



June 2011 Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

NEW
WEBSITE!

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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.

JACOBS FARMHOUSE: TODAY & YESTERDAY

The Jacobs Farmhouse greets visitors to Norwell... as the headquarters of the Norwell Historical Society, as an active community supported agricultural center, and as a jewel of "South Scituate" history.

The Farmhouse will be the location again this year for the Society's annual Strawberry Festival. During that celebration on Sunday, June 12th (from 3:00 until 5:00), the house will be open for tours and Norwell residents can learn a little about the homestead of the Jacobs family, the mills that once stood on the Third Herring Brook and whose dams created Jacobs Pond, and the many acres of farmland that once surrounded the home.

In June of 1990, Harold Turner III, reflected on his boyhood when he and his family lived and worked at the Jacobs Farmhouse. The following is a re-working of some of Mr. Turner's recollections. Bill Slattery, Norwell Historical Society Archivist made parenthetical comments and corrections.

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.

[Harold Turner III, born 1927, lived in the east portion of the Jacobs Homestead (currently the Historical Society museum side) as a boy from about 1933 to 1939. The Turners were cousins of the Jacobs family and occupied that side of the house from about 1897 to 1939. Along with caretakers Patrick Gammon and Henry Hines, who lived nearby, the Turners

worked the farm until Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs (the last of the direct Jacobs line) died in Baltimore, Maryland in 1939. While George A. Turner (Harold's grandfather) was alive, he was the primary caretaker, but his son Harold II was sometimes away in Canada with his family doing engineering jobs and did not really enjoy farming. In parts, the following reminiscence of Harold III bears some evidence of ill feeling toward Dr. Jacobs, though the Turners did derive some benefit from their association with him.]

The stubble of the pastures is my most vivid and persistent memory of Jacobs Farm.

One enclosed field was the direct route to Jacobs Pond where my cousin Janice and I were allowed to swim. We climbed the gate across Jacobs Lane past a line of old pear trees. One bite of the sour fruit would unbalance a young stomach in minutes.

There were several hazards in this short trek when we were very young. It was almost always occupied by a number of cows after the early haying season. They looked very large to us and we were unsure of their placid nature. The indiscriminate dropping of what were called "cow flaps" presented an obstacle course of minefield proportions. It required care and a zig-zag trail. Worst of all, the close-cropped hay stalks were pure hell for a tenderfoot, in the literal sense.

Janice lived nearby and was accustomed to bare feet by the time her city cousin arrived from Toronto [Canada]. That stubble was agony for several

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NORWELL GRAVESTONES STUDIED FOR LECTURE

by Bill Slattery

Gravestone Girl Brenda Sullivan, an art history specialist, spoke at the Norwell Public Library on Tuesday, May 3rd. Her talk was titled “Welcome to the Graveyard: A Tour of Cemetery Art, History and Symbolism with the Gravestone Girls” and reviewed gravestones in Norwell’s cemeteries. The following are notes from her talk:

- Many colonial headstones at First Parish and Church Hill cemeteries have etched drawings of winged skulls or “death’s heads.” Brenda said the addition of bones on headstones was meant to give “the creeps” to the living and get them to church services.
- She showed a variety of Colonial era stones that interested her in Norwell, including the grave of John Turner with a cravat around his neck (at Second Parish).
- Brenda showed slides of Norwell Victorian-era stones. One said “Gone but not forgotten” (Pinehurst Cemetery). She noted that the expression “nipped in the bud” comes from flower drawings on a child’s grave (First Parish).
- She showed some late Victorian-era tombstones that were made of zinc poured into molds and used as headstones. Because they are hollow inside, the freezing/thawing cycle causes them to buckle as the ground moves. Examples cited included a “Gardner” stone at Pinehurst and a “Harris” stone at First Parish.

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL: SUNDAY, JUNE 12TH

The Norwell Historical Society’s annual Strawberry Festival will take place on Sunday, June 12th from 3:00 until 5:00 pm. Come by and enjoy a piece of yesteryear (and, of course, the strawberry shortcake!).

This year’s Festival will feature:

- Tours of the Community Supported Agriculture fields at the Jacobs Farmhouse;
- Children’s games, including sack races, three-legged races, egg and spoon relays, donut eating from a string and more;
- Petting the visiting calves, sheep and other farm animals—they’ll love the attention!
- A raffle to win a beautiful ready-to-frame reproduction painting of the Jacobs mills.
- A display of the extensive arrowhead and tool collections... a local expert will be available to answer questions and supervise hands-on activities.

As usual, tours of the Farmhouse will be given throughout the Festival. And of course the homemade (NOT store-bought!) Bake Table will be stocked with some old-fashioned goodness. Historical Society publications (including the newest books by both Gertrude Daneau and Sam Olson) will also be available for sale.

So bring the family by for some fun, fresh lemonade, delicious strawberry shortcake, and for an opportunity to learn a little more about the Jacobs Farmhouse and the history of our beautiful town.

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: _____

JACOBS FARMHOUSE, CONT'D.

days before the soles of my feet became hardened to the torture. My progress was not hastened by her teasing.

Looking back, I am not sure what the rush was about, anyway. The place where we swam was used by the cows, too. We returned to the house covered with little specks of dirt that I would resist analyzing, even from this span of time.

Years later, my father took me and a cousin from my mother’s family to a secret swimming hole of his youth. It was about a half-mile up Jacobs Lane. We went skinny-dipping in a pool that was clear and cool as crystal.

Puzzled, I asked him why he had never mentioned this bit of heaven when Janice and I were suffering the monster cows, cow flaps and the painful stubble. He just laughed and left me to deduce that mother did not want us out-of-sight when we were still young and non-swimmers. It made sense and my question was silly. Subsequently, I learned that my older cousins knew where it was and were co-conspirators.

From my earliest memories, I looked forward to the visits to Jacobs Farm. It was during the years of the Great Depression and I am sure that the economy deeply affected the Turners and other relations who lived in Norwell and Hanover. I can only recall endless days of sunshine and laughter and comfortable nights with my mother, grandfather and Aunt Katherine (“Tat”) my father’s youngest sister who had not yet married. She looked after “Pa,” as they called their father.

The original farm was built by the Jacobs family around 1740 [actually 1726] in the village of Assinippi, just across the Norwell town line [known as west Scituate, containing portions of what is now north Hanover and west Norwell]. The Southeast Expressway did not exist until years after World War II. The main road from Boston swept through the commercial part of the village [now route 53].

The small General Store and one or two other shops have been replaced by a huge restaurant, shopping complex and a full range of suburban enterprises. Sophisticated traffic lights appeared at the intersection. Barnicoat’s tombstone business on the road to Hanover still remains, however, and looks much as it did fifty years ago [1940]. Somewhat sadly, the Barnicoats have carved grave stones for several generations of Turners, Browns, Curtis’ and Jacobs.

From Boston, about 35 miles away, a left turn off the highway [Route 53] passed a very old graveyard on the right [Union Cemetery, Hanover] and a sudden and lovely view of Jacobs Pond on the left. This secondary route [123 east] to Scituate on the coast is heavily traveled. The graveyard and the pond still provide a surprising buffer separating the hustling village from a sudden pastoral view of Jacobs Farm, sited on the corner of the main road [Main St., 123] and Jacobs Lane, the first turn to the left. The old house and outbuildings are an impressive anachronism.

Editor’s Note: More reminiscences of Mr. Turner’s life at the Jacobs Farmhouse will be featured in future issues.

Did You Know?

...the answer to the last issue’s Trivia Corner Question? **The question was: The Town of Norwell bought Ridge Hill Grove in 1954. How much did we pay for it?**

The answer is: \$1. The Union Athletic Association sold Ridge Hill Grove to the Town of Norwell with the understanding that an elementary school would be built there with a playground available for the neighborhood children.

Today, the Grace Farrar Cole Elementary School features not only a playground, but the Hatch Pond Outdoor Education Center--located in Cole School’s backyard. This outdoor classroom program enriches the current elementary school curriculum through hands-on learning and real life experiences in nature.



TRIVIA

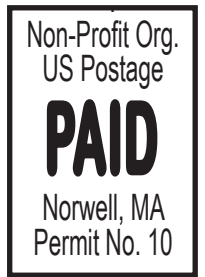
QUESTION: Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs was the personal physician to Robert Garrett (president of the B&O Railroad). While Dr. Jacobs was in his employ, Mr. Garrett became mentally ill--believing he was what famous person?


ANSWER: in the next issue! OR...read Sam Olson’s book *A Narrative of South Scituate & Norwell* to find out the answer right now!

Trivia Corner



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

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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> . | 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. |
| 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. | 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
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. | 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. |
| 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. | 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. |
| 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. | 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. |
| NORWELL TILES _____ \$10
These 6" X 6" white tiles depict various scenes: Kent House, Cushing Center, etc. <i>Limited number.</i> | |

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.