



# June 2010 Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

## SAINT HELEN'S 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

### DIRECTORS & OFFICERS

Wendy Bawabe, President  
Robert Norris, Secretary  
Robert Pashkowsky, Treasurer

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Samuel Olson  
William Slattery  
Gail Storm  
Harold Tuttle  
Joan Vermette

### CONTACTING US

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

### 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Joan Vermette

With this declaration,

*In Nomine Dei. Amen*

*I, Richard J. Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, having consulted with the Parish Priest of Scituate, of which Parish Norwell was a part, and having consulted with the Diocesan Consultors, do declare the Town of Norwell a distinct and separate Parish. This Parish will be bordered by the town lines of Norwell.*

*This will be effective  
Wednesday, April 12, 1950.*

*Richard J. Cushing  
Archbishop of Boston*

on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of March, 1950, the first Roman Catholic parish came to Norwell. The church was named for St. Helen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine. She is believed to have found the true cross on which Christ was crucified. The parish held its first mass in the Norwell Grange Hall on May 6, 1950. St. Helen's first pastor, the Reverend Norbert McInnis celebrated the service for the seventy-five families that made up his congregation. The services continued being held in the Grange Hall until the Archdiocese purchased the present rectory, outbuildings and land on Washington Street from Dr. and Mrs. Ramon Burke. A simple white wooden church was built and opened its doors on May 26, 1951. When Father McInnis was reassigned in 1961, Father John Kenney, the new pastor, was faced with a rapidly growing congregation that quickly outgrew the small church. The congregation had

grown in ten years from the original 75 families to 465 families. Father Kenney, with the help of his generous parishioners, raised the money and with a loan from the Archdiocese, the present St. Helen Church was completed in 1962. The old church was decommissioned, moved to its present location, and renovated as the present St. Helen's Hall. Father Kenney's assistant, the Reverend Robert Mooney, working weekends with some dedicated men from the Parish, made over a stable into what is now St. Joseph's Center. While all this building was being accomplished, the spiritual life, community activity and the religious school were growing with it.

At the sudden death of Father Kenney, Father Luke Farley was named pastor. A very gifted man, he brought his artistic and literary talents to the parish. When he too passed away, his assistant Father Joseph Naudzinas was named pastor. Sadly, he too passed away one month later. He was a great supporter of the youth of the Church and a scholarship was begun in his name that is awarded each year to a graduating senior.

It was to this broken-hearted parish that the new pastor Richard J. Smith came. Father Smith, realizing the sadness of the congregation, built a lively social life. He organized parties, dances, and games nights while

*(continued on page 3)*



**STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL  
SUNDAY, JUNE 13<sup>TH</sup>  
AT THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE**

# GERTRUDE ELDREDGE REMINDS US OF NORWELL-PAST

The following is a second installation of Norwell Historical Society Archivist Bill Slattery's transcription of the short memoir of Gertrude Eldredge. The indented portions of this article are from his transcriptions of *The Hanover Branch and Norwell Advertiser* of May 23, 1941.

Many Norwell residents today don't realize that, prior to the Great Storm of 1898, the North River used to flow into the South River and *then* out to sea. Ms. Eldredge notes what a profound effect this had on our town:

North River's Part: The North River played an outstanding part in the life of the early days, its salt meadows with their overflow of tides are well remembered. Many loads of salt hay for the winter feed of cattle were carted home to the different farms by both horse and ox power. The 1898 storm, changing the river mouth, made the meadows soft and unworkable. Coarser grasses came in where anything could grow except wild rice and sedge. Oxen were soon discarded on farms for the quicker motioned horses, and, then, the auto and the trucks outmoded them.

Winter is now behind us for another season, but it is fascinating to reminisce on the difficulties of snow removal one hundred years ago:

Snow Always a Problem: Another event of the winters a half-century ago was the arrival of the horse-drawn snowplow. "Everybody to the window" to see the big sled, drawn by four to six horses, with a plank rigged obliquely across the front to smooth the whiteness down. On the sled were a dozen men with shovels. Snow expense was then, as now, an item for the taxpayer. Blessings on the boy who was ambitious enough to shovel himself into a new suit of clothes.

Ms. Eldredge ends her recollection of older times with the following insight:

Some of the oldest houses and barns in town were "raised" through the kindness and cooperative work of neighbors. Our old barn was one of these, not a nail in the frame, nothing but the huge pins known to old builders as "trunnells," a colloquial name for "tree-nails." Community spirit is now expressed in various ways... Who is so wise that he or she can sit in judgment as to the comparative values of the old days and the new? One thing is certain, that we all believe in Norwell and will work for her benefit so long as life shall last.

Kudos to this fine woman who understood that the past should not be forgotten, but also extolled the importance of working for a better future!



## Did You Know?

...the answer to the last issue's Trivia Corner Question? The question was: **What is "switchel?"**

**The answer is:** In Jeanne Garside's *The Way We Were*, she chronicles "The Life and Times of a South Scituate Girl" based on the notes of Mary Louise Foster Nash Power (1862-1947). Mrs. Power describes switchel as "...the old haymaking drink of cold water sweetened with molasses, flavored with ginger and vinegar. The mixture was put in a crockery jug and placed in the deepest part of the well until ready to be taken to the field." Mrs. Power also suggests that we all try some switchel sometime "...when no Coca-Cola or ginger ale are available and learn what a delectable drink can be made with home fixin's." Would you like to read more about Mrs. Power's life? Order *The Way We Were* and read more.

### TRIVIA

#### QUESTION:

Why does the town-owned Stetson-Ford House include "Ford" in its name if it was built by the Stetsons?

**ANSWER:** in the next issue!

Trivia Corner

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: \_\_\_\_\_

**ST. HELEN'S, CONT'D**

*(continued from page 1)*

the other programs continued to flourish. With Father Smith's passing, the Reverend Thomas Maquire came to St. Helens. Father Maguire has renewed and beautified the church and grounds, while seeing to the needs of the 1,400 families that now make up his congregation.

The programs of caring for others, the Thanksgiving outreach, Christmas Giving Trees and their baby showers reach far beyond the parish. These programs are aided by the very active St. Vincent dePaul Society.

The religion school has 750 children, and for the third year, high school students will be going to a Catholic Work Camp to help the poor and elderly. St. Helen's is also a strong supporter of the Norwell Food Pantry.

Cardinal Cushing, Father McInnis, and all the pastors and assistant pastors who have passed through the parish would be and should be proud of what they helped to build at St. Helen's.

Congratulations and Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

*Joan Vermette is a member of the Historical Society Board of Directors and an active member of the St. Helen Parish.*



**ANNUAL STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL**

**June 13<sup>th</sup> 3-5:00 pm**

- Tour the Jacobs Farmhouse
- See the Norwell arrowhead collection
- Compete in sack races & egg relays
- Visit the gardens
- Purchase Home-made Baked Goods
- Eat old-fashioned Strawberry Short-cake!

**CALLING ALL  
BASEBALL  
FANS!**

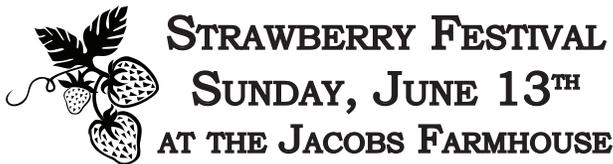
**SUNDAY, JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>  
4:00 PM**



This game is between the Hingham Vintage Base Ball club and a collection of Norwell celebrities including Town Officials. The Norwellians upset Hingham at their last match. The Derbys will try to avenge. Come support your hometown team!



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## NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA

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. Second reprinting in 1981.

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.

HISTORIC HOMESTEADS OF NORWELL \_\_\_\_\_ \$15  
published by NHS, 1992

We are proud of our lovely town. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Interesting hand-drawn map suitable for framing. It was drawn by Anne Henderson and first issued in 1967 by the NHS. A favorite depiction of the location of historic homes.

\$3

NEW  
ITEM!

THE WAY WE WERE \_\_\_\_\_ \$20  
by Jeanne Garside

This book is a series of articles written to preview Norwell's Centennial Celebration in 1888. Read what times were like when Norwell came of age. Illustrated with old photographs.

MORE THAN JUST A COOKBOOK \_\_\_\_\_ \$5

This book, expectably, is full of time-tested favorite recipes submitted by local people. Beyond the gastronomic delights, we have included historical sketches, interesting narratives and accounts of historic events. It is amply illustrated by local artists.

HISTORIA \_\_\_\_\_ \$7.50

A gem of local history for the people of the Norwell/Scituate area. George C. Turner's six pamphlets, written in 1898-99 have been re-printed for our enjoyment. Read about Norwell 100 years ago from the man on the scene.

NORWELL TILES \_\_\_\_\_ \$10

These 6" X 6" white tiles depict various scenes: Kent House, Cushing Center, Jacobs Farm house, and "From MA with Love!". *Limited number.*

*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.*