



NEWS-LETTER

DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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

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

March 2013

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILM HIGHLIGHTS JOHN ELIOT AND THE PRAYING INDIANS

On March 21 film director Zadi Zokou will show his new documentary film *Praying Town: John Eliot and the Praying Indians* at the Society. John Eliot, a Puritan from England, immigrated to America in 1631 and settled in present day Roxbury where he preached to the Native People of southern New England and formed several praying towns for his native converts. This documentary film is 90 minutes long; therefore, the program will start at 7:00 pm.

The lecture series will close on April 18th with the Ben Fisher Memorial Lecture and Annual Meeting. Northeastern University Professor William Fowler, historian and author, will present *Under Two Flags: The Navy in the Civil War*. Professor Fowler has taught courses dealing with the history of Boston, Maritime History, and the history of New England. He is the former Gay Hart Gaines Distinguished Fellow in American History at Mount Vernon, has taught at Mystic Seaport Museum and has lectured at the Smithsonian Institution, the United States Naval War College, and the Sea Education Association. The lecture will be preceded by a short DHS annual meeting starting at 7:30pm.

All lectures are free for members; \$5 for non-members. Funding for the annual lecture series is provided by David G. Newsom.

DHS WINE EVENT ON JANUARY 25TH

One hundred guests enjoyed an evening of wine, tasty hors d'oeuvres, and lively conversation at the January 25th Dedham Historical Society Wine Tasting. Wines were donated by Jorge and Kathy Ordonez Fine Estates from Spain, hors d'oeuvres were made by the members of the Worthington Committee and the conversation was provided by our enthusiastic guests.



**PLANS FOR THE DHS SPRING SOIREE ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY
DETAILS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER**

Invitations will be mailed to DHS members in late April.



SOCIETY COLLABORATES WITH FAIRBANKS HOUSE FOR SUMMER KIDS PROGRAM

The DHS and Fairbanks House have joined forces to receive a grant from the Dedham Cultural Council for a performance in July by Massachusetts folk singer, Jeff Davis. Jeff invites our young guests to relive our nation's heritage through songs of Revolutionary War heroes, Appalachian clogging songs, sailors' work songs, African-American banjo tunes, Irish fiddle tunes, cowboy ditties, and more. Davis accompanies himself on a myriad of instruments, ranging from the nose flute to a one-of-a-kind fretless banjo. The free performance is set for Wednesday, July 10 at 11 am at the Dedham Historical Society. Watch for additional details in the next newsletter.

UNIQUE GIFTS SUPPORT SPECIAL PROJECTS AT THE DHS

The DHS is fortunate to receive support from its members and friends in the form of dues, Annual Appeal contributions, donations of items for the collection, purchases from the museum store, and attendance at our many events. But there are other ways our supporters assist the Society that you may not be as familiar with.

Last year, our late dear friend Joe Pagluica left the Society a generous financial gift. After much discussion about how Joe would like his legacy put to use the DHS Board of Directors voted to sponsor a summer internship program in our library, a place where Joe spent many hours identifying photographs in the collection. The Society is currently accepting applications for the internship and will introduce the intern to the membership in the summer newsletter.

Another example of a unique gift took place several years ago when family and friends of Carol Sestito gave the DHS a financial gift to purchase a piece of Katharine Pratt silver as a way to honor Carol's ongoing support of our organization. After much searching for the right piece, the Society recently purchased a Pratt gravy boat with these funds.

Finally, at their January 2013 meeting the Board voted that all 2013 book purchases for the DHS library will honor the late Margaret "Peg" Bradner. Peg was a professional librarian who spent ten years as a volunteer organizing the Society library and will be remembered by many of our members.

These gifts help the Society accomplish goals that cannot be achieved through our operating budget. If you would like to contribute please contact the office at 781-326-1385 or email society@dedhamhistorical.org.



Pratt Gravy Boat – Sestito Gift

2013 DUES RENEWAL NOTICES

Annual DHS general membership dues notices were mailed in early January. Our sincere thanks to everyone who responded promptly to the notice. Please help the Society keep our mailing costs down by renewing as soon as possible. If you would like to pay your membership dues via credit card, be sure to have your card in hand and call the office Tuesday – Friday between the hours of 9am – 4pm. Membership dues are: Individual \$35; Family \$50; Contributing \$100; Life \$750; Student \$10. Thank you for being a member of the Dedham Historical Society!

RESEARCH NEWS FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS

Society volunteer Ellie Palma has been busy again, this time researching the Worthington family. Here is an abbreviated version of her research.

Erastus Worthington was a prominent name in Dedham history. In fact there were three Erastus Worthington: Erastus Senior, Erastus Junior and Erastus. The surname Worthington is derived from places in Lancashire and Leicestershire, England and possibly from the old English word Wuroingtun, meaning settlement.

Erastus Worthington was born in Belchertown, Massachusetts October 8, 1779. His father David was born in Colchester, Connecticut and his mother, Affa Gilbert, was born in Sherburne, Massachusetts. Erastus attended Williams College where he obtained a law degree in 1804. After his graduation, Erastus worked as a teacher and then began the study of law with John Heard Esq. of Boston. He became an Attorney of Law in Boston and moved to Dedham in 1809. He was admitted as a Counselor of the Supreme Judicial Court in 1813. After working as an attorney until 1825, he helped to organize the Norfolk Mutual Fire Insurance Company. Worthington always had a keen interest in politics and history. At the Norfolk County Convention of the Republican Party on August 17, 1812, he was chosen as Secretary of the Convention. In 1827 Worthington wrote and published "The History of Dedham from the Beginning of its Settlement in 1635 to May, 1827". He was the first to write a history of Dedham and carefully studied the records of the churches and the town in search of materials for the history. Worthington married Sally Ellis of Dedham, the daughter of Abner Ellis and Martha May, on May 2, 1815. The couple resided in Dedham where they raised three sons: Ellis born February 11, 1816, Albert born July 5, 1820, and Erastus Jr. born November 25, 1828. Erastus Sr. died of consumption June 29, 1842 and Sally died, also of consumption, June 29, 1856.

Erastus Worthington Jr. was born in Dedham November 25, 1828. He received an A.B. at Brown University in 1850 and a Law Degree from Harvard University in 1853. He married Elizabeth Foster Briggs, the daughter of Robert Briggs and Caroline Morton Briggs of West Roxbury, November 25, 1861. Their children, all born in Dedham, were Caroline Morton, Erastus, Robert Briggs, Alvan Fisher, Arthur Morton and John Winthrop Worthington. Erastus Jr. entered into the practice of Law in Dedham, and in 1866 he was the first person elected to the position of Clerk of Courts for Norfolk County. He was a prolific writer and wrote many papers, some of which were presented to the Dedham Historical Society and were also published in the Dedham Transcript Newspaper. Erastus had an interest in politics and in 1886 supported the Prime Minister of Great Britain, William Ewart Gladstone, in his stand on the Irish Question. Erastus, Jr. died in Dedham on January 20 1898 and his wife Elizabeth died on November 8, 1918. Elizabeth had been a longtime member of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Erastus Worthington was born December 12, 1863 and died October 16, 1953. He graduated from Dedham High School in 1877 and went on to study at MIT where he received a degree in Civil Engineering in 1885. Erastus partnered with other people before establishing his own engineering firm. He eventually opened his own engineering company in Dedham located at 4 Pearl Street. In 1938, he moved his offices to 26 Norfolk Street in Dedham in the building built by his great grandfather Abner Ellis in 1788. One of Mr. Worthington's specialties was designing water supply systems and sewer systems. He also designed many of the street railways in western Norfolk County. He married Annie Brooks Fales of Dedham, daughter of William and Mary Fales on August 25, 1898. They were married in the Episcopal Church by Rev. William F. Cheney and had no children. Annie died in Dedham June 13, 1956. Both Erastus and Annie are buried at Brookdale Cemetery.

If you would like more information on the Worthington family or your own family history please contact the library on Tuesday or Thursday from 9am – 4pm or even dated Saturdays from 1pm – 4pm.

HISTORIC TALES OF DEDHAM

MID-CENTURY MEMORIES OF DEDHAM, MASS, by WM. HORATIO CLARKE

Prof. William Horatio Clarke (1840-1913) was one of the best known organists of Greater Boston, a composer and writer on musical themes. When a boy, his parents moved to Dedham and Clarke received his education in its public schools. Between 1903 to 1904 he wrote a series of articles for the Dedham Transcript of his memories of Dedham.

February 20, 1904

When I was 10 years of age, the spiritualistic excitement was at its climax, and had hardly obtained footing long enough for mediumistic quacks to coin money out of credulous followers. This was in 1850. On one occasion of John Thayer's visit to the house to give me a music lesson – at the time we were living on Washington Street – my mother asked him if he would give us an illustration of table-tipping, to which he readily acquiesced. The table used was an old mahogany folding top, with brass trimmings, which had once belonged to an old Dr. Wheaton. As soon as the table was ready, my mother said that she would like to invite a neighbor to see the illustration, and she went to the brick house near the present Ames School, and invited a Mrs. Spaulding, who came back with her and was introduced to Mr. Thayer, who then met her for the first time. I was deputed to mark down the tippings according to the alphabetical code, the table tipping to letters as they were slowly pronounced. After various coherent answers to questions, it was asked what spirit was present. Then, as I marked the tippings, came the name, E-b-e-n-e-z-e-r- D-r-a-c-u-t. Mr. Thayer, whose hands were on the table, had never heard such a name; neither had my mother nor had I. Mrs. Spaulding had no such name in her mind, but upon reflection, she said that she remembered such a man, who had committed suicide in Providence 25 years before. Such an impression was made upon me that I never afterwards was inclined to trifle with such demonstrations. I can only attempt to explain such phenomena as emanating from sensitive psychic conditions of the mental organization. The brain acts as a storage battery, containing hidden things once recorded and apparently forgotten by the external memory.

The DHS Museum, Gift Shop, and Library are open Saturday, March 2nd, 16th, and 30th and April 6th and 20th from 1pm – 4pm.

WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

Timothy Cunningham
Mr. & Mrs. William Doyle
Nancy Kaaz
Diane & Kevin Preston
Bonnie Dinsmore Richardson

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