

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

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2003-2005**

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Meeting Location Changed!

Sunday, November 20, 2005

2:00 pm at the Cedar Hill Girl Scout Headquarters

The next meeting of the Waltham Historical Society will be held at 2:00 pm in the Conference Room at the Cedar Hill headquarters of the Patriots' Trail Girl Scouts, Sunday, November 20th, 2005. Please note that this event was originally planned for the Waltham Library, but due to renovations, has been moved to Cedar Hill.

A special presentation on Daniel O'Hara and the O'Hara Dial Co. will be made by Gerit A. Nijssen.

Born and raised in Indonesia, Mr. Nijssen completed his higher education in Holland, and immigrated in 1962 to America.

In the late 1960s he needed a diversion from his engineering and management duties and

became interested in clocks, high-grade and complicated pocket watches, cameras and photography.

Over the years he has written more than a half dozen articles for the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors (NAWCC) and in 1978 he published a book on F. A. Lange and Glasshutte. Most recently he authored an article on D. D. Palmer and the Waltham School of Horology.

Mr. Nijssen will be presenting a slide program on Daniel O'Hara. He has been interested in O'Hara since the late sixties and has collected material, information and O'Hara articles for the past 30+ years.

The Conference Room is accessible from Beaver Street,

opposite the University of Massachusetts Field Station. Proceed up driveway to the parking area. The entrance to the Conference Room is at the rear of the main building, and signs will be placed to help guide you. Handicapped parking is located to the left of the building, with ramp access nearby. For special considerations please contact Sheila or Wayne for arrangements.

We are greatly appreciative of the generous hospitality of the Girl Scouts and Mr. John Smith.

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



Historic Waltham Days 2005

The Waltham Historical Society's participation in Historic Waltham Days 2005 encompassed quite a few successful events.

Special thanks go to Mr. Jack Cox and his able assistant, Mr. Michael LaCrosse, for conducting Jack's always popular tour of the 18th century portion of Grove Hill Cemetery. Adding to the excitement was this year's edition began at the precise moment of Fall's arrival. As darkness descended, people gathered to listen to Jack discuss the significance of some of the individuals memorialized, and the stone cutters responsible for creating their markers.

Another event of interest was the lecture given by Mr. Douglas Carrier Jr. on the Buses and Trolleys that once traversed the city's streets. Through the generosity of the Charles River Museum of Industry, use of the Jackson room allowed Mr. Carrier to delight the audience with tales of games played by children at the side of the road, and of "Breezers", those who would ride the open streetcars to enjoy the wind in their faces!

The Society, along with the Land Trust and the Historical Commission co-sponsored a one-man nature photography exhibit by Mr. John Crookes, photographer for local newspapers. Held at the Robert Treat Paine estate, the event was well attended, and showcased photographs of nature, shot and assembled by Mr. Crookes.

The Society also published a self-guided driving tour of some of the most architecturally significant homes in North Waltham. This tour book will guide you past many homes of special interest, and may still be purchased only through the Society.



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 we believe are of interest to members of the Society.

This issue contains information about an upcoming

initiative to bring a collection by Mr. Brad Bigham to the curatorship of the Society. The story of Company F, 101st Infantry, 26th Yankee Division, American Expeditionary Force in World War I, formed here in Waltham, has been compiled by Mr. Bigham.

Beginning in this issue, in honor of its proximity to Veterans Day 2005, we offer some background on the story of Company F, of Waltham.

We hope to have more in every issue.

Visit us also on the web at walthamhistoricalsociety.org

An introduction to Company F

By Wayne T. McCarthy

As this newsletter is being printed and mailed during the week of Veteran's Day (originally Armistice Day) the opportunity has presented itself to incorporate some personal history with history of significance to Waltham's past, and its future. Sounds like a lot to ask? Let me try to explain.

As a fourth generation Waltham citizen, my interest in history started with stories from my grandfather, Alfred Rennie. Son of Simon Rennie, Alfred was brought up on Clark Street near the intersection of Newton and River Streets (now Rennie Square). He often mentioned his twin brother, Charles J. Rennie, and the pain the family suffered when Charles was killed at the very end of World War I.

Often referred to as "The War to End All Wars", the fighting in Europe was as brutal as any in history. Mechanization was only being introduced, and chemical warfare and hand-to-hand combat was not uncommon. The personal part of this story is concerned with family tales and oral history, and the discoveries made researching them. Initially, the stories were understood as by a very young child. Since my grandfather died when I was 10 years old, I can only assume some of his stories were not fully comprehended by one so young.

Oral family histories often are changed slightly by interpretation and misunderstanding. It had been told to me that Charles was killed on November 11, 1918, the very day the War ended. When one hears of a soldier dying on the last day of a War, it naturally seems to evoke nagging questions. Could

something have been done to avoid the loss? While trying to research the story, it was found that, indeed, some soldiers were killed on November 11, 1918. It was also especially unsettling that the War's end had been carefully planned for the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month. Decided nearly a month in advance.

Why then, would soldiers be asked to risk their lives further when the outcome had already been settled? Seeking to find some answers, I began collecting, reading and studying the end of the First World War. Family images and documented stories were sought and compiled, bringing more clarity to some of the misinformation caused by the deficits of a strictly oral history.

Finding the burial site at Calvary Cemetery of Charles Rennie, I discovered that he had actually been killed on October 27, 1918. Not killed the last day of the War, but definitely killed after the outcome had been decided. And, after the date and time set for a cease-fire had been set. Given the state of communications in 1918, I am fairly certain that the family learned of Charles' death only after celebrating Armistice Day on November 11th.

While doing personal research on the subject, I met Mr. Brad Bigham, a very knowledgeable gentleman with strong ties to the Company with which Charles Rennie served. Mr. Bigham's newspaper submissions every Veterans Day gave glimpses of the lives of those who survived, and of those who did not. It was always a part of Veterans Day to which I looked forward.

Company F (continued)

Upon meeting Mr. Bigham, I was immediately overwhelmed with the effort he had made, and was making, in recognizing and collecting the stories of those brave young Waltham men. His appreciation of what they had accomplished left me in awe.

I can say with pride that he introduced me to Mr. Leo F. Stankard, the last surviving veteran of Company F, 101st Infantry, 26th Yankee Division, American Expeditionary Force, 1917-1918.

Since that day, our paths have crossed a few times, and, as I currently have the honor of serving as the Co-President of the Waltham Historical Society, I have had the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Bigham again—this time with regard to the future of the story of Company F.

Mr. Bigham has indicated a desire to keep the all the materials related to Company F together, and accessible to the citizens of Waltham. It would be a great asset to the history of Waltham to have this collection showcased at a public location, secure in the knowledge that it would remain together and protected by those for whom the effort of collection was made.

This issue of the Newsletter is what we see as an initiative to bring Mr. Bigham's hopes to fruition. With the centennial of the Waltham Historical Society fast approaching, a plan is being developed to celebrate that occasion with the opening of a special exhibit featuring Company F, 101st Infantry, 26th Yankee Division, American Expeditionary Force of 1917-1918.

That plan includes asking for support from local organizations, politicians, and citizens. We are aware that not everyone can make monetary contributions, or sacrifice of their valuable time. Our hope is that through a sus-

tained community effort, this endeavor can be accomplished by 2013. It would require acquisition of a home of sufficient size and space to accommodate not merely Mr. Bigham's collection, but to accommodate the records and holdings of the Society as well. Recent acquisitions that should be on display include the Dot Slamin Hill collection, and the Collection of the Roland C. Barnes Company.

We have often bemoaned the small confines and difficult accessibility of our current home, and long sought a suitable space. This opportunity can provide a new focus for our efforts. Without a proper venue, this collection may be lost to the very City for which its collection was intended.

If you can help us, or are interested in learning more, please contact me at 617-448-6706 or email at waynemccarthy@rcn.com.

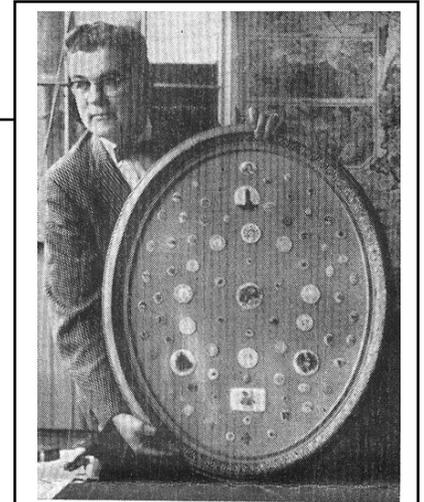


Members of Company F: Top left to right: Charles J. Rennie. Frank Gallagher, ?, Angus Burgess, Francis Sheridan

CALENDAR

Daniel O'Hara and The O'Hara Dial Co., by Gerrit A. Nijssen will be the presentation at the Waltham Historical Society's November 20 meeting. To be held at the Cedar Hill Girl Scout headquarters, the meeting will begin at 2:00 pm.

At right is part of a December 1966 News Tribune article showing a piece currently in the Society's collection featuring the work of the O'Hara Dial Company.



DONALD V. SLAYTER of South Weymouth shows part of his collection of hundreds of old buttons and studs. He plans to give a part of the collection, made by the former O'Hara Waltham Company, to the Waltham Historical Society for display at the Lyman Vale on Beaver St., Waltham. (News-Tribune Photo, W. B. Hay.)

House Tour 2006

The 2006 Waltham House Tour Committee is gearing up for our 10th annual event. If you would like to offer your home for inclusion, or know someone who may, please contact our committee chairs Joline Fish or Joan Sheridan.

We hope to have a few special opportunities this year, so please join in and lend a helping hand.

Please let Wayne, Sheila, Joan, or Joline know if you'd like to help. We need people to obtain ads, do publicity, write/research homes, sell tickets prior to the event, be docents the day of the event, and especially—WE NEED HOMES TO VIEW!

2005 Business Friends of the Waltham Historical Society

- Allegra Print and Imaging
- Brian Aucoin
- Charlesbank Estates
- Delaney & Delaney, Attorneys at Law
- "Hayes" Oil Co., Inc.
- Marcou Jewelers
- City Councillor Kathy McMenimen
- New England Historic Genealogical Society
- John C. Peacock, Executive Director

- The Regan Family
- Radio Station W R C A
- Stack Chiropractic Office
- Waltham Land Trust, Inc.
- Lizzy's Ice Cream
- The Nelson Companies
- Professional Hearing Aid Center
- Rotary Club of Waltham, Serving Waltham Since 1925
- Sadies Saloon and Eatery

Recent correspondences:

During the past few weeks the Society's website has generated a few inquiries and interesting opportunities. The following are a few of the items received. If you have information relating to any of these queries, or would like to follow up on any opportunities we would welcome your assistance. Please contact Sheila or Wayne for more information.

The Society received a letter of appreciation for our support of the Filicudi Associates' recent lecture by Dr. William Marchione, held at the Waltham Public Library. Dr. Marchione's presentations are always very informative and incorporate historical information pertinent to Waltham and many of its inhabitants. The presentation was held on Sunday, October 23rd.

A letter of appreciation was received from the Plympton School for our donation of copies of Waltham Rediscovered to their library.

An inquiry has been made by an archival researcher as follows:

By way of introduction, I'm doing some work at the Brandeis University Archives. In transcribing the history of the campus from the notes of C. Ruggles Smith there is mention of the following passage: "...Edmund L. Sanderson, a direct descendant of the first settler on campus land, has presented Brandeis University with a detailed account of the chain of ownership from 1640 to the present." [ca. 1948] This detailed account does not seem to be in the University Archives and I wonder if there may be a copy among the Edmund L. Sanderson papers held by your organization, the Waltham Historical Society. Many thanks in advance for your assistance in this matter.

An interesting opportunity for correspondence was raised with this email:

the park manager at Cedars Park, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, England. In the park there is a cork tree that was donated by the people of Waltham Mass. in August 1930. Our Borough of Broxbourne Councillors have asked me to contact people to try and get some more info about the event from our friends across the pond.

If you have knowledge of this event, please contact us. We will follow up with this correspondence and perhaps make some arrangements for our mutual benefit.



The new Dot Slamin Hill Gazebo on Waltham Common is a very pleasant site and should offer great enjoyment during the many events held there.



Also new to Waltham Common is the Veterans Circle of Remembrance.

The Waltham Historical Society is grateful for the continued support of the RTN Federal Credit Union.

