



January 2010 Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

DIRECTORS & OFFICERS

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

Board of Directors

Gertrude Daneau
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 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.

by Samuel Olson

Recently, I had the opportunity to peruse several 1930s editions of the *South Shore Life* newspaper. One of the things that left an impression on me was the advertisements of many venerable Norwell business establishments, such as Sparrell's Funeral Service, Tolman's Poultry, South Scituate Savings Bank, and Salmond's Tack Works. The June 12, 1936, edition featured an article on the Tack Works, which was then Norwell's oldest industry. After two years of being idle, a new generation (descended from the original owners) resumed operations.

Business was once again thriving at the end of the lane and on the mill pond (named after an early grist mill owner, Recompense Tiffany). The tack business had been established in 1830 by Captain Samuel Salmond, who was later assisted by his son-in-law, Edmund Q. Sylvester. After Edmund's death, the business was carried on by his two sons, Joseph and Albert. It was Albert's son, Samuel Salmond Sylvester, who was now managing the business. Sam Sylvester's entrepreneurship shifted into survival mode in the midst of the Great Depression. He was able to introduce new techniques of industry while retaining the best of the old ways.

One of the first acts after assuming operation was moving the packing and shipping operations from the head of the lane and locating them within the plant itself. Still another innovation was introducing a power hoist conveyor system to lift the big plates of iron. The article goes on to describe how these plates

"...traveled over the acid rinsing vats and down the line to the slitter machine. The twenty tack machines would bite away at the metal, and in some miraculous way bring it through all completed ready to be tinned, zined, or galvanized."

Mr. Sylvester had also devised a gas-driven motor to run the plant during the daytime. But at night, with a full-time shift, the machinery was run by the water power of the Third Herring Brook (as in times past).

A dozen or more local men now had full employment, and the hardware dealers again kept boxes of carpet, upholstery, and other types of tacks in stock. These boxes bore the logo of the leaping salmon with the inscription "Jumping Ahead for One Hundred Years."

On December 3, 1980, the Salmond Tack Works was given the distinction of being placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some time later, this important link to Norwell's past was destroyed by fire.

Further research is needed to determine when the factory actually ended operations. Perhaps this would be a worthy job for a Tiffany Road-area volunteer interested in cataloging the importance of Church Hill in the economic history of our town?

The Convenient Store
Near Corner Main and Winter Street, Norwell



We are in a position to supply the needs of those who require
SPECIAL DIET FOODS

Irving R. Henderson
Telephone Norwell 168

An ad
from a
1939
issue of
South
Shore
Life.

CHRISTMAS PARTY TRADITION A SUCCESS!

About forty people attended the Society party held on Sunday, December 13th from 2 to 4pm. Those who arrived earliest were spared the heavy downpour of rain, but it did nothing to dampen the spirits within. The candles were lit, some scented with "holiday bayberry," and, in the last hour, the early organ was pouring out Christmas songs ably rendered by Len Palmer.



Members graciously provided treats which were consumed in the ambiance of a lighted tree and holiday greenery. Director and historian Sam Olson provided tours of the Jacobs Farmhouse rooms and displays

for the many guests. Mulled cider was prepared and distributed by Director Bill Slattery. Many officers and directors were there and busily intermingled with company.

Former president and current secretary, Bob Norris, and his wife, Peg, provided yeoman service hosting many a guest. Former president, Grace Carty, and her husband, former Historical Commission chairman Joe Carty, were among many who shared in the traditional festivity. If you were among those in attendance, thank you for maintaining a holiday tradition and making it a special event.

NEED AN IDEA FOR YOUR NEXT FUNDRAISER?

At the Science Center this past fall, the Norwell Historical Society introduced its latest addition: a new Prize Wheel that was generously donated by Bob and Peg Norris.



Society Board member Bill Slattery ran the Prize Wheel at the Ice Cream Social this past fall. Could your organization use the Prize Wheel at your next event?

The spinning prize wheel has 12 slots that can be customized with prizes or "Spin Again"-type phrases. It also

has an area at the center of the wheel that can be customized with an organization's logo.

If you work with a local non-profit and would like to use this wheel for a fundraiser, the Society will "rent" you the wheel for \$10. Or, for \$50, the wheel can be customized with your prizes and a logo. All proceeds will benefit the Norwell Historical Society.

For more information on renting this prize wheel, please contact Wendy Bawabe at 781-659-1464, or via e-mail at bawabe@verizon.net.

Did You Know?

...the answer to the last issue's Trivia Corner Question? The question was: **In 1855, Henry Norwell sailed to America from his country of birth. In fact, he didn't become a U.S. citizen until the 1860s. Where was Henry Norwell (after whom our town was named) born?**

The answer is: According to Jeanne Garside's *The Way We Were*, Henry Norwell was born in 1832 in Erroll, Perthshire, Scotland. In 1846, at age 14, Henry entered a five-year apprenticeship with Wm. Todd & Co., prominent in the general dry goods trade in Limerick, Ireland. He then spent several years in trade in Scotland. In August 1855 (at age 23) he sailed for New York. After a brief stint in Illinois, he moved to Boston where he found employment with David M. Kinmouth & Co., a dry goods house on Washington Street. During his two and a half years with them he had charge of the ribbon department!

TRIVIA

QUESTION:

The "Church Hillers" are renowned in Norwell for their neighborliness and philanthropy. When was this group formed and why?

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: _____

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT COMING TO THE JAMES LIBRARY!

On Sunday, April 11th at 3:00 in the afternoon, the James Library will host "Louisa May Alcott." Her carriage will have just broken down in the center of town as she travels to her uncle's home "May Elms" on Main Street, and she will await its repair in the James Library!

Jan Turnquist, Executive Director of Orchard House (the Alcott family home in Concord) will play the role of Miss Alcott. Delightful and engaging, the author of *Little Women* brings us behind the scenes with stories from her life: family friendships with Thoreau and Emerson; her unconventional upbringing in poverty; and the family love that inspired her to write an American classic. From the youngest reader to the most sophisticated Alcott scholar, audiences have acclaimed Jan's performances (which are geared for ages 6 to 106).



Jan Turnquist will play Louise May Alcott on April 11th at the James Library.

There will be a special focus by Miss Alcott on her relationship with her uncle, the Reverend Samuel May, and the summers she spent at May Elms.



The Elijah Curtis, Jr. house on Main Street ("May Elms") is the former home of Rev. Samuel May of First Parish Church.

This program is sponsored by the James Library's Estelle Mosher Memorial Fund with support from the Norwell Cultural Council. For more information on attending, you may visit the James Library website (Literary Programs) at www.jameslibrary.org, or call the Library at 781-659-7100.

PAPER READERS NEEDED to read local newspapers and clip articles relating to Norwell notables. Clippings can be dropped off at the Historical Society Library at the Norwell Middle School or picked up by an NHS volunteer--whichever is more convenient. Newspapers to be read include *The Boston Globe*, *The Patriot Ledger*, and *The Norwell Mariner*. If interested, please contact the Society at 781-659-1888 and leave a message.



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**Is it time to renew your
Historical Society membership?
Check the expiration date on your address label.**

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 _____ \$3

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.



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.