



April 2007

Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

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Jody Vermette, Secretary
Robert Pashkowsky, Treasurer

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Donald Spradlin
Gail Storm
Harold Tuttle

CONTACTING US

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

MUSEUMS & LIBRARY HOURS

The Jacobs Farmhouse is open by appointment only. Please call the Society for further information.

The Norwell Historical Society Library at the Norwell Middle School (328 Main Street--Route 123) is open from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday each week.

The Norwell Historical Society Archives Center on the 3rd floor of the Norwell Town Hall (345 Main Street--Route 123) 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, Massachusetts 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.

NHS ARCHIVAL RELOCATION PROJECT ADVANCES

The Norwell Historical Society's efforts to move its archives to a more appropriate location received a welcome boost when the Community Preservation Commission approved a \$20,000 request on March 8th. The application was then presented to the Advisory Board on March 22nd. The project has four parts: 1) the moving of the archives, 2) the purchase of files and other archival supplies, 3) the services of an archivist to supervise the cataloging and preserving of the collections, and 4) the purchase of scanning and other digital equipment to preserve

the Mary Jane Clark collection and other town history for the future. The CPC funding will be highly leveraged with other in-kind contributions and support from the Commonwealth, from outside consultants, and volunteers.

Although the funding has been preliminarily approved by the CPC, a vote at Town Meeting is needed to authorize the expenditure.

Your attendance at the May 14th Town Meeting and your support of the CPC article is necessary for the success of this project.

HISTORICAL SIGNBOARDS GOING UP...

Have you noticed a number of new historic dateboards appearing on homes in Norwell? The Norwell Historical *Commission* is making historical home signboards available to anyone who owns a home built prior to 1920. By reviewing any information an antique homeowner may have and by performing a

visual inspection of the property, the Commission will either assign an approximate date to your property or confirm the name and/or date which has been attributed to your property. If you are interested in purchasing signboards, please contact Pam Bower-Basso at 781-659-9343.

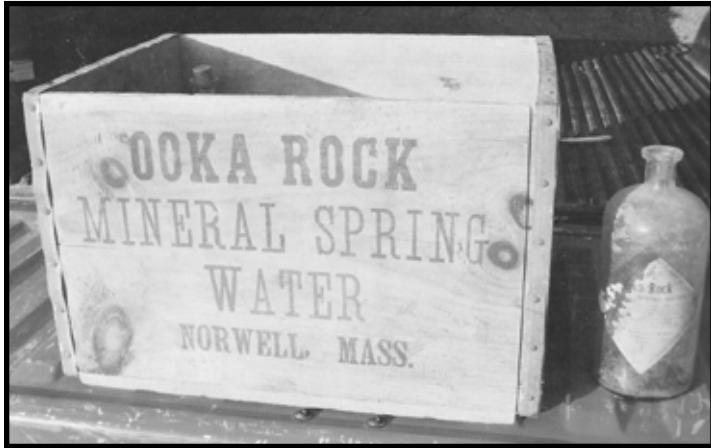


**BE THERE TO SUPPORT THE
NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY!**

**TOWN MEETING
MAY 14, 2007**

OOKA ROCK WATER COMPANY NORWELL, MASS.

The first to visit this famous Norwell spring were the Native Americans. They came to spend their summers there as it was the perfect place (near to fishing and game and with pure clean water). OOKa is the Algonquin name for water so it became known as Ooka Rock Spring. The natives came for many years, as witnessed by the abundance of arrowheads found on the Norwell property.



The white man discovered it next and found that no matter how hot or how dry the summer, the OOKa Rock spring kept flowing with cool, clean water. They settled there and, around 1888, John Philip Henderson realized the value of his spring. Thus began the OOKa Rock Bottling Company of Norwell, Massachusetts.

The water was advertised as a cure for many illnesses, and the company flourished for several years.

Nancy Henderson Joseph remembers going to her Great Grandfather's Farm and seeing the spring. It was inside a springhouse and was the home of many friendly frogs and not-so-friendly snakes.

Nancy recently bought the wooden box and bottles (*at left*) bearing the company's name from Marie Anderson's Stone House Antiques on Washington Street. She was delighted to have this piece of her heritage back in the family and was kind enough to share a poem about the spring, part of which is as follows:

*"Listen all, and I will tell you
Of the legend of OOKa Rock Spring;
Of that sweet and constant water,
Boiling up through rock and mineral;
Cold and pure, never changing,
Never shrinking in drought of summer,
Never chilled by winter's breath.*

*Thus it has been from time primeval;
Quenching the thirst of beast & red man;
The heart of the earth gave it conception,
The riven rocks its natural birth.
Thus it was when the doughty pilgrim
Landed on New England's shore;
It was flowing then and will flow forevermore."*

Did You Know?

...the answer to the last issue's Trivia Corner Question? The question was: ***Who was Simon Hill Road named after?*** The answer is: A Native American Indian (named Simon!) who lived way back on the hill at the site of today's Simon Hill Road. Simon was well-known in the area for repairing things, and people came from all around to bring their broken items to him.

TRIVIA
QUESTION:

How did
Norwell get its
first fire engine?

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

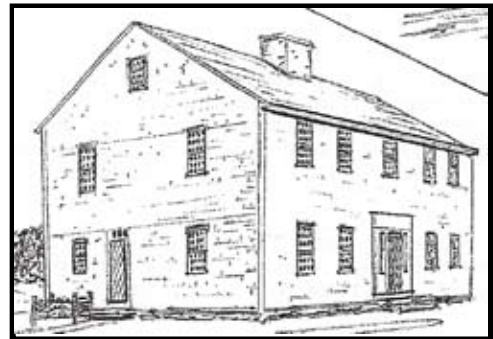
Newsletter _____ Public Relations _____
Hospitality _____ Program Planning _____
Research Library _____ Historical Research _____
Photo Cataloging _____ Process Archival _____
Material _____
Other: _____

**“NORWELL BACK THEN...”
A HUGE SUCCESS!**

The Phoenix Lodge in Hanover Four Corners was a full house on the evening of March 7th! The Norwell Historical Society's program on a history of Norwell Schools titled "Norwell Back Then..." brought in Norwell residents of all ages and backgrounds. Former teachers, administrators and students mingled with local history buffs and added their stories to the many told that evening. Many thanks to Bob Norris, Jody Vermette, Joan Chatfield and Gertrude Daneau who shared their tales of Norwell schools from years past.

The Historical Society hopes to plan another such event in the future--focusing on Norwell's history and looking for audience participation. If you have any inspired ideas, please contact the NHS at 781-659-1888.

WANTED



UNDATED HISTORIC HOMES
a/k/a "Antiques without dateboards"

**Need a dateboard for
your historic home?
Contact Pam at the NHS at
pbowerbasso@hotmail.com**



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Norwell, MA
Permit No. 10



STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

JUNE 17, 2007

AT THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE

NORWELL'S HIDDEN GEM: THE STETSON-FORD HOUSE & ITS SURROUNDING CONSERVATION LAND

The earliest history of Norwell (then, of course, Scituate) dates back to the 1630s and Cornet Robert Stetson.

Robert Stetson was served as Cornet, an ancient term referring to the standard bearer of a light horse, non-artillery military unit. He served as a member of the War Board (for King Philip's War) and was a businessman, extensive land owner, and first selectman of Scituate. The site of Cornet Robert's first home has been in Stetson ownership continuously through the centuries and is now owned by

the Stetson Kindred of America, Inc. Stetson family reunions occur annually on the property.

Adjacent to this Stetson-owned land is the Stetson-Ford house. The tract of land on which the house sits was willed originally to Thomas Stetson, son of Cornet Robert Stetson. In 1785, Michael Ford, built the house we see today. The house is owned and maintained by the Town of Norwell and serves as the centerpiece to a large tract of conservation land that provides trails and nature walks for public use.



Now that spring is here in Norwell, the Historical Society encourages visitors to this historic place. Lace up your hiking boots and get a taste of what Cornet Robert and Honour Tucker Stetson saw in 1634 when they arrived in the New World. You may access the trails from the end of Stetson Shrine Road.