

ANDOVER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



2013
ANNUAL REPORT

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Photograph by Cristen Farrell Photography

HAVE WE GOT A STORY FOR YOU

We are all story tellers at heart. We relate stories of family, friends, successes, failures, and tales, exciting and mundane. Our desire to share those stories connects us with each other. Telling stories is undoubtedly one of our most basic needs as a community.

The Historical Society specializes in telling stories of people, places, and objects from our past. Preserving images and objects has an intrinsic attraction. Learning “the story” associated with these items makes them come alive in ways that we share with others. We recently completed an exhibit that featured forty items from our vast collection, chosen by our family of friends and staff. Each object has its own story, but the connection with the selector gave that object new life and meaning. In the autumn of 2013, we opened an exhibit that tells the stories of people of Andover through twelve decades of amazing evolution of the use of fabric in dressmaking. In the spring of 2014, we will introduce the vast collection of images of persons and their stories highlighting Andover’s contribution to the American Civil War.

We continue to share Andover’s stories throughout our community.

Our successful association with the Center at Punchard affords the participants in our High Tea and History programs the opportunity to recollect their own stories long since relegated to memories.

Additionally, during this past year, we initiated our twice monthly informative sessions called Speak Easy Andover. The goal of these one-hour programs is to relate the three elements of the mission of the Society: preserving the past, connecting to the community, and educating for the future. An essential feature of this experience is the relating of stories of how people’s lives were changed by their connection with the Historical Society. We hope you will share your stories with us.

Doug Mitchell

President

OUR MISSION

The Andover Historical Society tells the unique stories of Andover to foster a strong community that knows its history, values what it inherits, and takes pride in what it passes on to future generations.

Every activity and program we undertake meets one of our three mission areas: preserving the past, educating for the future, and connecting to our community. Through those mission areas, we create opportunities to connect people to each other and this place to encourage community engagement.

Spring for History

May 14, 2013



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Two hundred people gathered for the Historical Society's first annual Spring for History fundraising breakfast. The breakfast kicked off with a musical performance by the Sunrise Singers and Andover High School junior Emily Wivell. Historical Society Executive Director Elaine Clements presented the Society's vision for the future in each of our three mission areas, then introduced a short video illustrating the impact of the Society's work. We are grateful for the creative support of Advertising Management Services and Andover Cable TV, which made the video possible.

Board member Jim Batchelder shared his most defining moment with the Historical Society when he discovered 33 transcribed letters from Lewis Garrison "Gat" Holt to his sister Caroline from 1861-1864 when Gat was serving in the Civil War. One letter resonated with him like no other in the collection.

"... I saw the smoke and heard the din of battle. I saw the foe and heard the rebel yell...I saw every man in Co. H alive and well, and I saw them fall on the field of Spotsylvania, some dead and some wounded. I saw the wounded tenderly taken up and cared for after the battle, and I saw the dead laid in a row side by side, touching elbows as they did in the ranks. I saw the trench dug, and the dead laid in it still touching elbows, their caps over their faces...I saw those who were left of Co H standing with uncovered drooping heads while tears fell from their eyes as the dirt was, not thrown, but gently pushed in as though taking care not to hurt their poor dead comrades.... (I saw) the strip ofhardtack box on which was written the name and killed at Spotsylvania May 19, 1864."

"It was at this moment," Jim said, "that I realized that the Andover Historical Society is the richest depository of Andover's historical documents and objects relative to our community...I cherish every moment I am at the Society, as every day is a learning experience."

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PRESERVING THE PAST

The Andover Historical Society cares for over 50,000 documents, photographs, objects, and other historical resources in our permanent collection. With each new item brought to us, we look for the story it can tell about the development of the town, the people who lived here, and what they valued.

Donations to the Society's permanent collection come from many different sources and can be something produced quite recently or something much older. Among the many fascinating things we receive, the most poignant are treasured family heirlooms. One such was Richard Kimball's January 2013 donation of two cherished samplers. Made by his ancestors, the samplers had been passed down through the years. It is a privilege that he thought us worthy custodians of these family treasures.



The Kimball samplers join our wonderful collection of Andover samplers. One of these new samplers, pictured here, was made by Susan Kitteridge Kimball in 1835. It was put straight to work telling its story in our current exhibit *Behind the Seams*. Hung in the boarder's chamber with other samplers from the collection, its beauty and needlework skills are a sharp contrast to those made by less skilled needlewomen. Today samplers are viewed as decorative items, but at the time they were an important teaching tool for girls to learn and practice the skills they would need in later life. The display of unfinished samplers shows that sewing was not a skill that came naturally to everyone. You can't help but sympathize with those women whose skills were lacking.

COLLECTIONS SUMMARY, JULY 2012 TO JUNE 2013

This past fiscal year we received fifty-six separate gifts to our collection, some including numerous individual items. The year's donations included photographs, books pertaining to Andover, DVDs of town events, and memorabilia, as well as textile objects and clothing. We are fortunate to be the stewards of the community's history.

Illustrating the range of the Society's collection, among the donations are cobbler tools used by Sylvanus Lovejoy in the late 1880s; a bolt of blue and yellow wool plaid cloth made in the mid 1900s at the American Woolen Co. of Andover; and items belonging to Dr. Martin Melia, one of three Andover doctors called to service in the Army



Medical Corp in 1968 during the Vietnam War. We added to our 20th century clothing collection with the generous gift of a lovely 1965 lace and ecru silk wedding ensemble complete with dress, veil, and train. We also received the trade card shown at left, an 1878 card from the Morse and Burns Fish Market of Andover.

We thank each of our generous donors. Their gifts add to our collection and enable us to continue to share the history and stories of Andover.

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EDUCATING FOR THE FUTURE

Each year, more than 1,000 local students walk through the doors of the Andover Historical Society and experience Andover's history through hands-on programs and engaging stories. In addition to those students, visitors of all ages come to the Society to learn from the past and understand its relevance to the present and future.

During the summer of 2012, a new series of house tours, called *Hands-on History Tours*, were offered on



Thursday afternoons as an intimate museum experience based on our long running Andover at Work in the 1820s school program. With guests ranging in age from four to seventy-four, we could see the knowledge being shared across several generations.

Sharing family documents and records continued in early 2013 with a series of genealogical workshops. These classes allowed the Historical Society to share resources and tools with the public related to the treasures and stories they hold most dear. Storytelling is at the heart of everything we do at the Historical Society. One of our favorite story-based programs is our annual Neighborhood Event. This series of one-hour presentations has featured neighborhoods across Andover over the years, but in 2013 the southeast corner of town was the focus. Jim Sellers, pictured at left, spent hours researching Harold Parker State Forest, which lays at the heart of this wide-spread neighborhood. His slideshow and discussion captivated audience members as they learned the sad yet inspiring story of Harold Parker, the Massachusetts state parks commissioner for whom the

forest is named. Jim's organization of the Neighborhood Events, with help from the Membership Committee, has inspired researchers and residents to dig deeper into the history around them.

CONNECTING TO OUR COMMUNITY

Every program, exhibit, publication, and interaction of the Historical Society helps us fulfill our mission to connect to those around us. The Andover Farmers' Market celebrated its sixth season in 2012 and brought hundreds of people to the grounds of the Historical Society on a weekly basis. Visitors and shoppers came in search of fresh produce and in support of local farms and we are proud to add our contribution to Andover's rich agricultural legacy.

The Historical Society's success at reaching a larger community is due in great part to our growing network of volunteers. Over one hundred regular volunteers dedicate their time and energy to the Society. Their efforts allowed us to present popular free programs including *High Tea & History*, in partnership with the Center at Punchard, and a School Street Walking Tour, in cooperation with Essex National Heritage Commission's *Trails & Sails*.

Bewitched in Andover returned for a second year and its series of events continued to explore Andover's connection to the infamous Salem witch trials. A varied series of programs drew casual historians and descendants of accused witches and gave us the opportunity to learn and share stories about Andover's darker past.

Last year also marked the 5th annual *Tree Time* display of volunteer-decorated Christmas trees. Andona Society, Andover Fire Rescue, and Memorial Hall Library were just a few of the community partners that we connected with. Our relationships with these groups, our volunteers, and our members are building new connections every day.



Member and volunteer Bob Marcus enjoys the opening night of the 5th annual Tree Time display with Board Member Karen Wakeling and her husband, Tim Wakeling

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Above: William Traatman (far right) and two additional members of The German Club, #1993.032.5. The club was under the supervision of the Cosmopolitan Singing Society. Front Cover Image: Gathering eggs at Sylvan Hollow Poultry Farm, #1948.036.2. Both images are included in *Andover Stories*, published November 2012.

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