

DOVER TIDINGS

Fall 2018
Volume XVIII, No. 2



Pamela Kunkemueller
Editor

The Dover Historical Society, P.O. Box 534, Dover, Massachusetts 02030
www.doverhistoricalsociety.org

The President's Letter

On November 11th we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that brought an end to The Great War. From an American perspective, World War I today seems very distant and inconsequential, dwarfed, in fact, by the rest of its century. The war itself passed from living memory with the death of Frank Buckles, the last surviving American military veteran, in 2011. With the exception of the occasional captured artillery piece decorating a Town Common, the war's physical legacy lies some 3,500 miles distant. There is little left to remind us of the magnitude of the national war effort, which entailed the mobilization of more than four million military personnel or roughly 4% of the country's population of 103 million people. Application of this percentage to the present national population of 327 million implies a commensurate mobilization of roughly 13.1 million people or the entire State of Pennsylvania.



German WWI Cannon: Norwood, MA

In an earlier issue of *Tidings*, I suggested that The War to End All Wars was ultimately a waste, both in terms of its human cost and

the fact that its resolution laid the groundwork for another, far greater international cataclysm. When viewed in a somewhat broader historical context, however, an argument can be made for a larger and more constructive purpose. The United States would indeed make the world safe for democracy several decades later, when American manpower and manufacturing capacity would play a vital role in defeating Fascism on both sides of the globe. Perhaps, in that larger scheme of things, George Preston and Guisepppe Michelucci did not die entirely in vain.

Readers who have not yet visited the Sawin Museum and seen our World War I exhibit are urged to do so, as it too will pass into the realm of history at the conclusion of our fall season. The photograph below introduces the exhibit with half of a remarkable panorama drawn by Joe Sacco depicting the Battle of the Somme which resulted in 60,000 British dead and wounded on day one.

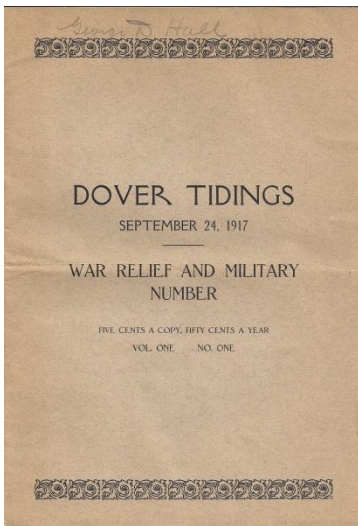


Those with an interest in the history of our town are respectfully reminded of our ongoing need for volunteers willing to help with various aspects of the Society's mission. As always, we are grateful for your continued support.

Elisha Lee

Dover Tidings 100 Years Ago

I had not planned on contributing to this issue of *Dover Tidings* having in the past provided our readers with discussions relating to that terrible war that ended exactly a century ago and propelled the United States on to the world stage. But as an archeologist who has devoted his career to discovering ancient settlements to excavate, interpret and publish, thereby helping to understand the puzzle that is our past and which invariably influences the present, I couldn't resist commenting on a recent chance discovery I made in the Sawin Museum archives.



I knew *Dover Tidings* had a venerable history, but was not aware of its date of birth or of the circumstances in which it first appeared. The cover of “VOL. ONE NO. ONE” explains much as does the opening paragraph: “DOVER TIDINGS is a venture undertaken to meet a need in the community or, daringly, to anticipate a need and a due response to it. The town, changing fundamentally, is slowly finding itself...” Well, 101 years later, what has changed one might

ask? The whole issue, whose purpose was to strengthen a sense of community, displayed a remarkably patriotic state of mind and stressed the need for a local—namely Dover—news source, and remarks on the presence of weekly newspapers in neighboring towns but the lack of something similar in Dover with its 1915 population of 999. Thus, significantly, the September 1917 *Dover Tidings* has the distinction of being the first newsheet in our town.

The issue covers several subjects of historical interest, amongst them the creation of a “Committee of Public Safety” and a

“Lafayette Day in Dover being devoted to a gathering of the residents of Dover to express their hearty interest in their fellow townsmen who are at the front or soon to be there...” as well as a “Role of Honor” listing the whereabouts of draftees such as Capt. Arthur B. Glidden in Ayer whose grandson Boynton gave to the Dover Historical Society the “Testimonial” illustrated here.



Also mentioned, along with many familiar Dover family names, is Donald F. Cutler, Naval Reserve, who built the house on Dedham Street, subsequently purchased from him by my wife Helena’s parents, in which we now live. Further on is yet another facet of the sad story of a misnamed individual: “...word has it that Michaele Guiseppe, first to be drafted, although an alien, will not claim exemption”.

Indeed he didn't, and his many aliases represent a typical tale of confusing "foreign" names. As Elisha Lee so well described (*Dover Tidings* Vol. XVII:2, Fall 2017, pp. 2, 3) : "Giuseppi Michelucci" signed up, but after being killed on October 27, 1918 his grave marker in France was inscribed "Guisseppe Michele" and the official history lists him as Private "Giuseppe Micheluccio". His Service Medal, on display in the Sawin Museum next to that of the much honored George Preston, the only other Doverite to die in action, bears yet another incorrect name. It is satisfying to recognize and identify this young "alien", whose death is unlisted in the Massachusetts Role of Honor, but who lost his life fighting for the country to which he hoped to belong.



Note that, as inscribed on the reverse, these bronze medals were "Presented by the People of Dover Massachusetts" to each soldier or sailor "in grateful recognition of Patriotic Service in the World War". Many towns in the Commonwealth struck individual service medals and awarded them to their WWI veterans, sometimes posthumously, as in the case of the two above mentioned individuals.

Stuart Swiny
Curator, Sawin Museum

Save the Date

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

7:30 p.m.

Hale Reservation

Eric Arnold, Executive Director of Hale Reservation

Dover Library, Lower Level

Jointly Sponsored by the Dover Historical Society and the Chicatabot Garden Club

Refreshments will be served

No charge for Admission

Volunteer Works on Sawin Museum Collection

This summer several hundred items from the Sawin archive, ranging from photographs to antique toys, were diligently described and measured by Nicole Fiore, a Sophomore at Clark University in Worcester, MA who is thinking of majoring in English. Nicole, whose family has lived on Cross Street for almost 40 years, asked at the beginning of the summer whether the Dover Historical Society might have some project she could undertake in her spare time.



Immediately thinking of the numerous unrecorded items in our collection, I invited her to attend, *ex officio*, our Board Meeting in June, and then provided her with a key to the Sawin Museum so she could work whenever convenient. Collections Manager Richard White can now provide the items, most of which Nicole and I photographed, with their final registration numbers and enter them into the DHS database, thereby saving him a great deal of time and effort.

We are very grateful for Nicole's help and look forward to seeing her again, kneeling on the floor, typing away surrounded by miniature toys – or whatever else may need her attention!

Stuart Swiny
Curator, Sawin Museum

Photography Credits

Pages 1 – 6 and bottom of page 8, Stuart Swiny

Pages 7 – 10 Dover Archives, courtesy Barbara Russell Williams

The painting of the house on page 7 is by William Jewell, 1949.

Dover Stories

Part 1: History of the House and Lands – 50 Springdale Avenue

Shortly after my parents, Dr. Henry Drummond Russell and Mary Elizabeth Meade Russell, were married on June 16, 1939, they moved to Springdale Avenue, Dover, Massachusetts. The house had no number at that time, but later became number 50 adjacent



to 46 Springdale Avenue. As they looked from the street to the house, they saw a field filled with low-bush blueberries, cranberries and goldenrod where cows once grazed and hay was grown to feed the horses. A long gravel driveway led to a two-

story yellow house with white trim, black shutters and a front door facing the street. This was the original part of the farmhouse. They later discovered it was most likely built by Ithamar Whiting (son of Aaron Whiting) between 1868 and 1874. The steeply sloping roof had two small dormer windows on either side of a tall, red brick chimney. These two city people fell in love with this quaint farmhouse in the country. Little did they know what a historic gem they had found.

At first, they rented the homestead from the owner, Halldis Prince (widow of Charles Prince). However, after my sister, Louise, was born in 1940, they bought the house and lands (70 acres) from Halldis. I was born in 1942 followed by my sister, Cynthia, in 1945. At that time, my parents named the home where they would live for the rest of their lives, “Meadowlea”.

After Henry and Elizabeth passed away in 1987, my sisters and I sold the property to the present owners, Mary and David Powers. And thanks to the efforts of David Lewis and Ralph MacAllister, we donated seven acres, close to the railroad tracks, to the Dover

Land Conservation Trust. This parcel of land contains a “perched rock” where we Russells often picnicked. The origin of this rock is of interest to Harvard University and perched rock societies. The railroad track was owned by The Boston, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. We kids spent much time exploring the tracks and waving to the engineer as the train rumbled by each day with freight or passenger cars. We could hear the whistle blow every morning and evening when the commuter train arrived or left the Dover station.



The original farmhouse was built around the tall red chimney. Small fireplaces opened into three rooms (one upstairs) while a fourth and larger cooking fireplace with bread oven and iron rod served the original kitchen. Several iron pots hung from the rod. One of the pots is presently part of the Sawin Museum’s exhibit on the lower level. Santa Claus always came down the chimney at Christmas and landed in the larger fireplace leaving his sooty footprints on a piece of white cotton placed over the logs. We cooked in that fireplace during winter storms when the electricity was out for days. The room to the right of the large fireplace, we were told, was used in the early days to make “hard cider” for the local and Boston taverns. Many of the apples came from the old orchard near the two-horse stable.

The apple trees were not the only trees of interest on the property. The mulberry trees were a curiosity because they were not common to the area. When I asked why they were there, I was told that our home had been part of an experiment to see whether or not our region could support a silk worm operation. The worms (caterpillars) feed on the mulberry leaves. The Silk Trains that carried the silk from the Orient sped across the United States from 1909 to 1933. They travelled from west coast ports such



as Seattle to east coast cities such as New York and Boston. It is exciting to think that I lived near Boston and presently live near Seattle. And better yet -- third grade science students at my elementary school, Charles River School, were growing silk worms in 2017!

The mulberry trees were one of the historical treasures around our home, but there were many more. For example: close to the long garage, that had been the original henhouse, stood a small shingled building used in the early days as the “broody hen” shed. One year my parents decided to replace the old exterior shingles with new ones.



To our surprise and delight, when we removed the shingles, we found Civil War era newspapers that had been used as insulation. The drawings and articles were fascinating! And next door more treasures lay in the ashes of an old burned out cellar hole where a building once stood. In the 1940s, Mr. George Hanchett owned that property which extended past a stone wall to the railroad embankment. He planted rows of corn through which we kids romped. But it was the old colored, clear and decorated glass bottles we found in the ashes of the cellar hole that we prized. On hot summer days, the ashes would smoke. Today a swimming pool sits in the place of the old cellar hole. And in the winter, we treasured the many hours we spent sledding down the hill where the house now stands at 46 Springdale Avenue.

But the most surprising treasure of all happened when my sister Cynthia’s five-year old daughter discovered a few heirloom jewels that had been passed down through generations of my family. My mother had included them in her Will. My sisters and I could not find them anywhere. But leave it to the curiosity of a five-year old to find them. When she lifted up the lid of the small potty in the three-seater outhouse, there she found a laundry bag taped to the

underside of the lid. And in the bag were the jewels -- a safe place indeed! We were not sure Emily understood our jubilation about this, but she took the hugs and kisses very well.



I think my parents made the right choice when they purchased the property on Springdale Avenue. Growing up at “Meadowlea” where my family was surrounded by history, nature and a unique community was a privilege and a treasure in itself.

Barbara Russell Williams
Former Dover Resident

Editor’s Note

The preceding article is the first of three proposed for this year’s editions of *Dover Tidings*. These will tell multiple stories of the Russell family, their many happy experiences and adventures living in Dover for nearly five decades in the mid-20th c.

This first article gives a broad overview of the land, home and family. Succeeding stories will provide richer detail and various other perspectives. The Russell family made numerous contributions to Dover over the years which will surely be of interest to present residents. Now living in Seattle, WA, Barb continues to enrich our understanding and appreciation for the Town treasures and memories we share.

Be Sure to Save the Date!

Sunday, December 9, 2018

2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.

Caryl Farm
107 Dedham Street
Dover

Annual Holiday Open House
Special Performance: to be Announced

Plans are underway for a very special musical treat to celebrate the upcoming Holiday Season. While it is, as yet, premature to announce the identity of the performers, it is not too soon to mark the occasion on your calendar! Be sure to watch the newspapers and our website for further information which will be announced as soon as arrangements are finalized. We in the Society are very much looking forward to sharing this event with our community.

Volunteers

It is a well-known, though perhaps often overlooked, fact that nonprofit institutions, both large and small, depend on the help of volunteers. In the case of the Dover Historical Society, this is absolutely true – sometimes painfully so. We have NO PAID STAFF! This means that *every* job, from running the organization, setting priorities, securing funding, allocating resources and the like to the often overlooked, but always appreciated, provision of refreshments for various events is done by volunteers.

There is a wide variety of jobs unfilled at the moment. Might you be willing to help? You do not need to be an expert to start – we all started somewhere! Learning and sharing our growing knowledge is fun, very much worthwhile and needed! Please contact one of the Board members if you can help.

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 lower level of the Sawin Museum is especially enjoyable for children as there are many artifacts which they are welcome to try out.

The WWI exhibit at the Sawin Museum will close at the end of November 2018. It is open Saturday afternoons from 1:00 – 4:00 and by special appointment.

Access to both museums is 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. There is also a limited number of hardbound copies still available for \$100.00. Call 508-785-0567 for further information and to order this item.

In addition, two companion guide books are available as above for \$1.00 each. They are: *Exploring the Center* and *Exploring: By Car, Boat, on Foot*.

Check the website for contact information.

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 already renewed, THANK YOU. If you would like to renew or become a new member you can obtain a membership application at one of the museums or by calling the main number and leaving a voice mail message. Please be sure to leave your name and contact information.

Dover Historical Society
P.O. Box 534
Dover, MA 02030
508-785-1832