

# DOVER TIDINGS

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## *The President's Letter*

On July 14, 2014, the Joseph Draper House at 6 Farm Street was wantonly and needlessly destroyed by its present owners. Built in 1724, the house was the oldest structure in town still on its original site, the setting of Alice Johnson



Jones' 1906 book *In Dover on the Charles: A Contribution to New England Folk-Lore*, and a much loved local landmark. The demolition marked the sorry end to an eight year effort on the part of concerned citizens and descendants of prior owners seeking to purchase the house and relocate it.

As an avocational historian and a longtime resident I have often lamented the loss of those structures which define the

character and visual landscape of our community. Change, of course, is inevitable, and it is simply not possible to save all of them. Therein lies the real tragedy of the Draper House – unlike so many others, there was a group of people dedicated to saving it.

That ignorance and greed ultimately triumphed over responsible stewardship in no way diminishes the worth of their cause and, as President of the Dover Historical Society, I would like to express our collective gratitude and appreciation for their vision, their passion, and their extraordinary patience.

That the owners of the Draper House would willingly demolish it rather than allow it to be dismantled and relocated by a group willing to pay them for the privilege can only be described as an act of cultural vandalism and a gesture of supreme disrespect toward the community in which they have chosen to reside.

*Elisha F. Lee*

# Waving the Flag of Freedom

A glorious sunny day brought out an enthusiastic group of folks for *Waving the Flag of Freedom* at the Caryl House Annual Garden Party on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The gardens were abloom with the colors and scents of lilacs, peonies and herbs.



The group, assembled in the Fisher Barn, enjoyed the singing and storytelling by Diane Taraz, dressed in period clothing. Through her storytelling, Diane brought alive the colonial life of the 1760's through to the Civil War period. She spoke of the Stamp Act (1765) and the defending of the British soldiers at the Boston Massacre trial in 1770 by John Adams.

It is interesting to note that many of the patriotic songs we sing today were written based on the music of tavern drinking songs and church tunes. Just as Joseph Caryl played his fife, many

young boys played their fife and drums while parading and practicing their march drills on the militia fields. Are you aware that Dover has a Militia Field? Do you know where it is located in Dover Center? Find out the specific location by reading the *Exploring Dover Center* booklet, available for sale at the Caryl House.

Guests at the Annual Garden Party gathered outside on chairs under a tent to sample and enjoy homemade cookies, cakes, and lemonade. The party was reminiscent of the manner in which citizens of Dover in the 1770's would gather to discuss family, life and politics of the times.

Events such as the Garden Party and the reliving of history provide an opportunity to reflect on how important the coming together of farmers and leaders was for the development of our historical documents and our freedom. How would we in this modern time have responded to the events of the 1770's? Would you march off to Lexington in 1775 to defend our freedoms? Are you appreciative of the tea you drink?

The Dover Historical Society wishes to thank all the businesses that graciously displayed our yellow Garden Party posters in their establishments. Please think about supporting them: Bridgewater Credit Union; Caryl Community Center; Charles River School; Dover Town Library; Dover Mobil; Dover Town House; Roche Bros.-Needham (Chestnut Street location) and Taffy Cafe Yogurt Store. Many thanks to all the members of the Historical Society who assisted in planning, organizing, setting up, and baking for our Waving the Flag of Freedom Garden Party.

Janet Comiskey-Giannini  
Curator, The Caryl House

# The Ice Saw

So what should we make of this rather unusual saw? The teeth are very large, and angled, but not at all sharp, so it doesn't look like it's suitable for cutting wood. The implement is undoubtedly an ice saw, since ice was harvested on the



Charles and probably elsewhere in Dover, until the invention of artificial refrigeration put an end to the business for all practical purposes.

Ice was a luxury for most of human history. The

Chinese and Romans imported it from mountains and the Egyptians and Indians knew how to produce it in pots when the nights were cold. However, there was no easy way to produce it unless you lived where the water freezes. The Northern Europeans were able to harvest ice from lakes and rivers and preserve it for months by keeping it dry and insulated.

One of the earliest ice houses in the area was near the Narrows on the Charles River on Smith Street, torn down before 1860 (*Dover Farms*, Frank Smith). Any body of water that freezes solidly enough to support the weight of a team of men and possibly horses (a thickness of about one foot) would be suitable for the harvest. It was very dangerous work. It's hard to imagine the Charles freezing solidly enough to support that kind of weight for long - but who knows? A flowing river would have been even more treacherous. Various sources state that a team of 75 men might be able to harvest 1500 tons of ice a day. At 12.5 pounds per cubic foot, that's 240 thousand big ice cubes, filling a 500 foot square. Dover's production was no doubt on a much smaller scale.

Thoreau mentions the ice harvest on Walden Pond which was exported to the Caribbean and India by Boston's own "Ice King", Frederic Tudor, who started shipping ice to Martinique in 1806. He later expanded his business throughout the Southern States (bringing his own supply to introduce skeptical Southerners to the joys of a cold beverage in hot weather) and amassing a sizeable fortune in the process.

River and lake ice is still harvested on a small scale, mostly for ice sculptures. Ice and coal were often supplied by the same company (coal for the cold weather, ice for the warm) but the coal is now generally fuel oil and charcoal. Our iceboxes are found in museums and antique stores and Honeymooners episodes, replaced by convenient freezers and refrigerators, and the iceman cometh no longer.

*Richard White*  
Curator, The Fisher Barn

# Welcome Back to Sawin

The leaves will be changing color soon and it will be time to settle in for the winter. To that end, it must be noted that progress has finally been made over the

summer in the effort to obtain furnishings for a turn-of-the century kitchen (19th to 20th). This is a project that has been under consideration for quite some time, but obtaining appropriate pieces, resembling what would have been found in an old country kitchen, has been difficult, since so many older attics, barns and cellars have been cleared over the recent past years.

We are happy to announce that some critical pieces have been obtained, but there is still a need for several pieces that would be critical to the development of the exhibit. These would, specifically, be: a hutch, a pie safe and some type of old shelving, i.e. a plain bookcase with shelves (the exhibit will be in the basement, and the walls are stone, so shelving would be most difficult to put up). Perhaps, you know of some such pieces stored somewhere, or being considered for replacement. Look around and give us a call.

It is also a pleasure to announce that a project to link the various buildings in Dover Center with their history, and to make the history of the locations accessible to anyone walking about the Center with a cellphone, through the use of QR codes, has been almost completed by a future Eagle Scout, Richard Freimer. He has worked diligently, despite some significant setbacks, on this plan for a while now, with the guidance of the Sawin staff, and his project will be a lovely addition to the DHS website when it is done. It will, also, be expandable in the future to include locations of historical sites outside of the Center, and can become another project for some other Scout(s) or students who has/have a historical bent. We so appreciate the efforts of the younger members of our community when they spend time to enhance our outreach efforts.

Another exhibit that is being worked on is an overview of a wide variety of interesting Dover citizens who over the years have contributed to making Dover the special town that it is, and have left a local, and sometimes, national, and/or international, mark on life. There has always been an interesting melange of folks, some lifelong local citizens, some not, some local workers, some big time movers-and-shakers, many who have worked together with the betterment of our town in mind, and some who have not been actively working in Dover itself, but whose effects on our larger society, as a whole, are noteworthy. If you have anyone you think should be considered for this exhibit, please contact us by email, at [info@doverhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@doverhistoricalsociety.org) and tell us why this Dover person is special. We still have room for more! This exhibit will continue to be expanded throughout the season, so there is still time to get involved and submit candidates.

As always, we eagerly anticipate the arrival of the Chickering third graders when they visit Sawin Museum and participate in the annual scavenger hunt and an overview of Dover's history. We love to see our dedicated docents again, and our members who visit during the season. However, we especially anticipate new visitors who have yet to explore the museum. So if you have some time to spend learning about Dover's history, come visit us, or perhaps, volunteer to help us enhance our properties with your energy and enthusiasm.

*Fay Bacher*  
Curator, The Sawin Museum

## Spotlight On Volunteers

One Spring Saturday afternoon in 2009, a couple arrived at the Caryl House where I was the docent. They explained that during a previous visit they had a complete tour. This day they were interested in checking out architectural and

decorative details. Knowledgeable and curious, they took full advantage of efforts which allow the Caryl House to accurately portray life in the 1790's. Amy Wilcox and Kevin Shale explained that they had recently moved to 52 Main Street, the oldest house they could find when they decided to move out of the city. Both grew up in families which emphasized the importance of historic preservation in the community. Their first home was a townhouse in Boston's South End. During the first winter of their restoration, a large icicle formed from the roof four stories down to the back door ... on the inside of the house. SPNEA (now Historic New England) advised on how to save a decorative frieze in the living room and This Old House featured the house in their magazine.

Now in Dover, Amy and Kevin continue to make informed decisions regarding their home and property, which has such a distinguished history. The house was constructed about 1752 by Ebenezer Battle, captain of the Dover company of minute-men who led 65 men to Lexington on April 19, 1775. Thanks to the generosity of Boynton Glidden, they were able to salvage much of the Josiah Draper House on Centre Street. Some of those joists and beams have already been used in a partial renovation of their Battle House. Both were actively involved in efforts to save the Joseph Draper House, recently demolished at 6 Farm Street.

The Dover Historical Society is fortunate to count Amy and Kevin as volunteers. Amy participated as a Board Member in charge of volunteers from 2011-2012. Both Amy and Kevin serve as docents at the Caryl House. Perhaps you will meet one of them on your next visit to the House.

*Priscilla Pitt Jones*

## **Sawin Museum Landscaping**

For the last year, plans have been underway to better utilize the 1.2 acre triangle on which the Sawin Museum is situated and to relate the Hodgson Shed to the Museum. It is our hope to create a more park like environment.

Last Spring some of the larger pines near the Museum and selected other trees closer to the Library end of the lot were removed. Plans are underway to have John Sugden, our Caryl House Caretaker, remove saplings and poison ivy. This will make it possible to realize outdoor learning potential. The following native trees thrive: white birch, cherry, American chestnut, hickory, red maple, red oak, white oak, sugar maple, white pine, and maple leaf viburnum. Labels will be attached this Fall and visitors will have the opportunity to identify tree species on the property.

One small diseased hemlock needs to be removed. A tiny insect, the woolly adelgig, which originated in Asia, is killing these evergreens in Dover and across the country. The next phase of our plan includes removing selected trees on other portions of the lot so that the remaining trees will thrive. The path to the Hodgson shed needs to be refurbished; parking spaces need to be more clearly defined; interesting ferns need to be labeled; and some low maintenance plantings would bring seasonal interest to the grounds.

Significant funding for this project has been provided by a generous donor. If you would like to contribute, opportunities are available.

*Priscilla Pitt Jones*

# School Programs

Third grade students at Chickering Elementary enjoyed a newly expanded "History of Dover" curriculum this past year, with a trio of field trips that culminated in a very interesting and unique experience at the 1777 Fisher Barn for the first time.

A farm design project enabled students to allocate Dover's average 60 acre farm into component parts, including meadow, pasture, tillage, wood lot, and undeveloped land. Tools used to grow and process flax, vegetables, grains, fruits, and nuts were examined. Animals and their uses were described. Actually cutting a log with a two handled saw, sharpening an axe, and operating a cider press illustrated the skills and hard labor required. Each student planted nasturtium seeds to grow at home.



This Fall a new class of third graders will begin with a visit to the Sawin Museum. On the main level the focus will be on learning about Dover as a town, examining geographic features, Native American way of life, Revolutionary War period, industrialization, school life, and important people, including Amelia Peabody. Downstairs the children will enjoy hands-on exploration of cooking and household tools, discovering similarities and differences to what the children have in their homes today.

The same classes will visit the Benjamin Caryl House. The home life of a family in the 1800s, specifically the Reverend Benjamin Caryl and his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren will connect many of the lessons from the Sawin Museum to life inside an actual Dover home over two centuries ago. Lori Carbone, Janet Comiskey-Gianni, Stuart Swiney, Fay Bacher, Patty Howe, Prudence Jones, Pam Kunkemueller and Priscilla Jones all took part in this past year of field trips and curriculum development.

*Lori Carbone and Priscilla Pitt Jones*

# Autumn 2014 Docent Schedule

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CARYL HOUSE</u>	<u>SAWIN MUSEUM</u>	<u>FISHER BARN</u>
September 06	Janet Comiskey	Amy Wilcox	Richard White
September 13	Sue Knowles		
September 20	Priscilla Jones	Dorothy Boylan	
September 27	Betsy Seeley	Kevin Shale	
October 04	Janet Comiskey	Amy Wilcox	
October 11	Fiona/Ursula Gray		
October 18	Barbara Palmer	Clare Burke	
October 25	Clare Burke		
November 01	Dorothy Boylan	Elisha Lee	
November 08		Dorothy Boylan	
November 15	Patty Howe		
November 22	Janet Comiskey	Fay Bacher	

## Sunday, December 14 **Caryl House Holiday Party 2-4 PM**

Clare Burke-docent and flowers, Jane Moore- flowers, Barbara Palmer- docent and cookies, Pricilla Jones –docent, cake and flowers, Dorothy Boylan, Pam Kunkemueller

**Docents** - If you cannot arrive at your scheduled time, please contact the curator.

## *Volunteer Opportunities*

Here's a wonderful opportunity to help the Dover Historical Society while learning about Dover's rich history.

The Society needs additional docents to serve as tour guides for its three museums. Docent volunteers work on one or more Saturday afternoons in the spring and the fall. Training is provided. Also needed are volunteers to help in the following areas: setting up exhibits, fund-raising, publicity and hospitality.

For more information, please contact Ursula Gray at 508-785-9947 or [ursulagray1@verizon.net](mailto:ursulagray1@verizon.net).

There are weeding opportunities at the Caryl House in the Parlor Garden, Kitchen Garden, and Fruitery. To volunteer, please contact Priscilla Jones at 508-785-0236 or [priscillajones@yahoo.com](mailto:priscillajones@yahoo.com).

# Mark Your Calendar

September 6th through November 22<sup>nd</sup> [Museum Open Houses](#)

Open houses at the Caryl House and Fisher Barn, 107 Dedham St. and the Sawin Museum, 80 Dedham St., from 1 to 4 PM each Saturday from September 6th through November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Saturday, October 18 at 11AM [Fairbanks House Guided Tour](#),

At the Fairbanks House, Dedham, MA. Adults -\$12, Children ages 6-12-\$6, AAA members and Seniors-\$10. For reservations, contact Clare Burke at [clareburke@comcast.net](mailto:clareburke@comcast.net) or (508) 785 1357 by October 4<sup>th</sup>. All are invited.

Wednesday, November 19 at 7:30 PM [George Fairbanks Stone House Part II](#)

At the Dover Library, Lower Level. Paul LaCroix, President of the Millis Historical Society will speak on *History of the George Fairbanks Stone House at Bogastowe PART II*. The excavation of the iron foundry will be highlighted. Refreshments will be served. All are invited.

Sunday, December 14 from 2 to 4 PM [Holiday Open House at the Caryl House](#),

107 Dedham St. The annual Caryl House Holiday Party. Please join us for a celebration of the holiday season. Enjoy festive decorations and seasonal music. Period refreshments will be served.

## Fifth Annual Preservation Award

The tragic loss of the Joseph Draper House this summer emphasizes the importance of historic preservation. Most people in Dover get this concept. Nevertheless the issue demands focused attention. For the last four years, the owners of homes, who have chosen preservation, have been celebrated by the Dover Historical Society.

Most recently, the Henry and Jean Stone House at 95 Centre Street was recognized when its owners decided to restore this architecturally significant late 1940's home rather than sell the lot and house as a tear down. In a previous article in *Tidings*, Jerry and Livi (Stone) Arnold and Henry Stone were cited. Just as vital to the process were long time Historical Society members, Hadley and Jeannette (Stone) Reynolds. In error, I omitted their names and now want to recognize their contributions.

Please consider nominating a house you admire by sending the name of the homeowner and the address by 1 February 2015 to the Dover Historical Society, Box 534 or [doverhistoricalsociety.org](http://doverhistoricalsociety.org).

*Priscilla Pitt Jones*

## Membership

The Dover Historical Society depends on money you donate through membership. If you have not renewed, please know how much we appreciate your continuing membership. Checks payable to the Dover Historical Society may be sent to P.O. Box 534, Dover, MA 02030