



# NEWS-LETTER

## DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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Library Hours: by appointment; Museum Hours: Tuesday – Friday 12 pm – 4 pm

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

## NOVEMBER 2016



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### DHS LECTURE SERIES SPOTLIGHTS STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

Our 2016-17 lecture series continues on November 10 with Peter Gittleman, Team Leader for Visitor Experiences at Historic New England, who will speak about a new historic house museum in Milton, “The Eustis Estate.” This outstanding example of late nineteenth-century architecture and design will soon be open to the public for the first time. The house was designed by Boston architect William Ralph Emerson and built in 1878.

2017 lectures include:

- Sunday, January 22 at 2 pm, DHS President Andrea Gilmore presents “Chickering House – Dedham’s Temporary Home for Women and Children 1864-1969.”
- Thursday, March 30, Stephen Kenney, Director of the Commonwealth Museum, focuses on “Exploring Massachusetts History at the Commonwealth Museum.”
- Thursday, April 27, the Ben Fisher Memorial Lecture and Annual Meeting. After the meeting and election of officers, Anthony Sammarco will discuss “Lost Boston: Landmarks That Left Their Mark on the City.”

Unless otherwise noted, all lectures begin at 7:30 pm at the Dedham Historical Society & Museum auditorium. Admission: DHS members free; \$5 per person for non-members. The 2016-2017 lecture series is sponsored by David G. Newsom in memory of his wife, Carol L. Newsom.



### LISTEN FOR THE TRAIN WHISTLE - THE TOY TRAINS ARE BACK!

Join us for the annual Dedham Holiday Stroll on Friday, December 2 from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm. Our volunteer train engineer, George Dunn, will be back with his popular toy train layout. Last year over 300 visitors enjoyed his Santa train and expansive layout. Make this one of your December traditions! This program is sponsored in part by the Dedham Women’s Exchange.



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**JANUARY 27, 2017!**

Save the date, January 27, 2017, for our annual January Wine Event. Invitations will be mailed to DHS members in early January. It is a festive event where you can reconnect with old friends and make new ones. A perfect way to start the New Year!

## ICE HOUSES IN DEDHAM

From the earliest times, people have dealt with the same conundrum – how to prepare and store food, keep it safe from predators, and prevent it from rotting in warm temperatures. They buried it in holes, hung it from rafters, and did all kinds of imaginative things. In 1846 the problem was solved by Abiathar Richards, who built the first ice house in Dedham on the Charles River at the foot of what is now Bullard Street. His business thrived and in 1854 was taken over by Amory Fisher, who gave up his work as a barber to sell ice from his shop on Church Street as well as the Charles River location. He was succeeded by shopkeepers Benson & Redman, who added flour and grain and eventually consolidated with the C. C. Churchill Company under the name Fisher-Churchill, which was located on Eastern Avenue.

The Boston Ice Company also erected ice houses on the same ponds where Fisher-Churchill harvested ice: Wigwam Pond, Little Wigwam, and Rodman Pond. The ice was cut in blocks from the ponds, stacked in the ice houses, and layered with straw, which prevented melting and made it easier to lift the blocks for delivery.

For many years inventors tried to create electric “ice boxes,” but they were unable to create one affordable by the average person. For example, General Electric manufactured two in 1911 but they cost \$1,000 a piece, twice as much as the average car. So, the ice industry continued to flourish until prices came down.

By 1947 there was no longer a need for the ice house and Fisher-Churchill donated around 2.5 acres of

land by Wigwam Pond to the town of Dedham. Fisher-Churchill, however, evolved with the times and is now a successful heating and air-conditioning company.



*This detail of an undated photograph shows ice cutters at work on Rodman Pond.*

## FISHER AMES: DEDHAM'S FOUNDING FATHER

The Broadway phenomenon “Hamilton” has sparked a fervor for history. It seems that everyone is listening to, and learning from, its hip-hop beat and contagious melodies. While the Broadway sensation spreads the story of Alexander Hamilton and the Founding Fathers, Dedham has bragging rights as home to one of the country’s smartest Federalists: Fisher Ames. Although his story is not as well known as Alexander Hamilton’s, Ames holds an important place in early American history as an eloquent Federalist and an ardent defender of the role of morals and reason in government.

Ames was born in Dedham in 1758. Although his father died when he was 6 years old, his mother provided her son with a classical education. Ames entered Harvard when he was twelve, graduating in 1774, and worked as a teacher while studying law. In 1781, he began to practice law in Dedham.

As a delegate to the Massachusetts Convention in 1787, Ames played a key role in persuading the other delegates to ratify the U.S. Constitution. His success at the convention resulted in his victory over Sam Adams in the race for the Suffolk District seat in the First Congress under the new Constitution. As a Congressman, he was well-known for his gift as an orator; in 1796 he gave an influential speech in favor of the Jay Treaty, which resulted in withdrawal of British troops from pre-Revolutionary forts, the first use of arbitration for wartime debts, and ten years of peaceful trade between the U.S. and Britain.

In addition to his flair for oratory, Ames was known for his sharp wit and sociability, traits that he used to win re-election in 1790, 1792, and 1794. After deciding in 1796 not to run for re-election, Ames resumed his law practice in Dedham. He remained active in Massachusetts politics, serving as a member of the Governor’s Council from 1798 until 1800. He delivered a moving oration on the death of President Washington in 1799. Ames died on July 4, 1808 and was buried in the Village Avenue cemetery after an elaborate funeral in Boston.

## **LIST OF 2016 ANNUAL APPEAL CONTRIBUTORS**

Our sincere thanks to all who helped us meet our financial obligations for the year 2016. It is important to note that many other individuals and organizations have made significant contributions throughout the year to specific projects of the Society. They have been gratefully acknowledged at the time of the gift. This listing completes all donations since our last newsletter through **October 15, 2016**. Please be sure to contact us if there are any errors. (IMO = In Memory Of, IHO = In Honor Of)

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## A SUMMER INTERN'S POINT OF VIEW

I am Brendan Glenn, a high school senior, and I interned at the Dedham Historical Society & Museum this past summer. History has long been an academic passion of mine, and it excited me to have an opportunity to study my favorite discipline. However, I knew that interns often don't have the most exciting work. I assumed that mine would be the usual intern's lot of copying, coffee-fetching, and general tedium. Instead, I was assigned to an immensely interesting project.

My task was to revamp the story of Dedham Pottery as it was told on the museum's walls. This may seem fairly simple—making a few edits to the original text, printing up some fancier photographs, etc. But as I began to research the story of Dedham Pottery, I was drawn in by the narrative. It is a story of sacrifice for art and perseverance through adversity, encompassing immigration, artistic movements, and the Industrial Revolution. I thoroughly enjoyed helping the Historical Society tell this story, and I eagerly anticipate the installation of the new exhibit in 2017.

*Brendan's research was supervised by Lauren Kaufmann, Educator and Jim Kaufman, Curator of Dedham Pottery.*



*Left, Brendan Glenn and right, Jim Kaufman, Curator of Dedham Pottery*

**OPEN SATURDAYS: The DHS Museum, Gift Shop, and Library/Archives are open on even dated Saturdays from 1 pm – 4 pm.**

***This newsletter is a benefit of DHS membership. For membership information, call 781-326-1385 or visit [www.dedhamhistorical.org](http://www.dedhamhistorical.org).***

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