

The Official Newsletter of

The Waltham
Historical Society
WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 2017

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MAY 10, 2017
MEETING WILL
BE HELD AT THE
BRIGHT SCHOOL
260 Grove Street
Waltham
Begins at 7:00 pm

PLEASE NOTE SPECIAL DATE CHANGE!

Wednesday, May 10, 7:00 p.m.

The Edmund L. Sanderson Lecture Series Presents

Haiti and the United States



*Featuring Pastor
Thomas St. Louis
Of the New Covenant
Church of Cambridge*

at former Bright School
260 Grove Street
Waltham, Mass.

Pastor Thomas St. Louis (a native of Haiti who has been in the US for 30+ years; and was a 20+ year former Housing Advocate for the city of Somerville) will speak to the Society on highlights of the emerging local Haitian community with particular emphasis on his Waltham parish, the New Covenant Church. In November 2005, Pastor Thomas and his congregation achieved a major milestone with the purchase of the former St. Joseph's Church at 527 Main Street. Pastor Thomas noted that he was especially proud that some of the old parishioners had returned to the Church to join the new congregation in singing some of their favorite French hymns. Pastor Thomas has a growing congregation of more than 300 and holds services both in French and English. He has worked tirelessly for the greater Boston Haitian community of all faiths.

The unique format for this meeting will be comprised of a panel with Society Board Member Dr. Helene Day as Chair making the introductions. Board Member Jeremy Hagger will then present slides highlighting aspects of Haitian History and its connections with the United States. Pastor Thomas will then talk about Waltham's Haitian community, the appeal of greater Boston to them and his parish's support for Haitian development and education projects. He will mention how our Waltham community can directly support these efforts as well. Finally, one of Pastor Thomas' parishioners will announce some of the Church's community events and festivals which are held on the Waltham Common in August and are open to the public.

The lecture will follow immediately after the May Member Meeting of the Society. This month's agenda includes Election of Officers to serve on the Board for the next two years. Please attend and vote.

Light refreshments will be available and you're invited to tour the Society's exhibits.

*This event is supported in part by a grant from the Waltham Community Foundation.
Please call 617-448-6706 or e-mail waltham.historical.society@gmail.com with any questions.*

Beginning in April! 100th Anniversary of The Great War

**AN EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTING
THE ACTIONS OF WALTHAM'S
COMPANY F IN AMERICA'S
101ST EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
FEATURING ARTIFACTS
FROM THE BRAD BIGHAM
COLLECTION!**

The Waltham Historical Society has been extremely fortunate to have received a large donation of materials from the Collection of Brad Bigham. Brad's sister Mary Martha and his Niece Terry Bigham have been instrumental in helping the Society make accessible the information and material about Waltham's boys "Over There!"

Among the items received are a helmet with the 101st logo, a uniform, and numerous awards and medals.



Letters from the soldiers telling stories of their experiences as well as photographs taken during the Company's time both on the Mexican Boarder against Pancho Villa, and in the trenches in Europe.

Starting at the end of April, the exhibit will begin presenting vignettes of activities surrounding the move towards full enemy contact. Although War was declared on April 6, 1917 the American troops didn't immediately travel to the front.

They had been dispatched to El Paso to protect the American border from incursions by the famous Pancho Villa and others. The laws at the time dictated that National Guard forces could not be used to fight outside the Nation's borders and were to be utilized for defensive purposes only.



However, an incursion was made, led by "Black Jack" Pershing into the Mexican state, bringing a strong reaction from all sides of the Mexican conflict.

There is reason to believe that the actions of the American troops in moving into Mexican territory led the Germans to attempt to recruit Mexico as an ally of Germany, with the promise of aid in recovering territory lost and the War was won.

#1 LGR
E. McNeil
Tobba Brown
F. Ring
John Lally SGT.
EARL Wheeler
Mike Lally
P. Cunningham

This action finally spurred the US President to declare war on Germany on April 6, 1917. American shipping had been targeted by German U-Boats, with many ships being sunk or damaged. Combined with the attempted collaboration with Mexico, President Wilson believed there was no option but to declare war on Germany.





Brad Bigham spent much of his life collecting, documenting, and writing about the actions of Company F. His father, Edward Bigham was a proud member of the unit, leading Brad to seek out and interview as many surviving members as possible. His articles in the local newspaper on Veterans' Day every year were always very informative and poignant.

The Bigham collection is almost overwhelming in its breadth. Photos in uniform as well as photos taken years later, show such true dedication to purpose that it is only appropriate that it now becomes available for viewing by the public.

The exhibit is planned to open by the end of April, with the first installation describing the men signing up and serving in El Paso, Texas. Photos taken at Camp Banks show the men in formation during drill-

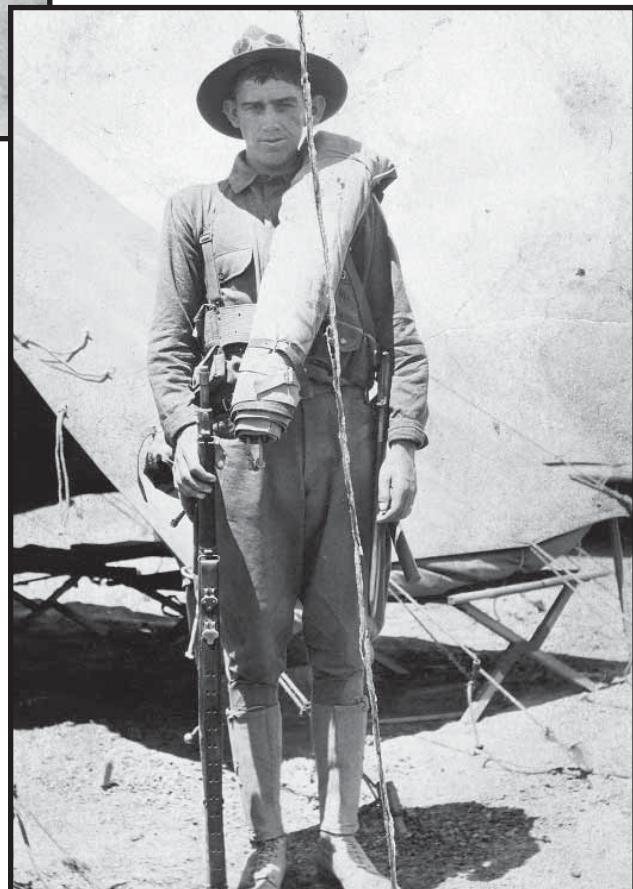


ing exercises. Brad returned there many years later with some of the same men and took "before and after" shots. He also did the same in a trip to Europe during his investigations.



*Ed and Eddie Bigham
from the Brad Bigham
Collection*

Unidentified soldier in camp at El Paso, Texas



The exhibit will expand continually following the activities of the times, culminating in the celebration of the Armistice on the 11th of November 100 years past 1917.

We want to thank Mary Martha Bigham and Terry Bigham for their assistance with the exhibit and for helping identify some of those in photos that were not clearly marked.

Watch for an announcement about the opening of the exhibit.

We would greatly appreciate any contributions to add to the exhibit. Please contact waynemccarthy@comcast.net or 617-448-6706 if you have materials we can copy and return to you. Help us tell the whole story.



A Drinking Stein made from
a spent shell

Liberty Loan Button
from the Society's
collection

Beginning in May we plan to staff the Bright School location, 260 Grove Street from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. This will become the regularly scheduled opening of the Waltham Historical Society at the Bright School location. If you would like to join us as a guest or as a docent, please contact us at waltham.historical.society@gmail.com.

“Thank you” to the Waltham Historical Society for preserving the City’s rich history.



As a proud member of the Waltham community for nearly 70 years, we look forward to serving the members of the Society.

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