



March 2012

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 call the Society for further information or to schedule a tour.

The Norwell Historical Society Library at the Norwell Middle School (328 Main Street--Route 123) is open on Wednesdays and Thursdays: from 1:30 to 3:30 during the school year, and 10:00 to noon during the summer.

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.

CHARLES HOWARD GALE'S TRIFECTA

by Samuel Olson

Although his pastorate in Norwell was relatively brief (1916-1920), Reverend Charles Howard Gale had a strong impact on both the religious and civic life of the community. Taking his life as a whole, one can't help being impressed by an individual possessing so much versatility.

Starting as a minister of the Universalist Church and then a Unitarian cleric, he was ordained to the Anglican priesthood in 1951. When his long life of 98 years closed in 1978, his lifetime résumé also included practicing osteopathic medicine and holding a college professorship. He summed up this full life in a memoir entitled *My Triple Life*.

Just prior to coming to Norwell, Reverend Charles Howard Gale ministered to a large parish in New Bedford and decided he needed a slower pace. He received a call to serve a small country parish which then had only sixty members. It is apparent from his reminiscences that he quickly was enamoured with his new assignment in a place he called "far off the beaten path."

Unmarried at the time, his mother and father came to Norwell with him. He recalled the long drive from New Bedford over roads he described as dense and foreboding. Arriving at the parsonage he described as a lovely old colonial on the main street surrounded by trees and much land, they found that their furniture had not arrived--necessitating spending their first night sleeping on the floor.

Among the parsonage's many amenities was a newly-built garage to house his

Metz and later a Maxwell Touring car. Something that had *not* been updated was the water supply. In the attic was a tank accommodating a day's supply of water which was filled by a hand pump in the kitchen. Filling the tank required several hundred strokes of the pump.



A 1916 Metz 25 Touring Car.

The Church, built in 1830, was a typical country church in both architecture and organization, which did not lend itself to what he hoped would lead to his interest in liturgical renewal. He also saw that parishioners were more interested in the humanitarian aspects of Unitarianism, so he restricted his zeal for liturgical change while in Norwell.

He soon formed many friendships in his new milieu. The village contained not only country folks who had never been to Boston, but also had one street (not named by him--River Street?) where four college presidents and one law school dean resided. The following is his description of Norwell at the time:

The village was beautiful beyond words. The roads were broad and overhung with great trees. The lawns were green and lush. Gardens flourished, houses looked fresh and attractive. Summer residents began coming back. Norwell was the village of one's dreams. There were auto rides, parties, picnics and a host of friends to enjoy.

continued on page 3

MEMORIES OF THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE

Editor's Note: In the last four issues of the Historical Society newsletter were the first parts of an article originally written by Harold Turner III, who lived at the Jacobs Farmhouse as a boy. The following is the final installment of that article, written in June of 1990 by Mr. Turner, and re-worked with parenthetical notes by Bill Slattery, Society Archivist.

For a complete transcript of Mr. Turner's recollections, please go to the Norwell Historical Society's website (www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org). In the "Newsletter Archive," the entire transcript is available.

[You may recall from previous issues, the Turner family lived on the "caretaker's side" of the Jacobs Farmhouse.] Dr. Jacobs' mother, Frances [Ford] Jacobs, occupied the other part of the house for a number of months each year. She died [in 1921] before I was born [in 1927], but the few words that the Turners had for her were affectionate. The feeling [toward his mother] must have been shared by her son [Dr. Henry Jacobs] because the house remained as it was on the day of her death. The dining table [was] set, the beds made, and a cleaning woman came in twice a week. [A widow, Mrs. McNaughton of Scotland, was Mrs. Jacobs' companion and was allowed to remain there until her own death.]

The Jacobs' part of the house was off-limits [to the Turners]. On one or two rare occasions, I was allowed to accompany visitors. It was elegant compared to the "other side." Recent restoration [c. 1990] has helped show the house as it may have been.

When I reconstruct those years, I remember how much my mother [Esther Diana Joel Turner] enjoyed her time in Assinippi. She was accustomed to a life of urban amenities. Her family lived in large homes in Everett, Boston and Watertown. My father's sisters loved my

mother from the first time that my father brought her to meet his family. They were both still in college, mother at Wellesley and my father at Tufts. She, in turn, adored this placid family whose temperament was in sharp contrast to her people.

The old place has not much changed. Lack of endowment has contributed to its deterioration. Jacobs Lane was a dead end until recent times. Now, heavy commercial traffic uses it as a shortcut, heedlessly undermining the foundations [of the antique homes that line the road].



An undated photo of the Jacobs Farm and Route 123 (a dirt road).

The farm was de-accessed by S.P.N.E.A. [now known as Historic New England] in 1988. It was purchased by...The Town of Norwell. Extensive renovations have begun. For so many who have been intimately involved with this special place, it is encouraging news.

Jacobs Farm is deeply imbedded in my psyche. The innocence of childhood, faulty memory and fantasy combine to re-create those happy times.

It was a quiet Sunday when I last visited. The hay had been harvested and that pesky stubble was evident. For a fleeting moment, I considered removing my shoes and socks and experiencing the pain and pleasure of testing my soles. The picture of a grown man running through a hayfield with bare feet, pants rolled up, seemed more than ridiculous, and that careless moment passed. Too bad.

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____ NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP

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

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

Benefactor (\$500)____

Please make checks payable to the *Norwell Historical Society* and mail to: NHS,
P.O. Box 693, Norwell, MA 02061

AREAS OF INTEREST

Newsletter____ Public Relations____

Hospitality____ Program Planning____

Library Volunteer____ Historical Research____

Photo Cataloging____ Process Archival____
Material

Other: _____

GALE'S TRIFECTA, CONT'D.

continued from page 1

As a minister of First Parish, he became involved in a number of civic activities: member of the Library Committee, president of the Home and School Association, chairman of the Red Cross and founder and scoutmaster of Norwell's first Boy Scout troop. With America's entrance into the World War in 1917, he became a member of the Public Safety Committee, Liberty Loan speaker and member of the Draft Board. His war work and that of others in the community received commendation from President Wilson and also from Samuel Eliot of the American Unitarian Association.

Following the war, Reverend Gale began his osteopathic studies in Boston and at the same time continued his ministerial duties. Being so far from Boston, the unreliability of transportation proved too much to cope with. Reluctantly, he accepted a more convenient pastorate in Beverly.

Reverend Gale held a special place in his heart for the small country parish for the remainder of his life. His impact here was long-remembered, especially his work with young people.

Author's Note: Most of the material for this article came from an unsigned synopsis of Gale's book found in the archives of the Norwell Historical Society.

Of Note...

- The Norwell Historical Society has a dedicated account that is accepting donations for the move of the Sergeant Samuel Stetson House on Stetson Shrine Road in Norwell. If you are interested in donating to this Fund, please send your gift to the Society and write "Save Stetson House" in the memo area.
- The DeGhetto Family of 303 River Street in Norwell is currently selling hardwood and all proceeds will go to the Historical Society. Need wood? Why not buy local and support a good cause?!
- Sam Olson's book *A Narrative of South Scituate/Norwell 1849-1963: Remembering Its Past and the World Around It* is now available as an e-book! Buy a copy on-line for your Kindle, Nook, or iPad.

Did You Know?

...the answer to the last issue's Trivia Corner Question? **The Litchfield Shoe Factory employed over 100 men. On what residential street was this large, 3-story factory located?**

The answer is: Norwell Avenue! The shop opened in 1870 with just a few men. As time passed, the shop enlarged several times until it became a large 3-story building that employed over 100 people (*see photo below*). It continued to make shoes for about twenty years. The site of the factory is to the left of 79 Norwell Avenue--the George Litchfield House.



Trivia Corner

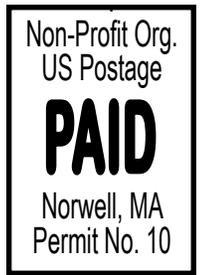
TRIVIA QUESTION:
Norwell's Rev. Samuel May enlisted a group of Sunday School children to help him fight for temperance. What was their group named and what was their chant?

ANSWER: in the next issue! OR...read Chapter 10 in Sam Olson's *A Narrative of South Scituate/Norwell 1849-1963: Remembering Its Past and the World Around It* to find out the answer right now!





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NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA

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| <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 through a collection of articles previously published in <i>The Norwell Mariner</i>.</p> | <p>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.</p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>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.</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>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>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>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.</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. (Framed copies available at the Society for \$75.)</p> |
| <p>NORWELL TILES _____ \$10
 These 6" X 6" white tiles depict various scenes: Kent House, Cushing Center, etc. <i>Limited number.</i></p> | |

All the above items are available at the NHS Library in the Middle School on Wed. & Thur. (1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m., see summer hours on front), or you may call Gert Daneau at 781-659-2226, 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.