

Annual Meeting of the Waltham Historical Society

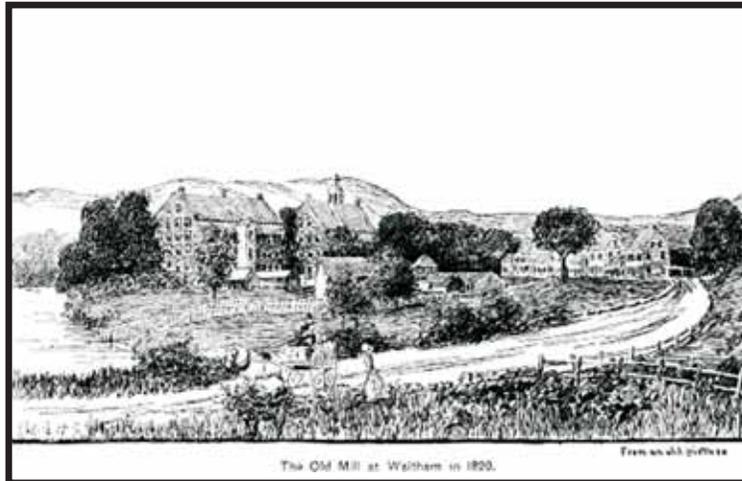
With Another in The Edmund L. Sanderson Lecture Series

Irish Immigration to Boston

Featuring MARIE E. DALY

The Waltham Historical Society's Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday evening, May 13, 2008. Annual Reports from Board Officers are due and will be submitted.

Marie E. Daly will speak on Irish Immigration to Boston, with a special emphasis on Waltham, Watertown, and Belmont. She will review the reasons for emigration from Ireland, the transatlantic routes traveled, the settlement patterns, the origins of Waltham Irish immigrants, the history of the Catholic Church and Catholic cemeteries in Waltham, and the sources for local history research.



Marie will illustrate population changes in Waltham, with special emphasis on the impact of the Irish on the city's population and industrial growth.

Marie E. Daly is the Library Director of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, and is the past President and cofounder of The Irish Ancestral Research Association (TIARA). She is on the board of directors of the Waltham Historical Society

and the Waltham Land Trust. She has been researching Irish genealogy and Irish American history since 1976.

Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. Please arrive before 7:00 p.m.

PLEASE JOIN US AT 7:00 PM ON TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2008

IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM OF

THE RTN FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, 600 MAIN STREET, WALTHAM



If you arrive late please call 617-448-6706 and we will try to send someone to open the door.

PROGRESS IN CATALOGING OUR COLLECTION

Sheila FitzPatrick, Edna Dolber, and Winnie Kneisel have been very busy at the Society's headquarters over the past few months. The file cabinets containing photographs, clippings, and documents have been reviewed with an eye toward preservation and eventual entry into our computer cataloging software.

The software we are using allows us to identify these items, when and by whom they were donated, and where in our collection they are located. The plan calls for making these items available for easy local and on-line searching.

The task is a huge undertaking, with our collection consisting of hand-written documents some that are two-hundred years old, photographs shot on glass slides, manuscripts typed and put in binders, and films and videotape from various sources and eras.

Once cataloged, cross-referenced, and recorded, the material will be entered into the software program. The entire effort may take years, as we are still acquiring items at a very good pace.

Marie Daly is constantly monitoring eBay for items with a Waltham collection, and when items are found, she has been purchasing and donating the items to the Society.

We will also be reviewing our holdings for their significance to Waltham, the Society, and their value. Some items are priceless, as they are the only examples of their type in existence. Others are valuable as "old and interesting" but not of significance to Waltham. We will be seeking guidance from professional organizations on the proper means of de-accessioning these items.

Patriots' Day, April 20, 2008

This year once again saw the National Guard Veterans Stephen K. Eaton Unit 14 conduct a ceremony at the monument to the Minute Men of Waltham. Commander Daniel O'Leary introduced the guests and led the assembled attendees in prayer and salute to those who have selflessly served our Country since 1775.

Placing a wreath and flags at the monument by members of the Eaton Unit 14 Veterans and the Historical Society is followed by a Salute and the playing of Taps.

The monument, erected in 1930 by the Dorothy Brewer Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Waltham Historical Society, is located at the intersection of Lincoln and Lexington Streets. This small parcel of land serves as the acknowledged meeting place of the Minute Men of Waltham on April 19, 1775.

The morning of April 19, 1775 saw men turn out at the Alarm spread by Paul Revere and William Dawes. It is often wondered why the Waltham Minute Men never made it to Lexington on that fateful morning.

Did Paul Revere do a better job of arousing the local militia Captains on his route than did Mr. Dawes? Was the Waltham Militia more inclined to support the status quo, believing that to take up arms against the King was treason, and therefore stayed at home? Was the Waltham Militia instructed to prevent the Regulars from returning to Boston via Roxbury Neck by blocking the most direct route?

Without instructions from the Militia commanders, Captains were instructed to let any troops pass by, and not to molest them without they begin first. Was that a command issued from the highest levels of the Committee of Correspondence? Were the Waltham militia merely following commands, protecting their own properties, or were they blocking a possible route of escape for the surrounded Redcoats?

Only weeks before, spies had traveled out to Concord and passed through Waltham, stopping at Mr. Brewer's Tavern on what is now Main Street. As they progressed towards Concord, their poor attempt at masquerading as New Englanders exposed them to great danger. Upon realizing their predicament, their first action was to head back to Boston. The shortest route was through Waltham, as Roxbury Neck was the only access to the City not requiring a boat.

The reason that we know "one if by land, two if by sea" is that the first route was over Roxbury Neck, the second was by transporting by boat to Cambridge, and marching out Mass. Ave. Surely the officers must have known that to return to Boston via Cambridge would require a shuttling of soldiers across the water.

That exercise in the early morning hours of April 19th cost them the element of surprise they had so hoped to attain. Why would they go back the same way? One reason often given is that they knew reinforcements were on the way via the same route they had taken. Were the troops traveling without scouts to inform them of enemy positions and strengths? Did they have such disdain for the Colonials they felt impervious to assault and that an "escape" never entered their minds?

By the time the retreating redcoats reached Lexington Center, their reinforcements were in sight.

The reinforcements positioned themselves at the East end of the long stretch of road leading from the Common to the sharp curve near the cemetery. The retreating troops were not safe until they reached Monroe Tavern, where they were able to enter the lines of the reinforcements sent from Boston.

Had they joined forces before reaching the Common, would any have thought to change course and march down Waltham Street towards Waltham, and thus the shorter route to Roxbury? Would anyone have been there to stop them?

We're aware that all the way back to Boston the troops were harassed from all sides, yet towns on the South side of Mass. Ave. appear to be absent. Where did Watertown join the fray? Where did Weston join in the fight?

Some say that the Regulars were on their way to recover the stores of powder, canon, and ball located in Concord. Others say they sought them in Waltham. History records that the troops marched to Lexington by way of what is now Massachusetts Avenue.

All the history books tell us they went to Lexington, but the question remains...why did they return to Boston via the same route?

By the time they arrived in Concord, they had already killed eight on Lexington Common, and the Countryside was raised against them. Would not a well-informed military officer have expected to meet resistance retracing the same path in a return to Boston?

All these questions need answers, and we've set out to research and find where Waltham fit in the opening round of the American Revolution.



Left to right Bill Bergquist, Walter Peirce, Al Arena and Wayne McCarthy

As always, the Waltham Historical Society is extremely grateful to Mr. Joe Connors and the RTN Federal Credit Union. Their support makes these Lectures possible. We encourage you to show your appreciation by patronizing RTN.

WALTHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY APPLIES FOR CPA FUNDING

The Waltham Historical Society, still hoping to find a permanent and convenient home for our collection, has been



speaking with the City about leasing the former dog pound on Felton Street. Built in 1894, this building once housed the Waltham Water Works.

Measuring 40 feet by 70 feet, the space is still a bit less than we would like

to obtain, but the opportunity to have a more accessible face to the community is very inviting. The space would allow display of many of our holdings, as well as space to for research and storage.

Society member Kristin Almeida has been working on plans for the space that can give us a look at the possibilities.

The City has made great strides in cleaning up the former dog pound and eliminating the odors and trash that has for so long created an eyesore in the community. It is hoped that with some assistance obtained through grants and the Community Preservation Act, the Society can restore the building to its original glory while still serving the community as a place for education and an appreciation for our history.

If you would like to become involved in this massive undertaking, please contact us as soon as possible and we will make arrangements to fill you in on the details. At some future meeting of the Society, a recommendation may be made to move forward with the project. Your vote will help us decide whether we should pursue the initiative further.

Historical Society News

Louise Hamilton has been managing our presence at 760 Main Street now for over a year. Every Sunday she has managed to have the site staffed by volunteers who have been engaged in keeping the displays dusted and neatly arranged, and organizing photos acquired from the High School year-book staff.

Those who have been very helpful in this endeavor include Edna Dolber, David Smith, and Mary Selig. Mary and Louise arrived one Sunday to find a broken window and items strewn around the floor. Apparently the wind blew in one pane on a window, causing items to fall to the floor and coating everything in dust.

Mary jumped right into action and she and Louise began cleaning up the debris and rearranging the displays to their original state. Mary also phoned her brother who came right over and repaired the window! Such quick action and initiative is something for which we are extremely grateful! Please let them know how much appreciated their quick thinking and selfless dedication to our cause has been.

The Society has been very fortunate in recent donations. The National Archives and Records Administration has donated 18 rolling office chairs. These chairs have made work at our headquarters much more comfortable than the former metal folding chairs we've be using for years. Many thanks to the folks at NARA.

We have also acquired four large bookcases from the Harvard Book Depository for use as 760 Main Street.

A year or so ago, co-president Wayne McCarthy had the

opportunity to accompany a couple of folks from the Historical Society of Watertown to the Harvard University surplus furniture area for what we lovingly referred to as "dumpster diving!" That adventure led us to the next level of items Harvard had that had not been left to the weather for a week beforehand. Through the kind regard of the Historical Society of Watertown we were recommended to the Harvard Book Depository where we were able to acquire three more wonderful display cases at absolutely no cost to the Society. Waltham Historical Society member Joyce Kelly directed us to Mr. Bob Childs, Councilor and Local Project Coordinator for the Historical Society of Watertown. Bob had already picked up one case more than the Watertown Society could use, and in turn donated it to us. It was such a great addition to our 760 Main Street display, we couldn't pass up acquiring three more.

Waltham Board Member Larry Logan, drove twice to Southborough, bringing back the three remaining bookcases. They are now set up and ready to be filled. Larry also cut the shelves to fit the bookcases at his shop, Prime Glass and Mirror in Watertown.

Larry has been instrumental in much of our progress in creating a visitor-friendly space at the former Nurses Training School site. If you have the chance please express our appreciation for his efforts.

The new displays will be ready for our June 1 House Tour. Please plan to stop in and see the exhibit and give us feedback on how we can make it better.

We could use another house or two for this year's house tour. If you know anyone who will allow us to put their home on the tour, please contact Louise Hamilton as soon as possible. 781-899-7625 or waynemccarthy@rcn.com.

Congratulations to The Historical Society of Watertown

We would like to express our congratulations to the Historical Society of Watertown on the Grand Opening of their totally restored headquarters at 28 Marshall Street. Councilor Robert Childs graciously offered us a guided tour of the Edmund Fowle House on one of our recent visits. The

site of meetings of the Provincial Congress in 1775-76, the site is quite spectacular in the quality of craftsmanship and detail. We strongly encourage our members to visit the site and see for yourself. The Grand Opening of the site is May 17th, 2008.

The Waltham Historical Society's House Tour 2008



The Waltham Historical Society's Annual House Tour will be held on Sunday, June 1, 2008 from noon to 4:00 pm. This fund-raiser for the Historical Society is our largest event of the year.

This year your tour will begin at 760 Main Street where a new exhibit will be opened for the first time. The exhibit will highlight Homes of Waltham, Past and Present. All homes

on the tour, and the display at 760 Main Street, will be accessible between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on June 1.

We hope you will support us for this event by being listed as a Friend or Business Friend in our Tour book. If you have not done so already, please complete the forms enclosed with this newsletter and send them, along with your check, to us at 190 Moody Street, Waltham, MA 02453. Or you can call Louise Hamilton at 781-899-7625 or Wayne McCarthy at 617-448-6706 for more information.

You can also demonstrate your support for our efforts by purchasing tickets for the tour in advance. By mailing your \$20.00 per ticket to 190 Moody Street in advance, you save \$5.00 on the cost of the Tour, as tickets purchased on June 1 will be sold for \$25.00 each.

Your tickets is redeemable for a tour book at 760 Main Street on June 1 beginning at 11:30. am.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2008
NOON TO 4:00 P.M.**

Tickets: \$20.00 IN ADVANCE • \$25.00 DAY OF EVENT

PHONE 617-448-6706 • OR MAIL \$20.00 PER TICKET TO THE ADDRESS BELOW

TOUR BOOKS WILL BE AVAILABLE JUNE 1 FROM 11:30-3:30

at 760 Main Street, site of the former Nurses Training School

OPPOSITE THE WALTHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY, WALTHAM, MA
