



June 2007 Newsletter

NORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

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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.

CUFFEE'S LANE: A SETTING FOR BLACK HISTORY IN NORWELL

Driving toward Scituate down Mount Blue Street, a dirt cart path appears on the right side between Old Oaken Bucket Road and Lincoln Street. Currently it's entrance on Mount Blue is privately-owned and gated, but portions of it can be accessed via the Black Pond Bog Reservation. Named "Cuffee's Lane" hundreds of years ago, it still appears on Assessor's Maps and in local land deeds today. Who is Cuffee? And why is this cart path named for him?

Such questions have been researched recently by the NHS, and a surprising amount of information is available regarding

the life and family of Cuffee.

Cuffee was a slave owned by Joseph Clapp of Mount Blue Street. Cuffee married Flora (a former slave of Thomas Clapp) in (what is now) First Parish-Church in Norwell in 1740. Cuffee and Flora had (at least) three sons to whom they gave the new surname "Grandison". All of their sons served in the Continental Army--one in Hull and the other two in the Adams, Massachusetts area.

This is where the story becomes renowned in Norwell history... In Joseph Merritt's *History of*

Continued on page 3

THE STRAWBERRIES ARE COMING!



Folks enjoying a previous Strawberry Festival on the Jacob Farmhouse lawn.

The Norwell Historical Society's Annual Strawberry Festival at the Jacob Farmhouse is set for June 17th from 1:00 until 3:00.

Bob Norris, NHS president, has planted strawberries in his garden that (he claims) will be "as big as peaches!" Come by with the whole family and taste Bob's

berries and the best strawberry shortcake east of the Mississippi! The Farmhouse will be open for tours throughout the Festival.



STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

JUNE 17, 2007 AT THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE

2007 HASKINS SCHOLAR...

Each spring, the Norfolk County Agricultural High School notifies the Norwell Historical Society of the recipient of the Jon Haskins' Memorial Scholarship. This \$150 annual scholarship is awarded to a student at the High School from Plymouth County who studied Animal and Marine Science and plans to go on to either a 2- or 4-year college. The scholarship was established in 2003 in memory of Jon, a graduate of Norfolk County Agricultural High School and a well-loved agriculturalist.



Meg Messinger and Jon Haskins in the 1987 Town Parade. Jon's oxen participated regularly in the annual event.

ARCHIVAL RELOCATION MONEY APPROVED!

The Norwell Historical Society's request for \$20,000 from the Community Preservation Fund was unanimously approved at Town Meeting on May 15th!

The project has four parts: 1) the moving of the archives to the third floor of the Sparrell School building, 2) the purchase of files and other archival supplies, 3) the services of an archivist to supervise the cataloguing 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 has been highly leveraged with other in-kind contributions and support from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, from outside consultants, and from volunteers. Thank you to our members who attended Town Meeting and voiced your support of this article!



Joan and Jon Haskins at the Town Parade in 1989--riding Sam and Jo Jo.

This year's Haskins' Scholarship has been awarded to Julianne Marie Skinner, a senior from East Bridgewater majoring in Animal and Marine Science. She will be attending Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy in the fall, and she hopes to major in Pre-veterinarian studies.

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)____

AREAS OF INTEREST

Newsletter____ Public Relations____

Hospitality____ Program Planning____

Research Library____ Historical Research____

Photo Cataloging____ Process Archival____

Material

Other:

Please make checks payable to the *Norwell Historical Society* and mail to: NHS,
P.O. Box 693, Norwell, MA 02061

CUFFEE'S LANE, CONT'D

Continued from page 1

South Scituate-Norwell Massachusetts, in the "Draft Report of The Black Community of Scituate-Norwell" by Pattie Hainer, and in *Slavery in Scituate* by Lynne Moretti, the same story is re-told:

"One day, soon after the Revolution, a typical Southern Negro, accompanied by a white woman, appeared in town and settled in this place. Nobody knew from whence they came, but it was generally believed that it was from the far South, and all sorts of stories were told regarding them and who they were. It was at one time thought that the man was a runaway slave and the woman the wife or daughter of his master. Later it was rumored that they came from the western part of the State and that the man had served in the Continental Army from the town of Adams. Paying no heed to their neighbors they proceeded to set up an establishment. The land was cleared and gradually people

ceased to wonder about them and they lived their lives and ended their days in their little place in the woods."

This man, Simeon Grandison (who, according to records is one of the sons of Cuffee and Flora) and his wife, Mary Woolsey Grandison of New York State, took over the hut at the end of Cuffee's Lane. Mary died at the age of 64 from cancer and Simeon died in 1835 at the age of 84. Their children continued to farm the land off of Cuffee's Lane for many years.

The Rev. William Fish of (what is now) First Parish later wrote about one of Simeon and Mary's son: "Attended the funeral of Mr. Charles Grandison (colored) aged 73 years--and a remarkable man for one of his position: industrious, honest, upright in his relations... He was a paying member [of the parish] to the end..."

Cuffee's Lane is truly a historic landmark and a monument to Norwell's African-American history.

Did You Know?

...the answer to the last issue's Trivia Corner Question? The question was: *How did Norwell get its first fire engine?*

The answer comes from Bob Apts, who recorded an oral history of Norwell. He said that the Veterans of WWI pooled their military bonuses to buy the first fire truck for the Town!

TRIVIA
QUESTION:

Where, in recent years, was a vineyard in Norwell?

ANSWER: in the next issue!

Trivia Corner





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P.O. Box 693

NORWELL, MASSACHUSETTS 02061

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STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

JUNE 17, 2007

AT THE JACOBS FARMHOUSE

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.

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.

THE WAY WE WERE _____ \$18.88

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. In his amply illustrated by local artists.

NORWELL PLATE _____ \$25

Limited edition plate with the town seal. Each plate is numbered, suitable for hot and cold use, and may be hung. Handcrafted in the USA.

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.

All the above items are available at the Norwell Historical Society Library in the Middle School on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m., or you may request a publication using this form and enclosing a check (made payable to NHS). Mail to: Norwell Historical Society, P.O. Box 693, Norwell, MA 02061.