

DOVER TIDINGS

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Editor

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The President's Letter



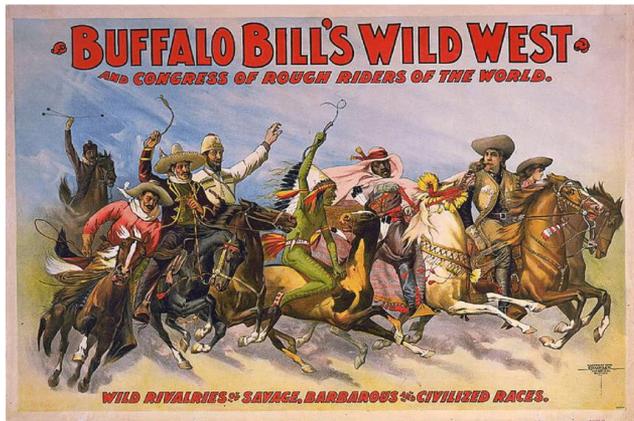
Visitors to the Sawin Museum will note a very large painting over the fireplace on the first floor commemorating the Armistice which occurred on November 11, 1918. Two soldiers, a sailor, and a nurse stand on a desolate battlefield, surrounding a radiant golden cross on which a wreath of laurel rests. Above the cross an angel hovers, bearing the olive branch of peace and an American flag. This painting and a bronze plaque in the Memorial Building stand as Dover's final tributes to the sacrifice made by her sons and daughter. Monumental paintings of this sort were quite popular in the years following the cessation of hostilities – John Singer Sargent's *Gassed* measured 20 feet in length and the *Pantheon de*

la Guerre created by 100 French artists as a tribute to the Allies measured 402 feet in length and stood 45 feet high.

As we have seen often in the past, when monumental work was required, the Town Fathers generally turned to a fellow townsman, be it an architect in the case of the Caryl School and the Sawin Memorial Building, or an artist. The painter, Robert Farrington Elwell, resided for many years at 11 Haven Terrace. Ironically, however, he is best known as an artist and illustrator of the American West.

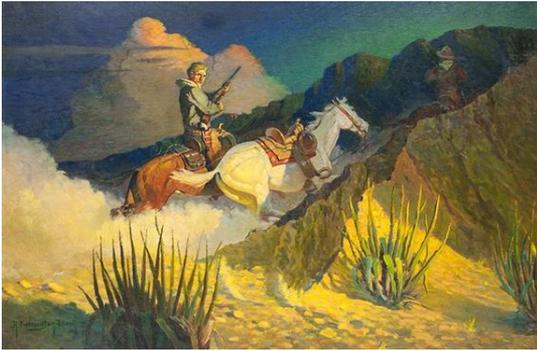
Born in Melrose, Massachusetts in 1874, Elwell was trained as a civil engineer. However, he began his career as a graphic artist for *The Boston Globe*. As such he was assigned publicity work for *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show* during one of their multiple visits to Boston. While the date of this visit is not known, we may reasonably conjecture that it took place in 1895 and that his publicity efforts were similar in style to this example dating from 1896.

The Great Scout, Buffalo Bill Cody, arguably the most famous entertainer of his time and a deft hand at self-promotion, took a liking to the young artist and invited him



to his recently purchased TE ranch on Wyoming's Shoshone River. Elwell found in the 8,000-acre property an outlet for both his artistic talents and his civil engineering skills and, as his friendship with Cody grew, he assumed the combined duties of ranch manager and artist in residence.

In 1897 Elwell married Mary Ellen Taylor, an English immigrant. The couple resided first with her parents at 66 Rosemary Street in Needham, and, in 1914, moved to 11 Haven Terrace in Dover. They had two daughters, Alice May and Grace Irma, the latter almost certainly named after Buffalo Bill's own daughter, Irma (Cody) Garlow. During the years between 1897 and Cody's death in 1917 the Elwells maintained a close friendship with Cody and were frequent visitors to the TE Ranch. Through him they became acquainted with many of the most famous and colorful figures of the American West including Theodore Roosevelt, Frederic Remington, and Annie Oakley, who is said to have taught Alice and Grace the finer points of marksmanship.



A Run For The Hills
(Altermann Galleries, Santa Fe NM)

In the years following Cody's death, Elwell continued to summer in Dover and winter in Pima County, Arizona while working as an artist and illustrator for numerous publications including Harper's Magazine, The Century Magazine, Ladies' Home Journal, as well

as Little, Brown & Co. He sold his Dover home in 1936 and, after World War II, settled in Wickenburg, Arizona. He died in Phoenix on October 1, 1962.

Elisha Lee

Photography Credits:

- Stuart Swiny, pp. 1, 4, 5, 12
- Andy Phelan, pp. 6, 7, 8
- Bob Hillberg, p. 9
- Source of illustrations: the internet, pp. 2, 3

News from the Sawin



The reaction to and interest in our WWI exhibit has been gratifying and makes the thought and time put into the display much more worthwhile. This exhibit was a good example of making the most of what we had and could borrow. Elisha Lee started the wheels turning in my mind with his offer to lend us such iconic items as a German helmet and holsters for officers' side arms.

The rest was sheer serendipity, such as finding a well-known Doverite's blood soaked pocket bible, or digging up my father-in-law's naval uniform from a trunk in the attic complete with his white gloves shoved by him in a breast pocket, presumably when he wore it the last time 99 years ago. Or again, being able to make the most of objects found at the Dover dump or given to me by a British Officer who fought in Burma in WWII, or casually donated by Michael Poisson or, finally, loaned by our good neighbor the Needham History Center & Museum.

The last addition to the exhibition is a touching memento contributed by the grandson of a man who lived, married and died in our town. Surely everybody living in Dover knows "Boomer"

a.k.a. James Michel, one of the helpful and friendly people at the window of the Dover Post Office.



What they don't know, however, is that his maternal grandfather Leo Maker fought with the 116th Engineers in the American Expeditionary Force. In one delightful letter home he comments, probably as the result of laying barbed wire for protection against German infantry attacks, that he is going to teach his Dad how to put up a barbed wire fence to keep the cows and other animals in! Soon after his safe return he married his Dover sweetheart, Mary Wall, on 8 June 1920. She would go on to work as the lone

female secretary in the early years of the E. F. Hodgson Company, and he, a successful carpenter, would build many a dwelling in Dover.

The engagement photograph of the attractive couple is on display under the heading "ONE HAPPY ENDING", to balance the somber tales of those from Dover who lost their lives as a result of the war.

Stuart Swiny
Curator, Sawin Museum

Adventures in Cider Making



Faced with an unexpected surplus of apples from our seven year old apple trees in Vermont and with almost 20 quarts of homemade applesauce already on the shelves, it was time to try making cider for the first time. I couldn't face peeling any more small apples! The Dover Historical Society graciously allowed me to borrow the combination apple grinder and cider press for my first foray into making cider.

Cider was an extremely popular drink during early U.S. history. Most farms in New England relied heavily on their apple crop for apples, dried apples and hard cider. In fact, our forebears drank staggering quantities of alcohol (partly because they lacked refrigeration and faced contaminated water sources which led to diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and cholera). Settlers drank tea using boiled water (which had the beneficial result of killing water borne bacteria) or alcoholic beverages. Hard cider with its three to eight percent alcohol content was "safe" to drink and even children imbibed daily! In "The Highs and Lows of Hard Apple Cider History"*¹, Rebecca Rupp reported that "a Massachusetts survey of 1790 calculated that every citizen over 15 consumed an annual 34 gallons of beer and cider, five gallons of distilled spirits, and a gallon of wine. (Americans today, according to a report by the World Health Organization, down on average 3.8 gallons of alcohol a year, about half of it beer.)" For the record, that is more than 35 gallons *less* a year than our predecessors!

On a warm Saturday afternoon at the end of October, we hauled the extremely heavy press (well over 150 pounds) from the 1777 Fisher barn to our back patio. As leaves were falling all around,

the dogs and one cat (on a lead) came out to supervise. Husband Andy kept appearing to “help” and take pictures.

We started by scrubbing the press and grinder and pouring boiling water on both to ensure they were clean. Then we washed about four large bags of apples (approximately three bushels) and cut out any bruised or rotten areas. According to the online forum The Balance, a bushel of apples is about 125 medium apples (mine were small to medium) and should weight about 47 pounds! That same bushel will also make about 15 pies or 15 quarts of applesauce.



The grinder is mounted on the top rear of the press and I could put in about 10 apples at a time. You grind the whole apple without removing the stems or seeds. The grinder has three cast iron rollers with staggered paddles that are about ½ inch high and two inches wide on each roller. As you crank a handle on the side of the grinder, the apples are pulled into the rollers and crushed. This is a lot of work!!



The apples would frequently get stuck in the grinder and need to be pressed in or pulled out when jammed. When the crushed apples come out the bottom of the grinder, they tend to scatter everywhere rather than dropping neatly into the bucket. My fix was to prop up a heavy duty reusable grocery bag underneath the grinder to try to catch most of the pulped apples. As

soon as I started grinding, the bees found the operation incredibly enticing, and I had to continually pick bees out of the grinder, the juice and the pulp. One of our dogs had a wonderful time chasing

the bees and snapping at them and miraculously, neither of us (me or the dog) got stung.



The crushed apples are then transferred to a bottomless slatted bucket made from white oak boards that are mounted with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch spaces between each slat. I loaded up the bucket with handfuls of pulp as juice started running out the bottom and slid it under the screw press which sits at the front of the contraption. Beneath the grinder and press is a slightly sloped wooden tray just barely wide enough to hold the slatted bucket with about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch on either side of the bucket base. The press is a cast iron

screw that you crank down onto a thick wood piece that fits within the slatted bucket. As you screw the press down on the top, the juice starts to course out the base and sides of the bucket (it is rather impressive looking) and onto the tray and off the edge into whatever vessel you have set underneath--I used a lobster pot. Andy cut down 4 x 4 pieces of lumber so I could get more leverage on the press. As you squash the apples down, adding pieces of wood under the screw top allows you to keep pressing the apple pulp more effectively. Cranking the screw handle by using an old axe handle helped squeeze far more juice from each of the five buckets of pulp.

We ended up (after several hours) with about four gallons of dark brown cloudy apple cider. It was pretty awesome -- sweet and full-bodied. After straining the cider through cheesecloth, we saved a gallon of fresh pressed cider to have for our Thanksgiving dinner this year (it was held in the freezer). The remainder, has been strained at least five times, boiled to pasteurize the juice, and had brewer's yeast "pitched" and is now fermenting in a heavy

glass carboy. We are looking forward to hard cider from our own small orchard after about six weeks.

Cleaning the press and grinder was a challenge. I used a mild oil and a lot of old rags to very lightly oil the cleaned grinder and press so that they won't rust. The cider press will return to its home in the Fisher Barn shortly and we hope to sample our cider at an upcoming Historical Society Board Meeting!

Kim Phelan
School Liaison

*Rupp, Rebecca. "The Highs and Lows of Hard Apple Cider History." *The Plate*. National Geographic, 08 Oct. 2015. Web. 21 Nov. 2017.

Priscilla Pitt Jones

The Dover Historical Society is deeply saddened by the loss of our Secretary, Priscilla Pitt Jones. Priscilla died on November 3 after a long and valiant struggle with a debilitating lung disease. She was, as our President Elisha Lee said in his announcement to the Board, "in many ways the soul of the Dover Historical Society".



A resident of Dover for 51 years, Priscilla grew up in neighboring Dedham. She was a natural and highly trained educator, as well as a voracious reader whose love of American History well served every endeavor she undertook. She first became involved in the Dover Historical Society

PPJ in 18th c. costume at the Caryl House nearly thirty years ago after playing an integral role in the programs of Weston's Golden Ball

Tavern for many years. She started at the Caryl House and quickly made it her mission to not only enhance its value, but also to make that value widely known. She shepherded the process that led to the Caryl House being listed on the National Register of Historic Places. She orchestrated restoration of the front “Parlor Garden” and construction of the “Kitchen Garden” behind the House. Priscilla also developed education programs for children at Chickering School, helped with the now discontinued Essay Contest in the fifth grade at Caryl and mentored numerous high school students as they pursued a variety of research projects.

In recent years, she became Secretary of the Society, not only keeping minutes of Board meetings, but helping with fund raising and membership efforts as well as many other activities. In short, Priscilla kept track of just about everything, and she gracefully kept us all on track. She will be sorely missed!

The Society has established “The Priscilla Pit Jones Education Fund” in her honor. Memorial donations will be directed to this Fund, and additional contributions can always be made directly to ensure that we preserve the high standards she inspired.

Save The Dates

Annual Meeting and Lecture

Wednesday, March 21, 2018

at 7:30 p.m.

Dover Library, Lower Level

Professor Paul Jankowski, Brandeis University

Verdun: The Longest Battle of the Great War

Wednesday, April 25, 2017

at 7:30 p.m.

Dover Library, Lower Level

Kevin Gardner

Discovering New England Stone Walls

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.

Both museums are also available by special appointment. Contact the curators directly or leave a voicemail message of your request on the main 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 this item.

In addition, two companion guide books are 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



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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.

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



Williams' Tavern Corner in the Sawin Museum

Reimagined, including Chippendale Chair rescued from the 1908 fire, reclaimed floorboards from the Fisher Barn site and an allegorical mural of Dover in 1810 painted in the Rufus Porter School Style