



Board of Directors
Term: 2013-2015

President
Wayne T. McCarthy

Vice-President
Sheila E. FitzPatrick

Treasurer
Mary Selig

Assistant Treasurer
Jack Cox

Recording Secretary
Janis Marchese

Corresponding Secretary
Edna Dolber

Curator
Vacant

Assistant Curator
Winifred W. Kneisel

Membership
Carol DiFranco

Board Members
Ruth M. Arena
Tim Close
Joseph Connors
Marie Daly
Dr. Helene Day
Denise Dube
Ron Guertin
Louise Hamilton
Susan Keefe
Morton Isaacson
Larry Logan
Lou Nocera
Joan M. Sheridan
David Smith

The Weathervane is the official publication of the Waltham Historical Society
190 Moody Street
Waltham, Massachusetts 02453
781-991-5815
www.walthamhistoricalsociety.org

© Copyright 2015, all rights reserved
Membership in the Waltham Historical Society includes subscription to this newsletter among other rights and privileges.

Articles and images submitted for publication, unless otherwise specified, become the property of the Waltham Historical Society. Authors submitting material for publication are requested to sign articles and include name, address, phone number, e-mail if any, and release to print images of any individuals depicted.

The Edmund L. Sanderson Lecture Series in partnership with



Tuesday, May 12, 2015

New England's Cowboy: Rex Trailer's Boomtown

by Jillian Rollock and
Michael Bavaro



Rex Trailer learned his cowboy skills from professional off-season rodeo riders while spending summers on his grandfather's ranch in Texas. Along with herding steer, Rex learned trick riding, rope tricks, bullwhips, and marksmanship.

At age 17, Rex met Western movie star Gabby Hayes while working as a rodeo performer at Madison Square Garden. Gabby liked Rex and hired him to work at his Catskills summer ranch for kids. Realizing Rex was a natural with kids, Gabby encouraged him to break into a new thing called television.

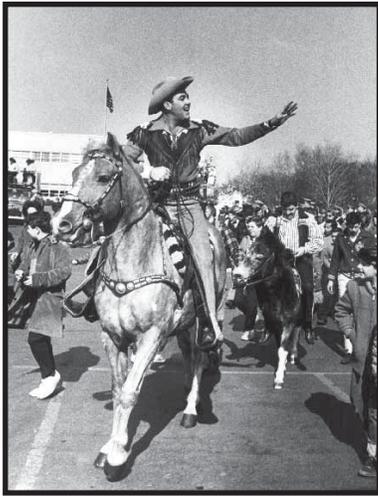
At the dawn of television in 1947, a genuine singing Texas cowboy showed up at the Dumont Network in New York City. Rex was told, "we don't hire cowboys here." Rex exited out the front door and entered through an open back stage door. The shopkeeper gave him a job painting scenery. In a few short months, Rex went from working as a production assistant to director. Later when the executives asked him if he knew of any cowboys for a new

kids show, he showed up with his guitar and bag of tricks and hosted one of the first nationally televised children's show, "The Oky Doky Ranch."

In 1951, the Westinghouse Broadcasting Company offered Rex a contract as their on-air children's personality at their WPTZ station in Philadelphia. Rex was the host of three shows, "High Noon with Rex Trailer," "Riding the Trail," and "Rex Trailer's Ranch House." By 1955, with 13 weeks left on his contract, Westinghouse sold the station to NBC. Rex was offered to play out his deal at their stations in either Cleveland or Boston. Rex chose Boston and that 13-week contract would last nearly 20 years.

**Registration is recommended.
Waltham Historical Society
members must call to register.
Please call 617-994-5912 for
more information.**

On April 28, 1956, "Rex Trailer's Boomtown" premiered on WBZ-TV in Boston. The show was an instant success. Every Saturday and Sunday morning "Boomtown" was on the air live for three hours. Over the years, more than 250,000 kids would appear on "Boomtown" and over 4 million watched from home. The show offered entertainment, educational games, films, cartoons, and outdoor adventure and brought awareness to children with disabilities.



As the demand of network airtime encroached on the local television markets, "Boomtown" signed off WBZ-TV in 1974 and syndicated until 1976. Meanwhile Rex was hosting a nationally syndicated program called "Earth Lab," a science show for children and teens. He took off his cowboy hat and explored other worlds that were of as much interest to him as it was to his

audience. The show enjoyed a successful run through the late-1970's.

In 1977, Rex was invited to teach on-camera performance and television production at Emerson College in Boston. Many of his students have gone on to great success in news and entertainment. Rex had a long career as a producer and director of numerous video content with his company, Rex Trailer Studios. Rex has written and recorded many songs over the years and performed at personal appearances and parades throughout his life.

Rex was the subject of Michael Bavaro's documentary film, "Rex Trailer's Boomtown" which received the 2005 Mass Impact Award, was nominated for an Emmy, and is now part of the permanent collection at the Paley Center for Television in New York City.

Rex was recognized for many causes and recognized by his broadcast peers with the 2004 Governors Award from the New England Chapter of the National television Academy along with the 1985 Silver Circle Award and 2008 Gold Circle Award. Rex was the first inductee into the New England Broadcaster's Hall of Fame.

Please join us for this interesting presentation. The lecture will be held at Historic New England's the Vale, Lyman Estate, 185 Lyman Street in Waltham. It will be preceded by a brief business meeting of the Historical Society.

Seating is limited so please arrive between 6:30 and 7:00 PM. Light refreshments will be available. Free to Historic New England and Waltham Historical Society members, \$5 nonmembers

About the Lecturers

Jillian Trailer-Rollock, like her father Rex, brings a multitasking background to the area of video production. Since childhood, she has had a love for the arts and a fascination with media.

Her experience in New York included teaching Broadway warm-up classes at the Shubert Theatre and modeling for The European Fashion Show. She appeared as a dancer and cast extra member in "The Cotton Club" and "The Muppets Take Manhattan."

She worked as a model, actress and spokesperson appearing on WBZ Radio with Larry Glick and Dr. Scott Borrelli, WCVB's "The Good Day Show" and "People Are Talking" with Tom Bergeron. Jillian used her artistic talents with her retail management and sales experience at Eileen Fisher, Inc., which included product presentations, fashion shows and events.

Over the years, Jillian assisted Rex with video production, television workshops, auditions and script writing and in 2012, she was his teaching assistant at Emerson College for his "Performance for Television" class.

Jillian continues her father's legacy by offering an avenue for talent, creativity and learning at Rex Trailer Studios. She has established "The Rex Trailer Collection," a digital collection of Rex's media archives.

Michael Bavaro is a creative strategist and digital filmmaker in the Boston area providing clients with original entertainment and marketing content.

A natural artist and storyteller, Bavaro learned filmmaking while in high school and college in Massachusetts. He spent most of his professional career in Hollywood and New York City creating award-winning promotional content for the Walt Disney Studios, the American Film Institute, NBC, ABC, CBS, web development for Miramax/Talk Magazine, C nde Nast, and the legendary "Siskel & Ebert."

In 1993, Bavaro embraced the digital age and established Digital Freeway®. He was soon invited to join the Bell Atlantic's (Verizon's) pioneering venture, Tele-TV. His creative leadership and Hollywood experience was key in the development of the world's first on demand streaming service and was responsible for its on-air promotion.

Bavaro's work has won numerous awards including a Clio Award, a New York Art Director's Club Award, and was nominated for two Emmy® Awards for his documentary films, "Rex Trailer's Boomtown" and "Voices from the Basement."

Bavaro is also a writer, illustrator, published cartoonist and professional voice-over actor.

**Waltham High School
History Club:
Class of 1965 meets
Class of 2015:
50 Years!**



Through the extraordinary efforts of Society member Marie Daly, the Waltham Historical Society worked with the Waltham High School History Club to bring together members of the WHS Class of 1965 and the WHS Class of 2015. This was an opportunity for students in this year's graduating class to learn about their counterparts of 50 years ago.

Michael DiLuzio and Tracey Kerns, with the support of Director of History Mr. Derek Vandergrift brought together these folks separated by 50 years but with much in common. Students learned about what it was like to live in 1965, experiencing the assassination of a President and other major events of the time. The members of the Class of 1965 learned how talented and bright are today's graduates.

Refreshments were provided by the Historical Society, and the school Library was made available through the courtesy of Joyce Guelli and Kendal Boninti at the high school.

We're now looking for Class of 1966 representatives for next year's graduates!

Images from the collection of the Waltham Historical Society



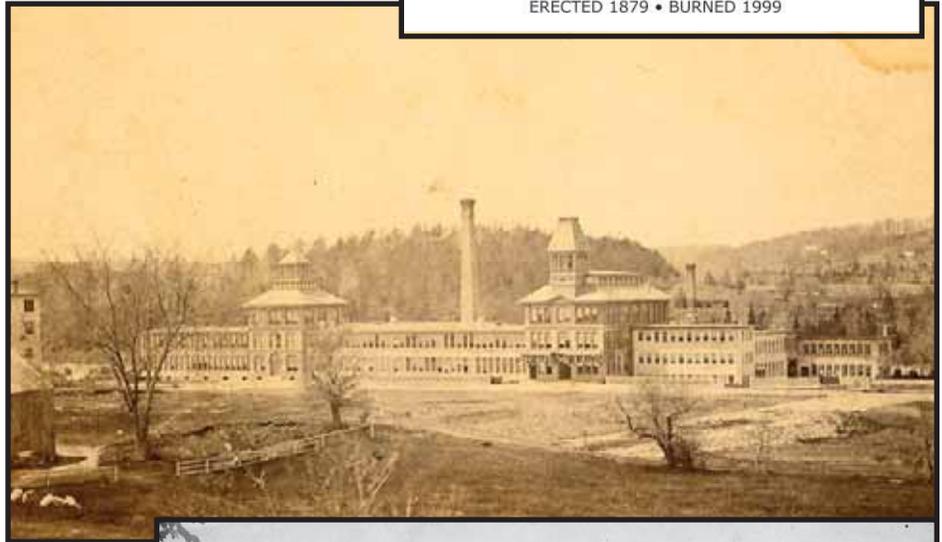
Rex Trailer on
Moody Street

Parmenter Building
Erected 1879 -- Burned 1999



PARMENTER BUILDING
ERECTED 1879 • BURNED 1999

Waltham Watch Company
circa 1860s



Main
Street
opposite
City Hall



The Board of Directors of the Waltham Historical Society wishes to express our appreciation for the support of the individuals and organizations listed on this page. They have been very generous to the Historical Society this past year and we encourage you to thank them for their generosity by patronizing the businesses identified, and by expressing thanks to the individuals. Without this type of support the Society would be unable to continue our work in the community.

Ruth M. Arena
Henry & Patricia Burke
Louise Butler
Robert Charbonneau & Family
Historical Commission
Jack Cox
Gail & Marion Cormier
Angie Emberley
Tom Emberley
Sheila FitzPatrick
Joyce Gianfelice
Ron Guertin
Beth Guertin
Louise Hamilton
Marjorie F. Hartman
Virginia C. Hays
Jean M. Husson
Mort Isaacson
Erica Zissman
Joyce Kelly

Winfred W. Kneisel
Norman MacDonald
Frank Maloney
Barbara Maloney
Roberta McCarthy
Peggy Nix
Chauncey Perry
Nancy Perry
John & Fiona Reardon
Bobby Robinson
Esther F. Seeley
Mary Selig
John Selig
Maria Sheehan
Joan M. Sheridan
Peter & Ellie Smerlas
Mary C. Spiers
Russ & Fran Stearns
Beth Hubley Thomson
Kate Tranquada
Eric Ward & Family

Fran's Fruit & Flowers
Phil Burke
Councilor Kathleen B. McMenimen
Professional Hearing Centers
Marcou Jewelers
Delaney & Delaney Attorneys at Law
James J. Hayes Oil Co., Inc.
Joyce Funeral Home
The Rotary Club of Waltham
Waltham High School Graphics Class
Fran's Flowers
Watertown Savings Bank
Gary Rogers, Realtor

“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.

Savings | Certificates
Free Checking | Free VISA® Debit Cards

Vehicle Loans | Personal Loans | VISA Credit Cards
Mortgages | Second Mortgages | Home Equity Loans

Free Online & Mobile Banking | Nationwide Branches

600 Main St. | Waltham
781-736-9900 | rtn.org



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
LENDER

Federally insured by NCUA

(781) 894-5090
FAX (781) 894-0579



FELTON STREET STUDIOS
Museum Quality
Custom Picture Framing

Robert Fitzgerald

72 FELTON ST
WALTHAM, MA 02453

Space on this page
is available for
your advertisement.
Inquire at Waltham.
historical.society@
gmail.com.



Relax.
It's Done.™

781-891-6700

merry maids

fast dependable service
auto • home • industry

PRIME GLASS and MIRROR
60 Arsenal St., Watertown, MA 02472

Larry Logan

Phone: (617) 924-9050
Fax: (617) 924-5182

www.prime-glass.com
email: primeglass101@aol.com

Looking for a reliable moving company?



BROOKLINE MOVING CO.
“Nothing but Service”

- » Moving
- » Storage*
- » Unpacking
- » Packing
- » Packing Supplies



*Ask about our 3 months of free storage offer

www.BrooklineMoving.com
Call 617.489.8090

CAFÉ ON THE COMMON
☕
coffees, teas, & French pastries



The Lawrence Building • 677 Main Street
Waltham, Massachusetts
phone: 781-647-4019