

**The Waltham
Historical Society**
190 MOODY STREET
WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

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2003-2005**

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Inside this issue:

<i>Ghost of Plympton Pond</i>	2
<i>House Tour '05</i>	3
<i>O'Hara Dial Inquiry</i>	4
<i>Patriots' Day Ceremony</i>	4



Society's 92nd Annual Meeting to be held at The Plympton School

The next meeting of the Waltham Historical Society will be held at 7:00 pm, Tuesday, May 17, 2005.

This year, the Annual Meeting will be held at the *new* Plympton School.

Principal John Barry has graciously offered to give us a brief tour of the new facility.

The meeting will also mark the Waltham Historical Society's 92nd Anniversary. As required in our By-Laws, this is an election year for the

members of the Board of Directors of the Society. You are strongly urged to attend and voice your opinion on the goals and issues to be addressed by the Society for the next two years.

Please consider becoming involved with the business of the Society by attending the meetings and volunteering to help move the Society toward acquiring a permanent home in time for our 100th Anniversary.

As in years past, your assistance is required to make our Annual House Tour a success. Please consider purchasing a listing as a Friend in our brochure, volunteering to act as docent at one of our houses, or selling tickets to help support this effort.

If you have any questions, please contact Sheila FitzPatrick at 781-894-0062 or email Wayne McCarthy at waynemccarthy@rcn.com.

***Candidates
for election
to a two
year term
beginning
May 2005***

Candidates recommended by the Nominating Committee are as follows:

Assistant Curator: Winifred Kneisel

Curator: Joan Sheridan

Treasurer: John Cox

Corresponding Secretary: Edna Dolber

Recording Secretary: Barbara Maloney

Co-President: Sheila FitzPatrick

Co-President: Wayne McCarthy

Candidates for Director include: Ruth Arena, Marie Daly, Louise Hamilton, Lucille Hanna, Virginia Hays, Jean Husson, Mort Isaacson, Frank Maloney, Lill Movsessian, Lou Nocera, Jean Salvucci, David Smith, Michael Squillante, and Robin Tyler.

Nominations may be made from the floor the evening of the meeting.

Please join us for this most important meeting.

About this issue's featured story

The intent of The Waltham Historical Society's Newsletter is to provide information on historical, current, and upcoming events in which the Society is involved. We will also attempt to include items of interest that are in the possession of the Society.

This issue contains part two of a previously unpublished work researched and written by Mr. Edmund L. Sanderson, secretary of the Historical Society in the 1930s.

This article, and the others to come, have been retyped by students at Waltham High

School in the Youth Tech Entrepreneurs class. Led by Ms. Suzanne Bozak (WHS '04) the material is also being prepared for use on the Historical Society web site:

walthamhistoricalsociety.org
We hope you enjoy.

"The story spread considerably, and a goodly audience witnessed this ghostship's third perambulation."

The Ghost of Plympton Pond Part II

By Edmund L. Sanderson, May 1939

INTRODUCTION

At a meeting of the Waltham Historical Society held May 16, 1922 the subject of the Plympton Pond Ghost was introduced and Mrs. Sumner Milton suggested that the secretary make complete notes of the remarks so that an accurate description of the event might be preserved for posterity.

Mrs. Milton and Thomas H. Armstrong were the principal ones to take part at that meeting but the secretary consulted with Charles F. Stone, Nathan Warren and George L. Johnson, the latter a grandson of the originator of the ghost.

The manuscript made from these notes was placed on file with the Society's collection. It has been shown to a number of interested persons and was read at one of the Rotary Club meetings as an authoritative account.

However the event took place long before the birth of any of the narrators and they could only tell their remembrance of what they had been told. In the secretary's search of the Waltham newspaper files for material for his Waltham History a number of communications in regard to the ghost were found. There were a number in 1875 in which statements made in one issue were corrected in the next and as some of the corrections were made after consultation with the sole living participant the truth in respect to the names of the actors and the sequence of the events seems to be fairly well established. The accurate description mentioned above is therefore superseded by the following account.

*Edmund L. Sanderson. Sec.
May 1939.*

THE WALTHAM GHOST The Truth about it.

Free Press, Aug. 6, 1875, p. 3

In the last issue of the Sentinel there appeared what purported to be the only truthful account of the old Waltham ghost story ever published; but as this last account is incorrect in important features, we take the liberty of correcting it, giving the particulars as rehearsed to us by the only living participant, Mr. Ladd.

The scene of this little drama was a short distance south of Lily, or Plimpton's pond, as then called. A Scotchman named McCracken, a peat digger here had a shanty where he kept his tools and also a bible, and he frequently remained reading until late at night.

Dr. Sherman, now deceased, knew this fact, and with a motive of sport only, and not for the purpose of "stultifying the neighbors", conceived the idea of having a little private fun by appearing to McCracken as an emissary from the spirit world. Accordingly, he appeared one night, wrapped in a white covering, unbeknown to any one, and before leaving named another evening when he should appear. The conversation being so spirited and too good to keep, Mr. Sherman told the story to a Mr. Adams and Mr. Ladd, who both entered into the joke and promised secrecy.

The story of a ghost being seen on Plimpton's land was circulated a little, but it was

Ghost of Plympton Pond (continued)

not generally believed; so that only about a dozen were present at the second appearance of the ghost, who, after a considerable conversation with McCracken, appointed a third appearance. Before the time arrived, the story spread considerably, and a goodly audience witnessed this ghostship's third perambulation. It was at this appearance that Dr. Sherman, the ghost, uncautiously stated, when asked why he appeared, that he was murdered by Plimpton. Meessrs. Adams and Ladd advised the ghost to stop the matter before it got too serious, and chided Mr. Sherman for his mistake; but he wanted to go on with the affair.

The story of the ghost rapidly spread all over New England. Mr. Plimpton was thoroughly mad at the saying concerning himself and was bound to shoot the ghost, but was kindly relieved of this unpleasant act by a Sam Pearsons, who offered to do it for him. The three "stultifiers" heard that it was intended to shoot the ghost, and without telling the secret, persuaded Pearsons to fire only powder, as it might be a hoax and would kill some one.

The fourth appointed evening came, and with it came thousands of curious and excited people. The ghost came and was immediately

shot at by Pearsons; when it said, "You may shoot your bullets, I'm not afraid! I've been killed once, and you can't kill me again!" And after stating when he would present himself again, the ghost vanished.

Although the crowd was greater than ever at the fifth walking, no ghost appeared; the two friends of the ghost being too much alarmed for Sherman's safety.

Suspicion settled upon Dr. Sherman as being the ghost, and Mr. Plimpton caused his arrest. He was tried and acquitted; there not being sufficient evidence to convict, Messrs. Adams and Ladd keeping clear of the court.

Mr. Hawes, we are told, knew nothing of the affair at the time, and therefore could not have been and was not the ghost.

This, as will be seen, from a desire to have a little sport, the affair became rather serious, as is often the case in jokes of a like nature.

In the next edition of the Society Newsletter:

Information furnished by Mrs. Sumner Milton, Thomas H. Armstrong, Charles F. Stone, Nathan Warren and a clipping probably from the Boston Herald, published circa Feb. 1883 or earlier given by George L. Johnson, grandson of Dr. Sherman.

"You may shoot your bullets, I'm not afraid! I've been killed once, and you can't kill me again!"

House Tour 2005

The 2005 Waltham House Tour is now scheduled for June 5, 2005.

As in years past, we will be in need of volunteers to help make 2005's event even more successful.

Joline Fish and Joan Sheridan have volunteered to serve on the House Tour Committee, and look forward to increasing the number of homes available. The Tour is always a great opportunity to get an inside look at some of Waltham's most significant homes and buildings.

If you are interested in opening your home for a tour, please contact us. Our volunteers will then help guide you through the process.

Frank Maloney has graciously agreed to continue soliciting "Business Friends," for mention in our House Tour booklets, and you can help by selling ads, greatly increasing our potential success.

Copies of the 2004 House Tour booklet are still available for use as samples when calling upon local businesses.

We will also be in need of docents to greet visitors to each home on the day of the tour. This is typically a very enjoyable part of the House Tour program. Get to meet some of your neighbors.

To become involved, contact The Waltham Historical Society, 190 Moody Street, Waltham, MA 02453, 781-891-5815, or email waynemccarthy@rcn.com.

2004 Business Friends of the Waltham Historical Society

Albert's Photo Studio	O'Toole Landscape, Inc.
Allegra Print and Imaging	Marcou Jewelers
Brasco & Sons Memorial Chapels	The Nelson Companies
Laura M. Cannon, Attorney at Law	O'Toole the Florist, Inc.
The Chateau Restaurant of Waltham	Professional Hearing Aid Center
Civil War Roundtable of Greater Boston	Reagle Players
Embassy Trophy Company	Regan Management, LLC
Gordon's Liquors	Rotary Club of Waltham, Serving Waltham
Historic B&W, Color Photos of Waltham & Vicinity by Frank Maloney	Sadies Saloon and Eatery
Waltham West Suburban Chamber of Commerce	Stack Chiropractic Office
James J. Hayes Oil Co., Inc.	Waltham Land Trust, Inc.
Joyce Funeral Home	Watch City TV and Appliance
J.P.I.	Stewart Woodward, Visual Talent Group

Recent Inquiry:

Greetings from the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum's Product Design and Decorative Arts dept. We are preparing a small collections exhibition this Fall and our guest curator has selected an object made by the O'Hara Dial Co. of Waltham, MA, a small round metal box with lid. A low-res jpeg is attached for reference. We were wondering if we might be in touch with a curator specializing in the history of the company to provide us with some further information regarding the object, its materials, and the dates. Another very basic question is in regards to the dates of the company (when it first became the O'Hara Dial Co. from Trenton Watch Company and when the business closed).

Here is a brief description:

Round box with lid depicting a viking-ship with a fully-deployed single sail at sea in the center. The circular boat scene is bordered by alternating fish and clam-shell decoration. Stamped on the underside of box: a fleur-de-lis with the words (written on the inside), PARIS/FRANCE/O' HARA DIAL CO./WALTHAM/MASS/USA.



We are interested in getting a more precise date for the box itself and was wondering if your curator might know the period in which such boxes were first produced for the company and what their purpose might be, perhaps a pin box or tobacco box? The interior of the box is not finished so we assume it was not meant

as a case for watch dials. We are also curious as to why Paris, France is listed first on the stamp. Was there a retail store located in France for the company?

We would be grateful for any assistance you may provide, if you know of good reference sources or a contact at another institution. Thank you in advance and have a nice day!

Editor: If you have any information on this request please contact us at 781-891-5815 and leave a message, or email the Society at waynemccarthy@rcn.com

Patriots' Day 2005 in Waltham

The Waltham Historical Society would like to extend its deepest gratitude for the efforts of the Stephen K. Eaton Unit 14 of the Massachusetts National Guard Veterans for their continued recognition of the sacrifices made on behalf of Liberty. By marking Patriots' Day every year with a ceremony held at the Corner of Lincoln and Lexington Streets, these veterans have maintained a tradition that stretches back to the placing of the memorial stone in 1933.

The Waltham Historical Society, in partnership with the Daughters of the American Revolution, established this monument to remind us of our heritage.

The Society has extended an offer of assistance to ensure that this solemn ceremony shall endure.

This year's event heard speakers Mayor Jeannette McCarthy, State Rep. Thomas Stanley, and State Senator Susan Fargo.

Dorothy Gardner, representing the Daughters of the American Revolution, spoke of the need to remember those currently inhabiting veterans' hospitals.

In an article appearing in the News Tribune of April 19th, it incorrectly stated that Society Co-President Wayne McCarthy "portrays Paul Revere in a Patriots Day ceremony" when in actuality, Mr. McCarthy was dressed for his role as Isaac Muzzy in the Re-enactment of the Battle of Lexington.

Please put this ceremony on next year's calendar and show your support for these honorable Patriots.

Come learn more about Cornelia Warren

"Cornelia Warren and Cedar Hill: Then and Now" by Lesya Struz is being presented by Ms. Struz at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, June 1, 2005. The Historical Society, is co-sponsoring this illustrated talk sharing the story of Cornelia Warren and 100 years of land use history of the former Cedar Hill Estate.

Don't miss this opportunity. Held at Stonehurst, 100 Robert Treat Paine Drive, off Beaver Street in Waltham, this promises to be a very special opportunity.

CALENDAR

The National Archives Experience, to be held at the Verizon Conference Center in Marlborough, MA on Saturday, July 30, 2005 will be presented by the Massachusetts Genealogical Council and the National Archives and Records Administration. Diane LeBlanc, Regional Administrator for the National Archives and Records Administration- Northeast Region will give the Keynote Address: **NARA, More Than the Census**. Details can be found at: www.massgencouncil.org.

FGS/UGA **Reminders of the Past: Visions for the Future** Conference to be held in Salt Lake City, Utah on September 7-10, 2005. www.familysearch.org. The 2006 Conference will be held at the Hynes Auditorium in August-September and be co-hosted by NEHGS.