



# 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

### July 2017

### A VERY SPECIAL EVENING AT THE HISTORIC SAMUEL DEXTER HOUSE

It was a picture perfect evening at the historic home of Vicki and Norty Knox. The weather for the DHS annual Soirée was cool, the food was delicious, the house and grounds were beautiful, and the kayakers on the water added a bit of fun to the evening. Our hosts generously shared the history of their 1761 home with our guests. Special recognition for the successful evening goes to the Worthington Committee, a group of women who volunteer their time and talents to organize our yearly social fundraising events. They took care of everything, from addressing the invitations to cleaning up after the event. A very special thank you goes to Vicki and Norty for the use of their spectacular home and gardens.





## **DHS RECEIVES GRANT FROM DEDHAM SAVINGS**

The Society has received a grant from Dedham Savings to purchase new computers with upgraded software. The new system will enhance staff efficiency in dealing with tasks from membership records to collections data management. Vicky Kruckeberg, Executive Director, worked with JD Computer Solution (the Society's IT support company) to create a plan for updating the computer system for the organization.

In order to access the best computer system possible at an affordable price, the Society has joined TechSoup, a product donation program. This non-profit organization provides eligible non-profits with discounted software, hardware, services, and training.

## **375th BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR MOTHER BROOK**

History and outdoor fun made a perfect mix as the town celebrated the 375th anniversary of Mother Brook in May. Featuring historical exhibits and fun for kids, the Condon Park event marked the opening of the first man-made canal in America. Mother Brook opened in 1641, connecting the Charles River with the Neponset River and providing Dedham's early settlers with water power for grist mills.

Planned by the Mother Brook 375th Anniversary Committee, which included DHS Executive Director Vicky Kruckeberg, the celebration was rescheduled to May 13 after being rained out last fall. The Society contributed a history pamphlet to mark the event.

The origins of Mother Brook go back to 1639, when early settlers were seeking a source of water power to run a planned grist mill. A committee appointed by the town conceived the idea of diverting a portion of the Charles River into East Brook via a man-made canal. The elevation drop would provide the necessary water flow to power mills. Together, the canal and East Brook become known as Mother Brook, flowing from the Charles River near the Dedham Mall to its confluence with the Neponset River in Hyde Park.

Early records regarding the construction of the Mother Brook canal are scarce. There are no documents to tell us the names of the men who dug the canal, how long it took to complete the project, or its cost. The first reference to the completed canal comes in the form of a proposal from the town to John Elderkin to build a grist mill near what is now Condon Park, in return for grants of land.

After grist mills came cotton mills, woolen mills, paper mills and more. The canal that spawned the mills also spurred the growth of East Dedham, from housing and stores to the East Dedham Fire Station still in use today. The 375th party included tours of the historic fire station.

The 375th committee is currently working on another project to commemorate Mother Brook's industrial heritage by installing pieces of old industrial machinery along the brook with plaques explaining their use.



Left: Contemporary image of the Colburn Street Dam  
Right: Historic Postcard of Dam and Woolen Mill, East Dedham MA

## DHS ARCHIVE INCLUDES THOUSANDS OF IMAGES RECORDING PEOPLE AND PLACES IN DEDHAM

The Society's archives hold amazing treasures. DHS Archivist, Sandra Waxman, loves to share the wealth of documents, maps, and images she oversees with researchers and members. The photograph collection, which includes tintypes, daguerreotypes, glass plate negatives, and other types of images, spans decades of Dedham history. Here are just a few of the images in the collection to whet your appetite. 8" X 10" copies of these images are available for purchase at \$25 per image. Please contact Ms. Waxman for more information. [Library@dedhamhistorical.org](mailto:Library@dedhamhistorical.org) or 781-326-1385.



**Left:** The Dedham Cycle Club (shown here) was organized in 1892. They held the club's First Annual Cycle Meet in 1894, drawing nearly 8,000 people into Memorial Square and along High Street to witness the races.

**Right:** Corbett's Blacksmith Shop was located on Washington Street, near High Street. Town records indicate the first blacksmith set up shop in 1638, and the 1941 business directory was the last to list a blacksmith, Frank P. Kern on Williams Street.



**Left:** During the July 1938 flood, water was high enough to go paddling inside Breed's boathouse. The Breed family owned the business from 1916 until a fire, originating in the Log Cabin Café, destroyed it on October 22, 1940. Dedham's fire chief, Henry J. Harrigan, died in the fire.

**Right:** In this 1940 photograph, Howard Bonnemont and Don Gleason Hill stand in front of Bonnemont's Ford-Mercury dealership on High Street in East Dedham. The photograph was taken by Robert T. Rafferty.

## DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM SUMMER HOURS

Office and Museum: Tuesday – Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Library and Archives: Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm by appointment

Museum, Library, and Archives - Even dated Saturdays: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

July 4<sup>th</sup> – CLOSED

Saturday, July 22 – CLOSED

## **DEDHAM STORYTELLERS: FORGING FRIENDSHIP ACROSS GENERATIONS**

Through the sharing of memories and mementoes, twelve Dedham senior citizens and twelve Dedham High School sophomores struck up friendships through the Dedham Storytellers Project. Over the course of the spring, the group came together three times at the high school and once at the Dedham Historical Society and Museum. The goal was to share their experiences of growing up in Dedham and document them in a scrapbook. The project culminated with a luncheon hosted by the Dedham Rotary Club.

The Dedham Storytellers project grew out of the town's 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration committee. The project provided an opportunity for the students to learn first-hand about the life of these senior citizens when they were high school students. Through the conversations, all of the participants gained a greater appreciation for the differences and similarities that come from living and going to school in Dedham. The conversations explored topics such as dress codes (one student was baffled by the word "dungarees") to mutual interests in cars.

Dedham High School history teacher Michael Medeiros played a key role in inspiring his students. As part of the final project, all the students wrote three essays: a biography of their partner; an autobiography; and a comparison of their high school experiences with that of their partner. All of these materials are now archived at the DHS so that future generations can learn about this living history project.



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

### **WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS**

Thomas Carty  
Robin Cochrane  
George Gebelein  
Barbara Magruder  
Julie & Dennis O'Rourke  
Janice Santo  
Patricia & David Thomas

### **PLEASE THANK OUR CORPORATE SUPPORTERS**

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### **DEDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

Andrea M. Gilmore, President, James D. Kaufman, Vice President; William E. Flanagan, Treasurer; Laurie Rabe, Recording Secretary. Directors: Stephen K. Brayton, Kate Cahill, Angela Cavallo, Thomas A. Gormley III, Alexander K. Leith, Joan Pagliuca, John Underhill, Mark R. Whalen. Executive Director, Vicky L. Kruckeberg