

The Official Newsletter of

The Waltham
Historical Society
WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

March 2011



Sanderson Lecture Series

7:00 p.m., Tuesday Evening

March 8, 2011

RTN Federal Credit Union

Community Room

600 Main Street

Waltham, MA 02453

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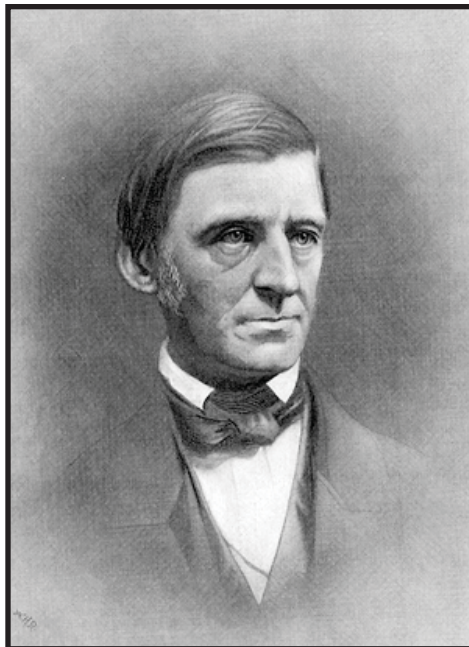
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The Edmund L. Sanderson Lecture Series Presents



Mr. Alex Green

owner of *Back Pages Books*

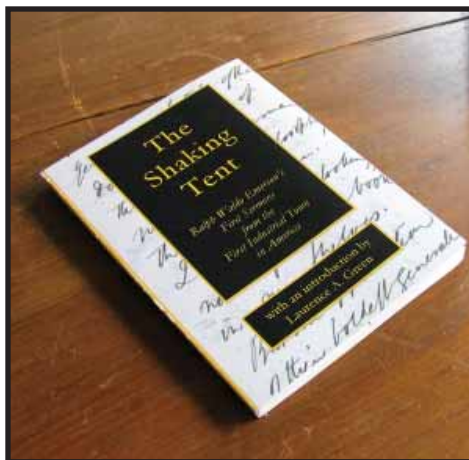
with his lecture

“The Shaking Tent”

When Ralph Waldo Emerson boarded a stagecoach in the fall of 1826 a fellow traveler turned to him and said, “Young man, you’ll never preach a better sermon than that.” So began the public career of the minister who would become America’s greatest philosopher.

“The Shaking Tent” revives Emerson’s first two sermons, delivered in Waltham, and reveals his deep personal and philosophical ties to the first industrial town in North America. Join us as Alex Green of Back Pages Books presents a fascinating glimpse into the mind of a man whose explosive ideas would ultimately shape every aspect of American life.

The lecture is free and open to the public. It will begin at 7:00 pm in the Richard H. Osborn Community Room of the RTN Federal Credit Union, 600 Main Street (Rear) in Waltham. Please phone 617-448-6706 for more information.



Mr. Green will have copies of his book, *The Shaking Tent* available for purchase at the meeting.

The *Weathervane* is an official publication of the Waltham Historical Society
190 Moody Street
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781-891-5815
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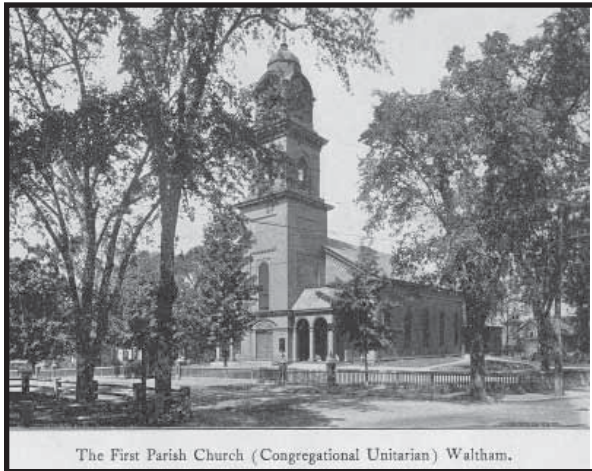
The Shaking Tent

Alex Green and Back Pages Books

The Shaking Tent will discuss Nathaniel P. Banks, the Fugitive Slave Address, and Emerson's lifelong ties to Waltham.

The broad spectrum undertaken by Mr. Green involved looking at those first two sermons and realizing that Emerson was later a very self-mythologizing man. For that reason, he told stories that sometimes amended his own experiences in ways that obscured actual experience.

Emerson's uncle was minister of First Parish in Waltham, and it appears that much of his philosophy about nature and self-reliance stemmed from watching industrialization begin near his uncle's church.



The First Parish Church (Congregational Unitarian) Waltham.

He seemed to find his first real communion with regular working people in Waltham and that relationship lasted his entire lifetime. He came back to Waltham quite often and was always obsessed with how to communicate with regular people rather than ministers and Harvard graduates.

Here are two quotes from the Mr. Green's book you may find of interest:

"I could not help remarking at church how much humanity was in the preach-

ing of my good uncle, Mr. R. The rough farmers had their hands at their eyes repeatedly. But the old hardened sinners, the arid educated men, ministers & others, were dry as stones."

Despite his break with the clergy and his increasingly radical ideas, he was still welcome in the Ripley home and continued to return to Waltham with regularity. In a memoir published in 1902, one-time Waltham resident George Francis Train wrote:

General Nathaniel P. Banks, who was a few years older than I, was chairman of our library committee.

We used to have lectures in Rumford Hall... The lecture night was always a great event in Waltham.

One day a man came to me and said, "Here is a remarkable letter." He read it to me, and it was as follows:

To the Library Committee, Waltham:

I will come to lecture for \$5 for myself, but ask you for four quarts of oats for my horse.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The lecture that Mr. Emerson delivered for us boys of the library committee in Waltham was entitled "Nature." We paid him \$5 and four quarts of oats for it. He delivered it many times afterward, when his name was on every lip in the civilized world, and he received \$150 to \$500 for each delivery. He was just as great then, in that hour in the little old town of Waltham; it was the same lecture, with the same exquisite thought and marvelous wisdom; but it took years



for the world to recognize the greatness and the beauty and the wisdom of him, and to value them at their higher worth. The world paid for the name, not for the lecture or the truth and beauty.

Please join us for this interesting lecture on Tuesday, March 8, 2011 and learn more interesting facts about Emerson's relationship with Waltham.

About the Press

Back Pages Publishers was founded in March 2009 and is housed in the Lincoln Building alongside Back Pages Books. Before the rise of large publishing houses, it was commonplace for bookstores to also be local publishers and binderies. Back Pages Publishers uses the accumulated knowledge of retail bookselling to produce affordable works of political interest, poetry, fiction, and art.

Images from The Edison Electric Illuminating Company publication of 1909.

Join the Society on Facebook!

The Historical Society can be found on Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8809620393&v=wall>

Proposal to Restore and Repair Grove Hill Headstones



Long-time Historical Society and Historical Commission member Mr. Jack Cox has begun an initiative to restore or repair a number of the most important gravesite markers at the Grove Hill Cemetery.

Nearly every year Jack has conducted a tour of the oldest portion of the cemetery for the Society, pointing out the details carved into the slate, and recounting some of the stories of those whose grave they mark. During this year's tour, it was noted that the weather has again taken a toll on many of these 300 year-old artifacts.

Jack has drafted a request to the City and the CPA Committee to help fund the work necessary to save these valuable reminders of our past.

The Waltham Historical Society will be right there with him and the Historical Commission in working to undertake this important mission.

Headmaster's Gallery and Superintendent's Gallery at Waltham High School

The Society has been working to research and document the rich history of the City's schools and their administrators.

We have found information and pictures of many of the headmasters and superintendent's of the Waltham Schools in our archives, and plan to enlarge and frame them for hanging at the high school. The gentleman at the right is first Waltham High School headmaster, Mr. Leonard P. Frost, who first served in 1849.

Historic Trolley Tour for Waltham High School Digital Photography Class



The Digital Photography class studying under Ms. Barbara Bourque recently took a field trip sponsored by the City of Waltham and the Waltham Historical Society. The Society utilized the Tick Tock Trolley to shuttle these budding photographers to a number of historic locations around the city.

The photos shot will be used by the Art Department at Waltham High at an upcoming city-wide music concert. The students' photos will also be on display at the Waltham Education and Beyond Foundation's annual Wine Tasting Event held at the Paine Estate in April.

We will work with Ms. Bourque and her students to showcase their images at an upcoming exhibit for 760 Main Street. Proceeds from the sale of any of the images goes to the photographer.



Special Request:



We need your assistance...

Recently, the Historical Society, in collaboration with the Vocational Graphic Communications classes at Waltham High School, have begun to inventory and document paintings by Waltham's own Paul Shea.

Mr. Shea was a teacher and Director of Art for the Waltham Public Schools for many years. You have probably seen his work in many of the local landmarks you frequent on a regular basis. His watercolors include many subjects, both in Waltham and beyond. He was often seen in the process of creating his works in locations near and far.

The students have scoured the high school and located 37 of his paintings in various locations throughout the school. They hope to check other schools this spring.

If you know of a Paul Shea painting, you can help us complete this survey by sending us the following information: the subject of the image, its size, whether it is matted and/or framed, and where it is located. For example, there is a painting inside the front door of the Cafe on the Common that is 30" x 40", matted and framed, that depicts Copley Place under-going construction.

Send the info (and if possible a snapshot) to us at our email (waltham.historical.society@gmail.com) or snail mail (190 Moody Street, Waltham, MA 02453) address or call 617-448-6706.

Please patronize all our sponsors. Without their support, we would be unable to continue our efforts to preserve Waltham's history for future generations.

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**MARCH MEETING WILL SEE
NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS
AND DIRECTORS**

Please consider recruiting folks to become members of the Waltham Historical Society, and recruiting current members to become officers or directors. With all our projects and the 100th Anniversary activities right around the corner, we will need all the help and guidance we can find! Please contact any member of the Board and let them know you're interested in serving for the next two years. It is definitely a rewarding experience!

**"Thank you" to the Waltham
Historical Society for preserving
the City's rich legacy!**



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we look forward to serving all members of the Society.*

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