



NEWS-LETTER

DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY DEDHAM MA 02027-0215
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HANSON TO START SOCIETY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR WITH A HISTORY OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Robert B. Hanson, the unofficial historian for the town of Dedham, usually talks about the town's history—its people, places and things, and events past. On Thursday, January 22, he will talk about our history—the history of one of the oldest historical societies in the nation, as the Dedham Historical Society celebrates its 150th Anniversary.

Hanson is both a past president and director of the Society. As is his custom, he has researched the Dedham Historical Society's early years and found plenty of interesting tales beyond the "straight history" of our Society. He literally knows "where all the bodies are buried" and never hesitates to reveal historical secrets.

So just what is he going to tell us about Dedham Historical Society? Come to his talk on January 22, and be amazed, amused, inspired and mystified.

The lecture cost if \$5 for non-members, with no charge for members.

DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES 150 YEARS

The Dedham Historical Society is 150 years old in 2009! We can be proud that our Society is one of the oldest local historical societies in America. As part of our year-long birthday celebration, each *News-Letter* in 2009 will look back on the Society's long history. We begin with an account of the Society's founding and early years, published in 1890 in the *Dedham Historical Register*, the Society's quarterly publication for many years.

DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY A Brief Sketch

(Reprint from the *Dedham Historical Register*, 1890)

On the first day of February, 1859, Henry Orin Hildreth, Calvin Guild, Danforth Phipps Wight, Jonathan Holmes Cobb, Francis Marsh and William Bullard, met in the office of the Dedham Institution for Savings, to form a society for local historical work. The object as stated in the record of the meeting was the "preserving and transmitting to posterity all possible memorials of past and present times." Dr. Wight was chosen chairman, and Mr. Guild, secretary. A committee was then appointed, consisting of Messrs. Bullard, Hildreth and Guild, to draft the Constitution and By-Laws. This was adopted at the next meeting, February 15th, and continued in force, with some slight changes, until the adoption of the new By-Laws, March 2, 1887. The record further states that a "nomination was then made of forty-one citizens of this town, who should be invited to associate themselves with us in the organization of the Society." Only twenty-two responded to the invitation, most of whom now take an active interest in the work.

As early as 1853, Mr. Hildreth called the attention of several persons to the need and importance of such an organization, and the credit for the beginning of this enterprise was largely due to him. His untiring energy, with the earnest support of Mr. Guild, brought about the formation of the Society.

The first regular meeting was held on March 10, 1859, and the officers chosen were the Rev. Alvan Lamson, D.D., president; Dr. Wight, vice-president; Mr. Hildreth, corresponding secretary; Mr. Guild, recording secretary, treasurer, and librarian; Mr. Cobb, Mr. Bullard, and Waldo Colburn, curators; Enos Foord, and Henry White Richards, auditors.

During the thirty years of the Society's existence, there have been but few changes in officers, as will be seen in the appended list.

Three years later, April 23, 1862, the Legislature passed an Act incorporating the Society, and this was accepted on the 9th of the following June. On February 25, 1886, an additional act was passed, giving the Society the power to hold property.

Until June 25, 1866, by the courtesy of Mr. Guild, meetings were held in the office of the Savings Bank, where the Society kept its small library. But as this room was needed for another purpose, quarters were secured in the Court House, through the friendly offer of the County Commissioners. During the following summer the library was moved to the new location, where meetings were held until the erection of the present building.

The progress of the Society, during this time, has been gradual. At the end of the first year thirty-seven members were enrolled, and now the membership numbers one hundred and forty-seven, including women, who were first admitted December 1, 1886. On the 21st of March, 1864, the library contained sixty-eight bound volumes, a large collection of pamphlets, and a small number of newspapers and manuscripts. At the present time there are about two thousand volumes, comprising standard works on American history, histories of towns in New England, especially Massachusetts, and genealogies. It also contains a large number of pamphlets, portraits, maps, articles of ancient furniture, relics, etc. The whole forms a valuable collection, largely the accumulation of the last three years.

Before the adoption of the new By-Laws on March 2, 1887, quarterly meetings were held, at which papers were read on subjects relating to Dedham. At a special meeting held in the Vestry of the First Church, September 14, 1885, to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the settlement of the town, interesting historical sketches were ready by several members.

In 1883, the first publication of the Society was issued, entitled "A Plan of Dedham Village." It contained the record of the original allotments of land in the centre and upper villages and a heliotype of the plan made by Henry Sylvester Talbot, facts for which were collected by William Bullard, assisted by the late Judge Colburn. The original plan was given to the Society by Mr. Bullard, June

9, 1862. A list of the publications, and papers read and prepared for the Society, follows this sketch.

At the Annual Meeting, March 3, 1886, Don Gleason Hill announced "the munificent gifts of Miss Hannah Shuttleworth, by her will now in course of probate." The Society received by this bequest a lot of land, and ten thousand dollars to be used for the erection of a building thereon suitable for its purposes. By means of this gift and about fifteen hundred dollars subscribed by members and friends, a fire-proof building of colonial style was erected with ample accommodations sufficient for its needs for many years. The work was completed under the direction of the Curators, as a building committee, and Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., architect. Messrs. Woodbury and Leighton were the builders. It was begun in the fall of 1886, and completed in December 1887.

No formal dedication was attempted, but the building was opened with a loan exhibition of historical relics. This began January 25, 1888, and continued until February, giving much pleasure to a large number of visitors. Since that time, the Society has taken up its work with renewed energy.

THE FIRST 31 YEARS OF THE SOCIETY

In the early days of the Society it was the custom to present papers, or essays, on various subjects. It is interesting to see what was being discussed during those early days. This listing below is exactly as printed in the Dedham Historical Register in 1890.

Papers Read Before the Society

New Court House, July, 1859	Jonathan H. Cobb
Old Court House, Sept. 5, 1859	Jonathan H. Cobb
Trees, First Parish, Mar. 5, 1860	Danforth P. Wight
Miniatures of Washington, Dec. 24, 1860	Danforth P. Wight
Dedham Branch Railroad, March 25, 1861	Calvin Guild
The Flagons, Dec. 16, 1861	Danforth P. Wight
Old Cemetery, Dedham Village, Dec. 12, 1864	Danforth P. Wight
Manufacturing in Dedham, Sept. 5, 1865	Calvin Guild
Norfolk Cotton Manufacturing Company	Calvin Guild
Powder Rock, Dec. 17, 1866	Carlos Slafter
Dedham Village, 1807, June 10, 1867	Danforth P. Wight
The Damon Donation, June 6, 1870	Danforth P. Wight
American Loyalists, March 6, 1871	Jonathan Edwards
Life of Danforth P. Wight, April 12,	Jonathan H. Cobb

1875
Dedham Minute Men, April 12, 1875

Motley and Quincy, Dec. 31, 1877

Paper, with design for Town Seal,
Mar. 18, 1878

Indian Deeds and Village, Natick, Sept.
14, 1885

Burying Place, Dedham, Sept. 14, 1885
History of West Dedham, Sept. 14,
1885

Old Houses, Dedham, Sept., 18815
Memorial of Judge Colburn, march 3,
1886

Dedham, England, Dec. 7, 1887

Epitaphs, Dedham, Oct. 3, 1888

Memoir of T. L. Wakefield, Mar. 6,
1889

Discovery of America by Northmen,
Apr. 10, '89

Memoir of C. C. Churchill, May 8,
1889

Puritan and Huguenot, May 8, 1889
Inauguration of Washington, June 5,
1889

Maine and Massachusetts, Oct. 2, 1889

Dedham and Dorchester Boundary
Line, Nov. 7 '88

Abelard and Protestantism, Dec. 6,
1889

Memorial of William F. Allen, Jan. 8,
1890

Winter of Fifty Years Ago, Jan. 8, 1890
District School, Eighty Years Ago, Jan.
8, 1890

Erastus
Worthington

Erastus
Worthington

Erastus
Worthington

Erastus
Worthington

Carlos Slafter
Calvin S. Locke

Henry O. Hildreth
Erastus
Worthington

William F. Cheney
Carlos Slafter

Erastus
Worthington
Edmund F. Slafter

Henry O. Hildreth

Joseph P. Seabury
George Fred
Williams

Alonzo B.
Wentworth
Charles F. Jenney

William H. Fish, Jr.

Erastus
Worthington
Henry O. Hildreth
George F. Joyce, Jr.

According to the Preface written by Elihu Root, the Secretary of War in 1901, when the General Index was published, "voluminous" archives were consulted in order to compile this collection. They included: "the records, Union and Confederate, of every company, battery, regiment, brigade, division, corps, and army, as well as those of geographical military departments and division and include the files of the War Department and all of its bureaus." The Union records are complete, but the Confederate ones are not.

Initiated at the close of President Lincoln's first term, the series had been continued under successive administrations. Colonel E. D. Townsend, Assistant Adjutant-General, United States Army, began to prepare the records for public use in 1864. After the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865, ninety boxes of its records were shipped to Washington. An act was passed in 1874, assigning the title to the reports as *The Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*. General Townsend resumed the work succeeded by various superintendents, including Captain, later Lieutenant Colonel Robert N. Scott. Under Scott's supervision, 79 "preliminary prints" were compiled and 30 sets were printed. In 1880, it was decided that there would be a number of series: Series I detailed formal reports of both sides, with military operations, correspondence, orders and returns arranged chronologically; Series II contained prisoner of war material from both sides such as correspondence, orders and reports; Series III sets forth material from the Northern authorities not included in the other Series such as reports of the Secretary of War; Series IV incorporates those of the Southern authorities. Book one was initially published in 1881. Joseph W. Kirkley was the compiler most closely associated with the work.

There is a general index for each set of books. Researchers can locate the names of those who participated listed in alphabetical order, last name first. Place names are listed, whether states or battle names, as well as army designations. Under Massachusetts are listed the troops, battalions, regiments, companies, batteries with volume and page numbers. For instance, the Dedham Post No. 144 G. A. R. is named in memory of Captain Charles W. Carroll. According to the reports, Captain Carroll died of wound at the Second Battle of Manassas. He was in the 18th Infantry, Massachusetts. There are also accounts of the battle.

SOCIETY RECEIVES IMPORTANT CIVIL WAR COLLECTION

The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies and Navies

The Society's Library received a generous donation from Jonathan Cook, who had previously researched the Civil War at the Society. The gift includes 129 volumes plus an index titled *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Part of the donation is a companion set known as *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 24 volumes in all, accompanied by an index. Both sets of books are reprints published by The National Historical Society in 1985 and 1987 respectively from earlier publications of the United States Federal Government.

The first naval series relates the records and statistics of all naval operations including interior waterways. The second contains statistics and records of naval prisoners. It was authorized in 1894, and published in 1927.

These publications are considered one of the most important research tools for anyone seeking information on the Civil War, and are in limited locations.

SPECIAL THANKS TO DIANA McNAMARA

Diana McNamara, a DHS member and professional graphic designer, generously designed the logo for the Dedham Historical Society 150th Anniversary.

THANKS TO THE FAIRBANKS GARDEN CLUB

Thank you for the donation of a lovely Christmas wreath, seen on the porch of the Society's Building.

NEW ARCHIVAL ACQUISITIONS

Maps of Needham and Dedham, and the John Sigel Collection. Gift of John Sigel.

Riverdale Elementary Yearbook, 2008. Gift of Nancy Clement.

1831 Map of Dedham. Copy of map of Dedham from Massachusetts Archives, as well as CD. Gift of Electa Tritsch.

Copies of photos of 15 Richards St. The originals were loaned by Margot Austin who lived there.

Postcard, The Square, Dedham Mass. Purchase.

Court House Photograph, Dedham, Mass. Signed by Isabelle French. Purchase.

Dedham Cub Scout Pack 2 Flag Project. Letters and flag, in appreciation of efforts of troops in Iraq. Gift of Dedham Cub Scout Pack 2, Mr. Joseph Levens, Cubmaster.

Articles on Dedham Pottery. Gift of Carol Sestito.

Photo of Athletic Team 1906. Gift of Dorr Begnal.

Dedham High School, Class of 2008, graduation brochures. Gift of Dedham High School, Class of 2008, Stephen Dewar, advisor.



The earliest known image of the Dedham Historical Society, dated 1903

Norfolk County Jail Redevelopment Papers. Gift of John W. Delaney, a lawyer who worked on the redevelopment of the Norfolk County Jail and House of Correction for over 20 years.

Haynes Family Collection. Dedham Mirror issues from Dedham High School are included.

Keaney Family High School Memorabilia. Dedham High School, Class of 1948, 45th Reunion booklet, 1993. Gift of Brian Keaney.

Noyes daguerreotype. A cased photograph of one of two Noyes daughters. Gift of Bill McKibben.

A Tale of a Dedham Tavern, signed by author, Walter Austin. Gift of Marcia Krim.

Current Aerial Photos of Dedham Square. Gift of Ned Roberts.

**Old books for sale at the Society
See our recent e-mail
or call 781-326-1385**

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 and CEO, Ronald F. Frazier.