



ANDOVER  
CENTER  
FOR  
HISTORY  
& CULTURE

97 Main Street, Andover, MA  
AndoverHistoryandCulture.org

# CONNECTIONS

Connecting you with the Andover stories you help save

## Thank you for helping make Andover's history come alive!



### **Inside Your Winter 2022 Newsletter**

- ~ Debunking a local legend for a walking tour
- ~ Have you caught the History Buzz?
- ~ Cheers from a walking tour fan
- ~ Why I Give . . . Jeri Majerison

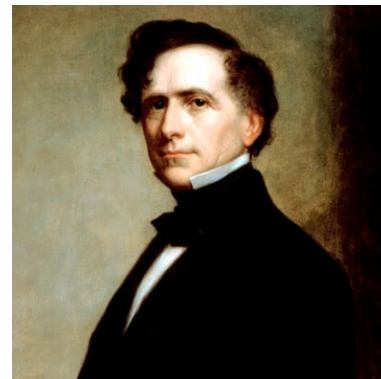
Walking tour participants in 2019 discovering  
Andover's history by foot.  
Thanks to you, there's more to come in 2022!

**Thanks to you, Andover's stories are revealed and rediscovered!**

## Myth, legend, or fact?

### New stories told.....old legends debunked

One of the History Center's most popular walking tours is of Central Street. In the fall of 2021, we discovered that the story told about one tour stop was not true. So, with your help, we set out to uncover the truth and debunk the legend.



*The 14th President of the United States, Franklin Pierce, was at the center of a long-held Andover legend, until you helped debunk it.*

#### 48 Central Street

From 1849 to 1873, 48 Central Street was the residence of John and Mary Aiken. Mary Appleton Aiken was the sister of Jane Appleton Pierce, the wife of the 14th President of the United States, Franklin Pierce. The Pierces, who lived in Concord, New Hampshire, were frequent visitors to the Aiken home before and after the Pierce presidency.

#### The legend

Starting sometime in the mid-20th century, a story emerged that 48 Central Street was President Pierce's "Summer White House." And the house across the street at 47 Central Street was said to be used for offices, where the administrative staff lived when the president was in town.

#### The origins of the myth lie very close to home

As far as we can tell, the Summer White House story actually began in our own research files. In the 48 Central Street file, there is a bundle of hand-written notes that include this line:

*"Samuel A. house Used by Pres. Franklin Pierce as the Summer capital. The Ripley house opposite was also used for offices (so said M. Newman)."*

A photograph of a handwritten note on a piece of paper. The text is written in cursive and matches the quote in the previous block: "Samuel A. house Used by Pres. Franklin Pierce as the Summer capital. The Ripley house opposite was also used for offices (so said M. Newman)".

It's easy to see how "Summer capital" from the research file notes could morph into "Summer White House."

However, according to the White House Historical Association, it was Pierce's successor, James Buchanan, who is credited for having the first official summer house.

#### Evidence emerges

Researching the story, it was discovered that in October 1856, the Andover Advertiser ran an article that provides some evidence that 48 Central was not President Pierce's Summer White House.

A photograph of a newspaper clipping from the Andover Advertiser, dated October 1856. The text reads: "the 'President of thirty one States.' The train from Boston, via Boston and Maine Railroad, consisted of nine cars. This is his first visit to New England since his inauguration, and is said to be made solely for the purpose of attending to his private affairs." The clipping is framed by a thin black border.

***"This is his first visit to New England since his inauguration."***

#### Debunking the legend

Based on this and many other articles documenting the Pierce's summer vacation locations from Virginia to Cape May, New Jersey, and the White House Historical Association website, it appears that the house at 48 Central Street was not President Pierce's Summer White House.

**And so we arrive at the conclusion that we – the Andover Historical Society – started the story about the Summer capital and then the Summer White House.** And much like other legends it grew and spread, and will take time to undo. It's with humility that we step up to debunk a local legend that we created.

**Thanks to you and donors like you History Center staff and volunteers can continue to research, share, and when needed, correct the record.**

**Walking tours will resume with this spring.  
We hope to see you on a tour!**





## Have you caught the History Buzz?

Did you know that there's more to President Pierce's Andover story on History Buzz? You can find this and hundreds of Andover stories on the History Center's online newsletter.

What would later become History Buzz took its first baby-steps a month into COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. History Center staff missed getting together with and talking with our community....We were storytellers with no way to share stories.

On a whim, in April 2020, we sent out an email about this painting from the collection. It would be the first of hundreds of email stories sent out. And the response from readers knocked us off our feet.



Andover Artist Bancroft T. Haynes (1850-1929) painted scenes along the Shawsheen River, AHC #1962.244.1. History Buzz readers collaborated to identify the location of the bridge in this painting.

Go to [HistoryBuzz.substack.com](https://HistoryBuzz.substack.com) to read over 200 stories.

There you'll find a three-part series on President Pierce and his family. And you can read the full story of debunking the Summer White House legend and the First Family's tragic story.

After months of emailing stories, readers started asking for an archive where they could read, share, and comment on their favorites. And so, a year after our first email, in March 2021, History Buzz was born.

The research and writing you support makes History Buzz possible. A team of writers and other volunteers help produce and manage History Buzz.

Today over 2,100 readers subscribe to History Buzz. It's easy to subscribe! Just go to [HistoryBuzz.substack.com](https://HistoryBuzz.substack.com) and click on the Subscribe button at the top of the web page to receive two History Buzz stories each week.

Your new favorite column or writer are waiting to be discovered! What will be your favorite? Andover Bewitched or What's It Wednesdays? Or maybe Miscellany Mondays or a special guest writer's story? Go to History Buzz to learn more!

### Meet history and walking tour fan Jessica Randolph

When Jessica moved to Andover six years ago, she followed her interest in history straight to the History Center, hoping to meet people in her new hometown and learn something about the buildings and neighborhoods. Jessica recently shared her observations about the programs and walking tours she has attended.

*"It's the stories that stand out. And now that I've attended so many different talks, I love how the stories tie together."*



Jessica was impressed by the story of Smith & Dove founder John Smith's stand against slavery, an aspect of Andover history she learned about on the Historic Mill District Walking Tour. While traveling to South Carolina in 1815, Smith observed the sale of mother and her three young children. When he came back, as Jessica recalls the story, *"he wanted nothing to do with cotton and that is the reason the company was built around flax instead."*

An architect and project manager for construction projects, Jessica has also enjoyed diving deep into the history of Shawsheen Village, where she now lives. She smiled as she said *"architects are fascinated by planned communities."*

## Why I Give . . . Jeri Marjerison



A dedicated financial supporter of the History Center for 26 years, Jeri Marjerison often adds special contributions in memory of her parents, Bernice and Frank Haggerty. She also pays tribute to others in her life with memorial donations.

When asked about her loyalty, she said *"you can't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been – history is important."* She developed an appreciation for local history from her parents who passed their love of Andover on to their children. She explained that her parents often answered simple town-related questions with a history lesson!

Jeri has come to enjoy history herself through History Center programs, such as the walking tours, slide show presentations & History Buzz.

It's the *"little stuff, the stories about everyday people"* that makes the difference in her appreciation for history. She felt she learned very little regarding the history of Andover during her school years. She asked *"why didn't I know that President Franklin Pierce's son died in Andover? There was so much history we didn't learn about that happened so close to us."*

**Thank you, Jeri, for your thoughtful support and encouragement over many years. Through your support, you make possible programs that share your passion and enthusiasm for local history with students of all ages!**

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

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## Wish list

**There are many ways you can help preserve more history, share more history, and engage with more people and groups in our community.** If any of these opportunities interest you, please call 978-475-2236 or email [info@andoverhistoryandculture.org](mailto:info@andoverhistoryandculture.org)

**The Collection: Items and stories are needed that reflect all aspects of Andover.**

*Always on the wish list:* Photographs, letters, journals, ledgers, and other primary source documents related to Andover people, places, and events. The work of preserving history is ongoing, so please consider items from the 1900s and 2000s, as well as pre-1900.

**Promotion: Help is needed to break through all the noise**

Social media is so important to spreading the word today. You can help by liking, following, and sharing History Center posts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and History Buzz.



**Sharing: Your love of history and the History Center**

There's a special program designed just for you! *Curious Andover* is a one-hour, free introduction to the History Center. Stories, treasures from the collection, and information about the work you help make possible. It's easy! Personally invite 15 people to attend *Curious Andover* and we'll do the rest.

**Are you interested in getting involved? Call the History Center at 978-475-2236 to learn more and discuss next steps. Thank you!**