



NEWS-LETTER

DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Tel: 781-326-1385 – E-Mail: Society@DedhamHistorical.org – Web Site: DedhamHistorical.org

Library Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 9 am – 4 pm; Museum Hours: Tuesday – Friday; 12 – 4 pm

Both are open even-dated Saturdays, 1 – 4 pm

Saturday, May 14 & 28; June 4 & 18

MAY 2011

AN EVENING OF COCKTAILS BY THE RIVER . . .

The Dedham Historical Society's Spring Soirée will take place on May 21, 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the elegant Colonial Revival home of Carla and Douglas Conigliaro, 15 Hale Drive. Built in 1930 by R. Minturn and Helen Peabody Sedgwick, this classic, five bay, hipped roof structure is sited on a broad bend of land on the Charles River. This site was originally a part of "Broad Oak" the extensive cattle farm of the Reverend Ebenezer Burgess, minister of Allin Congregational Church for almost 40 years in the mid 19th century. The current owners purchased the home in 2001 and embarked upon an extensive restoration and reconstruction of the house and surrounding gardens. Tickets for the Soirée are \$100 per person; Patron Tickets \$125; Benefactor Tickets \$200. Invitations were recently mailed to DHS members. For more information please see the special insert in this edition of the newsletter.

ANNUAL MEETING ELECTION RESULTS

The Annual Meeting was held on April 14, preceding the Ben Fisher Memorial Lecture by Robert Hanson. The following individuals were elected to the Board of Directors: William Flanagan re-elected as Treasurer for 2 years; Jim Kaufman re-elected to the Board for 3 years; and Clara Potash re-elected for 3 years. A new addition to the board for 3 years is Thomas A. Gormley. Tom, his wife Kate and three children are residents of Dedham. He is an investment manager specializing in not-for-profits with Cambridge Associates LLC.

SUCCESSFUL SPRING PROGRAMS AT THE DHS

The DHS enjoyed a busy spring with a variety of well attended programs. Anthony Sammarco's lecture on "Howard Johnson: 28 Flavors" was enjoyed by over 75 guests remembering fried clams and their favorite ice cream. The Theatre Espresso performance of "American Tapestry: Immigrant Children of the Bread and Roses Strike" entertained both children and adults as the performers encouraged the audience to participate in the program. At the final lecture of the spring season local historian and author Robert Hanson brought his usual sense of humor and style as he spoke about Dedham's three historic "squares." On April 30, the experts at Grogan & Company provided fascinating information to visitors who brought their antiques to the Appraisal Day. The DHS sincerely thanks David Newsom, the Dedham Cultural Council, Eastern

Bank, the Dedham Rotary Club, and Grogan & Company for their sponsorship of these programs.



Dasha Layne and her daughter Amelia, a 4th grade student at Avery School, visit with actors after the Theatre Espresso performance.

375th COMMEMORATIVE PLATE AND THE DHS 2011 ANNUAL PLATE

The DHS is designing two plates for 2011. A special commemorative plate for Dedham's 375th anniversary will include the 375th logo on the back of the plate. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this plate will be contributed to the 375th Anniversary Committee.

The DHS Annual Plate is also in the design stage. Several classic Dedham Pottery designs are being considered and the final decision is expected in May. Details for ordering both plates will be sent to DHS members and other past purchasers of reproduction plates.

MEMORIES TO CELEBRATE DEDHAM'S 375th ANNIVERSARY

“Memories of a Girl's Life in Dedham 1914-1920, War and Pestilence”

by Catherine P. Harris

In the spring of 1918 a catastrophe gave us something else to think about (other than WWI). Influenza had broken out near by and as it spread from town to town was fast becoming a full fledged epidemic. Dedham watched its course with dread. There was no such thing as inoculation to prevent it and no drugs to mitigate or stop it. The only advice doctors could give was to stay away from crowds. Luckily for Dedham there were among its citizens two middle-aged sisters well known for their good works. They were always ready for any emergency. Because they felt their town could not possibly escape the worsening epidemic, they started preparing for it.

Dedham had no hospital and those in near-by towns were already full. What to do? The Misses Snelling were not discouraged. They climbed into their electric automobile, a familiar sight around town for many years, and drove around looking for some building that would serve as a make-shift hospital. When they saw the Unitarian Sunday school, they both exclaimed “This is it.” The next step was to see the interior of the building. Whether they asked the minister's permission for its use I don't know; in any event he could not well refuse. There was a large ground floor room which could presumably hold a large number of beds without crowding. Also there were kitchen facilities and a few small rooms.

The next problem was nurses which, as everyone knew, were in very short supply; nevertheless every registry office was visited and every possible clue followed up. With no luck. There was just one answer: volunteers would have to be sought, with some knowledge of nursing if possible; if not, strong arms and a courageous spirit would certainly help. The response in the affirmative from many of these volunteers was quick and truly remarkable. It was thought they would not even want to step inside the pest house (that actually was what it was). Instead they went bravely to work and carried on like veterans. Some of them unfortunately caught the disease, but luckily there were no fatalities.

Watching these devoted souls going to their work, my conscience whispered I should join them even though I disliked nursing. While I was trying to drown out this inner voice, fate stepped in. A Mrs. Meade in Brookline phoned me that she was trying to organize a headquarters in Boston where people could come for help and advice in regard to the influenza epidemic. Would I help her? My answer was “yes”, accompanied by an inaudible sigh of relief.

The influenza stayed with us for several weeks before it finally came to an end and the devoted nurses, both professional and volunteer, could resume their normal lives.

LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

Mayflower Descendant Volumes 1 and 2 of years 2003-2010. Gift of Virginia Mucciaccio.

Manuscripts at the New England Historic Genealogical Society and book. Gift of Stephen Becker.

ARCHIVES ACQUISITIONS

Dethlefs Greeting Cards Collection. Gift of Bill McKibben.

Photograph of gas station at 694 Washington St. and additional photographs. Gift of Stephen Becker.

Box of Rust Craft Christmas Cards. Gift of Helen Nehiley.

Posters from St. John's Methodist Church with photos of events from 1970s and 1980s. Anonymous gift.

MUSEUM ACCESSIONS

2011.3 Katherine Pratt silver jam spoon.

Gift of Enid & Vincent Peterson



RESEARCH AIDS

The DHS Archives is a wealth of information for anyone researching their family genealogy. The Archives is open Tuesday and Thursdays from 9am – 4pm and even dated Saturdays from 1 – 4pm. We recommend you contact Sandra Waxman prior to your visit at 781-326-1385 or library@dedhamhistorical.org. Access to the Archives is free for DHS members; \$5 per visit for non-members. If you are unable to visit the Society, Ms. Waxman and her experienced volunteers will conduct the research for you. Our fees are \$25 for the first hour and \$20 per hour for each additional hour. Copies of materials are available for an additional fee. Here is a sample of two Dedham families and some of the archival materials held by the Society.

CHALONER FAMILY PAPERS

1718-1791

The Chaloner Family Papers date from 1718-1791, the bulk from 1746-1774. The letters received by Martha (Chaloner) Church Cunningham and receipts for business transactions constitute the majority of the collection. The correspondence, mostly between family members, centers on religion, family life, bankruptcy, illness, business transactions, and military service. The papers have been mounted in an album and preserved sometime in the past. The album was donated by Miss Frances M. Baker in 1926.

BENJAMIN HOLDEN'S PAPERS

A typewritten ledger book of 117 pages copied from the original. It spans the years 1759-1760. Serving in the military was Holden's career. He was the officer who wrote the orderly book that details the orders issued at Fort Cumberland in Nova Scotia. The ledger contains: lists of the officers and soldiers; instructions to the sentries at Fort Cumberland in 1759; rules and orders of the Spur Guard; orders against pillaging; "irregularities"; care of the sick "providentials"; breaches of order concerning ammunition; details for guards; instructions for liberty; guarding against misuse of ammunition; provisioning; disposition of molasses; discipline, including prohibition against gaming; courts martial; Kings' work; comments on John Morse's character; relations with the Indians; rules regarding "spirituous liquors"; mutiny.

Note: In the mid 1700's there was universal, compulsory service from ages 16 – 60 where individuals trained or served a part of active duty every year. The royal governor was the commander-in-chief of the militia forces. Only clergy, public officials, Harvard College students or faculty, blacks, Native Americans and those of questionable loyalty were exempt.

The ledger was given by Mr. Fred A. Guild in 1905.

RESEARCHING LOCAL ARTIST CHARLES MILLS

The life and works of local artist Charles Mills (1856-1956) has brought architectural historian, Dr. Timothy Orwig of Boston to spend time in our library and archives. Mills was a prolific artist and muralist who born in Pittsburgh and graduated from Alleghany College, Meadville PA. He traveled and studied in Europe for many years and eventually moved to 63 School Street in Dedham in 1888. He also maintained a studio on the top floor of the Greenleaf Building. Mills is known for his portraits and landscapes, however; he also produced designs for the stained glass windows in Memorial Hall at Harvard College and Trinity Church in Boston.

Dr. Orwig is particularly interested in Mill's biographical murals of Benjamin Franklin in the Franklin Institute in Boston. The Franklin Institute is pursuing an enhanced preservation designation for the building and the murals play an important part in the application. Mills carefully studied Benjamin Franklin and period furniture

and costumes to ensure accuracy for the murals. In 2006, the U. S. Postal Service selected one of Mill's murals for a commemorative stamp to mark Franklin's birth.

On a more local note, Mills also produced designs for Dedham Pottery including the lion and the dolphin. He was active in the Dedham Historical Society serving as Secretary and Curator and produced the design for the DHS logo.



Dedham Pottery Lion Plate

WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

Joan Byrne
Lucille Carivale
Carle & Joyce Civita
Bill Miller
Karl & Kathleen Nordgren
Daniel K. Onion
W. Rooney
Dr. James & Roberta Rothwell
Frances Wilmerding

The society is extremely grateful to the many members who have sent in their 2011 dues. Unfortunately, due to the costs of printing and postage this will be the final newsletter for individuals who have not responded to our letters, phone calls, and emails. If there is a bright colored sticker near your address label please note that we have not received your renewal and you will be removed from our email and mailing lists as of May 31, 2011.

DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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