



December 2011 Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

NEW
WEBSITE!

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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.

CHRISTMAS AT THE FARMHOUSE: JOIN US ON DECEMBER 11TH

Please mark your calendars: **Sunday, December 11th** will be the Norwell Historical Society Christmas party at the Jacobs Farmhouse.

The house will be scrubbed and polished and decorated in a traditional fashion for the holidays. The public will be invited to tour the house during the party, from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m.

Volunteers to decorate the farmhouse and bake are needed. A decorating "party" will take place at the farmhouse at 1:00 prior to the party. Donations of greenery, antique Christmas finery, and edible treats are welcome. If you are interested in helping decorate or donating finger foods, please contact the Society via the link on our website: www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org.

MEMORIES OF THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE

Editor's Note: In the last three 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 continuation of that article, written in June of 1990 by Mr. Turner, and re-worked with paranthetical notes by Bill Slattery, Society Archivist.

The final part of Mr. Turner's reminiscences will be printed in the next newsletter. 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.

A large dark room separated [my grandfather's] workshop from the back entrance of the house. It was, essentially, a tool shed, and a great amount of gardening equipment was hung from the walls, along with harnesses in various states of repair. A long rough table was covered with preserves. [My Aunt] Tat continued her mother's practice and put-up a variety of jams and jellies as well as homemade root beer and sarsaparilla

in specially capped bottles. Large milk cans stood in a dark corner to keep the fresh milk cool, a large wooden butter churn beside them.

The door to the house opens into the kitchen. On the right [probably left] were counters and an ice-box. Another door [off the next door dining room] leads to a small summer kitchen [now called the pantry] with shelves for fresh baked bread and pies.

According to my father, his mother cooled pies on an outside shelf that formed the bottom of the window sash. As with all country boys, he and his pals would manage to "lift" a pie, occasionally. They were always caught because "Ma" was careful to count her production. He [Harold Sr] said the warm pies were so delicious, it was worth the inevitable woodshed treatment from "Pa."

The sink and copper pump are on the left [of the kitchen], the sole indoor source of water. There was an outside pump over another well. A white porcelain pitcher filled with water stood beside the handle for priming purposes.

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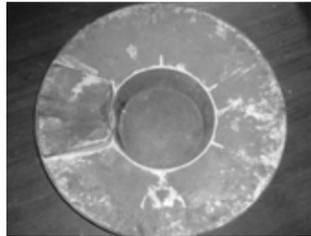
JACOBS FARMHOUSE, CONT'D.

continued from page 1

It was a serious offence to pump water and forget to re-fill the jug. The coal stove was just inside the entrance.

Baths were taken in a large copper tub, placed in the middle of the kitchen floor.

The wooden floors slope upward into a narrow hallway. [The author may be incorrect because the floor slopes down toward the kitchen, through the corridor/dining area, which he calls a narrow hallway, from the living room in front.] Aunt Tat said that they were honed clean at least once a week, and she and her sister Edith would slide from the living room into the kitchen until "Ma's" patience was exhausted.



This bathing tub for sponge baths is in the Jacobs' kitchen today. The seat is on the left, feet go in the center.

There is a peculiar window in the hall [corridor of dining area] that looks into a room that opens off the living room. My father [Harold Sr] had a serious bout of Scarlet Fever when he was about ten or eleven [1906-1907] and almost died. When he began to recover, his father [George] cut a hole in the wall and fitted a regular outside sash which must have been available. His young son could be brought downstairs and watch the activity in the house from his sickbed placed in the room [Sometimes called the quarantine room, now it has indoor plumbing and is used for preparing for hospitality; it was once used for the Society's first library, originally, it could have been used as a sick or storage room.]

The living room [in front of house] was not large, but had a fireplace on the east side [cast iron stove now attached] that led to the vestibule of the front door that was never used, in my memory. There were two windows facing the Scituate Road [Route 123], and an old upright piano sat against a door that was permanently locked [No key or lock on door today]. [That door] led to the Jacobs' part of the house. Adjacent to the piano was a steep flight of enclosed stairs to the second floor. Another door to these stairs kept the living room warm. Scratches can still be seen on the frame where matches were lit for the oil lamps that were carried upstairs at bedtime.

At night, the house would take on a life of its own. The creaking and groanings left an indelible impression on me when we would all be sitting around in the living room after dark. Of course, I was first to bed. Mother would light an oil light and precede me up the stairs. After I was tucked-in [in what is now the Vinal Library, as he once told me], she would light the lamp on the hall table and disappear below, closing the door behind her at the bottom of the steep staircase.

It is surprising that I have no memory of being frightened although the house noises and the murmuring of the adults continued. On one occasion, however, I was badly rattled. My grandfather had nodded off and, without warning, began to talk to Henry Jacobs, who, he had dreamed, walked through the door blocked by the piano. His eyes were open, and Aunt Tat talked quietly to him until he awoke. She was careful to avoid unsettling the old man. He talked so little that his conversation startled us all. I watched that door for the rest of the years we visited, hoping that Dr. Jacobs would not make another appearance.

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: _____

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

by Sam Olson

In 1925, in the midst of the so-called Coolidge prosperity, funding for Norwell schools, roads, care of the indigent, and other public needs were prudently calculated down to the last penny.

Local officials were relieved that tax dollars expended for schools could be used more efficiently as a result of the closing of all but three district schools. Those district schools remaining would be used only for the primary grades.

In 1922, a new high school attached to the rear of the Town Hall had been built costing \$40,000. Pupils in the fourth through eighth grades, numbering 144, attended classes on the first floor while 57 pupils in grades nine through twelve were instructed on the second floor.

The total budget for all school expenses in 1925 (teachers' salaries, textbooks, transportation and janitorial services) totaled \$26,598. To place this figure in proper perspective, one must consider that \$20 to \$30 dollars a week was a good wage for working people at the time.



Norwell High and Grammar School, built in 1922 and burned down in 1935.

Obviously, the new school did not come equipped with all of the "bells and whistles." One problem that manifested itself was the need to replace the chairs and desks that had been used in the former high school. The movement of the kitchen-like chairs caused a racket that was not conducive to good order in the high school and also bothersome to pupils in classes below. In 1926, the School Committee called for the expenditure of \$500 for the purchase of attached desks and chairs. But after careful consideration, they called for withdrawal of the proposal as too great a burden on the taxpayers.

By the end of the decade, however, most of the furniture had been replaced. In 1930, the School Committee called for up-to-date tables for the Science classrooms. They also proposed the installation of dressing rooms and boys and girls showers on the basement level.

The early years of the Great Depression brought greater reductions in school spending up to December, 1935 when the Town Hall and the adjoining high school were destroyed by fire caused by electrical malfunctions. Pupils displaced by the fire then attended afternoon sessions in Hanover until the new high school, now the Sparrell Building, opened in May, 1937.

Did You Know?

...the answer to the last issue's Trivia Corner Question? **Where is Bryant's Corner in Norwell and what businesses used to be there?**

The answer is: Bryant's Corner is at the junction of Norwell Avenue, Grove Street and Lincoln Street. The Joshua Bryant house (located at 3 Norwell Avenue) used to be known as Henry Ford's Store and earlier Snow Bryant's Tavern. Ford's store also served as the Mount Blue Post Office from the late 1800s until 1913, when rural free delivery was launched. Sold here at various times were dry and fancy goods and feed, flour and groceries. Across Lincoln Street another store also stood: Isaiah Lincoln's (see photo at left). To read more about this previously mercantile neighborhood, see Chapter 10 in Sam Olson's *A Narrative of South Scituate & Norwell: 1849-1963--Remembering Its Past and the World Around It*.



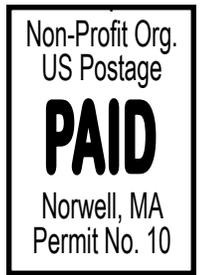
Trivia Corner

TRIVIA QUESTION: The Litchfield Shoe Factory employed over 100 men. On what residential street was this large, 3-story factory located?

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



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**CHRISTMAS AT THE FARMHOUSE
 DECEMBER 11, 2011**

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.