



# September 2011 Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

[WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG](http://WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG)

NEW  
WEBSITE!

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Norwell, MA 02061  
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[www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org](http://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 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.

## YESTERDAY AT THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE

*Editor's Note: In the last issue of the Historical Society newsletter was the beginning 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.*

*More reminiscences of Mr. Turner's life at the Jacobs Farmhouse will be featured in future issues. For a complete transcript of Mr. Turner's recollections, please go to the Norwell Historical Society's website ([www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.norwellhistoricalsociety.org)). In the "Newsletter Archive," the entire transcript is available.*

As the generations rolled on, the land [surrounding the Jacobs Farmhouse] was broken into several farms, all occupied by descendants [of the Jacobs family]. The original house, outbuildings and 150 acres of land were eventually acquired by The New England Society for the Preservation of Antiquities [now Historic New England] from Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs after his death in 1936 [actually 1939].

Dr. Jacobs was educated at Harvard Medical School and became the personal family physician to Robert Garrett, President of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Dr. Jacobs married Garrett's widow and continued to enjoy homes in Baltimore [MD] and Newport [RI].

It is obvious from the probate of the will that Dr. Jacobs inherited little of the former Mrs. Garrett's fortune, due, undoubtedly to the acuity of Mr. Garrett [unlikely--as Mr. Garrett died insane, more likely due to no Jacobs

heirs]. The endowment of the farm was meager, even for the standards of the times.

Dr. Jacobs lived in Boston and Baltimore. He paid rare and ceremonial visits to the house in Assinippi. It is more accurate to say "houses" because the Turners occupied the east side, about one third [the size of] the main house, when viewed directly from the front.

My grandfather [George A. Turner] was a carpenter and country contractor with only moderate skill and little drive. He married Mercy Brown of Scituate. As his family grew, his first cousin, Henry Jacobs, installed him on the farm as caretaker. My father [Harold Sr] was born in another Jacobs house in Norwell and was six-months-old when the Turners moved to the farm in the early Spring of 1897.

After Dr. Jacobs died, the Turners were asked to leave, after continuous occupation for forty years.

There were two hired hands, Patrick Gammon and Henry Hines. Pat lived in the next house toward Scituate, which still stands. It is unclear whether my grandfather [George] helped with the work at peak seasons. It is certain my father [Harold Sr] served two masters: apprentice to his father and farmhand. My father was always proud of his hard work. He was good with his hands, but, in spite of occasional moments of nostalgia, vowed never to return to a farm.

There was a good-sized barn with two horse stalls, a hay loft and four-wheeled buggy that was still used in the Thirties.

*continued on page 3*

# JACOBS BOOKS RE-DISCOVERED

by Bill Slattery

As of July, a Jacobs Family Collection consisting of 46 volumes that once were possessions of some members of that well-known family has been added to the Society Archives. They were the generous gift of the McHugh family of Norwell who had rescued them from a dumpster during renovations to an old Jacobs house on Jacobs Lane.

Mr. McHugh was an electrician doing work at the Jacobs Lane house at the time. The books have been stored in the McHugh's barn and were rediscovered there recently before the barn was to be torn down.

The earliest of the books dates from 1811 and is entirely in Latin on selected Roman orations. Others include: (1) a U.S. history text that ends in 1817 after James Madison, our 3<sup>rd</sup> U.S. President, left office, (2) an English grammar book published in 1826, and (3) a Greek grammar book from 1809. Only four volumes in the entire collection are from the twentieth century. One of these, however, is a sketchbook of Arthur Loring Jacobs that shows drawings of houses on Jacobs Lane (see one at right). It should not be surprising to find many textbooks in this collection because our school districts fully expected families to purchase them for their children, and the Jacobs' were no exception.

Matching the years the books were published to the age of Andrew F. Jacobs, who was born in 1845, and whose name appears in several inscriptions, you may surmise that he studied world geography around ages

8-10, anatomy at age 12, and undoubtedly used his father's U.S. history textbook at some point as his name is written in it. Though his father, Andrew, was a farmer, he must have put some faith in education for his son. By age 20, it appears son Andrew, in addition to farm chores, was studying some French.

Other volumes are inscribed with the names of Franklin Jacobs, Loring Jacobs, Mary L. Bowker, James E. Perkins, one of Henry Barton Jacobs, last family owner of the Jacobs Farmhouse, and Laura H Jacobs.

Heartily do we thank, commend, and applaud the civic-mindedness of the McHugh family in preserving what we shall now be able to display from time to time over succeeding years.



A 1944 drawing of the "Old Homestead" by Arthur Loring Jacobs. The house is located at 99 Jacobs Lane.

## Did You Know?

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

**The answer is:** The Prince of Wales (who was later known as King Edward VII, 1901-1910). According to Chapter 12 in Sam Olson's book *A Narrative of South Scituate/Norwell*, Mr. Garrett was served by a full complement of servants, and the Garrett mansion was run as if it were Buckingham Palace, maintaining his grand delusion. What drove Mr. Garrett to become "hopelessly insane," as his doctors later concluded? It is believed that the pressure of running the B&O, the death of his father, the untimely death of his brother, and the sudden death of a business rival in Mr. Garrett's arms during a negotiation is what drove him to insanity. In his earlier, more lucid years Mr. Garrett and his wife, Mary Sloane Frick Garrett, were generous philanthropists.



**TRIVIA QUESTION:**  
2011 is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the construction of what building in Norwell Center?

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

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: \_\_\_\_\_

## JACOBS FARMHOUSE, CONT'D.

The cows were housed in a smaller building next to the big barn. There was barely standing-room in this damp atmosphere, heavy with the odors of tightly-packed cows and wet hay. Those two buildings [barns] were floored with heavy timbers. It was easy to slip and fall on your backside in the cow barn, built on lower ground and constantly wet.

Nearby there was a piggery and a pen that adjoined a chicken coop. Another pen enclosed a bull that came and went for reasons that baffled Jannie and me [probably rented for breeding]. All of this was within 50 yards of the house.

Across Jacobs Lane facing the Scituate Road [Main St., 123], a long building housed much of the large, horse-drawn farm equipment: plows, a reaper, hay fork and rick, the name for a wagon on which the hay was loaded. Included in this inventory was a two-seated "pung," as a horse-drawn sled was called, a large wooden apple press for cider and a foot-pumped, circular grinding stone for sharpening and honing blades. The task of turning that stone was mine when I stood around and pestered the hired hands. I would, of course, last about two minutes before near-collapse.

My grandfather [George] may have been a man of indifferent success, but he was no fool. One of the features of the large barn was added after he studied the antiquated method of backing the hay rick up the slope to the barn floor and pitching the hay through the overhead loft door above the wagon.

A large square was cut out of the second floor and pulleys and stout ropes were fastened to the corners of this platform. Carefully balanced and weighted stones were added. At the harvest, several men would stand on the floor and lower it to the level of the hay wagon. The hay was forked from the wagon to the lowered floor and a number of men, augmented by the calculated weight of the hay, would stand on the stones. The floor would rise to its original position and the hay pitched sideways into the big loft.

With equal ingenuity, he designed gravity feed pipes that were used to pour measured amounts of grain into the horse troughs, saving storage space on the ground floor and easing the job.

These operations seem primitive in the waning years of the twentieth century, but internal combustion engines and electricity were rare on small farms in the late 1800's. These improvements, along with others my grandfather concocted, added efficiency to farm work that had remained unchanged for generations.



An undated photograph of the Jacobs Farmhouse and barns before Main Street was the busy thoroughfare that it is today.



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**76<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18<sup>TH</sup>**  
**AT THE PHOENIX LODGE, HANOVER**



**NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS AND MEMORABILIA**

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|--|--|
| <p>A NARRATIVE OF SOUTH SCITUATE-NORWELL _____ \$20<br/>         by Samuel H. Olson<br/>         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<br/>         by Gertrude Daneau<br/>         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<br/>         by L. Vernon Briggs<br/>         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<br/>         by Joseph Foster Merritt<br/>         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<br/>         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<br/>         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<br/>         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<br/>         by Jeanne Garside<br/>         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<br/>         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<br/>         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<br/>         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.*