

DOVER TIDINGS

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Pamela Kunkemueller
Editor

The Dover Historical Society, P.O. Box 534, Dover, Massachusetts 02030
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The President's Letter

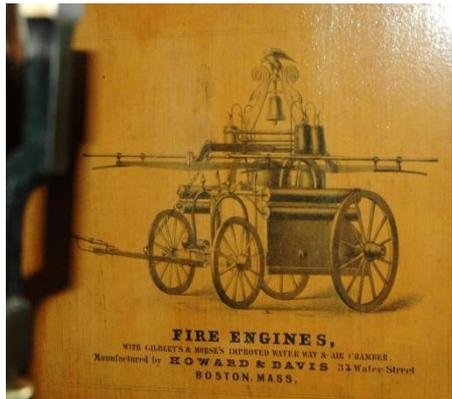
Visitors to the Sawin Museum will find many changes in our little building, thanks to the Herculean labors of our new Curator and his able assistants. Among the many benefits of these changes has been the “rediscovery” of a number of items that, by virtue of their positioning, had been languishing in relative obscurity. Among these is the former Town scale. Measuring approximately 75 inches by 66 inches by 23 inches, it is one of the largest items in our collection.



Our scale was made by the firm of Howard and Davis of 34 Water Street, Boston as one of 330 sets ordered by the Legislature (one for each town, city, and county in existence at the time). There is some question as to the number actually delivered as a number of communities reportedly shared a set to minimize expense. As early as 1800 state statutes mandated “it shall be the duty of the treasurer of each town within this Commonwealth, at the expense of such town, to procure, and ever after to preserve as town standards, a complete set of the beams, weights, and copper or pewter measures ... and the State or county treasurer shall be entitled to demand

and receive of each town treasurer, a fee of three cents for the first sealing of any weight, measure, scale or beam, and two cents for each and every after sealing the same.” While one might imagine the scales being used to weigh bushels of potatoes and gallons of cider, their function was not so much to determine weight as to ensure that other scales utilized in the town were accurate. Once a year all inhabitants and persons having places of business in the town who used weights, measures, and balances were required by law to bring in their scales to be adjusted and sealed to verify their accuracy. A small card attached to the scale suggests that it, too, was sealed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, most recently in 1915.

The mechanically versatile Edward Howard was born in Hingham in 1813 and initially trained as a clock maker under Aaron Willard, Jr. In 1842 he formed a partnership with another Willard apprentice, David Potter Davis, and commenced the manufacturing of wall clocks, sewing machines, precision balances, and fire engines. The firm was dissolved in 1857 and Edward Howard went on to greater renown as the founder of the Howard Watch & Clock Company. While the exact age of the scale is not known, we may infer that it was built at some point between 1848 (when the manufacturer first traded under the name Howard & Davis) and 1857 when that name ceased to be used. The scale was condemned by the Town at some point after 1915 and presented to the Historical Society.



Elisha Lee

Sixth Annual Preservation Award

Through its Annual Award, the Dover Historical Society seeks to raise awareness of the importance of preserving our older homes. Please consider nominating a house you admire by sending the name of the homeowner and the address by February 1, 2016 to the Dover Historical Society, Box 534, Dover, MA 02030 or doverhistoricalsociety.org.

Priscilla Pitt Jones

Spring/Summer Events at the Caryl House

Domestic arts were showcased with excitement at the Caryl House this spring. In colonial times sheep would be sheared in the spring and the yarn and yarn products for the household would be produced by the females of the house. Flax would be grown and processed to make linen.

The Caryl House received a generous donation by the local Devine family, now of Needham, of a pristine flax spinning wheel from the Dover Mann home. Using this spinning wheel, Barbara Provest, a Dover Historical Society Advisory Board member, demonstrated how, with flax and a little water, yard could be produced. As the colonists did not want to pay taxes to England, they needed to produce many of the items required for living using resources right on their farms. Thus, the domestic arts and cottage industries grew in America.

Barbara further expanded on the importance that spinning came to have on the farms in America. She shared information about the drop spindle, another method for yarn production which was easily portable. Linen requires a multi-step process to dye and frequently was used in its natural state. Wool requires a mordant or fixative as well as a dye bath. Calendula, parsley leaves, and onion skins are among the many plants used in dyeing.

The many folks who came to Barbara's workshop were well versed in the arts of spinning, knitting, and weaving. The event became a forum for the exchange of information similar to the days when women would gather together by the fireside visiting and learning from each other. One couple in attendance shared that they had found a broken spinning wheel in a Dover recycle pile and that they had repaired and restored it. In the last few years, just as in the 17th and 18th centuries, there has been an increased interest in these domestic arts as cottage industries.

As a side note, we learned that Barbara had recently discovered that she is distantly related to the Caryl family. One might suspect that families who have lived in the area for a long time are related to each other as there were a limited number of families that first settled in America.

In June, the Caryl House hosted its annual Garden Party. The sun was warm and the gardens were beautifully in bloom. Local musicians and Society members – Richard White, oboe player and curator of the Fisher Barn and Richard Giannini, trumpet player, entertained with patriotic music. Much excitement was in the air

as the gathered group waited for the unveiling of the new parson's privy and the champagne celebration that followed.



Come by in the fall and enjoy seeing all the changes at the Caryl House - Fisher Barn Home Lot. Maybe the apples will be on our trees. The Concord grapes and hops should be ripe.

“Scherenschnitte”* was one of the winning words in this year’s Scripps National Spelling Bee. It means the art of cutting paper into decorative designs. The Caryl House has a few

scherschnittes. Do you know where they are in the Caryl House?

Janet Comiskey-Giannini
Curator, Benjamin Caryl House

*Reference – *The Boston Globe* May 29, 2015

Save the Date

Annual Holiday Party

**The Benjamin Caryl House
106 Dedham Street**

Sunday, December 6, 2015 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Diane Taraz will perform Holiday Music from 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

**This is the first time Diane has entertained with Holiday Music
for the Dover Historical Society**

Reminiscences on an Outhouse

In a previous issue of *Dover Tidings* I discussed plans for the Fisher Barn outhouse which included a drawing by Mark Oteri of what it would look like. It is now gratifying to report that this project was not only finished on time -- as those who attended the Spring Garden Party may testify -- but also on budget. Furthermore, it looks just like the published drawing.

You may say that a mere 6-1/2 feet by 4 feet lean-to is not that much of a project, but if you build it following 18th century protocols, cut the wood yourself, and are involved in every step of the process, from digging the foundations to hefting the foundation blocks, posts, beams and boards into place, it turns out to be highly educational and far more satisfying than going to the gym. Watching Mark transform a tree trunk into a perfectly squared post and then integrate it into a sturdy frame with unerring precision without the use of a single, nail, bracket or screw was well worth the time and effort. Indeed he was following techniques, developed 5,000 years ago with the invention of copper tools, which have changed remarkably little since then and still work today.



I was especially intrigued by the size of the 6 x 6 inch posts Mark assured were necessary and commented that this outhouse was not for the use of elephants. He retorted that it is much easier to work on large billets of wood since they move less when being axed, and also that the deep mortises housing the hefty tenons joining the posts on two adjoining sides require large timbers to ensure their strength. He also noted that in those days timber was cheap and plentiful. As a point of interest, the trees used for the frame were, according to their rings, about 80 years old. I had also thought it would be appropriate to let the timber season, but again Mark assured me it was far better and easier to use green wood for both the frame and the oak pegs holding it all together, since everything would shrink into a tight, cohesive whole. The “five quarter” (meaning one and a quarter inch thick) planks for the floor and roof, up to 16 inches wide were from a white pine once growing nearby,

as were the granite blocks – known as “tip-ups” – with their distinctive drill holes used for splitting off the slab from the bedrock. According to the Dover Highway Department, by whom they were graciously donated and transported, these were once curb stones along part of Dedham Street. Only the cedar roof shingles and the shiplap boards covering the sides were imported to Dover for the building project which was funded by a generous gift from the Windover Foundation, the Dover Cultural Council, DHS members and other local residents.

The actual wooden box with its three holes retrieved from the original Fisher Barn, fitted perfectly into its new home and will hopefully live there happily evermore, enclosed by a door using original 18th century, hand-forged iron hinges, once part of the Fisher Barn collection. The Caryl House complex with its residence, barn and now privy, is at last complete and I am sure that the Reverend Benjamin Caryl would have fully approved our efforts at preserving his legacy in the town to which he contributed so much.



In the first picture, Mark is driving an oak peg into a beam to secure it to the vertical corner post. Note the granite curb stones beneath the sill. The one on the right shows Mark and me moving the “box” into the nearly completed privy.

Stuart Swiny
Curator, Sawin Museum

Sawin Basement Shows How It Was

As Curator of the Sawin Museum, I seem to have been wearing several hats, literally (see *Spring/Summer Events at the Caryl House*, page 4), what with overseeing the construction and inauguration of the outhouse to protect our cherished late 18th or early 19th century two seater toilet box -- its age being suggested by the type of nails used in its construction -- and helping transform the Sawin basement into a viable exhibition space. The displays there now range from early school-house furniture to kitchen equipment and tools of various trades, all with a connection to Dover.

Certainly the Chickering School 3rd graders enjoyed the hands on exploration of the objects on show, thanks to the enthusiastic program organized by Lori Carbone. The kitchen space reminds me of scenes from 40 years ago Masterpiece Theatre *Upstairs Downstairs*, a worthy precursor of *Downton Abbey*. With reference to the latter series, which I trust some have watched, Mrs. Patmore, the cook, would feel quite at home concocting something special for the gentry upstairs on the coal-burning kitchen range -- made in Dover, New Jersey before the factory blew up -- visible with its shining kettles in front of the screen now hiding the furnace. Mrs. Bridges, the *Downton* housekeeper, would also have ensured that the hand-driven circular device (on the lower left) complete with its royal coat of arms in relief, which was required for polishing the iron blades of table knives before the introduction of stainless steel, was well supplied with emery powder.



View of the rearranged exhibits in the Sawin basement. Note in particular that the new floor and screens obscuring the furnace and electrical panel have transformed the space from a dank basement into a vibrant and inviting exhibition area.

And there is much more, from ingenious Yankee clothes washing contraptions, to a cobbler's work bench (on the right) and an unusually fine array of carpenter's tools. A feast for the eyes and healthy food for thought, these once upon a time everyday objects emphasize how rapidly domestic and manufacturing equipment, as well as the school house environment, have changed in the past 150 years. Soon an ice box refrigerator that has been hiding in the cellar of a nearby house will be joining the exhibits and completing the "must haves" of a modern kitchen a century ago. This winter we plan to judiciously label the collection further enhancing its pedagogical value.

Not all the attention focused on the Sawin basement, however, as the main exhibition hall has also been rearranged. Thanks to Priscilla Jones and Pam Kunkemueller, the fine old showcases now trace, with the help of objects and descriptions alike, the remarkable story of Dover's evolution from its Native American origins through its Colonial, Revolutionary, Federal, farming and manufacturing days.

I am also happy to mention that the couple to whom the Dover Historical Society and our town owe so much, Benjamin and Eudora Sawin, are, at long last, being appropriately recognized; but that is a story for the next issue of *Dover Tidings*.

Stuart Swiny
Curator, Sawin Museum

Upcoming Programs

Saturday, October 24, 2015 at 10 a.m.

Guided Tour of the Harvard Semitic Museum
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
by Helena (Laina) Wylde Swiny, Research Associate
and Joe Greene, Deputy Director

Admission: Free

RSVP: Clare Burke at clareburke@comcast.net or call 508-785-1357

Thursday, November 12, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

"Nations in Transition: A Modern Day Walk Along the Northern Silk Road"
by Grant Stephen
Dover Library, Lower Level

Admission: Free

Refreshments will be provided.

Fall 2015 Docent Schedule

DATE	CARYL HOUSE	SAWIN MUSEUM	FISHER BARN
Sept. 5	Dorothy Boylan	Stuart Swiny	
Sept. 12	Ursula Gray	Pam Kunkemueller	Richard White
Sept. 19		Susanne Knowles	
Sept. 26	Priscilla Jones	Stuart Swiny	
Oct. 3	Janet Comiskey	Clare Burke	Richard White
Oct. 10	Richard White	Stuart Swiny	
Oct. 17	Barbara Palmer		
Oct. 24			
Oct. 31		Pam Kunkemueller	
Nov. 7	Priscilla Jones	Pam Kunkemueller	
Nov. 14	Janet Comiskey	Elisha Lee	
Nov. 21		Patty Howe	
Nov. 28	Janet Comiskey	Stuart Swiny	

Photography Credits

Stuart Swiny, pages 1, 2, 6 left and 7

Robert Hillberg, pages 4 and 5

Helena Wylde Swiny, page 6 right

Members are welcome to submit photographs for publication consideration. Contact *Dover Tidings* editor, Pam Kunkemueller, at the main Historical Society phone number (508-785-1832) and leave your contact information. She will get back to you regarding submission.

General Information

Please note that our museums are open to the public, free of charge, in the fall (September – November) and spring (April – June). All visitors are welcome. The basement of the Sawin Museum is especially enjoyable for children as there are many artifacts which they are welcome to try out.

Both museums are also available by special appointment. Contact the curators directly or leave a voicemail message of your request on the phone: 508-785-1832.

The Historical Society also has an exhibit of Richard H. Vara's watercolors on display at the Caryl Community Center, just off the lobby at the Springdale Avenue entrance. It too can be viewed, free of charge, whenever the Community Center is open (times vary).

Copies of the final edition of ***Dover Days Gone By*** by Richard Hart Vara are available for \$25.00 at both museums or by phone at the main Society number, 508-785-1832. There are also a limited number of hardbound copies still available for \$100.00. Call 508-785-0567 for further information and to order.

Two companion guide books are also available as above for \$3.00 each. They are: ***Exploring the Center*** and ***Exploring: By Car, Boat, on Foot.***

Check out our website: www.doverhistoricalsociety.org and



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

The Dover Historical Society is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization supported by members, grants and donations.

Dover Tidings is published three times a year and is sent primarily to members. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so to avoid being dropped from the list. If you have already renewed, THANK YOU. If you would like to become a new member you can obtain a membership application at one of the museums or by calling the main number (508-785-1832) and leaving a voice mail message. Please be sure to leave your name and contact information.

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