

DOVER TIDINGS

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The President's Letter

While by no means the oldest house in Dover, 134 Farm Street lends an air of antiquity to a section of the town that has been profoundly changed both by residential development and the construction of our regional high and middle schools. Frank Smith tells us that this house was built by John Shumway, Senior shortly after his marriage to Abigail Wight in 1813. The earliest recorded land



acquisitions took place in May of 1816. John Shumway was born in Thompson, CT in 1787 and removed to Medfield in 1808. His wife was the daughter of Amos and Hannah (Morse) Wight, whose farm lay just north of this property at what is now 127 Farm Street.

John Shumway died in 1844 and, in 1847, ownership of the farm passed to his oldest son, Amos Wight Shumway, born in 1819. In 1847 Amos married Hannah Harding, daughter of Oliver and Sarah Harding of Medfield. The 1850 Federal Census Non-Population Schedules provide an interesting overview of the

Shumway farm, which at that time encompassed 105 improved acres and 20 unimproved acres (on both sides of Farm Street), with a total value of \$4,000. The livestock consisted of 2 horses, 6 milk cows, 4 oxen, 10 other cattle, and 2 swine with a total value of \$770. Agricultural production consisted of 150 bushels of Indian Corn, 115 bushels of oats, 20 bushels of Irish potatoes, and 10 tons of hay. This was a fairly large operation, at least by local standards. The largest farm in Dover belonged to Ephraim Wilson of Wilsondale Street and encompassed 230 improved and unimproved acres with a value of \$6,500. Amos Shumway was closely involved with the town as well, serving as master of the West School (located at the corner of Farm and Glen Streets), a Selectman for 25 years, Town Moderator for 35 years, and a Captain of the Independent Company of militia in Medfield.

On 29 November 1895, Amos Shumway's widow, Hannah, conveyed the property to her son Amos Shumway, Jr. The younger Amos Shumway, then living in Los Angeles, appears to have had little interest in the property which he immediately conveyed to James and Charlotte Carey of Newton. The Careys appear to have been dairy farmers who never actually resided on the premises.

In 1899 they leased the property (which they later sold) to the Pokanoket Club, a group of young Boston men seeking a gathering place for outdoor recreation. The club's history, written in 1931, notes "as our own land was hardly suitable for the purpose... a golf course was laid out on some rented fields beyond Farm Street Station in Medfield, where some pleasure and experience was derived dodging cows and losing golf balls on a course well named "Cowmowet".

The club history also mentions a tennis court in the valley near the Charles River, skating on the river, and considerable shooting. A log book entry for Saturday, November 3, 1900 reads "with one axe, one revolver, three lanterns, one bottle of kerosene, one pair of climbing irons and numerous bottles of 'O be joyful' the members of the Pokanoket Club...under the guidance of their guest Mr. Fay and his faithful canine coon terrier Trim started out on the long looked forward to and never to be forgotten coon hunt."

In late 1941 John C. Lee of Wellesley and John Duff of Boston as the surviving and remaining trustees of the Pokanoket Club granted the property to Henry Lee Shattuck. While not a founding member, Shattuck, a Boston attorney, member of the state legislature, and lifelong bachelor, may have been the Pokanoket Club's most active member and he continued to make use of it until his death in 1971. By that time the west side of Farm Street had lost much of its rural character with the construction of the regional high school.

On Shattuck's death in 1971 the house passed to his nephews, George, Edward, and Elliot Richardson. In 1979 the house and 4.05 acres were conveyed to a third party and survive today as a graceful reminder of Dover's agricultural heritage.

Elisha F. Lee

Caryl House

This autumn the Caryl House had Grade 3 visitors from the Chickering School. They came with such excitement and enthusiasm to learn about the Caryl House and what it means to the Town's history.

They were very interested in the bed warmers, foot warmers, loom and spinning wheels. Excitement arose when they found out that George Caryl, Benjamin's son and the first doctor of Dover, had a pet squirrel, Bun. They saw the poem he wrote. During that time period it was very fashionable to have pet squirrels. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston has a painting by John Singleton Copley with a pet squirrel. (See Historical Insight #2 for poem).

During the Christmas Holiday Party, Cub Scouts came to learn about beeswax candle making and Christmas celebration over the years. Several of the Cub Scouts are in the 3rd grade. Amazing to see what they had retained from the House tour a few weeks earlier.

Before the candle making, the Scouts learned that in the late 18th Century in the Boston area Christmas would have been celebrated as a religious holiday, if at all. It was not a day of toys, games and presents. During that time New England folks might have celebrated with evergreens and candles which came from a Pagan tradition. The Romans, as well as other cultures, celebrated the Winter Solstice (the shortest day) with greens to denote life as well as lights to brighten the dark winter night.

In nearby New York, the Dutch settlers would have observed Christmas differently from the English of Boston. The Dutch celebrated St. Nicholas's birthday with treats for children in their wooden shoes.

In the middle of the 19th Century, Queen Victoria married (1840) Prince Albert of Germany and later they brought the concept of celebrating Christmas with an evergreen tree decorated with lit candles attached to the branches, a German tradition. Thus, the Christmas tree tradition started in England. Charles Dickens wrote the Christmas Carol story (1843) during this period.

Under the direction of Priscilla Jones, and with the help of Lori Carbone, the Board member in charge of school programs, and Ava, her fourth grade daughter, the Scouts made their candles. They carefully dipped weighted hemp ends into melted bee's wax. At first they did not know why only the ends of the wick were dipped until they had to place the mid-section of the wick over a drying rack. They waited until each layer of wax was dry before dipping another coat. They were amazed how quickly the candle started to form. They also learned they had to do an even dipping to get a nice smooth candle. They promised not to attach and light the candles on their Christmas trees. They also promised they would only do artificial lights on their Christmas trees. They were further instructed not to light their candle unless watching it. They now understood why some candles in stores are connected at the top of the candle by the wick.

The Scouts learned that Christmas has changed over the centuries, that the modern day American Christmas incorporates concepts from several traditions,

and that the lights and festival activities can be celebrated by all.

Hoping 2014 is good to all within the Dover lands.

Janet Comiskey-Giannini
Caryl House Curator

The Plow

Last year, *The Atlantic* magazine ranked the moldboard plow as one of the 50 greatest inventions in human history. The plow is ancient and seems to be found wherever there is farming. The first farmers simply created a furrow in the ground with a pointed stick or hoe, planted seed and harvested the resulting crops. After the domestication of cattle, the primitive plow was hitched to an ox, for example, and driven by the operator who guided the animal in a straight line.



A later Iron Age innovation added the coulter, a blade that cut the soil ahead of the share (the actual plowing component). This works well in an area like Egypt, where the soil is naturally renewed by annual flooding, but elsewhere the ground has to be turned and the stalks and undergrowth buried so they can decay and replenish the earth.

This eventually led to the development of the moldboard in China (probably the first farmers to use an iron plow), an elegant solution to the tilling problem. The coulter makes the first cut, the share (the horizontal blade that is attached to the coulter on our plow), cuts under the soil from the previous furrow to the vertical cut, and the resulting flap is turned over by the curved moldboard. When the first settlers on the great American prairie plowed the earth for the first time, the sound was said to be like a great ripping sound, the release of millennia of compacted vegetation. The leverage of the plow combined with literal horse (or ox) power gives tremendous mechanical advantage and allows the operator to cultivate a large area of land in a short time, which brings us to some agrarian vocabulary.

The moldboard plow is difficult to turn, so fields were more efficiently plowed in long rectangular strips rather than in a square. The furlong is naturally the length of a furrow, 220 yards. The width of such a field would be one chain, 22 yards, and the product of these two old surveyor's measures is 484 square yards, 43,560 square feet, or one acre, traditionally the amount of land that could be plowed by a team of oxen in one day. This is about ten percent smaller than an American football field (excluding the end zones).

The Chinese moldboard plow soon made its way to Europe where it revolutionized agriculture. After the manufacture of our plow, the next great breakthrough came in 1837 when John Deere developed the steel plow, and further innovations led us to the modern plows and tractors of today's agriculture. The principles behind the technology are probably older than the wheel.

A footnote to the history of the plow is the name Jethro Tull, the British agriculturist who in the 1700s invented a seed-drill for sowing after furrowing.

Richard White

Curator, The Fisher Barn

Spotlight On Volunteers

When I first met Dorothy Boylan, I knew she would be a fine docent at the Benjamin Caryl House, as she talked about being the steward of Mrs. Greenough's house, her home on Farm Street. In fact, she not only has been a docent for over 20 years, but she, also, has taken on a variety of other responsibilities.

She helped catalogue the contents of the Caryl House and Sawin Museum. She then served as co-curator with Ellen Little of the Caryl House, during which time she raised the standard for cleaning at Caryl, by working closely with Alberto on a regular schedule, and doing the primary research for a new furnace when that became a necessity. Her sharp eyes first detected a leak on the surface of the chimney in the attic. This observation was useful when it came time to document significant issues for our preservation project.

She continues to serve on the Board in charge of Hospitality. Those who attend our meetings frequently are treated to a theme coordinated flower arrangement and delectable Vicky Lee Boyajian cookies. As a significant contribution, she has been in charge of the Caryl House Lot, introducing us to Lynn Miller, who helped design the Parlor Garden, tending the Kitchen Garden, procuring choice pansies and nasturtiums at appropriate times, and tracking down excellent bayberry bushes at Weston Nurseries.

She will be the first to tell you that maintaining our historically inspired gardens requires a Spring to Fall commitment. In my opinion, too much of the responsibility has fallen to her recently. Members of the Dover Garden Club contribute to appreciated opening and closing cleanups. Chicatabot Garden Club has been more involved in the past and it is hoped more will be done this year. She hopes additional individuals will volunteer on a regular basis from April through November. Seeing the Gardens thrive is a rewarding experience. Please consider being part of it.

Priscilla Pitt Jones

Sawin Museum

Sawin Museum is getting ready to open for the Spring season! We look forward to visitors eager to come in and visit, having been cooped up this winter with all the snow piles and icy walkways. So stop by, bring a friend, and learn more about the wonderful Town that we live in....

We are beginning the development of a new Main exhibit for the Fall 2014, and would like to have the participation of our citizenry. If you know of some interesting people who live, or have lived, in Dover over the years, please contact us by email (info@doverhistoricalsociety.org), by mail (PO Box 534, Dover, MA

02030-0534) or by phone (508-785-1832- leave a message). We will contact you to get the details and discuss the candidate. If you have a picture of the person, that would be fabulous!

The folks whom we want to hear about can be anyone who lived in Dover, particularly, during the past 100 years. These people do not need to have been famous, although, they may be, but the key is that they are interesting. This covers a lot of possibilities, as they can be local “characters”, persons who have dedicated their lives to charitable efforts, politicians, media or theatrical personalities, artists, athletes, business icons, humanitarians, medical innovators, or any number of other noteworthy categories...These are broad criteria, but one never knows who might come to our attention.

We will review the candidates and develop the exhibit accordingly. We look forward to working with you in an active and engaging process in order to identify appropriate candidates. This worthwhile exhibit will be a wonderful addition to our Museum Collection. We appreciate your participation in assisting us with this endeavor and thank you for your time and consideration in this project. We look forward to your ideas and suggestions.

Fay Bacher
Curator, the Sawin Museum

Fourth Annual Preservation Award

The Dover Historical Society sponsored winter tour of the Gropius House in Lincoln raised the awareness of some of the Dover attendees of American Modernism. Lincoln was a hot bed of early modern architecture. In fact, architect Henry Hoover designed his own home a year before Gropius and went on to

design 50 more in Lincoln. Dover, also, plays an important role in this story. Joseph Hudnut came to chair the Harvard School of Design from Columbia. Settling in Dover on Centre Street, he brought Walter Gropius to Harvard. Among other Hudnut colleagues were Carlton Richmond and the Harvard Five, one of whom designed the Jackson House on Farm Street. Amelia Peabody worked closely



with architect Eleanor Raymond who designed houses constructed of materials such as plywood and masonite as well as the sculptress's Bauhaus-style studio. Raymond introduced Miss Peabody to Dr. Maria Telkes of MIT who planned the solar house, located on Powissett Street before it was recently demolished.

Carlton Richmond, another architect working in Dover, designed a home for Henry and Jean Stone, long time Dover Historical Society members, at 95 Centre Street between 1947 and 1949. Following their deaths, family members hoped to sell the house, but they were shocked to learn that it would be a tear down according to several real estate agents. Not wanting to see this happen to an architecturally significant house, Jerry and Livi (Stone) Arnold of Dover and Henry Stone, a designer and builder now living in Weston, decided to bring the house back to its 1940s condition. Livi and Henry are Henry and Jean's children.

Fortunately, plans as well as a documentary scrapbook exist. The restoration is nearly complete and the house will be offered for rent. This effort exactly fits the criteria for the Dover Historical Society's Preservation Award. It is with great pleasure that the Fourth Annual Preservation Award goes to the Stone House at 95 Centre Street.

Jill French, Priscilla Jones, Sara Molyneaux, and Charlotte Surgenor consider nominations from the community each year. Because of the significance of the award this year, it is hoped that the Dover Historical Society will begin an inventory of Mid-century Modern houses in Town. Toward that end, please let us know of houses which should be included in this inventory.

Priscilla Pitt Jones

Dover Historical Society Officers and Board Members

Elected at the Annual Meeting March 26, 2014

President	Elisha Lee	(508)785-1653	eelej@verizon.net
Vice President	Jack Hoehlein	(508)479-1937	jhoehlein@hotmail.com
Secretary	Priscilla Jones	(508)785-0236	priscillapjones@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Sue Fitzgerald	(508)785-2161	susanjfitzgerald@comcast.net
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Fisher Barn Curator	Richard White	(508)785-3197	whitefork@verizon.net
Sawin Museum Curator	Fay Bacher		
Hospitality	Dorothy Boylan	(508)785-1980	DLBoylan@att.net
Public Programs	Clare Burke	(508)785-1357	clareburke@comcast.net
Public Relations	Sue Knowles	(508)785-0858	susanneknowles@aol.com
School Programs	Lori Carbone	(774)893-4024	loricarbone1@gmail.com
Volunteers	Ursula Gray Dan Wilcox	(508)785-9947	ursulagray1@verizon.net Daniel.E.Wilcox@gmail.com
	Stuart Swiny	(508)785-0229	swiny@albany.edu

Advisory Board

Pam Kunkemueller	Shirley McGill	Barbara Provost
Dale Cabot	Barbara Palmer	Judy Schulz
Heather Hodgson DePaola	Kim Phelan	Deirdre Windsor-Bailey
Patty Howe		

Spring 2014 Docent Schedule

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CARYL HOUSE</u>	<u>SAWIN MUSEUM</u>	<u>FISHER BARN</u>
April 5	Janet Comiskey-Giannini	Fay Bacher	
April 12	Chris Giannini	Clare Burke	
April 19	Janet Comiskey-Giannini	Richard White	
April 26	Amy Wilcox	Jack Hoehlein	
May 3	Daniel Wilcox	Ginny Leonard	
May 10	Richard White	Amy Wilcox	
May 17	John Sugden, Jr.	Pam Kunkemueller	
May 24	Janet Comiskey-Giannini	Barbara Palmer	
May 31	Pam Kunkemueller		
June 7	Chris Giannini	Barbara Palmer	
June 14	Priscilla Jones	Nancy Ferguson	
June 21	Priscilla Jones	Fay Bacher	Betty Brady
June 28	Janet Comiskey-Giannini	Clare Burke	
Sunday, June 8, 2 – 4 PM Caryl House Garden Party- Janet Comiskey-Giannini			

DOCENTS: If you cannot arrive at your scheduled time, please contact the curator.

If you can fill one of the open dates above, please contact Ursula Gray, (508)785-9947 or ursulagr1@verizon.net.

Mark Your Calendar

Wednesday, April 30, 2014 at 7:30 PM. Daylilies of Elm Bank

At the Dover Library, Lower Level. Barbara Provest, master gardener and manager of the Daylily Garden at Elm Bank which has 750 daylily varieties, and Dover Historical Society Advisory Board Member, will present a slideshow and talk on *The Daylilies of Elm Bank*. The program will be co-sponsored by the Chicabot Garden Club. Refreshments will be served.

Sunday, June 8, 2014 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM Caryl House Garden Party

Greet your friends and enjoy a Springtime Celebration. Period refreshments will be served.