



Newsletter

June 2014

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.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO: JUNE 1914

By Samuel Olson

June 28, 1914, will mark the centenary of an event that profoundly changed the world. Archduke Franz Ferdinand, nephew of octogenarian Franz Joseph and heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his consort, the Countess Sophie, were murdered in Sarajevo, Bosnia, a province of Austria-Hungary. The assassin was a young Serbian (Yugoslav) nationalist. This tragedy in the Balkans, the "tinderbox of Europe," led to a holocaust that took millions of lives including those of 116,000 Americans.

The murders were followed by ultimatums and counter-ultimatums with Czarist Russia backing Serbia and Germany backing Austria-Hungary. Within weeks, both France and Britain were also at war. On August 2, 1914, Germany invaded neutral Belgium. President Wilson issued a proclamation of neutrality and at the same time condemned the German action. Ironically, on that same day, President Wilson had lost his beloved wife Ellen and was inconsolable for weeks following.

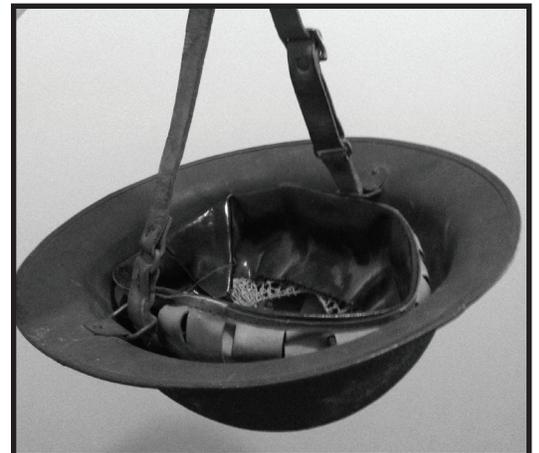
Both the Allies and the Central Powers suffered horrendous casualties in the months and years that followed in battles such as Tannenberg, Verdun, Ypes, and the Somme.

Germany's attempt to break the British blockade with a policy of unrestricted U-boat warfare against the United States forced Wilson to appear before Congress on April 2, 1917, asking for a declaration of war to "make the world safe for democracy." Both houses of Congress responded four days later with huge majorities for war.

The following are some items from the

Rockland Standard highlighting Norwell events from 1914:

Jan. 30, 1914, Report that Ralph Keynes of Boston will soon institute proceedings for a divorce from Jane Ainsworth Keynes, daughter of Mrs. Eaton of Norwell. [Mrs. Eaton had been acquitted the preceding year in the murder of her husband, Admiral Joseph Eaton.]



This World War I Doughboy helmet has head pad webbing for camouflage with a rubber doughnut and a leather strap. It was used by Norwell resident Perry Osborn during the Great War, and a gift to the Norwell Historical Society from the Mary Knapp estate (Perry's daughter).

Jan. 30, 1914, Harry T. Fogg has purchased a new "Overland" touring car.

Feb. 20, 1914, The roads of Norwell are in fine condition for sleighing, and many are taking advantage of it.

Feb. 20, 1914, The annual masquerade ball is to be held at Fogg Hall on Washington's Birthday. \$2.50 in gold will be given to the

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ABIAL FARRAR'S CIVIL WAR

by Bill Slattery

Editor's Note: The following is the first installment of a Historical Society newsletter article originally written in 1990 by current Society Archivist Bill Slattery. The remainder of the article will appear in future editions of the Society newsletter. 2014 marks the 150th anniversary of South Scituate (Norwell) resident Abial Farrar's entrance into the Civil War at age seventeen. In honor of this occasion, we are presenting this revision.

We may never really know exactly why a seventeen-year old boy sought to involve himself in the great Civil War that had consumed so many lives and so much treasure by late 1864, but there are several possibilities. There were war stories, real or fictionalized, that might on the surface have appeared to be from a romance of olden days, of Revolutionary forbears, of patriots, that may have served as motivation. In any case, this war had likely assumed monumental proportions in the teenager's mind, like a dragon that required a dragon-killer. The teenage years also cried out for some rite of passage where a boy might be regarded as a man, where he might prove himself worthy of the admiration of feminine society in particular and of peers in general. Being a first-born male in a large family of mostly male siblings may have inspired enlistment to uphold his image of leadership.

By late 1864, General Sherman had marched through Georgia, the Mississippi was under the control of Union troops, and General Grant was on the outskirts of the Confederate capital. In other words, time for the gory but glorious war appeared to be running short. Undoubtedly, optimism on the success of Union arms assisted President Lincoln to be re-elected in November of 1864. If a boy who had some talent helping his parents plant and harvest, repair and make shoes, and do chores, including chopping firewood, wanted to achieve some sort of glory for himself, this seemed to be that time.

The teenager was Abial Farrar (pronounced "aah by'el fair'aah"). He was the first-born child and son of Civil War veteran Charles Henry Farrar and mother, Mary Gould Clapp. His grandfather would have been Abiel Farrow, Jr., who had married Lucy Sears, daughter of Revolutionary War Captain, Peter Sears of Bart Barrell's Woods (now called Lincoln Street, house at 211). Abiel Farrow, Jr., built a cottage on the "Back Road" (now Grove Street) in 1813 for Lucy. His son, Charles, would have builder Elijah Damon construct his cape-style house for his bride further west of his father's house in 1845 (now house # 727). This is where the teenager, his grandfather's namesake, Abial (born 1847), lived all his life. He attended District School Number 3 (also built by Elijah Damon) that had been at the great bend in the "Back Road" where Grove Street now meets School Street. He learned to read and write. He attended Sunday School under Henry Abial

Turner at the church in South Scituate center (now First Parish Church of Norwell).

It was about a mile walk each way from Abial's home to his school, no doubt made more hazardous in inclement weather, but, in time, he would be joined by siblings, Charles A. (born 1849), Mary Ellen (born 1850), Frederick H. (born 1852), William H. (born 1854), James H. (born 1856), and Hosea D. (born 1858). He was probably graduated by the time George F. (born 1861) went to the school. Many people in his neighborhood were listed as "shoemakers" in census and military records of the time. It is likely that they were also subsistence farmers, but earned money by selling shoes. This occupational description was applied to Abial when, later, he would enter the service.



Seventeen-year-old Abial Farrar of South Scituate in his Union uniform.

When Abial was thirteen in 1860, he knew of the troubles that would lead to a civil war and that he was not about to further his schooling. There was the private Hanover Academy at Hanover Four Corners and the private Assinippi Academy also near another Hanover/South Scituate line. However, with so many mouths to feed, tuition would have been impractical. He was undoubtedly an apprentice shoemaker doing errands for his father who was engaged in that trade. Abial would become the man of

the house at age 15 when on Monday, September 15, 1862, his thirty-nine-year old father went to town hall on the common and enlisted as a private for nine months service in the 45th Regiment of Massachusetts Infantry Volunteers. It is doubtful he would have done so without sufficient skilled hands plying the shoemaking trade at home.

On or about Christmas day of 1862, with his father in the service, Abial received a thick pocket-sized hardcover copy of the Holy Bible from R. B. Pratt of Weymouth (who must have known Abial's situation). It was probably no coincidence that many Pratt family members were shoe manufacturers in Weymouth and that some served as officers in the Union army. In any event, the giver took the time to write the following inscription:

*All seasons suit this sacred page
The holy lamp of heavenly truth
T'will cheer the tottering steps of age
And guide the erring feet of youth*

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____ NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP

Individual (\$15) _____ Business (\$40) _____

Family (\$25) _____ Life (\$200) _____

Benefactor (\$500) _____

AREAS OF INTEREST

Newsletter _____ Public Relations _____

Hospitality _____ Program Planning _____

Library Volunteer _____ Historical Research _____

Photo Cataloging _____ Process Archival _____
Material

Other: _____

Please make checks payable to the *Norwell Historical Society* and mail to: NHS,
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ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO: JUNE 1914, CONT'D

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lady with the most elaborate costume; the same amount will be given to the gentleman with the most grotesque.

Mar. 6, 1914, The Norwell Town meeting was quiet. Horace Fogg proposed that the town appropriate \$15,000 for highway repairs, but the proposal was voted down.

Apr. 17, 1914, Samuel Olson [author's grandfather] has purchased a Reo touring car.

Apr. 24, 1914, With only four seniors, the Norwell School Committee will also graduate members of the junior class.

Aug. 7, 1914, Norwell couple caught in war zone as war breaks out--Former Norwell High School principal Edward Cox and Mrs. Cox were traveling in France at the outbreak of the war and are now reported safe in London. Mrs. Cox is a cousin of Horace Fogg.

Aug. 28, 1914, Calvin West and Mrs. Frances White have attended the Marshfield Fair every year for the past 48. Both will be attending again this year.

Aug. 28, 1914, Otis Corthell is to attend Rockland High School to prepare for Amherst College.

Sep. 18, 1914, Henry Farrar, formerly of Norwell, was in Paris searching for fashion when the war broke out. He is with L. P. Hollander Co., a posh 5th Avenue store. He has written Frank S. Alger describing the bedlam in Paris. He has managed to get safely to London.

Oct. 2, 1914, 80-year-old General Edmund Studley of Norwell marries Mrs. Adelle Randall of Avon. Their attendants were an 8-year-old boy and his 6-year-old sister.

Dec. 11, 1914, The lady teachers of Norwell High School were entertained at dinner by Principal and Mrs. Kierstead.

Dec. 18, 1914, The jury in the case of Harry Fogg against the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad for \$25,000 settlement for each of his parents returned a sealed verdict of \$6,951 for Ebenezer Fogg and \$6,503 for Mrs. Fogg. [In 1913, the couple had been killed in their automobile while crossing near the Kenberma Station at Nantasket.]

My summary of some Norwell news items that appeared in the *Rockland Standard* in 1914 reveals that life in Norwell followed in its usual uneventful channels. The possibility that the United States would be at war in three years was in no way apparent.



STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL
Sunday, June 15th
at the Jacobs Farmhouse
3:00 - 5:00 pm

Tours of the Farmhouse & Gardens
Strawberry Shortcake & Lemonade
Children's Games



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NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA

- A NARRATIVE OF SOUTH SCITUATE-NORWELL _____ \$20
 by Samuel H. Olson
 This book chronicles the life and times of our town from 1845-1963 through a collection of articles previously published in *The Norwell Mariner*.
- 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, and re-printed in 1988.
- 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.
- 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.
- 1879 MAP _____ \$3
 This map is reproduced from a hand-drawn map of South Scituate in 1879. It shows the locations of road, homes and their owners. Suitable for framing.
- NORWELL TILES _____ \$10
 These 6" X 6" white tiles depict various scenes: Kent House, Cushing Center, etc. *Limited number.*
- THE ABCs OF NORWELL _____ \$10
 by Gertrude Daneau
 This coloring book is 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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. (Framed copies available at the Society for \$75.)

All the above items are available at the NHS 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.