



## *The Society welcomes new members, and...*

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Sheila E. FitzPatrick

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The Raytheon Credit Union RTN has recently increased our membership by thirteen. The program, begun just last month, offers membership in the Society to anyone wishing to establish and conduct banking at the Credit Union. Thirteen individuals took them up on the offer, and we are pleased to welcome them to the Society.

Under the guidance of Mr. Joe Connors at the Waltham branch, we hope to increase our membership to assist in our efforts to continue collecting and archiving the important pieces of history necessary to inform future generations of life here in Waltham.

To those new members, welcome to the Waltham Historical Society. Please come to our next meeting and get to know us better.

Students in the YTE course at Waltham High School have been working on the Historical Society web site recently, and hope to launch an updated version before the end of the school year. It is hoped that one or two of those working on the site will be present at our meeting on May 18th.

Ideas for inclusion on the site and in this newsletter are most welcome.

A couple of recent inquiries to the Society include a person looking for information concerning the "build date" for the Waltham Railroad Tower.

Also being sought this month is information regarding the picture of Thomas Francis Birmingham that once hung in the Council Chambers many years ago. He was a Waltham citizen who had served in the Union army during the Civil War.

If you have any information on these subjects, please contact Wayne McCarthy at 781-899-2155.

If you have not become a Friend of the Waltham Historical Society, please fill out the enclosed form and return it to the Society as soon as possible. Your name will be listed in our program book on the day of the House Tours, June 13th.

The Society is seeking fundraising ideas for the upcoming year. Many opportunities lie ahead that will require

serious financial resources. It is our hope that members will step forward to lead the efforts to raise sufficient funds to place the Society in a position to acquire, rehabilitate, renovate, or restore a site suitable for use as a headquarters.

If you can help us out with ideas and time, we can all make the Society an organization that is moving forward on securing that home.

Contact either of the Co-Presidents with your thoughts. We'd love to hear them.

New topics for upcoming newsletters will include brief stories from our members' memories of Waltham. If you have reminders of the City "the way it used to be" please jot them down and send them to us. We want to record them for future generations, and to help some of us remember things we may have forgotten!

Send us your stories!

Sheila FitzPatrick and  
Wayne T. McCarthy  
Co-Presidents

## *May Meeting of the Waltham Historical Society to be held at the new McDevitt Middle School*

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The annual meeting of the Waltham Historical Society is scheduled for Tuesday evening, May 18, 2004 at the McDevitt Middle School, beginning at 7:00 pm in the auditorium. Our meeting will be followed by a tour of the new McDevitt Middle School.

As we go to press, there is a slight

possibility of a change in plans, (may not be the auditorium) but any changes will be posted on the web site, [www.walthamhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.walthamhistoricalsociety.org), and signs will be posted at the school. You may also call Wayne at 617-448-6706 with any questions.

*I would like to take this opportunity to offer my most sincere apologies to Louise Hamilton for accidentally leaving her name off the list of Board Members in the last issue of this newsletter.*

*Wayne T. McCarthy*

# About this issue's featured story



Early Boston Manufacturing Company

In coming issues of the Waltham Historical Society's Newsletter, it is our intention to provide you with information on current and upcoming events in which the Society is actively involved. We will also attempt to include items of interest that are currently in the possession of the Society. As an example, the following text is an ex-

cerpt transcribed from *Publication No. 3, Waltham Historical Society Incorporated, "WALTHAM COMMON."* The pamphlet was published in 1926 by Mrs. Sumner Milton in memory of Mr. George Arthur Milton. The complete title of the Pamphlet is *WALTHAM COMMON Its Ownership and History by Thomas H. Armstrong. Reminiscences of*

*Homes and People by Sumner Milton.* This is an excerpt of the reading given at a meeting of the Waltham Historical Society on March 17, 1914. The accompanying drawing was made by then Society Secretary, Edmund L. Sanderson. This is the second of three portions of the reading.

## The Common

By **Thomas H. Armstrong**

Abraham Peirce was a soldier of the Revolution, and a pensioner, and somewhat noted around this vicinity. He died in 1802, leaving a widow, Deborah, who died soon after, and a son Abraham, and a daughter Abigail. His property was appraised at \$4,382.69 personal, and \$4,550 real estate; a pretty good estate for those times. In 1807, commissioners appointed to divide the real estate as \$5,841, and added: "The above described premises in our opinion is insufficient to make two livings and that the whole be settled on Abraham, the only son." Accordingly the Probate Court by decree of January 14, 1808, assigned to Abraham Peirce, only son, the whole of the real estate, and directed him to pay to his sister Abigail,

her guardian, husband or other legal representative, the sum of \$2,905. The schedule of the real estate made by the commissioners contains as the first the parcel we are now considering as follows: "The homestead (so called) consisting of a dwelling house, barn and out-buildings, and about 22 acres of land situated in Waltham and bounded, Northerly by the country road, Easterly partly by land of Uriah Moore (the Priest lot) and partly by land belonging to the heirs of Warham Cushing, Southerly partly by Charles River and partly by land of John Boies, Westerly by said Boies land and a town way. Abraham Jr. paid his sister Abigail the sum ordered by giving her a mortgage upon the whole farm of 57 acres, which mortgage was paid up seven years later.

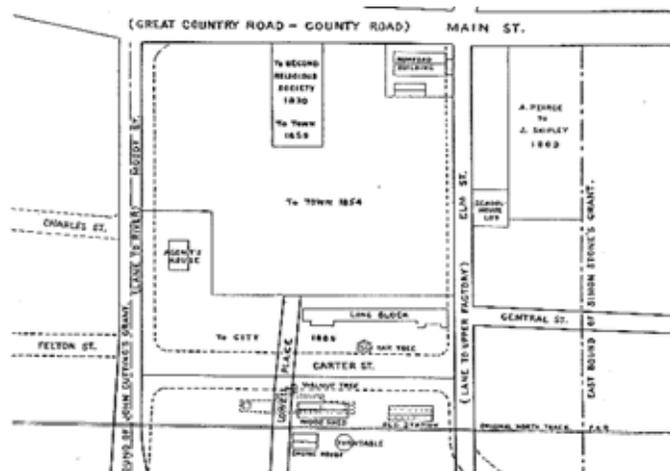
In 1810 John Bright, Isaac Miles,

David Townsend Jr., and Phineas Barnes, a majority of the selectmen and overseers of the poor in Waltham, complained that in their judgment Abraham Peirce of Waltham does so spend, waste and lessen his estate as thereby to expose himself and his family to want and suffering circumstances, and does thereby also endanger and expose the said town of Waltham to expense for his and their maintenance and support, and prays for the appointment of a guardian. David Townsend, Jr., was appointed guardian, and was licensed by a resolve of the Legislature in 1818, to sell the estate. Accordingly after the customary formal notices &c the guardian sold all the farm to Patrick T. Jackson, who a few months later sold this tract and other land to the Boston Manufacturing Company. Mr. Jackson was a man of wealth and enterprise, who became early interested in the manufacture of textiles, and was one of the active promoters of the Boston Manufacturing Company here in Waltham. He at one time or another owned nearly all the land between Moody street and Newton street, and conveyed it to the Company, of which he was for a time treasurer, and to persons largely interested in the movement. The Lawton and Leland estates, and the Boyden and Cushing holdings were once his.

Eighty years ago the Fitchburg Railroad cut this property in halves, leaving the mill buildings of the company on the south, and the nearly square lot,

**"consider, and even dwell upon, the foresight and wisdom and sacrifice of those fathers who so wisely furnished us this place to be a joy forever."**

Illustration drawn by Edmund L. Sanderson, Publication Committee Secretary



## The Common *(continued)*

with a line of tenements and the Agent's residence on the north. I do not know the date of the building of the agent's house, but it must have been not far from this time.

About this time also the Boston Manufacturing Co. conveyed a location on this parcel to the Second Religious Society in Waltham, an offshoot from the first parish, made up largely of those connected with the factory or living nearby. Unitarianism was then invading the town parishes in great force, and so changing the prevailing form of faith that those who remained Trinitarian in faith seceded from the first parishes leaving the Unitarians in possession. The new society was at first orthodox in faith but soon divided, the Unitarians joining with the old parish in forming the present First Parish Church while the Trinitarians formed a new society. The meeting house erected by the Second Religious Society became the place of worship for the Methodists. The deed to the Society, dated Jan. 8, 1830, reads:

*"To be used as a place of meeting for public Worship and for no other purpose a certain tract or parcel of land on which a meeting house has already been erected in Said Waltham." The bounds were: "beginning at a point on the principal Street or country road 187 feet West of the Northwest corner of Rumford Hall, so called, thence along said*

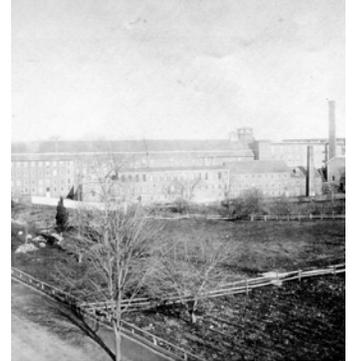
*street 96 feet, then turning and running Southerly at right angles to said street 195 feet, then turning again and running Northerly 195 feet to point of departure." It also reads that "it is hereby declared to be a condition of this deed that if the said Religious Society shall for the space of one year omit or neglect to use the premises for the purpose of public worship or shall pervert the same to any other uses then this instrument shall be null and void and the land hereby conveyed shall revert to the grantors and become vested in them in the same manner as if this conveyance had never been made."*

About twenty-four years later the Boston Manufacturing Company conveyed another portion of the farm to the Inhabitants of the town for a common, although there were no conditions in the deed that made such use imperative.

The price paid was \$39,192.50 and the description was: "a certain piece or parcel of land with the buildings thereon, situated in said Waltham and bounded and described as follows, to wit: Beginning at the Northeasterly corner of the premises at a point where the Southerly line of Main street crosses the Westerly line of Elm street, thence the line runs Westerly by the Southerly line of Main street 246 feet to land now occupied by the Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, thence the line turns and runs South-

erly by land occupied by said Society 195 feet, thence turning and running Westerly by land occupied by said Society 96 feet thence turning and running Northerly by land occupied by said Society 195 feet to the line of said Main street 244 feet to the Easterly line of Moody St., then turning and running Southerly by the line of said Moody street 325 feet to a bound, thence turning and running Easterly on other land of the Grantor 131 feet to a point 2 feet North and 1 foot East of an Elm tree, thence turning and running Southerly by other land of the Grantor 202 feet to other land of the grantor thence turning and running Easterly by other land of the Grantor 457 ½ feet to the Westerly line of said Elm street, thence turning and running Northerly by the line of Elm street 474 feet to the point of the beginning." The area was 251,405 square feet. It refers to a survey made by Seth Davis and a plan drawn from said survey by J. A. Hagar in which the Grantor in the conveyance is styled "The Waltham Manufacturing Company."

*This article will be continued in the next issue of the Society's newsletter. Should you wish to purchase a copy of the publication, contact the Society with your request and arrangements will be made to accommodate your desires.*



**"the Boston Manufacturing Company conveyed another portion of the farm to the Inhabitants of the town for a common. "**

## Annual House Tour



The Waltham Historical Society is now planning for our Annual House Tour, to be conducted on June 13, 2004. Each year, the Society conducts tours of houses of significance in Waltham, and this year promises to offer some new and exciting opportunities.

If you are interested in supporting the Historical Society, and can make your house available to visitors for a few hours on June 13, please contact Wayne McCarthy at 781-899-2155.



190 Moody Street  
Waltham, MA 02453

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
[WWW.WALTHAMHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG](http://WWW.WALTHAMHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG)

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Citizens Bank of Watertown recently visited the Society Headquarters to deliver a donation of Bank ledgers dating back to the late 1800s.

These ledgers were found in the basement of the Citizens Bank in Watertown and indicate the final dividend payments from the Waltham National Bank. Once a large part of the banking industry, National banks disappeared years ago.

Accepting the donation for the Society were Curator Winnie Kneisel and Co-Presidents Sheila FitzPatrick and Wayne McCarthy. The story and photo ran in the Waltham News Tribune the week of April 26, 2004.

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## *Society in need of space for storing holdings*

*This is a photograph taken of some of our holdings that are currently being stored in an unheated garage.*

*The recently donated cabinet is now sharing the space you see at the right.*



Another recent donation has created more overcrowding. The Waltham High School Career and Tech Ed Director, Gregory DeMeo has assisted in helping us acquire a large wooden cabinet formerly used at the old High School. This 8' long oak cabinet will require a large area to house.

Currently housed at the Mill building on Moody Street, the Historical Society occupies a single large room containing most of our collection. The room has no windows, and the ventilation is poor, making it extremely difficult to work there for any extended period of time.

We also have stored in a garage across town, maps and books that are in dire need of protection. There is a roof over the material, but the garage is unheated and the 100 year-old books and maps cannot be expected to survive long in such an atmosphere.

Please help us find a home. Contact your local City Councilor and ask them to help find a solution.