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IMAGES

(Left) Detail of mourning brooch containing a lock of braided hair, #1966.058.1

(Above) Tim and Karen Wakeling enjoying a spirited evening at the 2013 Vintage Halloween Party

SPIRITUALISM IN ANDOVER

by Elaine Clements, Executive Director

Spiritualism – the belief that people can communicate with the dead – was widespread throughout the 19th century even in stalwart, conservative Andover. Andover had a well-deserved conservative reputation due to the strict orthodox Calvinist doctrine taught at the Andover Theological Seminary. As evangelical religious beliefs grew in the 19th century and challenged old Calvinist ways, “The Andover Creed,” as it was known, was much debated and frequently derided.

Read it to the mourners crying.....
This, their darling, whom they cherished,
Has in hell forever perished,
All because of Adam's folly!
'Twill drive away your melancholy.
A wonderful thing is the Andover creed,
Put it aside for the hour of need! (Puck, 1886)

Nineteenth century Protestant Revivals, known as the Great Awakenings, introduced an evangelical approach to Christianity that forever changed the character of American religion. The old Calvinist theology of Predetermination, that people's fate was predetermined by a distant and angry God, was being rapidly replaced by the concept of Free Will, wherein people could choose salvation and therefore their destiny.

In the religious fervor that accompanied the Great Awakenings, spiritualist beliefs grew. Two of Andover's most famous residents, Calvin Stowe and Harriet Beecher Stowe were both ardent spiritualists. As a child, Calvin Stowe believed he saw ghosts and spirits, and he encouraged his wife's interest. After their son Henry died by drowning in 1857, the Stowes believed that he visited them in their house in Andover. The Stowes met with spirit mediums in their home and held séances to try to communicate with their beloved son. For many, including Harriet Beecher Stowe, spiritualism also had scientific potential,

Continued on page 4

PRESIDENT'S LETTER, FALL 2014



Have you noticed the popularity of the phenomenon known as “Throwback Thursday?” It’s an Internet theme day observed every week during which people share old photographs (usually, but not always, of themselves) via social networking sites. Many internet analysts believe that it was started in 2006 by a teenage sneaker blogger, gained usage on the photo-sharing platform Instagram around 2011, and then spread to Twitter and Facebook. The trend has swept up not only teens and celebrities, but also adults and many businesses and brands as part of their marketing and community-building strategies. *Fortune* magazine said (in May 2014) that were, to that date, more than 228 million photos tagged #tbt or #throwbackthursday on Instagram alone.

What’s interesting to me is the reason that some of these analysts cite for the explosive growth of this trend. They say that the plugged-in Millennials – the generation raised in the pervasive atmosphere of social media – have an especially strong impulse toward and need for nostalgia, that sentimental feeling that we stereotypically associate with older people. *Fortune* quoted a 2008 *Psychological Science* study: “*Nostalgia strengthens social connectedness and belongingness...and, when appropriately harnessed, can*

strengthen psychological resistance to the vicissitudes of life.”

Some people – even within our own town and membership – have expressed doubts about whether ‘old-fashioned’ Historical Societies in general and our organization in particular has a place in the twenty-first century. But this trend shows that the need for what we provide is more vital than ever – people of all ages crave the connections that we foster – and that this need will only grow stronger in the coming years.

At the Andover Historical Society, every day is Throwback Thursday!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Cairns".

Jane Cairns

President, Andover Historical Society



Explore a New Story!

For this year’s Bewitched in Andover series, we’re setting aside the witch trials and giving the series a fresh spin by exploring 19th century spiritualism. It’s a fascinating subject that has piqued our interest and we’d love for you to join us in discovering its many facets. Yes, we’ll explore the fun side of ghosts and spirits and Halloween, but we’ll also explore the serious side of spiritualism. Read on to find out how the spiritualism helped a grieving nation recover from the ravages of the Civil War. Discover Andover’s role in a national movement that changed the country. Follow us on Facebook and be a part of the discussion. Connect with Andover’s past and present, and explore a new story!

CALL
To
ACTION

GHOST MOTHERS AND OTHER VICTORIAN ODDITIES

19th century photography required long exposure times, sometimes as long as 10 minutes to capture an image. Not everyone could manage to sit still for that long; children especially had a hard time sitting still for photographs. Family photographs with a blurry child or two were not all that uncommon.

Mothers sometimes went to great lengths to help their young offspring sit up – and sit still – for their photograph. In her book, *The Hidden Mother*, Linda Fregni Nagler assembled over a thousand photographs of “ghost mothers.” Her book is filled with images of mothers hiding behind draperies, curtains, and furniture. Some were more successful at hiding than others.



Courtesy of Mack Books, Linda Fregni Nagler

This sent us looking through the Historical Society’s collections for local examples of “hidden mothers.” Well-known Andoverite Bessie Goldsmith was photographed frequently as a child. In this photograph, the attending adult is clearly visible behind the high chair.



AHS #1999.112.20

Other times, attempts at hiding the mother were more subtle, like this next photograph, who at this tender age was unlikely to sit on her own for a long exposure time.



Bessie Goldsmith, AHS #1991.983.1

You can see the leg of a chair in the lower left corner. The drapery and long christening gown could easily have disguised Bessie’s mother as she held her child still. Photographers also edited parents out of photographs. In this photograph of Helen Ferguson Smith, it appears that the photographer edited out the parent hiding under the drapery.

*Helen Ferguson Smith,
AHS #1992.659.23*

Other times the photographer edited out the entire background, as in this photograph of Florence May Mears



*Florence May Mears,
AHS #2006.027.27*

Variouly called ghost, invisible and hidden mothers, these inventive parents and photographers did their best to capture lasting images of their children. Over 100 years later, parents continue their efforts.



SPIRITUALISM IN ANDOVER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“I regard them (spiritualist manifestations) simply as I do the phenomena of the Aurora Borealis, or Darwin’s studies on natural selection, as curious studies into nature. Besides, I think someday we shall find a law by which all these facts will fit into their places.” (Nancy Koester)

As can be expected, Andover had its share of believers and non-believers. Between June 1853 and February 1854, a series of articles and letters were published that alternately supported and decried the belief in spirits. In printing the letters, the editors of Andover Advertiser made their beliefs known:

TABLE TIPPING – We insert the Article over the signature of “Medium,” in our paper of to-day for the purpose of letting our readers see that there are individuals in our community, who really believe they can communicate with departed spirits – not that we intend to open our columns to a discussion of the question, for we have no sympathy with those who thus believe, and have yet to learn that any good has resulted from, or is likely to result, from these pretended spiritual communications. (Andover Advertiser, January 1854)

Unlike conservative Andover, Boston was a center for spiritualist activity. The leading spiritualist newspaper The Banner of Light was published in Boston. The newspaper featured stories and reports of spiritualist activity along with advertisements for and lists of mediums who could help believers contact their loved

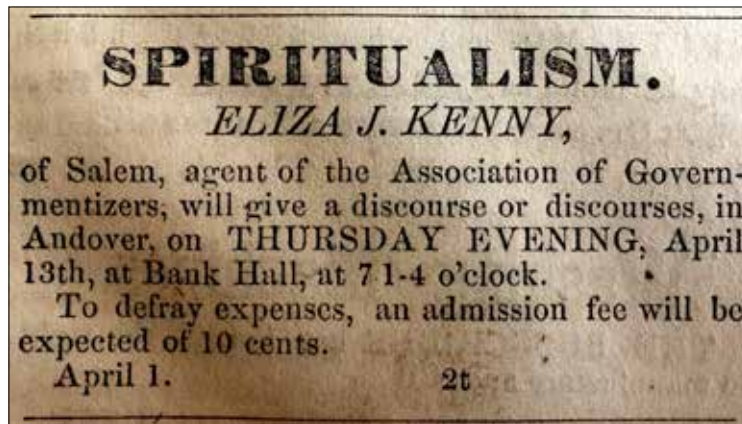
ones. The newspaper solicited letters from subscribers describing spiritualist activity in their town. In the Historical Society collection is a letter written by Andover resident John G. Russell to the Banner of Light. In his letter, Russell reports that there were few believers in orthodox Andover and that his beliefs earned him “a good deal of oppression, not to say persecution, from the church and likewise from my own family.”

Spiritualists openly challenged the conservative Andover Creed. Andover resident Eastman Sanborn published a letter in The Banner of Light in October

1858, in which he described Calvinist theology as an “old, dry husk.” In July 1864, an Andover Advertiser writer described spirit rapping at the Theological Seminary, concluding that “We are glad...that some one is rapping on the theological walls of Andover...They have been startled from their sleep, and have gone

to the window and looked out to see who or what is at the door. Soon they will be induced to go down, open the door, and let the Truth in.”


Nineteenth century spiritualism was deeply Christian and references to God and angels were not uncommon. Coming from a Calvinist tradition of a distant God, the possibility of communication with not only mortal loved ones, but with God and angels was enticing. Messages from loved ones included promises that they will meet again in heaven. In the years during and after the Civil War, these promises were comforting to grieving families.



A HOLIDAY TOUR OF ANDOVER HOMES

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22ND FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.

TICKET SALES SUPPORT THE
ANDOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
978.475.2236
ANDOVERHISTORICAL.ORG



HOUSE TOUR TICKETS
\$20 MEMBERS
\$25 IN ADVANCE
\$30 DAY OF TOUR

SPIRITUALISM IN THE CIVIL WAR

by Jane Cairns, Board President

On July 16, 1864, just a few weeks after the battle of Spotsylvania, the Boston spiritualist newspaper *The Banner of Light* published a “message” from soldier Leander Bolton to his mother in Jacksonville, Pennsylvania.

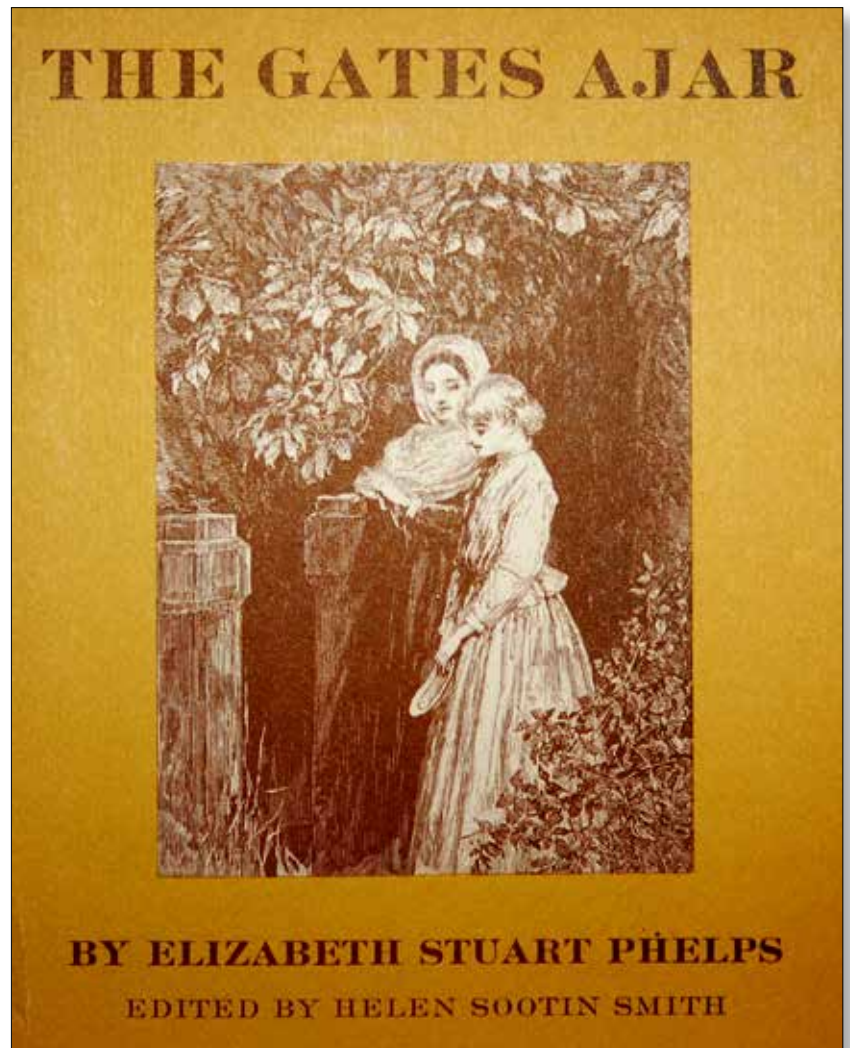
“If you please, sir, I’d like to give my mother a little sketch of the manner of my death. I was first wounded in the arm and was suffering from that when I received a mortal wound in my side. I believe it was something like five or six hours I laid on the field before I died.”

Bolton wanted to reassure his mother that he was “satisfied” to have died and that heaven seemed to him to be “earth over again, only more beautiful.” It may be reassuring for the modern reader to know that the story of Leander Bolton’s protracted battlefield death and his mother’s bereavement was the creation of prominent Boston trance medium Fanny Conant. There was no Bolton family residing in the town of Jacksonville during the 1860s, and the only Leander Bolton listed in U.S. Army records was alive and well in Polk County, Iowa. But it isn’t hard to understand how comforting this message would have been to the *Banner of Light’s* thousands of subscribers, many of whom had experienced a loss similar to that of the fictional Mrs. Bolton. Fanny Conant’s popularity and the *Banner of Light’s* “Message Department” were part of the upswell in Spiritualism that occurred in the United States during and shortly after the Civil War, when the country was, in the words of Andover’s Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, “dark with sorrowing women.” Seances became popular in both the Northern and Southern states and even Abraham Lincoln was reported to have attended a few sessions.

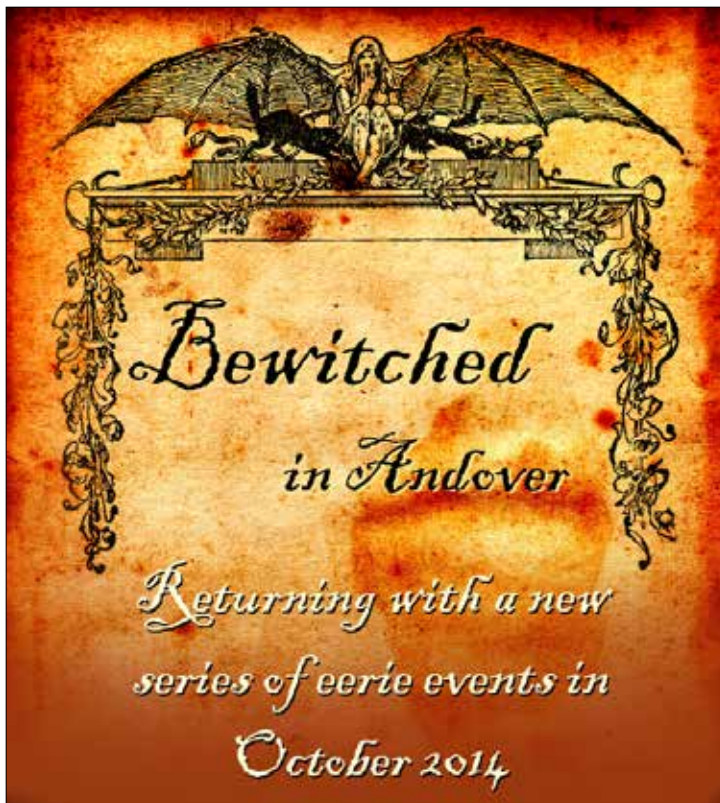
Several factors combined in the middle of the nineteenth century to lead large numbers of people to believe that communication between the living and the dead was possible. The first was the overwhelmingly evangelical nature of the nation’s religious values and assumptions -- the old Calvinist principles of predestination had yielded to a widespread belief that salvation, and thus admission into Heaven, was available to anyone who professed a sincere belief. Most Americans believed that Heaven was a literal place, where bodies would be made whole and families would be reunited.

Another important factor was the era’s rapid advancements in science and technology. Wonders like the telegraph – which allowed nearly instant

communication between people separated by geography – encouraged the belief that messages between Earth and Heaven were no less possible. Both parlor and performing Spiritualist mediums produced rapping noises, rising tables and moving planchettes that seemed to offer the proof demanded in the modern age. New photographic technologies allowed the creation of double exposure “spirit photographs,” that purported to show people accompanied by ghostly figures of the dead. Many women who turned to Spiritualism also found in the movement an opportunity for religious leadership



– Spiritualists were among the few American women who were allowed to speak in public – and also a way to express their support for women’s rights and temperance. Into this culture came the hundreds of thousands of Civil War deaths, and along with them, the even greater number of grieving mothers, wives and sisters in search of consolation. “*My mother, sir, is broken-hearted*” wrote the ghost of Leander Bolton, “*but I feel quite happy, that I can come back and talk to her. I think she may become more reconciled to my death.*”



The season of ghoulish antics and hocus pocus has arrived in Andover! The fourth annual ***Bewitched in Andover: A Series of Eerie Events*** will take place throughout the month of October offering a wide variety of spirited and Halloween themed events for all ages. This year, the Andover Historical Society is delighted to explore the hauntingly interesting subject of Victorian spiritualism and will be partnering with Memorial Hall Library, Circles of Wisdom, and the Andover Bookstore to present a wide variety of programs.

To kick off *Bewitched in Andover*, Memorial Hall Library will host ***Séances: Searching for the Spirits*** on Tuesday, October 7. Guests are invited to join ‘mentalist and mindbender’ Rory Raven for an interactive lecture-demonstration on the history of séances. Raven, originator of the Providence Ghost Walk, and author of four books about Rhode Island’s history, has nurtured a life-long interest in all things psychic and paranormal. His goal is to reproduce the kind of effects parapsychologists have been researching for years – live and onstage.

Andover Bookstore joins the *Bewitched in Andover* line-up this year with four story-themed events. Held on Saturdays, beginning October 11, Halloween loving children are invited to attend a ***Spooktacular Story Hour*** with games, craft activities, and storytelling. On the evening of October 25, teens age 13+ have an exclusive invitation to a night of ***Stories & S’mores!*** Join Bookstore staff around the fireplace for marshmallow toasting as they share their favorite scary stories, and encourage guests to tell theirs, too.

As part of his ongoing book tour, ***mystery writer and storyteller Michael Nethercott*** will be appearing in Andover for a night of memorable story-telling on

Thursday, October 16 at 7pm. He will begin the event by telling several ghost stories, both traditional and (presumably) true—from his sprawling Irish family. Following the storytelling, Nethercott will read a short excerpt from his first novel, *The Séance Society*, discuss the book, and field audience questions.

Fans of mystery novels should ask themselves, are you ready for ***Murder at Blanchard House?*** This year, a Murder Mystery Dinner takes place on Saturday, October 18 at the Historical Society and guests will be part of the story, and perhaps the crime itself! We’ll turn back the clock to the year 1912 and discover Henry Robinson, home owner of the Blanchard House, has just been murdered! Can you solve the crime? Limited to just 24 guests, each attendee will be assigned a character from Andover’s history and will receive a personalized character dossier. Guests will search for clues, gossip with the servants, and enjoy a sit-down dinner while trying to discover the identity of the murderer among their fellow guests. This is sure to be the eeriest event of the season.

Clues aren’t always easily found when trying to solve a mystery, but mysterious ***Locks in a Locket*** are one type of mourning jewelry sure to attract attention. On Tuesday, October 21, fine jewelry designer and metalsmith, Sarah Nehama will present a brief history of memorial jewelry from the 17th through the 20th centuries and show examples of how it relates to memento-mori and sentimental jewels. She will share examples of mourning items from historic collections, her own personal collection, and highlights from the Andover Historical Society’s holdings.

On Friday, October 24, restless souls will gather for ***Spirits in the House*** at the Society. In cooperation with local shop, *Circles of Wisdom*, this eerie evening event this season will find guests enjoying spirited drinks and seasonal fare while exploring the mystical side of Victorian spiritualism. From psychic and mediumship readings to demonstrations of table tipping, this unique gathering is sure to raise the hairs on the back of your neck! Learn about vintage Ouija boards, talk with a practicing Wiccan about how to honor departed loved ones in a traditional way, or delve into Andover’s 19th century newspapers to discover the strange happenings that once occurred right here in town. 15-minute psychic readings will be available for an additional fee.

Halloween is meant for little spooks, too! Children are invited to attend ***Haunt-the-Halls Halloween Party*** on October 30. Just for students, this after-school party will feature old-fashioned refreshments, Victorian games, a costume parade, and a spooky holiday craft – all connected to our *Bewitched in Andover* series. Not too scary and not too plain, this afternoon adventure is perfect for children in grades 2-5.

Grab your magic wand, your witch hat and your broomstick and visit Andover this Halloween season. Be sure to visit the web site at bewitchedinandover.com call us at (978) 475-2236 to confirm the exact time and cost for each event.

FACES OF ANDOVER - ANDOVER DAY



Changes are afoot at the Blanchard House as one exhibit moves to Memorial Hall Library and volunteers bring the house back to life for the year 1829. The Historical Society's most recent exhibition, *Faces of Andover*, featured more than eighty rarely-seen photographs of Andover residents during the mid-1800s. On display from April 11, 2014 through August 30, 2014, the exhibit showcased the stories of Andover and its citizen, visitors, and students – before, during, and after the U.S. Civil War. From a chair once owned by Harriet Beecher Stowe, to uniform pieces worn in the midst of battle, three-dimensional artifacts highlighted the themes of Sacrifice, Leadership, Cadence, Influence, Abolition, and Honor were highlighted. A condensed version of the exhibit will soon reopen in the Memorial Hall on the second floor of Memorial Hall Library. Collections Committee Chair Angela McBrien will oversee the move and exhibit installation with support and assistance from library staff and trustees.

The exhibition was removed from display at the Society just in time for the Andover Business Community Association's annual street fair, Andover Day, on September 6th. As a special treat for the town, nearly 20 Historical Society volunteers dressed in reproduction 1820s clothing and stepped into the past by demonstrating early 19th century crafts and occupations. Nearly 1000 visitors had the opportunity to see blacksmithing

activities on the lawn, work a printing press in the barn, peel apples in the kitchen, and write with quill pens in the parlor. In addition, activities including drying beans, sewing, knitting, and reading were on display throughout the day. Despite the hot weather, volunteers and visitors were delighted by the open house and welcomed the opportunity to explore and learn more about Andover's past during the annual Andover Day festivities. As a finale to the day, volunteers on site at the end of the afternoon participated in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, with some help from the Rotary Club of Andover's newly donated fire buckets. It was a refreshing and generous end to a spectacular day!





CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Séances: Searching for the Spirits

Tuesday, October 7 at 7pm at Memorial Hall Library

Join 'mentalist and mindbender' Rory Raven for an interactive lecture-demonstration on the history of séances. Raven, originator of the Providence Ghost Walk, and author of four books about Rhode Island's history, has nurtured a life-long interest in all things psychic and paranormal. His goal is to reproduce the kind of effects parapsychologists have been researching for years – live and onstage. Sponsored by the Friends of Memorial Hall Library. Reserve your free seat at mhl.org/eventcalendar or call 978-623-8401 x31.

Little Spooks Story Hour

Saturday, October 11 at 11am, for ages 6+ at the Andover Bookstore

Halloween loving youngsters will have fun listening to *The Ghost with the Bloody Fingers* by Alvin Schwartz & *The Monsterator* by Keith Graves read aloud by staff at this fun event. Program also includes time to play an ice breaker game, Make a Pair!, and learn to make a popsicle stick haunted house to take home. To sign up for this free event, please call or email the Andover Bookstore at (978) 475-0143 or info2@andoverbookstore.com.

High Tea & History: Who's Who at the Burial Ground

Wednesday, October 15 at 2pm at the Center at Punchard

Join us for our final High Tea & History program as local historian Char Lyons provides a virtual tour of Andover through the early settler's burial yard, the South Church Cemetery.

Learn about the famous and infamous residents of Andover's earliest resting place. High Tea & History is a collaboration between Andover Historical Society and the Center at Punchard. Register for this free event by calling 978-623-8321.



An Evening with Michael Nethercott

Thursday, October 16 at 7pm at the Andover Historical Society

As part of his ongoing book tour, mystery writer and storyteller Michael Nethercott will be appearing in Andover for a night of memorable story-telling. He will begin the event by telling several ghost stories, both traditional and (presumably) true—from his sprawling Irish family. Following the story-telling, Nethercott will read a short excerpt from his first novel, *The Séance Society*, discuss the book, and field audience questions. Copies of both novels will be available for sale, courtesy of the Andover Bookstore, and can be signed by the author. \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Register for this event online by calling 978-475-2236. Online registration now available.



Spooktacular Story Hour

Saturday, October 18 at 11am for ages 3+ at the Andover Bookstore

Little spooks will enjoy a morning playing Pin the Tail on the Black Cat (a Halloween version of Pin the Tail on the Donkey) and making Q-tip skeletons to take home. This week's stories, *Green Ribbon* by Alvin Schwartz & *Monster Needs a Costume* by Paul Czajak, will be read aloud to participants. To sign up for this free event, please call or email the Andover Bookstore at (978) 475-0143 or info2@andoverbookstore.com.

Murder at Blanchard House: A Mystery Dinner

Saturday, October 18, 6-9pm at the Andover Historical Society

The year is 1912 and Henry Robinson, home owner of the Blanchard House has been murdered! Can you solve the crime? Limited to just 24 guests, each attendee will be assigned a character from Andover's history and will receive a personalized character dossier. Guests will



CALENDAR OF EVENTS *(continued)*

search for clues, gossip with the servants, and enjoy a sit-down dinner while trying to discover the identity of the murderer among their fellow guests. \$60 members, \$75 non-members. Register for this event online or by calling 978-475-2236. Online registration now available!

Locks in a Locket: Mourning Jewelry

Tuesday, October 21 at 7pm at the Andover Historical Society

Sarah Nehama will present a brief history of memorial jewelry from the 17th through the 20th centuries and show examples of how it relates to memento-mori and sentimental jewels. She will share examples of mourning items from historic collections, her own personal collection, and highlights from the Andover Historical Society's holdings. Finally, Sarah will discuss how mourning customs changed after the turn of the 20th century, and why the industry declined. Questions will be welcomed after the presentation. Sarah is a fine jewelry designer and metalsmith working in Jamaica Plain, MA. She has been volunteering at the Massachusetts Historical Society cataloging and photographing their mourning jewelry collection since 2007. \$5 members, \$10 non-members. Register for this event by calling 978-475-2236. *Online registration available September 24.*

Spirits in the House

Friday, October 24, 7-10pm at the Andover Historical Society

In cooperation with local shop, Circles of Wisdom, this eerie evening event this season will find guests enjoying spirited drinks and seasonal fare while exploring the mystical side of Victorian spiritualism. From psychic and mediumship readings to demonstrations of table tipping, this unique gathering is sure to raise the hairs on the back of your neck! Learn about vintage Ouija boards, talk with a practicing Wiccan about how to honor departed loved ones in a traditional way, or delve into Andover's 19th century newspapers to discover the strange happenings that once occurred right here in town. \$15 members, \$20 non-members. 15-minute psychic readings available for an additional fee. Register for this event by calling 978-475-2236. *Online registration available September 24.*

Spooktacular Story Hour (HALLOWEEN COSTUMES REQUIRED!)

Saturday, October 25 at 11am for ages 8+ at the Andover Bookstore

Come play a sensory game called The Dead Man's Brains – children will be asked to reach their hands into “mystery boxes” to feel and guess the body parts (eyes, hair, etc) of the dead man in the story. Story hour also includes a reading of *The Viper* by Alvin Schwartz & *A Halloween Scare in New England* by Eric James plus a competition to see who is the fastest to eat a hanging doughnut! To sign up for this free event, please call or email the Andover Bookstore at (978) 475-0143 or info2@andoverbookstore.com.

Stories & S'mores at Andover Bookstore

Saturday, October 25 at 6pm, for ages 13+

Join us around the fireplace at 6pm, when we will toast marshmallows in our fireplace & make s'mores! Our staff will share their favorite scary stories, and you are encouraged to share yours as well! To sign up for this free event, please call or email the Andover Bookstore at (978) 475-0143 or info2@andoverbookstore.com.

Haunt-the-Halls Halloween Party

Thursday, October 30, 3:30-5pm at the Andover Historical Society

Just for students, this after-school Halloween party will feature old-fashioned refreshments, Victorian games, a costume parade, and a spooky holiday craft – all connected to our *Bewitched in Andover* series. Not too scary and not too plain, this afternoon adventure is perfect for children in grades 2-5. \$12 members, \$15 non-members. Register for this event by calling 978-475-2236. *Online registration available September 24.*



Essex County
Community Foundation



ANDOVER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Tuesday through Saturday : 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Office: 978-475-2236 Fax: 978-470-2741

www.andoverhistorical.org

STAFF

Elaine Clements, Executive Director
eclements@andoverhistorical.org

Carrie Midura, Programs & PR Manager
cmidura@andoverhistorical.org

Marilyn Helmers,
Development & Collections Manager
mhelmers@andoverhistorical.org

Weekend Assistants
Adam Brooks
Kenna Therrien

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