold for cod fishing.

If River Street was the way of shipbuilders, Main Street seems to have been the abode of doctors and ministers. Dr. Isaac Otis built Miss Pray's house, and afterward, his son, Dr. James Otis, lived there. Isaac Otis was the first regular doctor to settle in Scituate, and the town voted him a settlement of one hundred pounds to encourage his remaining.

The Barnard's house was occupied by Dr. Cushing Otis, a son of Dr. James, who was third generation of his family to care for the sick of this locality. In the First Parish Cemetery is a monument to the Otis family, which, quite appropriately, has a carving of two saddle bags, a reminder of the past, when doctors and their medicines traveled on horseback.

In later years, Dr. Brownell lived in the Baird house on the corner of Winter Street, and, still later, Dr. Little occupied the Davis house on the corner of Central Street.

Dr. Fuller, who lived in Scituate in 1830, lived on Main Street, a little above Lincoln Street, in an old Cushing house. The cellar hole is still visible, and the spot is marked with a tablet in memory of Judge Cushing.

The ministers, too, were distributed up and down the street. Ralph Gordon's house was built by the Parish as a parsonage in 1728 to replace an older one. Rev. Nathaniel Eells lived there, but later bought a house just beyond the Homestead Farm near the corner of Lincoln Street. Until a few years ago, an old pear tree stood in the field, the last of the Eells orchard.

Another minister, Dr. David Barnes, built the Fogg's house, while his successor, Reverend Samuel Deane, lived in the Hart house, now owned by Mr. & Mrs. George E. Judd. The next minister, Reverend Samuel J. May, owned the Arthur L. Power place, and beautified it greatly by planting the elm trees.

The McMurray's house was also used as a home for two ministers until the present parsonage, the Pickels Cushing property, came into the possession of the Parish.

Dr. Barnes was apparently a lovable man, much respected by his parish, which he served for fifty-seven years. One of his hobbies was the keeping of bees in which he was quite successful.



A scene from Main Street is depicted on an old postcard in the Society Archives.

Reverend Samuel Deane, who succeeded Dr. Barnes, wrote a history of Scituate, which represented a great deal of research. He was interested, financially, in some of the North River vessels, owning shares, as was the custom. Like the present minister [Alfred Wilson in 1938], he was fond of horses and rode constantly. He was considered a good judge of horseflesh, and, his opinion was often quoted. The story is told that a man tried to sell a horse to someone, and offered as an inducement, the information that Mr. Deane said the horse was seven years old. The purchaser rather doubted the statement, so, he went to Mr. Deane and asked him if he had made such a statement. "Yes," remarked Mr. Deane, "but that was seven years ago."

One interesting man who followed the sea was Captain Henry Vinal, who lived in Scituate harbor. He first went to sea as a mere boy of twelve, as the cook on a fishing schooner. One wonders what sort of meals he prepared. He followed the sea all his life, making many trips to the West Indies and the Dutch island of Curacoa off the coast of Venezuela. He, evidently, was a persuasive talker with remarkable powers of description. He apparently told the Dutch merchants a great deal about the excellence of Scituate rabbits, which interested the Dutchmen so much that they asked him to bring some to them. Accordingly, when he returned to Scituate, he set all the boys catching rabbits in box traps. In due course, he sailed for Curacoa with a goodly supply of bunnies, which he sold for six dollars apiece.

This sketch only tells a few incidents of the North River valley. It is a region abundantly blessed with historical incidents, and to anyone who loves this region, it is a constant joy searching for something new in the old.

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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MEMBERSHIP

Individual (\$15) _____ Business (\$40) _____
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AREAS OF INTEREST

Newsletter _____ Public Relations _____
 Hospitality _____ Program Planning _____
 Library Volunteer _____ Historical Research _____
 Photo Cataloging _____ Process Archival _____
 Material _____
 Other: _____

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JOHN HARRIS GUTTERSON, CONT'D

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With American entrance into the World War in 1917, he presided over many patriotic sing-a-longs and liberty bond rallies. He saw music as an important weapon in inspiring patriotism for the war effort.

He gave his time and effort to a myriad of civic activities, particularly those of the Church Hill neighborhood. He was president of the Church Hill Improvement Association for four years. Under his direction the Society's Community House (today the North River Theater) was established. He also served as Vice President of the Marshfield Fair Association.

His extraordinarily active life came to an end at the age of sixty-seven in February, 1932. Mrs. Gutterson continued to live on at Hillcrest until her own death in 1946. Afterward, it became a boys' school called Greenwood for a time.

His obituary in the *Rockland Standard* summed up his love for Hillcrest and adopted town as follows:

"He always felt that having a beautiful home made him a sort of hostage. He wanted all his friends and neighbors to share it. His legacy will be a lasting one."

Program	Program
1 MARCH in G John H. Gutterson <i>Smart</i>	9 ESSAY "The White Pine Blister" Levi R. Olson
2 SONG "To America" School <i>Waller</i>	10 ESSAY "The Alien Problem" Annie E. Phair
3 PRAYER Rev. Howard Charles Gale	11 ESSAY "Lafayette, We Have Come!" Lindsay Ellms
4 SONG "Freedom's Banner" School <i>Charles Harvey</i>	12 PRELUDE from "Rebecca" John H. Gutterson <i>Barnby</i>
5 SALUTATORY Hugh E. Westfield	13 CLASS PROPHECY Pansy J. Mac Donald
6 ESSAY "The Spirit of Joan of Arc" Veronica E. Hines	14 VALEDICTORY "The American Girl's Inheritance" Josephine C. Molla
7 ESSAY "An Old Man's Dream" Ethel M. Burns	15 "Morning Invitation" School <i>George A. Veazie</i>
8 "Song of the Armorer" School <i>George B. Nevin</i>	16 PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS
	17 BENEDICTION

This program from the 1918 Norwell High School Graduation Exercises shows John Gutterson at the organ and the author's grandfather as a graduate and reading "The White Pine Blister" essay at #9.

Of Note...

The Norwell Historical Society will be co-hosting an event with the Hanover Historical Society on **Wednesday, April 30th at 7:00 pm.** Save the date!

Following a pork dinner at the **Hanover Grange Hall**, clock expert Les Tyralla will give a talk on the History of Time-keeping. After the presentation, he will have an "Antiques Roadshow"-type session for people to bring in their clocks.

Although Les is not an appraiser, he will give a running commentary on what he can observe, its history, and general comments using trade journals and eBay to determine current values. *Further details will be in our next newsletter.*



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Marcia Estabrook presents

Ellen Craft's Journey

Saturday, January 25th

3:00 pm

The James Library, Norwell



In 1848, Ellen Craft and her husband William made a remarkable escape from slavery in Georgia to freedom in the North. Often mistaken as a Caucasian woman due to her light complexion, Ellen disguised herself as a white man while her husband posed as her slave. Marcia Estabrook who, in assuming the personalities of her characters, educates and entertains through dynamic interaction with the audience.

Don't miss this powerful performance!

Sponsored in part by the Norwell Historical Society

Tickets:

\$15 at the door

\$12 in advance

or on-line at

www.jameslibrary.org

*We apologize,
but the Victorian Room
in The James Library is not
handicapped accessible
at this time.*