

NEWS-LETTER

DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY DEDHAM MA 02027-0215
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MARCH 2010

JANICE FRONKO TO SPEAK ON SILK MANUFACTURING IN DEDHAM MARCH 25

Janice E. Fronko, educator and textile historian, will present “Jonathan Cobb and Silk Manufacturing in Dedham”, March 25, 7:30 pm, in the Dedham Historical Society auditorium. The lecture is free for DHS members and \$5 for non-members. Franko will discuss Cobb, his involvement in the silk industry in Dedham, and the demise of the industry in New England.

Fronko, a graduate of Framingham State College and the University of Rhode Island, wrote her master’s thesis on the silk industry and Cobb’s many contributions to it. Her career as a teacher at Fairgrounds Middle School in Nashua and as adjunct faculty at Framingham State College has allowed her to continue her passion. She has also served as a museum educator, curatorial technician and textile conservator at the American Textile History Museum in Lowell.

During the time of early mechanical loom development and the construction of textile factories on New England’s rivers and canals, a little known craze for silk cultivation crept into the region. After flourishing briefly, the silk boom went bust, sweeping away the fortunes of many men.

Jonathan Holmes Cobb, founder of the New England Silk Company in Dedham (1836), was an inventor, author, and industry promoter. Cobb devoted 15-20 years of his life pursuing a passionate belief in America’s ability to successfully engage in sericulture and silk manufacturing for profit. He wrote four editions of a silk manual to prove his point, but in the end lost nearly everything.

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LETTER FROM THE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends;

This is my first newsletter as Executive Director of the Dedham Historical Society. It is an honor to take over the helm of this organization and I look forward to many years of working with the Board of Directors, our faithful membership, and the Dedham community. Throughout my career I have enjoyed learning about local history and finding interesting ways to enhance public understanding of the past, present and future of a community. The DHS offers me a wonderful opportunity to continue with my passion.

We are now well into the new year and it is the perfect time to appreciate past accomplishments while focusing on the future. I want to thank outgoing Executive Director and CEO, Ron Frazier, who graciously spent many days providing me with an orientation of the day-to-day operations. We also say a fond farewell to two long time employees and welcome our new people who have stepped into their shoes. As you might imagine our new staff will bring a few changes to our operations, but rest assured that **dedication to our mission and membership will remain a priority.**

One of the changes you will see in this newsletter is to highlight items in our collection. The objects might be new to the collection or we may have owned them for many years, but we hope by showcasing them you will appreciate our efforts to collect items that represent life in Dedham. This month we introduce a finial from the Ames School.

Several of you have already stopped by the office to say hello, and I look forward to meeting more of you throughout the year. If you have ideas

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Janice Fronko lecture from page 1

Silk in America had a rise and fall not unlike the "dot com" bubble of our own time. Unfortunately for Cobb and the many individuals who lost everything during the silk craze, the New England cotton and wool industries overshadow silk's importance in the region's textile history. **Note: The Ben Fisher Memorial Lecture and Annual Meeting are scheduled for Thursday, April 15 at 7:30 pm.**

SAVE THE DATE! SOIRÉE AND HOUSE TOUR

Pull out your Blackberry or iPhone and save the following dates. You won't want to miss these wonderful events!

Soirée: Saturday, May 22

House Tour: Sunday, May 23

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Our thanks to the following for in-kind donations to our offices. These items help us function more efficiently.

- two office chairs from Historic New England
- two computers from Russell Brier & Company LLC

We are seeking the following items. Please call or email if you can help us.

- Small digital postage meter
- Digital camera
- Small microwave

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBERS TO THE SOCIETY

Marianne Hart	Joan Warshaw
Randall Kennedy	Beverly Armour
Peter W. Smith	Peggy Gundal
Louisa & Robert Miller	

ANNUAL APPEAL DONORS

DONOR (\$100 - \$249)

Beverly White Ford (IMO Walter and Helen White)
Joan Gordon Wislocki

FRIEND (\$10 - \$99)

Agnes E. Anderson	Helen Arnold
Lisa Compagnone (IMO Rosario Compagnone)	
Mary Elizabeth Hannah	R. Newcomb Stillwell

ARCHIVAL ACQUISITIONS

Courtenay Worthington Report on tornado damage to farms in Worcester, 1953. Worthington was president of Dedham Historical Society from 1963-1976. Gift of Norfolk and Dedham Group.

Bob Hanson Civil War Lecture at Dedham Historical Society. Tape.

CD of photographs of the Carroll, Bakes, Marshes, Sanderson, Hewins and Page families. Gift of G. Sanderson.

Photograph Collection from 1960's and 1980's of Dedham places such as Oakdale Square and events such as the 350th parade. Gift of Barbara Lyons.

CD_ROM on restoration of cupolas from Ames School House. Gift of Paul Corey.

James Joyce Ramble Poster. Gift of Alice Ungethuen.
DVD of Sacco and Vanzetti, a film by Peter Miller. Purchase.

Richard Ellis papers. Richard Ellis was Town Clerk in Dedham, circa 1830. Gift of the Canton Historical Society.

Dedham High School Class of 1959 50th Reunion Photographs and DVD. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Corey.

Fairbanks House Image. Gift of Lexington Historical Society.

Two Copies of "The Dedham Mirror", publication of Dedham High School. Ms. Carol Roche, on behalf of Dedham High School.

Postcard, Dedham High School, circa 1900. Purchase.

LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

A Massachusetts Mystery The 1801 Tragedy of Jason Fairbanks & Elisabeth Fales. A Joint publication of the Fairbanks House, Dedham, MA & the Dedham Historical Society. Purchase.

Dedham Historic and Heroic Tales from Shiretown. Gift of the author, James Parr.

Reflections 1958, the yearbook of Dedham High School. Gift of Thomas and Kathleen Lynch.

Louis D. Brandeis: A Life by Melvin I. Urofsky. Purchase.

Pointers #87 and #88. Two issues of an Italian genealogical magazine. Gift of William Sestito, and Carol Sestito.

A Change in Altitude by Anita Shreve. Purchase.

Rose's Garden by Peter Reynolds. Gift of author.

FROM THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

The DHS subscribes to a number of antiques related magazines and journals. Visit us to peruse the latest *Antiques & Fine Arts*, *The Magazine Antiques*, *Maine Antiques Digest*, *Kovels on Antiques & Collectables* and others.

PURPOSE OF THE DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SECTION 1. To bring together those who have a common interest in local history so that they may find enjoyment through their association and mutual encouragement in their particular interests in this field.

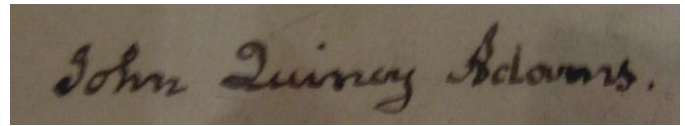
SECTION 2. To help the people of Dedham, through a greater knowledge of local and national history, to become more aware of the value of their American heritage and take pride in their community's part in its development.

SECTION 3. To collect, manage, interpret, and display materials pertaining to the history of New England and particularly the Town of Dedham. These materials may include tangible or intangible property or real estate deemed to be of historic interest, educational value, social significance, or necessary for the implementation of the Society's mission. Such materials shall be used to promote interest in and research on New England and Dedham by the Society's members and others seeking information on topics within the scope of the Society's collections.

SECTION 4. The Society shall, further, advocate and promote the concept and practice of historic preservation within the Town of Dedham.

SECTION 5. To focus, through visible, tangible and audible means, special attention on the Historical Society, its museum, collections, historic sons and daughters, sites and events, historical advancements, and the Historical Society's collections, in order to assure, via awareness of them, support for their preservation and pride through knowledge of them.

(DHS Bylaws – adopted Nov. 2, 1993; revised 2001 and 2003)

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "John Quincy Adams." The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured paper.

PRESIDENTS' DAY SPECIAL EXHIBITION

Hopefully, you found time to stop by and see the special exhibit of documents signed by four U.S. Presidents. These documents are very light sensitive and cannot be placed on long-term display without potential damage. Throughout the year the DHS will showcase additional objects from the collection and share them with you as special short-term exhibitions.

A TREASURE FROM THE DHS COLLECTIONS

In this newsletter we highlight a new addition to the museum collection from the Ames School:

Finial from the Ames School House This painted wooden finial measures approximately 21" high and 9" in diameter. It was replaced by a plastic finial during the restoration of the cupola on the school in 2008. Gift of Paul Corey.



Letter from Executive Director from page 1

for lectures, special events or just want to introduce yourself please call me at 781-326-5762, send an email (society@dedhamhistorical.org), or better yet come by for a visit. Be sure to join us for our lecture on March 25, "Jonathan Cobb and Silk Manufacturing in Dedham" –I will be there waiting to meet you.

Vicky L. Kruckeberg, Executive Director

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership dues notices were mailed out at the end of 2009. The DHS thanks everyone who promptly sent us your dues. Many of you were generous and included an additional contribution as well. If you haven't sent in your dues, please do so as soon as you can and consider upgrading your membership or including an additional contribution. Your dues are an essential part of our operating budget. Thank you.

DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 215
Dedham Massachusetts 02027-0215

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
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DEDHAM, MA
PERMIT NO 26

Library Hours: Tuesday–Friday 9 am–4 pm

Museum Hours: 12 pm–4 pm

Both are open even-dated Saturdays 1–4 pm

DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Stephen K. Brayton, President; Alexander K. Leith, Vice President; William E. Flanagan, Treasurer; Mary Anne Osborne, Recording Secretary. Directors: Andrea M. Gilmore, Dr. John J. Herrmann, Jr., James D. Kaufman, Clara B. Potash, Peter H. Reynolds, Michael B. Grogan, Mark R. Whalen, and Suzzara F.C. Durocher. Executive Director, Vicky L. Kruckeberg

A TREASURE FROM THE DHS ARCHIVES

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Henry O. Hildreth in 1888 to the Society regarding the donation of the "President's Chair" made from the Avery Oak. The chair is currently on exhibit at the Dedham Historical Society.

To the Dedham Historical Society,

I respectfully ask the acceptance by the Society of the followed named articles for its personal use.

The President's Chair, made entirely from wood taken from the Avery Oak in 1886. This chair was carefully modeled from an ancient chair, which belonged to Rev. John Eliot of Roxbury, commonly called the "Apostle to the Indians" and was used in his study. It was preserved for many years in a Roxbury family, by which it was afterwards given to the late Rev. Dr. Harris, for 43 years, minister of the First Parish in Dorchester and by him presented to the Society, by whom it is carefully preserved as a venerated memorial. A correct drawing of the old chair may be found on pp. 415 Vol. 1 of the Memorial History of Boston. The President's Chair now given to the Society, is an exact copy of the original Eliot Chair and was made under my special superintendence by a skillful Scotch mechanic, accustomed to such work.

The age of the Avery Oak from which this chair was made is of course uncertain, but according to tradition it was an old tree when the town was first settled. It is not at all improbable that it may have been seen by John Eliot, who in his frequent journeys to Cutshamokin, Ponkapoag and Natick, may have often passed through this town.

I trust that the Chair, and the venerable and venerated tree, from whose sturdy stock its material substance was taken, may outlast many successive generations of our descendants.

Respectfully,

Henry O. Hildreth

Dedham, March 7, 1888