



December 2016

Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

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P.O. Box 693
Norwell, MA 02061
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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.

MAKING THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

by Wendy Bawabe

Due to a recent complaint that was filed with the Architectural Access Board (AAB) citing limited access, the Norwell Board of Selectman voted on November 16, 2016 to indefinitely close the Jacobs Farmhouse to the public.

As a result of the closing, all public events at the Farmhouse are cancelled. This includes the annual "Christmas at the Farmhouse" party typically held in December. The Society Board looks forward to the 2017 Farmhouse events, when handicapped parking spaces will be available and the Farmhouse will be accessible to all—no matter their ability.

As president of the Norwell Historical Society—the organization that oversees the Historic Display Area at the Jacobs Farmhouse—I am disappointed in the decision of the Board of Selectmen. Accessibility is a concern of mine and of the Society Board of Directors. Many of our members have limited mobility and maneuvering the front steps into the Farmhouse has become difficult, and even impossible, for some.

The Town will soon receive specific direction from the AAB—the state board that oversees ADA compliance. I am looking forward to the Town of Norwell, the Historical Society, and the AAB working together to determine how best to make the Jacobs Farmhouse accessible to all who would like to visit.

I have personally just participated in a similar accessibility assessment for the James Library & Center for the Arts in Norwell Center. During that process,

the AAB was helpful in suggesting alternatives that both maintained architectural integrity and allowed for access. The AAB granted variances to the James and made it clear that their goal is never to "close down a building." The AAB was a knowledgeable ally whose services were available (free!) to the James.



3rd Grade School Field Trips to the Jacobs Farmhouse will be on hold until the building is officially re-opened. Tool expert and restoration carpenter Jon Detwiler (left) and Wendy Bawabe (right) are regular tour guides for the Vinal and Cole School visits.

Accessibility is a high priority for the Norwell Historical Society. I worry that an indefinite closing may encourage complacency and postpone the important task of achieving accessibility as soon as possible. The Historical Society Board looks forward to using the AAB as a helpful resource to achieve accessibility for all our members and for anyone who wants to visit the Jacobs Farmhouse and learn about the rich history of Norwell.

I will be following this important process closely and will update our members on the progress.

SOUTH SCITUATE/NORWELL FOLK OBSERVE HOLIDAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

by Sam Olson

Sam Olson has reviewed the year in holidays and noted how some were celebrated in Norwell of old. This holiday listing will continue in the next issue.

New Year's Day (January 1st): *Anno Domini*: Latin for "In The Year of the Lord"

In the 1920s, Mr. and Mrs. Horace Fogg invited Norwell residents to a New Year reception at their home, "Tower Hill," on Main Street.

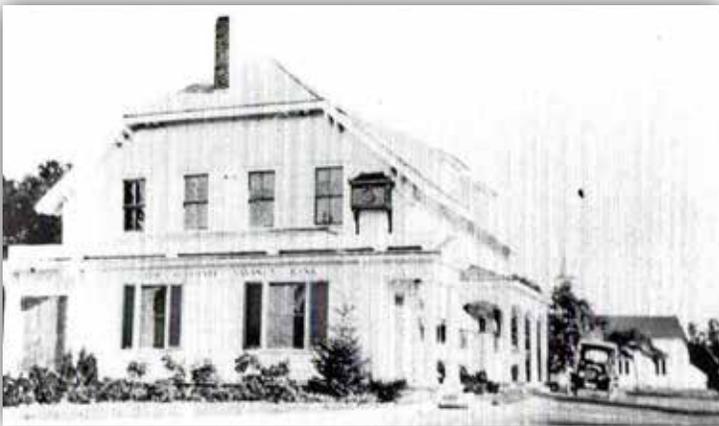
Martin Luther King's Birthday: The actual birth date was January 15th, but the holiday is observed on the third Monday in January. It was first observed in 1986.

Valentine's Day (February 14th): Honors the Christian martyr to love

In the early 20th century, it was mainly a children's holiday and hand-made valentines featuring angels and hearts were exchanged. In more recent years, the day has become highly-commercialized with expensive gifts.

Washington's Birthday: aka "Presidents' Day"

For many years, it was observed on February 22. Washington was born in British North America (Virginia), on February 11, 1732 Old Style (Julian Calendar). In 1752, Britain adopted the Gregorian Calendar (New Style), and Washington's birthday became February 22, 1732.



Fogg Hall was on the second floor of the Bank. Today Coastal Heritage Bank's "new" building is on the site.

A Norwell tradition for many years was a masque ball on that date in Fogg Hall (see photo above), a venue on the second floor of the former South Scituate Savings Bank building. The tradition continued with the event being held in Cushing Hall beginning in 1937.

Evacuation Day (March 17th): Only recognized in Suffolk County, this holiday celebrated General Howe's departure for Nova Scotia after an eleven-month siege in which Washington had set up captured cannons from Fort Ticonderoga on Dorchester Heights.

Coincidentally, March 17th is also St. Patrick's Day.

Easter Sunday: Observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox. For many years, South Scituate/Norwell was the "poultry capital" of the South Shore and local children would color eggs as a symbol of the Resurrection. A Catholic Parish was not established in Norwell until 1950 with the first masses said in Grange Hall on Main Street. Earlier, the relatively few Catholics in Norwell attended mass in neighboring towns.

Added note: in the 1870s, Mrs. Rutherford Hayes, wife of the 19th president, introduced the White House Easter Egg Roll on the White House lawn, a tradition that follows today.

Patriots' Day (April 19th): Now observed on the third Monday in April, Patriots' Day was first proclaimed in 1894 and is only a holiday in Massachusetts and Maine.

Note: Maine had been a part of Massachusetts until 1820. Several Scituate men went to Lexington and Concord following the day the embattled farmers "fired the shot heard 'round the world."

Since the early twentieth century, the twenty-six mile Boston Marathon is held on the same day, linking the Athenian and American struggles for liberty.

May Day (May 1st): See the Norwell Historical Society newsletter from Spring, 2016 for a complete history. Former newsletters are available at www.norwell-historicalsociety.org under the "Publications Archives" tab.

Arbor Day (May 1st): Although not widely observed today, it was a time for the citizens of South Scituate/Norwell to replace the elm trees, victims of Dutch Elm disease. The elm was a symbol of many quintessential New England towns such as ours.

On May 1, 1896, townspeople turned out in epic numbers to prepare Gaffield Park for children--a gift of Thomas Gaffield, a summer resident of Norwell.

Memorial Day: First proclaimed as Decoration Day by Grand Army Commander John Logan on May 30, 1868, as a day to decorate veterans' graves. It became known as Memorial Day in 1882 and since 1968 has been observed on the last Monday in May.

For many years, local Grand Army members would join with Hanover veterans at the Universalist Church in Assinippi and then proceed to decorate the graves at Union Cemetery (see photo above). From there, each organization went on to decorate graves in their respective towns.

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NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____ NAME _____

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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 _____

HOLIDAYS, CONT'D.



This photograph above, taken in the early 1900s, shows the Memorial Day gathering of Hanover and Norwell veterans at the Union Cemetery on the Norwell/Hanover line. Note Jacobs Pond in the background and the old Jacobs saw and grist mills that straddled Third Herring Brook.

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Bunker (Breed's) Hill Day (June 17th): A state holiday only in Massachusetts.

Although it was not an American victory, it was a pyrrhic victory for the British who suffered staggering losses. The battle was a major factor in the British leaving Boston several months later.



Society member Peg Norris stands atop the Otis Farm water tower at the 81st Annual Meeting of the Norwell Historical Society.

Tours of the tower and a talk by restoration carpenter Pret Woodburn were highlights of the event/meeting on October 23rd.

**IMPORTANT
NOTE:**

Do you have an email address that you would like to share with the Historical Society? Having up-to-date emails for our members allows us to share last-minute news and events. Please use the "Contact Us" link on the website and send us your email so we can update our records.



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NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS (AN ABBREVIATED LIST...)

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.

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 on over 45 antique houses in Norwell.

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 *The Norwell Mariner*. Each chapter is its own story!

NORWELL 1903 MAP REPRODUCTION _____ \$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.

All these items (and more!) are available...

at the NHS Library at the Middle School on Wednesdays (2:00-3:00 p.m.) **OR** you may e-mail the Society via our website and arrange local delivery, **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.



Give the gift of MEMBERSHIP

Buy a membership in the Norwell Historical Society as a gift this holiday season. Introduce your neighbor to Norwell history or give a unique hostess gift! Please indicate whether you would like the membership card mailed to the new member with a letter noting your generosity, or mailed to you for direct gift giving.

VIA MAIL: Fill out the enclosed member form and note new member name/address/email

ON-LINE: Go to www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org, choose the "Become a Member" tab and donate, then use the "Contact Us" tab to send an email noting the gift recipient name/address/email.