

## *Dedham Historical Society April 2005 Newsletter*

### ***WILLARD CLOCKS TO BE MARCH 8 LECTURE SUBJECT***

John R. Stephens, Director of the Willard House and Clock Museum, will be discussing Willard Clocks at the Dedham Historical Society Museum on Tuesday, March 8, at 7:30 PM. Of special interest will be a discussion on the Society's extremely rare Simon Willard Astronomical Shelf Timekeeper, with face by Paul Revere, and the First Church, Unitarian's Simon Willard Steeple Clock.

Stephens is a Texas native and a graduate of Austin College in Sherman, Texas, South Methodist University School of Law in Dallas, Texas, and of the Preservation Studies Program at Boston University. He was named Director of Willard House and Clock Museum in Grafton, Massachusetts in 2001 after serving as Curator from 1993 to 2001. He serves as the chairman of the Grafton Historical Commission, treasurer of the Grafton Historical Society, and is a member of the Grafton Historic District Commission and the Community Preservation Committee.

The Willard family made their first clocks in central Massachusetts before the end of the Revolutionary War. Benjamin Willard began making clocks in his small Grafton workshop in 1766. Within a few short years, his three younger brothers—Simon, Ephraim and Aaron—would follow in his footsteps and become America's premiere 18<sup>th</sup> century clockmakers. In 1802, Simon Willard obtained a patent for his Improved Timepiece, or "banjo" clock; today it is considered to be one of the most significant styles of American timepieces.

Founded in 1971, the Willard House and Clock museum's collection includes over 80 Willard clocks and is the largest of its kind in the world. The collection is displayed in period room settings in the 1718 Joseph Willard homestead, the 1766 Benjamin Willard Clock Manufactory and three modern galleries.

The program will trace the history of the Willard clockmakers, from their first shop in Grafton, to the later workshops in Roxbury and Boston. The presentation will include images of clocks from the museum's collection, and will include a brief discussion on the restoration of the Simon Willard tower clock in the First Parish Church of Dedham.

### ***2005 DEDHAM POTTERY PLATE IS THE DUCK***

The 2005 Museum Reproduction plate from the Dedham Historical Society is the Duck.

According to the Society's Dedham Pottery Curator, Jim Kaufman, the Dedham Pottery's whimsical Duck border pattern originated during the early 1890's prior to the pottery's move to Dedham from Chelsea, MA. This well-balanced design employs the Japanesque imagery of flowing water to enhance its appeal. The duck design was quite popular with the Dedham (and Chelsea) Pottery's' customers from the beginning and that remained so for nearly half a century.

Unlike previous years when delivery of the plates was expected by December, the first 200 plates have already been delivered and are at the Society.

The plates are still numbered and limited to 300 per year, after which no others will be made.

Cost for the plates is \$98 plus applicable tax and shipping if desired. Members purchasing before March 15, need only pay \$80, and after March 15, \$89.50. Before March 15, non-members may purchase the Duck for \$88.00.

A limited supply of previous year plates are also available, at \$96 each, with a 10% discount to members.

### ***2004 ANNUAL APPEAL CONTRIBUTORS***

Our sincere thanks to all who helped us to meet our financial obligations for the year 2004. It is only through such help that we are able to do so much of that to which we aspire. It is important to note that many other individuals and organizations have made significant contributions throughout the year to specific projects of the Society. Those have been gratefully acknowledged at the time of the gift.

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