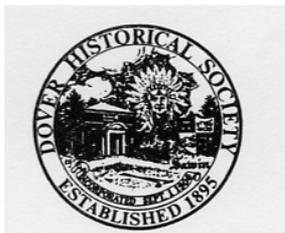


# DOVER TIDINGS

Fall 2019



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The Dover Historical Society, P.O. Box 534, Dover, Massachusetts 02030  
[www.doverhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.doverhistoricalsociety.org)

## *The President's Letter*



Connie Hines, Alan Young, and Bamboo Harvester (aka Mr. Ed)

## **“Hollywood East - The Famous Mr. Ed”**

As stewards of the Town's institutional memory, local historians have much to be serious about, and yet there are times when our past and our present intersect in a lighter fashion. Readers of a

certain age will no doubt recall the popular television show *Mr. Ed*, which ran from 1961 to 1966, featuring a talking Palomino and his hapless owner, Wilbur Post, played by actor and one-time Dover resident Alan Young.

***“Young and his second wife, Virginia McCurdy, purchased a newly constructed home at 4 Knollwood Drive”***

While best known for his role as Wilbur Post, the British born Canadian bred actor had a lengthy career beginning with *The Alan Young Show* which aired on Canadian radio from 1940-1944, in the United States from 1944-1949, and on television from 1950-1953. Young received two Emmys for the television show in 1951. It is the role of Wilbur Post, however, for which he is best known. Ironically, his television wife, Carol Post, was played by actress and Dedham native Connie Hines (1931-2009). Guest stars playing themselves on the show included Mae West, Clint Eastwood, George Burns, Zsa Zsa Gabor, and Sharon Tate.

In the aftermath of *Mr. Ed*, Young retired from acting in order to help establish a film and broadcasting center for the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston. On December 1, 1969 Young and his second wife, Virginia McCurdy, purchased a newly constructed home at 4 Knollwood Drive. He would spend the next three years working on the film and broadcasting center and then another two years touring the country as a Christian Science lecturer. The Youngs sold their home in Dover on July 2, 1973, apparently during his time as a travelling lecturer. On returning to Hollywood, he became the voice for the Disney character *Scrooge McDuck*. Young died at the Motion Picture and Television Country House and Hospital in Woodland Hills, California on April 12, 2016 at the age of 96.

Elisha Lee

## Where Would We Be Without Compasses or GPS?

The Sawin Museum exhibits are striving to present the evolution of certain categories of items from the Revolutionary War through WW II, a span of around 170 years. Amongst these are compasses, the subject of this contribution to Dover Tidings.

According to the slightly quaint definition in 90-year-old *The Encyclopedia Britannica*,<sup>1</sup> a “magnetic compass ... is an instrument by means of which the directive forces of that great magnet, the Earth, upon a freely suspended needle, is utilized for a purpose essential to navigation.”

A compass might be small and somewhat inconspicuous but is often critically important in a wide range of situations. Prior to the advent of electronic surveying instruments and the now ubiquitous use of GPS (Global Positioning Systems), if you needed to find your way or set an accurate course on land or especially at sea, that little magnetized needle was essential. Who remembers the epic scene in the Oscar winning film *Lawrence of Arabia* where the Bedouin chief (Omar Sharif) whips Lawrence’s (Peter O’Toole) compass out of his hand, potentially condemning him to death in an uncharted sea of sand?

***“it seems that a British officer lost a  
pocket sundial compass on the banks  
of the Charles River”***

The Ancient Greeks were the first to report on the magnetic properties of the mineral magnetite out of which lodestones were made. It has been suggested that an orientating device of some form, involving a spoon shaped object, was used in China in prehistoric times, but it is generally accepted that actual magnetic compasses were first carried on ships around 1000 AD and that this invention

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<sup>1</sup> *Volume 6, page 171. New York 1930.*

is attributed to Italy or the Arab world.<sup>2</sup> Initially, a magnetized steel needle which had been repeatedly rubbed with a lodestone was attached to a floating straw, but later in the 13<sup>th</sup> century the device was improved by mounting the needle on a stationary pivot.

At some stage in the later 1700s it seems that a British Officer (rank and file did not need compasses) lost a pocket sundial compass on the banks of the Charles River as it neared Boston. It remained perfectly sealed and its working parts, as well as the paper “compass cards” (a spare card is housed in the lid) were miraculously preserved. The circumstances of its loss will never be known, but fortunately for us Paul White located the small brass box with a metal detector and then correctly identified it. We are fortunate that his grandson Cole White who, much interested in historically meaningful artifacts, has been acting on occasion as Junior Docent at the Sawin Museum. As a result, we now have the compass on display next to a facsimile map with the provocative title: BOSTON, its Environs and Harbour with the Rebels Works Raised Against that Town in 1775.



Photograph of the compass placed on the 1775 map above the Charles River. Note, incidentally, Charlestown with the fortifications on Bunker Hill which would be the scene of such momentous events in June of that year.

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<sup>2</sup> Details relating to early compass development fact checked in *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Chicago 1973.

This compass is not that different from those in use a century or so later during the Civil War, except that the paper compass card with the north point embellished with a “Fleur de Lys” has been replaced by etched markings on the base of the case and that the needle can be locked in place when not in use and finally that it now has a hinged lid.



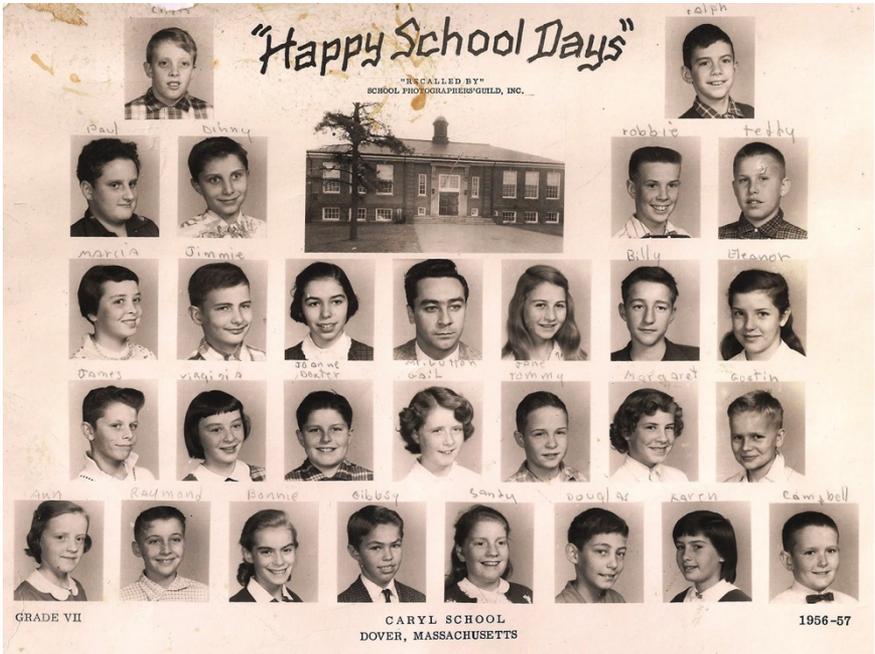
Left to right: Revolutionary War, Civil War (replica), WW I (1918) and WW II (1943) compasses

The prismatic marching compass carried by Lieutenant Henry M. Bliss of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Infantry in WW I is much improved from its Civil War predecessor. The well-seated luminescent dial may be read in the dark and accurate bearings could be sighted by squinting through the prism which also magnifies the dial’s graduations. The base has a thick flat ring of rubber to help prevent the compass from slipping when placed on a flat, and perhaps wet, surface such as a map. The



We had no High School at that time as the Dover-Sherborn Regional School was still not quite finished. Dover High School age children were bussed to Needham High School for their education.

## Caryl School 1956-1957, Grade VII



### Left to right

**Top row:** Chris Sullivan, Ralph MacAllester;

**Second row:** Paul ....., Donald Lowe, Robbie ....., Ted Loranz;

**Third row:** Marcia MacDonald, Jim Quinn, Joanne Flynn, Mr. Lutton, Jane Maxant?, Bill George, Eleanor Cranton

**Fourth row:** James Greene, Virginia Dwyer, Dexter Andrews, Gail Cassidy, Tommy ....., Margaret Dowd, Bill Gustin

**Fifth row:** Ann Smith, Raymond Mansfield, Bonnie Mahoney, Buddy Gibbs, Sandy ....., Douglas ....., Karen Paulsen, Bob Campbell

My mother, Mary Cranton nee Macdonald, was a long time Dover resident. In addition to belonging to the Grange she previously worked at the Telephone Exchange over the Dover Drug Store, then at the Dover Drug Store and finally with the Dover Police Department as a dispatcher. My father “Bud” worked for Miss Peabody at Powisset Farm as a mechanic. Most of the Grange families were farm related. The Dimock family were involved in the cattle part of the farm, along with Gerry Thompson and Dave Keizer. Carl George worked at Mill Farm and his wife Esther was at one time Town Clerk. Dick Thibedeau was the Horse Master at the farm. For many years Ruth Fryer ran the March of Dimes art show (she was a polio survivor) based in the Town Hall; her husband Paul ran the Fryer Water Company, now known as Colonial Water. Roger and Nancy Beckwith lived in Dover on Normandie Road and raised three children. Nancy’s brother George Scholz, who was the Superintendent of Highland Cemetery. All were active Grange members. Barrie Clough was a future Town Clerk and Bob Wilson a future Police Chief.

***“This celebration was thrilling to me,  
with ordinary people, the men in  
their dress uniforms and  
their wives in their best dresses”***

At that time people who worked in Dover usually lived in Dover. They staffed the schools, the local businesses, the Highway Department and the town offices.

All my young years I was surrounded by adults I respected and looked up to. These people worked hard all day and spent some of their spare time volunteering in some way to benefit the town. The population was small enough that we all knew each other.

The first Firemen's Ball I attended with my parents and younger brother David was in the Great Hall of the Town Hall where we vote. At the end of the ball there was a Grand March with all the firemen and their wives to celebrate a year of work putting out many brush fires as well as keeping the trucks clean and running. The wives played a part in this as well by making coffee and food to bring to their husbands during a long fire.



This celebration was thrilling to me, with ordinary people, the men in their dress uniforms and their wives in their best dresses. They all had such a fierce pride in the work they did as volunteers.



This must have been a first day of school photo, judging by the smiles all around! I believe my mother Mary Cranton took the photo at the end of our driveway. We walked to Caryl School from here, sometimes taking the railroad tracks,

sometimes the street – Haven to Centre to Springdale.

Back row (L-R) Carol (Jackman) Devine, Loretta Lemmler

Front row (L-R) Joe Devine, Eleanor Cranton (Herd), Sue McGill, Jack McGill

There were then so many varied groups from garden clubs to theatre groups that made Dover a better community because the members cared and gave of themselves. The Dover Grange eventually disbanded, probably because of changing times, and low attendance. By that time, I was not active with the Grange and was married and living out of town.



Ellie and her father playing with a toy train on Christmas Day 1953

Thank you for such great memories, it was a wonderful time to grow up in Dover.

Eleanor Cranton (Herd)

## **Dover International Airport**

*How close did Dover come to being taken over  
by an airport?*

In 1967 with the growing “jet boom” in airline travel, the Boston Redevelopment Authority determined that a second airport to Logan Airport would be required to handle air traffic by 1980. They recommended immediate action to acquire and develop land for a new airport site.

Landrum & Brown a global aviation consulting group from Cincinnati, prepared a study that selected Dover as the new airport

site. They selected the town because of the large swaths of undeveloped land and low home density.



“Details of the 18-month study called for the construction of a 10,000-acre satellite airport in Dover. This facility would have a \$33 million terminal complex and parallel runways 15,000 feet long”<sup>3</sup>

They picked the wrong town to play around with. The Dover community which had many prominent residents fought the plan hard. Among the notable residents of Dover at the time were Lt. Gov. Francis W. Sargent, former U.S. Senator Leverett Saltonstall, Charles C. Cabot Jr. chairman of the MBTA board of trustees and Carl Gilbert, chairman of the Massachusetts Port Authority. State Senator Jack Quinlan from Dover led a delegation of 20 people to meet with Massport Executive Director Ed King. Senator Quinlan half-heartedly hoping to discredit the consulting firm made a remark “that Cincinnati (where the consulting firm was based) didn’t even have an airport.” Later the agency gave in to public pressure and decided to revisit the expansion of Boston’s Logan Airport instead.

Ted Knowles

<sup>3</sup> The Boston Globe (Boston, Massachusetts) · Thu, Sep 12, 1968

## In Remembrance

### Paul H. Tedesco

The Dover Historical Society mourns the passing of past President Dr. Paul H. Tedesco on November 3, 2019. Paul was an accomplished professional historian, widely respected university professor, and the author of numerous books including *Images of America – Dover, Portable and Prefabricated Houses of the Thirties*, and (with his son Jim) *Postcard History of Norfolk County, Massachusetts*. He was President of our Society from 1999 to 2008 and a long-time member of the Town’s Historical Commission. We extend our condolences to his wife Eleanor, son Steven, and daughter Sara.

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Ted Knowles

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FOLLOW US  
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(Caryl House Farm Museum)

Check out our website: [www.doverhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.doverhistoricalsociety.org)

Please note that our museums are open to the public, free of charge, on Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00 PM, in the fall (September – November) and spring (April – June). All visitors are welcome.

The Dover Historical Society is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization supported by members, grants and donations. The Society is run exclusively by volunteers. If you would/could offer your services, please let us know; we are always eager for more help! Expertise is welcome, but on the job training is also provided.

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