

THE NEWSLETTER  
Winter 2014  
Vol. 39, No. 4



ANDOVER  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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IMAGES

(Left) Detail, Uncle Wiggily

(Above) Andover Girl Scout  
Troop #76130 decorating a  
tree for Tree Time exhibit.

## GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST

by Tom Adams

For those who celebrate it, Christmas is a cherished time. A time for family and friends to gather together. A time to reconnect. It's a time that recalls the warm memories of Christmas' mornings past. The anticipation one felt as a child watching the calendar, counting down the days to that special morning. The sleepless Christmas Eves and the excitement early Christmas morning seeing all those mysterious and beautifully wrapped packages Santa left under the tree.

Those of us who keep Christmas carry these memories with us as we leave our childhood behind. Favorite games that lit our imaginations and filled countless hours. Toys we played with until they literally wore out. Gifts lost in time that we hold near and dear decades later. "I love Christmas memories," Historical Society volunteer Mary Ruth Luther said. My sister and I would hang our stockings with our parents and grandparents looking on. Then we'd be off to bed in our new P. J's. We stayed awake as long as we could swearing we'd heard the pitter patter of reindeer hooves. Little did we know that we were tucked in at 6:30 pm! When we woke up at the crack of dawn and rushed into our parent's room we never stopped to wonder why mom and dad were *soooooooooooooo* tired. Christmas morning was magical! The sparkling tree, the stuffed stockings, and presents brought by 'Santa and his elves.' All made for memories that I cherish to this day."

Another dear friend remembered, "We had wonderful times at Christmas. My parents were very traditional – stockings were opened before breakfast. When everyone was ready, mom and dad would open the doors to the sunroom where Santa left all his gifts. It was a gorgeous site and, as you can imagine, my brother and I were so excited. We were allowed to open one present at a time – that way it would take a little longer!!!"

Local historian and retired teacher Jim Batchelder remembers his favorite toy at Christmas was a Lincoln logs set. "I spent hours and hours building and rebuilding all sorts of structures, towers,

*Continued on page 4*

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER, WINTER 2014



My husband's new "toy" is a rusty and dilapidated 1930 Ford Model A pickup truck, purchased at a local auction. My hope was that he would have it in running condition in time to pull the Historical Society's Christmas tree in this year's Santa Parade, but that goal has proven to be wildly optimistic.



The job has mushroomed into a full-blown research and restoration project – we now hope to have an "authentic" reproduction of a truck owned by Glenn's grandfather, Andover homebuilder (and developer of the Shawsheen Heights neighborhood) George Cairns.

As always, the Historical Society's resources have been a great source of information and encouragement. The *Townsman* archives has been a good source for answers to questions that family memories and lore could not supply, as have several books from our library. Fellow-board member Jim Batchelder has offered photos of his West Andover family's farm trucks for reference, and our growing gang of costume lovers has contributed accurate 1930s fashion ideas for our future driving attire.

One of my favorite discoveries is this quote from Henry Ford himself, which was cited by someone in response to my mock bemoaning of our new enthusiasm. "*Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.*" I've found out that this quote is well-known among proponents of lifelong learning, but it could be the motto of our Historical Society as well. We are a community of active learners and I am proud to count among my friends so many "young" people of all ages.

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

Jane Cairns  
President, Andover Historical Society



## DONATE TO THE ANNUAL FUND

## Your gift to the Annual Fund is vital

Thank you to all our members and friends who support the Andover Historical Society's Annual Fund! Your gift to the Annual Fund, above and beyond membership dues, has a direct and immediate impact on our mission to gather, preserve, and share Andover's unique stories, and connect people to this community. With you and your support, the Historical Society inspires and deepens community connections and civic engagement. Your contribution is truly an investment in Andover's future.

There is still time to support this year's Annual Fund! We invite you to join with us in our mission of preserving and sharing Andover's stories by making an unrestricted gift. You can donate online on the Society's website at [www.andoverhistorical.org](http://www.andoverhistorical.org). Click on "Support Us" to make your gift or call us at 978-475-2236. Read on to learn more about what your gift helps make possible.

# “TOY THEATER” – A TRULY TINY TREASURE!

by Katharine Barr

If you grew up in the 1950s and had a TV, you and your family were undoubtedly entranced and hugely entertained by the TV antics of *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie*, and their friends The Kuklapolitans. This ground-breaking puppet show, conceived by puppeteer Burr Tillstrom, kept America glued to their TV sets from 1947 – 1957.

If you’re a little younger than this, you witnessed the “birth” of Jim Henson’s *The Muppets* — a phenomenon that began in 1955 and has grown into a multimillion dollar worldwide enterprise, still wildly popular even after Henson’s untimely death in 1990.

Centuries before all this, the *Punch and Judy* puppets brought their irreverent and often coarse humor to audiences across Europe, becoming especially popular in Britain, having arrived there via France and Italy in the mid-1600s.

## TOY THEATER — A BRIEF HISTORY

Entertainment in miniature has fascinated society for hundreds of years, and has taken many forms. At the turn on the 19th century, toy theater (also called paper or model theater) was created and became wildly popular throughout Europe. Depicting scenes from popular stage productions of the time, they consisted of a miniature stage, with a grooved base upon which pieces could be moved. Scenery and characters also slid onto the base and could be moved back and forth by threads, wires and small sticks. Sold as kits, they were available in playhouses, book stores and commercial libraries.

Printed on lithograph paper, or hand-colored, and then glued onto cardboard and cut out, they provided hours of entertainment in the production and presentation of the plays. Many enthusiasts embellished the scenes and characters with bits of actual greenery, cloth and tinsel to add a bit of realism.

By the end of the 19th century, toy theaters began to decline in popularity. In the early 20th century, they enjoyed a brief resurgence only to decline again as TV watching grew.

## FAMOUS “DABBLERS” IN TOY THEATER

Many prominent creatives found the toy theater concept fascinating. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote an essay in tribute to its tiny grandeur. Lewis Carroll, Hans Christian Andersen, and even the sophisticated Oscar Wilde took their turns experimenting in the genre. Ingmar Bergman and Orson Welles used toy theaters as staging grounds for several of their cinematic masterpieces. And the great actor Laurence Olivier



even made a toy theater of his film version of *Hamlet*, with a little paper cutout of himself in the starring role! But despite all of this attention, toy theater could not compete for audience attention with the new medium of TV.

## BEQUEST TO THE AHS

In 1980, the Andover Historical Society received a generous bequest of family artifacts from the estate of the Abby Locke Castle Kemper, a descendant of several prominent, early Andover families including the Lockes, Thomsons, Castles, and Drews. She was the second wife of Phillips Academy Headmaster John Kemper. The items were presented to AHS by Eleanor Castle. Among them was a “toy theater” depicting scenes from the classic story of “Robinson Crusoe.” The families’ involvement in Andover began in the 1860s, when the Locke family moved into 70 Elm Street. Later, Abby Locke and her husband, T. Dennis Thomson, son of the Rector of Christ Church, built a handsome house at 54 Abbott Street. Several generations of these families

## THE ROBINSON CRUSOE STORY — ON THE TINY STAGE!

Daniel Defoe’s story of the castaway adventurer, his faithful companion Friday, his misfortunes, and his eventual rise to wealth has made fanciful reading for both children and adults since it was first published in 1719. Unfortunately, we do not have much concrete information on AHS’ toy theater — how old it might be and from where it might have originated. But it is delightful nonetheless, and in fairly good condition.

The pieces have been printed on both sides, allowing two scenes to be interchanged and displayed. On the proscenium, painted audience figures watch from curtained boxes. One background shows the wall of a cabin in winter. Side pieces that can slide onto the base from either side show forest trees. The reverse of this background depicts the inside of a small cabin facing out to sea, a cabin that Crusoe may have built on the island where he was marooned. Surviving figures include Crusoe, various “savages” he encountered, and a boat full of shipwrecked sailors rowing toward an uncertain shore. Each piece has threads attached for moving them back and forth across the stage.

*Robinson Crusoe* will be fully assembled and on display at the Society’s winter exhibit “Making Time to Play.” Come see this and other toys and games that entertained children and adults in a pre-electronic era!

# GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and forts. They never get old and of all the toys I had as a kid my Lincoln logs are the only ones I kept. They are still doing service when the great nieces and nephews show up. I have added to them over the years and have taken them to school for my senior (high school art) portfolio students to get creative with.”

In the 1970, volunteer Kim Whitworth “always found a Parker Brothers game under the tree. My favorite game was *Sorry!* It was an uncomplicated game and fun for a young girl in elementary school to play. The game’s title comes from the various ways one player can obstruct the progress of another player’s progress toward getting all four of their colored ‘pawns’ from their Start location to the Home space – all while issuing an apologetic *Sorry!* My father, the fierce competitor, certainly wasn’t. His sing song ‘Sorry!’ every time he caught me was maddening at the time. I laugh now remembering those games and those wonderful times.”

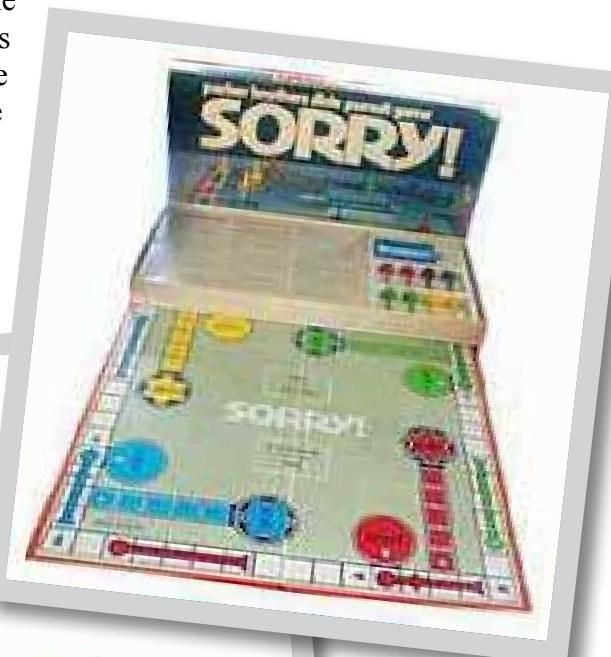
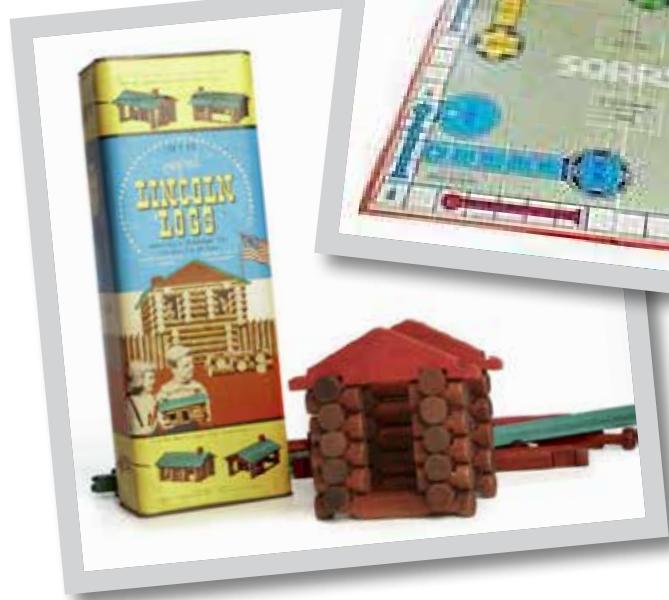
Lifelong Andover resident Julie Pike remembers that “Once upon a time I received a Christmas gift that was to be used only outdoors during warmer weather. My father was watching me very closely as I opened the gift, as if he knew what it was. It was a rocket that you pump air into and launch into the wide open spaces. Dad’s hands were out to grab the rocket and head for the door, but after word from Mum, thought otherwise. When good weather finally arrived, we took the rocket outside. Dad pre-

pared it for its maiden flight. It was pumped up and released. Up it went, then taking a sharp left through Mum and Dad’s bedroom window! That was the first and last flight for my rocket. It is a memory I’ll never forget.

Society member Scott Slaughter loved his Tonka Trucks and remembers his first 3-speed green Schwinn bicycle.

“My favorite gift ever,” recalled Historical Society friend Melanie LaRocca, “was a life-like Scarlett O’Hara doll. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I think I was 8 or 9-years old when I got it. It was a collectable doll so I couldn’t play with it. It had real hair in banana curls and fake eye lashes. It lasted as a bed decoration for several years until one summer. One of the cats decided it made a great companion. The cat ate the eyelashes off, ate the banana curls and got fur all over the costume!”

Christmas is a time that connects us all. It recalls precious memories of childhood. The pure, unadulterated thrill of Christmas morning. Memories that endure throughout our lives warming our hearts and lifting our spirits.



Lincoln Logs, Strong Museum of Play,  
Rochester, NY; Others, stock images

# IT'S YOUR DEAL, ANDOVER

by Tom Adams

Enjoying family and friends over a card game has long been a popular Andover pastime. Playing cards offers a warm and inviting time to just relax, sit and talk, and catch up on the latest family news and neighborhood gossip. Such moments blend the generations, connect us, and stir our fondest memories – recollections of times past, stories that bond us more deeply to our roots.

While the origins of card games are lost in the annals of time, history dates playing cards back to China as early as the 9th century. By the later portion of the Middle Ages, the popularity of card games had travelled from China to the Middle East and to Europe. The look, feel and design of playing cards have changed significantly over the past 1200 years. Playing cards evolved from domino-like tiles used in China to hand painted cards so prohibitively expensive only the wealthiest could afford. It wasn't until the advent of woodcut printing in Europe during the mid-1400s that playing cards became affordable for the common man.

As playing cards became more widely available, governments began to exert control over who played. Certain types of wagering games were banned. The Church hosted card burnings. By decree, the King of England, Edward the 4th, restricted card playing to the twelve days of Christmas. Here in North America, card playing and gambling among the indigenous population preceded the arrival of the Pilgrims in 1620. And while the staunch Pilgrims tried to prevent card playing from taking hold in their new world, they fought a losing battle.

During the 1840s the local population was swelling with immigrants seeking employment in the burgeoning mills. Many of the Irish that fled the potato famine migrating to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland boarded timber ships bound for the industrialized Merrimack Valley ports of Lowell, Haverhill and Lawrence. They brought with them a game rooted in 19th century Ireland called "Forty-Fives." The game took hold.

Local historical and long time Society member Norma Gammons recalls playing 45's back in her college days. "*I played it on the train my first year in college. There were about 30 students riding the train each day from Haverhill, Lawrence, North Andover, Methuen and Wilmington. We would take*



Playing cards, circa 1941,  
gift of Karen Herman (#1993.014.1)

*down one of the signs posted all along the tops of the windows. We would make this our card table by holding it across our knees. We would turn the seats around for a game of four or six. The games would go on for days. It was our amusement on a boring ride."*

Passed down through succeeding generations, the game remains a popular pastime today. Leagues have formed attracting players from Andover and surrounding towns. *The Merrimack Valley 45's League* was founded in 2001 and boasts over 20 teams hailing from Haverhill to Lowell. Their mission is simply "to join people together, allow life to be more interesting, to relax a little and have some fun." Our own town senior center hosts a game of 45's most Tuesday afternoons. Sitting in on their game a few weeks back, I marveled at the intensity, the strategy, and rapid flow of the game as two pair of partners squared off for several hours of play. Their table talk was nonstop and spirited - but more so, it was warm, bonding banter among friends. What has remained with me was the sense of community the game embraces.

In today's fast moving world we are bombarded by technology, texting, iPhones and Tweeting seem to dominate every waking hour. The simple act of sitting among family and friends, playing a game of cards and connecting with the stories that define our lives too often falls along the wayside. So dust off those cards and get in on the fun. It's your deal, Andover.

**MAKING**

TIME TO  
**PLAY**

*...with*  
***Tree Time!***

by Carrie Midura

For the seventh year, a unique exhibit of history-inspired trees will be the featured display for the month of December at the Andover Historical Society. Tree Time is a collection of more than thirty-five decorated Christmas trees, each inspired by an artifact from the Society's collection. The inspiration objects for 2014 are also on display as part of the Making Time to Play exhibition in the Society's main gallery. The trees are decorated by groups and businesses from the Andover community including Andover Fire Rescue, Andover Sister Towns Association, Memorial Hall Library, SHED's Springboard to Kindergarten, and Empty Nesters. The Society is also proud to have many individual and families decorating trees this year as part of the largest Tree Time display yet.

Many of the decorators are back for their fifth, sixth or even seventh year of decorating. Volunteer Rachel Penner along with members of her family, have been participating in the display since 2010, and this year is no exception. Their past trees have been inspired by such varied items as a child's frilly pink dress and an old bound leather book. This year, Rachel's tree is inspired by a rooster pull toy manufactured in France during the World War I period to raise funds for veterans. Using piles of black and white feather boas, fuzzy yellow chicks, and egg shells in all shapes and sizes, this egg-stravagant (sorry!) tree is a fun nod to a toy with a serious past.



Two of this year's trees are particularly off beat – one is lime green and the other is light blue! However, once seen, these decorated trees match their theme and inspiration objects perfectly. The Mullen and Bardetti families chose a tropical theme inspired by the island scenes in the Robinson Crusoe toy theatre mentioned earlier in the newsletter. Their lime green tree is nestled in an inflatable pool filled with beach sand and covered in painted pinecones-turned-pineapples, floral leis, tropical drink umbrellas, and even miniature aloha shirts. When visiting, be sure to keep an eye on the dancing hula girls at the top of the tree, we've caught them dancing and spinning on several occasions.

Not to be outdone, the light blue tree decorated by Andover Fire Rescue is quite the opposite of what you might expect. Inspired by an antique fish pond game, this underwater-themed tree glows with the tropical oranges, pinks, and purples you'd find in an aquarium. From sea anemone made from toothpicks and small balls, to a bed of hand-cut coral forming the tree base, this one simply must be seen to be believed. The luminescent jellyfish are a special added touch and help show what a Christmas tree might look like from a fish's point of view.

A wide array of other historical artifacts are also on display as inspiration objects, including an 1850s mechanical walking doll, wood tennis racket, doll house furniture built by the famous Addison LeBoutillier, and

even a home-made marble shooting gun. Tree Time will be on display throughout the month of December, Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission is \$8 per person and \$5 for members, seniors, and students. Children under 5 are admitted free of charge. Visit the Historical Society this December and join the thousands that have enjoyed this festive holiday tradition in past years. Additional details are available at [andoverhistorical.org/treetime](http://andoverhistorical.org/treetime).

The Making Time to Play exhibit will remain on display through September 2015 and will be accompanied by

numerous events and workshops throughout the year. Members and non-members alike are invited to drop in and play some of the reproduction games, work on a puzzle, or even craft some additional items for our hands-on dollhouse. The exhibit was designed by West Elementary teacher and Society volunteer Tyler Bedford, with assistance from students in the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 AP US History classes at Andover Historical Society. Volunteers Rory O'Brien, Jean Cookson, Jim Redmond, and Sue Horgan also offered invaluable time and effort to put this exhibition on display.





# CALENDAR

**Historical Society offices closed  
December 29 – January 9 for winter break.  
Library and Museum will be open 10–4 on  
Saturday, January 3.**

## History Connects Us

*Interested in learning more about the Historical Society?  
This is a one-hour program bringing you inside our mission.*

### UPCOMING DATES

**Tuesday, January 13, 10 am**

**Wednesday, January 21, 7 pm**

**Tuesday, February 10, 10 am**

**Wednesday, February 25, 7 pm**

**Tuesday, March 10, 10 am**

**Wednesday, March 18, 7 pm**

**Tuesday, April 7, 10 am**

**Wednesday, April 15, 7 pm**

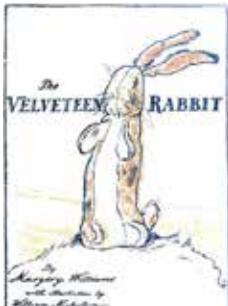
**Wednesday, April 29, 7 pm**

**Tuesday, May 5, 10 am**

## Andover Historical Society

97 Main Street, Andover, MA 01810

**RSVP to Marilyn Helmers 978-475-2236**



### **Making Time to Play: Velveteen Rabbit**

**Saturday, January 24 2–3:30pm**

Come and cozy up with us for this beloved story followed by a chance to stuff your own Velveteen Rabbit to bring home. Hot chocolate will be served and Victorian style games will be on hand to play with. Ages 7 – 9 (limit 15) Price is \$10 per child including supplies.

The Velveteen Rabbit is a children's novel written by Margery Williams and illustrated by William Nicholson. It chronicles the story of a stuffed rabbit and his quest to become real through the love of his owner. The book was first published in 1922 and has been republished many times since.

### **Knitting & Stitching Club**

**Tuesday, February 3 12–3pm**

Do you enjoy knitting and other types of needlework? Come join fellow crafters the first Tuesday afternoon each month for a few hours of stitching time. Open and free to all levels of ability and interest. Bring your own project and supplies and get to know other local stitchers. No instruction provided but helpful attendees are sure to offer assistance. Tea, coffee, & water will be available and other refreshments are welcome.



# OF EVENTS



## Making Time to Play: Old Fashioned Valentines

**Saturday, February 7 11am–2pm**

All ages are invited to drop in to the Historical Society for an afternoon of Valentine merriment. See hundred-year old valentines up close and take the time to make one for someone special. A wide variety of supplies will be on hand to craft your own unique card. Volunteers will be on hand to help with ideas and encourage creativity. Fee of \$2 per card covers all supplies.

## Making Time to Play: St. Patrick's Day Bingo

**Tuesday, March 17 2–3:30pm**

When's the last time you sat down for an old-fashioned game of BINGO? Join us for a fun afternoon of fun and games, all with a bit of Irish luck thrown in. \$5 per person includes light refreshments and time to play games.

## March Write In - Celebrating Andover's Female Authors

The Andover Historical Society is hosting several reading and writing events in March with a special focus on female authors in honor of Women's History Month. The event series highlights local writers from both Andover's history and the broader contemporary society. A wide variety of programs are designed to appeal to a range of ages and participation levels.

### March Write In: History Kids Journaling

**Thursday, March 5 3:30–5pm**

Have you ever wondered what goes into creating a hand-made journal? Young students are invited to join local teacher, Maureen Witbold, for an afternoon program on journal writing and creating. Participants will see an 1860's journal up close and have the opportunity to create one to take home. \$5 per member child, \$7 per non-member.

### March Write in: Author Reading & Book Signing

**Thursday, March 19 Time TBD**

The Historical Society is still waiting on confirmation from a special guest author! Updated event listings will be posted to the Society's website and facebook page.

### March Write In: Meet the Authors

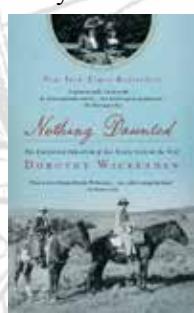
**Saturday, March 21 1–4pm**

Harriet Beecher Stowe, Bessie Goldsmith, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and other lesser-known Andover authoresses will return to town for one afternoon of living history presentations at the Andover Historical Society. Visit the Blanchard House for a 30 minute guided tour and have the opportunity to 'speak' to these illustrious writers from the past. \$5 per member, \$7 per non-member, students and children under 12 admitted free.

### March Write In: Authors' Live Panel

**Thursday, March 26 7–8:30pm**

Andover authors will take the floor for this special panel discussion as we explore the art and craft of writing in the 21st century. A local moderator will lead the event and explore questions relating to styles of writing, sources of inspiration, and many other audience generated queries. Authors are still being confirmed as this newsletter goes to print but updates will be posted to the Society's website and facebook page. \$5 per member, \$7 per non-member, students and children under 12 admitted free.



### March Write In: Nothing Daunted Discussion & Dessert

**Tuesday, March 31 7–8:30pm**

Explore the past by reading *Nothing Daunted*, the acclaimed and captivating true story of two restless society girls who left their affluent lives to "rough it" as teachers in the wilds of Colorado in 1916. Written by Dorothy Wickenden, the executive editor of *The New Yorker* since 1996, all are invited to read the book and join in a guided discussion of the story to conclude the March Write In series of events. Open to the public at no charge but reservations are requested.

# ANDOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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[massculturalcouncil.org](http://massculturalcouncil.org)



Uncle Wiggily children's game,  
gift of Robert Burns (#1996.056.3)

# 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](http://www.andoverhistorical.org)**

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