



May 2011 Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

NEW
WEBSITE!

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Gail Storm
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CONTACTING US

The Norwell Historical Society
P.O. Box 693
Norwell, MA 02061
781-659-1888
www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org

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.

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED, 1861-65

by Samuel H. Olson

Most Norwell townspeople are familiar with the war memorials situated on the South Scituate/Norwell Veterans Memorial Common. Less known to many, however, are two monuments situated in the Washington Street Cemetery. First laid out as a town cemetery in 1892, it is the last resting place for many Civil War veterans including Charles N. Gardner, a Medal of Honor recipient.

In the years following the end of the Civil War (1865) down to about a half century ago, three organizations were of major importance in the community's veterans' affairs and patriotic events. Foremost among them was the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). Originating nationally in 1866, the Norwell unit (The Gen. Charles Griffin Post #112) was established in 1869 with ten charter members. Two years later it was renamed in honor of D. Willard Robinson, the "boy martyr" who had died in a Confederate prison camp in Florence, South Carolina.



May 24, 1914--Dedication of the monument to the "unknown dead" in the Washington Street Cemetery.

Nationally and locally, the GAR was the pivotal force in keeping alive the memory of the great sacrifices made in

order to restore the sundered union and free the bondsmen. It also served as a strong lobby for veterans' pension legislation. To many in the North, GAR stood for "Generally All Republicans." In fact, of the seven presidents who held office between 1869 and 1901, only Cleveland was not a Civil War veteran, a GAR member or a Republican. Many believed it was only right that the party that had saved the union should continue to govern it.

A great accomplishment of the local GAR and the South Scituate/Norwell community was the erection in 1878 of a monument memorializing the twenty-four soldiers and sailors of South Scituate who made the ultimate sacrifice. Six years later, the post received a blow when their headquarters in the Town Hall burned. Lost were many records and irreplaceable memorabilia.

Through these years and well into the 20th century, the local commander of the GAR would issue "General Orders" for Decoration Day (later officially Memorial Day). Members would join the Hanover post at the Assinippi Universalist Church and together proceed to the nearby Union Cemetery to decorate comrades' graves. Each unit would then separate to place flowers on graves at cemeteries in their respective towns.

In 1885, a GAR auxiliary, the Women's Relief Corps (WRC), was organized. This organization was the major force in raising funds to convert the former Webster-Cushing Shoe Factory into a permanent home for the GAR. Overseeing the renovation of the headquarters, now the Ridge Hill Nursery School, was Frederick H. Curtis, a local

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FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT...

by Wendy Bawabe

Many exciting events have happened or are about to happen at the Norwell Historical Society. Here is a sampling...

- Former NHS president and current Board Member **Gertrude Daneau has been selected by the Norwell Chamber of Commerce as Citizen of the Year!** If you would like to attend the dinner at the Barker Tavern honoring Gert on Thursday, May 19th at 6:00, please contact the Chamber at P.O. Box 322 or www.norwellchamberofcommerce.com. Tickets are \$45/person.
- The Society hosted a talk by Marshfield resident Paul McCarthy on April 13th. He gave a fascinating presentation on a North River shipwreck that he has researched. Paul then came back the following day to speak to the Society Board of Directors on research he has done on wooden posts that protrude from the banks of the North River. We hope to have Paul back in the future to speak on this topic further (as he finds out more details!). **Thank you to the Norwell Cultural Council for underwriting Paul's evening presentation.**
- The Jacobs Farmhouse will be open on **Saturday, May 14th** for tours of the farmhouse, planting in the gardens, and a discussion of the antique farm tools on display. Please stop by to celebrate the final event for Norwell Reads, help jump start the Community Supported Agriculture program through Norwell Farms, and support the Historical Society. I just love collaborating with other groups!

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED

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naval hero who was an eyewitness to the clash between the ironclad Monitor and the ironclad Confederate Merrimac in 1862.

In 1914, with the local GAR membership rapidly aging, the Frederick H. Curtis Camp #143 Sons of Union Veterans (SUV) was established. On May 24, 1914, the SUV assisted GAR members who were gathered in the Washington Street Cemetery in dedicating a dark gray polished granite obelisk topped by a polished black granite ball in honor of the "unknown dead" of 1861-65. Once again this monument was the gift of the Norwell WRC. The memorial is impressively situated in what at that time was the center of the cemetery. It was, and still is, superbly landscaped with shrubs and paved walkways.

By the early thirties, the local GAR post had suspended operations as the last of Norwell's "men in blue" passed. In 1939, as war clouds once again began to gather, a large memorial boulder with a bronze plate designed by N. Barnicoat & Co, was placed at the entrance of the cemetery. Its inscription is as follows:

ERECTED BY THE FREDERICK H. CURTIS CAMP 143
SONS OF UNION VETERANS
OF THE CIVIL WAR

SAVE THE DATE  **STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL**
SUNDAY, JUNE 12TH
AT THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____ NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP		AREAS OF INTEREST	
Individual (\$15) _____	Business (\$40) _____	Newsletter _____	Public Relations _____
Family (\$25) _____	Life (\$200) _____	Hospitality _____	Program Planning _____
Benefactor (\$500) _____		Library Volunteer _____	Historical Research _____
Please make checks payable to the <i>Norwell Historical Society</i> and mail to: NHS, P.O. Box 693, Norwell, MA 02061		Photo Cataloging _____	Process Archival Material _____
		Other: _____	

3 NOTABLES AT THE WASHINGTON STREET CEMETERY

by Gertrude Daneau

Washington Street Cemetery in Norwell has three soldiers buried there that deserve special recognition. Although there are many other veterans in the cemetery, these three stand out for their service and sacrifice.

The first, **Charles Gardner**, was awarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry in action on April 1, 1865, at Five Forks, Virginia. His action in capturing a Confederate flag helped the Union forces to successfully win the battle which was called "The Waterloo of the Confederacy." It was only eight days later that Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House. Gardner returned to his home in South Scituate (Norwell), and the 1880 census listed him as working in a shoe factory and having a wife and family. He died in 1919 at the age of 73.

Another soldier that served his country and gave the ultimate sacrifice, was **Samuel Turner, Jr.** Born in 1922, Turner grew up in Norwell and married Cora Brown in 1943. Four months later he was inducted into the army. After serving for eight months he was killed in action in France.

In 1948 his body was brought back for burial in Norwell. To honor a fallen soldier, the local American Legion post was renamed in his honor.

The third soldier buried at Washington Street Cemetery to give extraordinary service to his country was **Winthrop Smith**. Born in Norwell in 1911, Smith later moved to Weymouth. His active duty began in 1943. After serving for eleven months, Smith was killed in action in France. He left his wife, Mary who lived in Weymouth and now resides in Scituate.

It is interesting to note that both Turner and Smith were returned to Norwell for burial in 1948--Turner in June and Smith in December. They are also buried in family lots near each other.

GRAVESTONE GIRLS
coming to the Norwell Public Library
on Tuesday, May 3rd at 7:00 pm
The Norwell Historical Society and the NPL
will co-host this presentation on cemetery art,
history and symbolism in the graveyards
of Norwell. Come join us!

Did You Know?

...the answer to the last issue's Trivia Corner Question? The question was: **Franklin Delano Roosevelt ran for President four times. Out of these four presidential races, how many times did FDR win in Norwell?**

The answer is: Never! Not only did Roosevelt lose, but he lost by more than 3:1, and sometimes even 4:1! Chapter 26 in Sam Olson's *A Narrative of South Scituate/Norwell* has the details, but here are the stats:

1932	Herbert Hoover (R)	592
	Franklin D. Roosevelt (D)	153
1936	Alfred M. Landon (R)	672
	Franklin D. Roosevelt (D)	180
1940	Weldell Wilkie (R)	777
	Franklin D. Roosevelt (D)	247
1944	Thomas E. Dewey (R)	808
	Franklin D. Roosevelt (D)	153



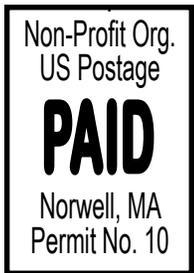
Trivia Corner

TRIVIA QUESTION:
The Town of Norwell bought Ridge Hill Grove in 1954. How much did we pay for it?

ANSWER: in the next issue! OR... read Gertrude Daneau's book *The ABCs of Norwell* to find out the answer right now!



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**THE GRAVESTONE GIRLS AT NPL
 MAY 3RD AT 7:00**

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.</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.