

The Edmund L. Sanderson Lecture Series presents

Working Women at Waltham Watch

By Tom McIntyre

The Waltham Historical Society is pleased to announce the next in our Edmund Sanderson Lecture Series. Mr. Tom McIntyre will speak on November 18th on "The Working Women of Waltham Watch."

This lecture will focus on both the women who worked at Waltham and



Sanderson Lecture Series

Tuesday evening

November 18, 2008

RTN Federal Credit Union

Community Room

600 Main Street

Waltham, MA 02453

*The Weathervane is an official
publication of the Waltham Historical
Society
190 Moody Street
Waltham, Massachusetts 02453
781-891-5815
www.walthamhistoricalsociety.org*

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the services provided women employees on the one hand, and the watches that Waltham Watch produced, to be worn by women on the other hand.

In the lecture you will learn about the beginnings of the Watch factory, and Aaron Dennison's utopian dream of providing for every worker's need. He was particularly attentive to the needs of the women employed in the factory. With his sisters the mainstay of his family's business, he appears to have been influenced by his recognition of their importance in the success of the endeavor..

In the late 1800's young women living away from home were a difficult issue with which to cope.

There was a feeling that they had to be protected and cared for. Many of the women working at the Waltham Watch lived at home with their parents. Still, a large number lived independently in the town of Waltham.

The Watch Company plant operated on the "Waltham System," a system originally developed by the operators of the Boston Manufacturing Company in Waltham.

The American Watch Co. continued improving the Waltham System, providing comprehensive benefits to the employees that were equal to or greater than those provided in modern industrial plants.

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Among their efforts included the Adams house. This house served as a place where young ladies could live a proper life while working at the watch factory as skilled assembly workers.



Although the Adams house did not provide sufficient space for the housing needs of all the young women, it did provide an example, and economic benchmark for other facilities in Waltham that housed the remainder of the women workers.

Realizing that healthy workers were productive workers, the factory in Waltham provided nursing stations in the factory for both male and female employees.

At the same time, a number of beds were maintained by the Company at the Waltham Hospital. These beds were reserved exclusively for employees of Waltham Watch Company at no charge to the employee.

Facilities such as these expanded on the recognition of the importance of the family in the life of the factory worker.

One hundred and fifty to two hundred women employees were served by a cafeteria created and maintained by the factory. Women in the factory were considered and treated as equals of their male co-workers on the work floor, but as was the custom in the late 1800s, were still segregated in many areas within the Company and community.



Mr. McIntyre is currently retired, and is spending most of his time on activities related to the National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors, Inc. On their Board of Directors of that organization, he has been instrumental in recent upgrades to their computing resources and on-line presence and capabilities.

The NAWCC discussion site at <http://mb.nawcc.org> represents the public dialog face of the organization while the web site www.nawcc.org is the view of the organization's structure and content. (The NAWCC.org link is in the process of being upgraded.)

Mr. McIntyre also plans to bring a small exhibit of the watches mentioned in the lecture to the talk, and has generously offered to comment on any watch that attendees would like to bring.

This lecture looks to be very interesting so please join us on November 18th, and listen as Mr. Tom McIntyre relates the story of Working Women in Waltham at the height of the Waltham Watch popularity.

The lecture begins at 7:00 pm at the Community Room of the RTN Federal Credit Union, 600 Main Street, in Waltham. The doors open at 6:45, and will be locked at 7:15 pm. Please be prompt to ensure you don't miss any of this exciting presentation. Phone 617-448-6706 for more information.

REMEMBER: DUES ARE PAST DUE

Your support helps us continue bringing you the lecture series, events such as the Kaminski appraisal evening, and the Weathervane newsletters. If you have not already done so, please send your dues or contribution today. If you have not paid your 2008-2009 dues a red dot appears on your mailing label. We will all benefit by your prompt attention to this request.

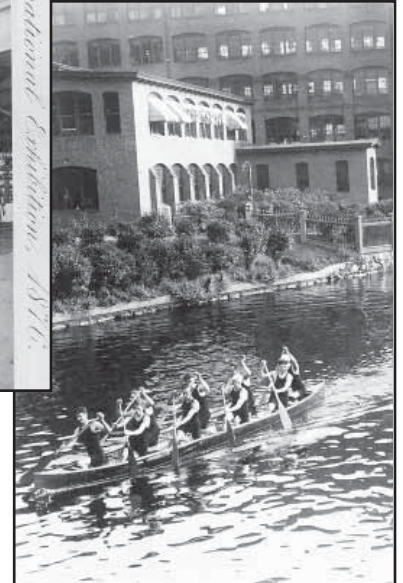
Photos of the Watch Factory and employees



Watch Factory in 1870s



1876 International Exhibition



House Tour 2009



Preparations for the Waltham Historical Society's 2009 House Tour are now underway.

The 2009 Tour will be held on Sunday, June 14, 2009. To have your home included, please contact Louise Hamilton at 781-899-7625.

The Waltham Dog Pound Building

We need your help now!

As you may be aware, the Waltham Historical Society has been seeking more space to accommodate our large (and growing) collection of Waltham artifacts and records. In the past few years, the City has generously worked to make available to us space that might otherwise be left under-utilized.

Recently the property at 92 Felton Street was offered as a possible site for our collection. If you had ever been past the building in recent years, you might wonder why we would consider such a space suitable for our uses.

The City, under the supervision of Mayor Jeannette McCarthy, has made an

extraordinary effort in cleaning the building, removing hazardous materials, and addressing structural issues that initially made the property unattractive.

The past two years have seen the property brought from the depths of neglect to a potential site for some of the City's greatest treasures. The condition of the property at present, is still far from move-in condition. However we have been connecting with various community-minded individuals and businesses who have encouraged us to pursue leasing the building.

Your Board of Directors has been meeting to discuss the options available that can make this possible. Questions have been raised, and been answered to the satisfaction of the Board.

A few issues remain to be addressed.

First on the list is the status of the CPA funding the Society hopes will come to fruition. With the funding, we would be able to move forward with rehabilitating the space using high quality, architecturally appropriate plans and materials. Currently, the proposal is still under review by the City's Law Department and cannot be assumed by us to be available.

Next on the list are questions that can only be answered by professionally trained architects familiar with this type of project. Under our current financial circumstances, we are hard pressed to find funding for such a service.

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The Building at 92 Felton Street served as the Waltham Water Works before becoming the City Animal Control Office.

Another issue is the increased cost of operations that accompanies occupancy of any property. Currently, we occupy space where the sole expenses are rent and insurance. To move into a space like the Dog Pound, our maintenance expenses alone will exceed our current requirements.

What avenues are available to us to address these issues in a manner that will not jeopardize the future of the Society?

After reviewing all balance sheets, income projections, and costs, and factoring the known expenses for utilities and maintenance of the Felton Street property, the Board has come to the realization that we must increase our annual income stream by \$15-\$20,000.00 dollars.

With advice from similar organizations that have been through this type of process, it was suggested that we conduct an Annual Appeal for funds.

Others have suggested finding a major corporate sponsor to underwrite the costs of a portion of the expenses.

Each of these recommendations is under serious consideration. As a first step, we are asking your guidance and support at our upcoming November 18th meeting.

The Board of Directors will ask for a vote of the membership present to give the board permission on whether to proceed or drop our initiative.

In the interim, we would respectfully request anyone who is willing to step forward with a donation to the Society to please do so now. As well, if you know others who might be swayed to contribute to our future, give them our contact information.

If you know of an architect willing to assist with the preparation of plans and guidance through the labyrinth of steps required to obtain an occupancy permit, please point them in our direction.

Now is the time that we need your support most. Without the funds from the CPA, making the building habitable for the Society's holdings will require more and more funding. The building is currently the site of the former Dog Pound. With your help, we would like to see it return to the glory of its earlier life as gem of architectural integrity known as the Waltham Water Works.

Please do what you can to help us in our time of need. If we can see a strong show of support, the Board believes this opportunity is one that will rarely be made possible. You can make a difference.

Donations may be made to:

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Homes of Waltham

Now on Display at 760 Main Street

The Waltham Historical Society has a new exhibit at our satellite office that shows many of the homes in Waltham that are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

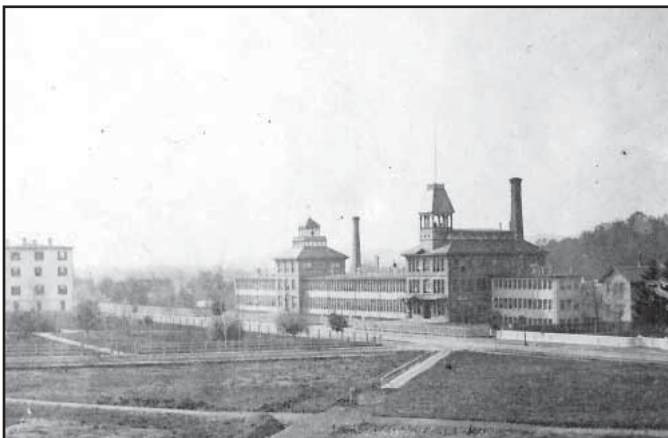
Homes that over the years have been lost to re-development, replaced by newer structures, or renovated to like-new condition are depicted in photos from the collection of the Historical Society.

The Society is compiling and documenting homes that still stand in the city, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some of these homes will be included in the upcoming release of Mort Isaacson's *Driving Tour of Waltham, The Main Street Corridor*.

Check our website calendar or call: 781-891-5815 for more information.



Waltham Historical Society and Charles River Museum of Industry collaborate to create exhibit at Watch Factory



Berkeley, the developers of the former Waltham Watch Factory have asked the Historical Society and the Charles River Museum of Industry to assist with creating an exhibit to adorn the main entrance of their new home.

Together with Dan Yaeger of CRMI, the Society has been collecting and scanning images from our collection in an effort to create the graphics and stories to accompany the display.

The space is scheduled to open on June 1, 2009. As part of the exhibit, plans call for pieces of equipment used at the factory in its heyday to be displayed. The story accompanying each piece will describe its purpose and significance to the process of watch making.

Another important part of the exhibit will be the human aspect of the American Waltham Watch Company. Depictions of the workers will be prominently displayed to give today's employees a connection with the employees of the past.

We will keep you posted on activities as we proceed.



NEW ENGLAND HISTORY FESTIVAL

WHEN: Saturday, November 15th, 2008 from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM

WHERE: Hibernian Hall, 151 Watertown Street, Watertown, MA 02472

ADMISSION: \$16.00 PHONE: (339) 368-1971

email: historicalweather@hotmail.com

TICKETS: Log on to www.historyfestival.org or mail a \$16.00 check made out to:

Educonference, P.O. Box 145, Watertown, MA 02471

The second annual New England History Festival will take place on Saturday, November 15th, 2008 from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the Hibernian Hall, located at 151 Watertown Street in Watertown, Massachusetts.

Come and enjoy a historical blend of re-enactors, authors, collectors, historical societies, genealogists, historical researchers, speakers and vendors as we celebrate over 375 years of New England history. Presentations will be made by author and keynote speaker Stephanie Schorow. She will discuss her book "The Crime of the Century: How the Brink's Robbers Stole Millions and the Hearts of Boston." Living history presentations will be performed in period attire by Julia Donahue ("Mother Goose"), Linda Palmer ("Ann Vassall: A Puritan Woman in 1637"), James B. Hogan ("1775 New England Congregational Pastor"), the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment ("The Storming of Fort Wagner"), David L. Smith ("New England During the Civil War"), the Lexington Minute Men and folklorist John Horrigan, who will present brief vignettes on "The Great Nantucket Fire of 1846", "John Winthrop's Sudden Gust" and "The Great Meteor Storm of 1833".

The New England History Festival has been affectionately referred to by some as "Historapalooza". It is a living history celebration and a revue of re-enactors and researchers who proclaim that "the past is a blast!"

The hall is accessible for the handicapped and by public transportation (a short walk from to Watertown Bus Yard). Tickets can be obtained online at www.historyfestival.org or by mailing a \$16.00 check made out to: Educonference, P.O. Box 145, Watertown, MA 02471. There are a limited amount of tickets available. Like the inaugural event last year, this show will sell out quickly. Tickets available at the door.

Questions? Call (339) 368-1971.



Appraisal Event a great success

The Waltham Historical Society recently sponsored an evening of appraisals for our members. Mary Westcott, appraiser for Kaminski auctioneers offered her assessment of many items brought in to our 760 Main Street office.



Members were treated to an interesting lesson in evaluating and assessing objects some of us believed were of significant value. Many of the items had great sentimental value to their owners, but very little market value. Reasons for the disparity and professional tips on assessing items were explained by Ms. Westcott.

The evening turned out to be quite educational for all in attendance. Mr. David L. Smith's collection of early newspapers were complimented on the preservation techniques used to store and show items of such vintage.

Items of such diversity as books, silverware, souvenirs, and jewelry were examined and assessed.

We look forward to another event of this type in the future.



Please patronize all our sponsors. Without their support, we would be unable to continue our efforts to preserve Waltham's history for future generations.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
 LENDER

This month we received a correspondence from Mr. Henry A. Gibson sharing some of his memories of growing up in Waltham. The memories included enjoying circus events at the Waldorf Theater, movies at the Central Square Theater, and taking the trolley to Norumbega park.

Stories of kayaking on the Charles, watching horses pull snow plows, and watching milk being delivered bring fond feelings for the days when Waltham was a very different place. Enjoying 5 cent burgers and hot chocolate after a train ride to Boston bring Mr. Gibson great pleasure.

Please consider sending us your memories for publication here.