

DOVER TIDINGS

Holiday 2006



Volume VI No. 4

Priscilla Pitt Jones

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Editors

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

*The Dover Historical Society
invites you to a*

Holiday

Open House

*Sunday, December 10, 2006
from 2 to 4 pm*

*at the Benjamin Caryl House
107 Dedham Street, Dover*

*Diane and Michael Jones
Seasonal Music*

*Children's Activities
including Pine Cone Birdfeeders, Spinning
Demonstration, Needle Weaving
and a Treasure Hunt*

Period Refreshments

A Letter from the President...

We have had a very successful fall season despite the fact that our two major events, the October 1 Old Home Day and the exhibition of the Everett Civil War Flag during The Friends of the Library House Tour on November 12, took place during inclement weather.

The new Craft Fair at this year's Old Home Day attracted over 200 people. The Wilson Family exhibit at the Sawin Museum and the Caryl House and Fisher Barn displays interested many willing to trudge through puddles and showers to enjoy the work of our curators.

Some 250 plus citizens and visitors came to the Wider House to view the Everett Civil War Flag displayed in the barn/garage. This flag, sewn by six neighbor ladies and flown across Farm Street approximately where No. 56 is today, was made in the Spring of 1861 to celebrate Union victories. "The flag told all who passed under its folds that it was proclaiming the success of our armies, and that our boys in blue were working, fighting, and dying for Liberty and the Union." Viewing this wonderful 6 foot x 12 foot treasure in full color, one was reminded again what the cost of "Liberty and Union" was and is.

These two events are truly wonderful examples of the sense of civic pride and the uniqueness of our history that make Dover a special place. We are dedicated to the preservation of our past and our present, so we can be better prepared for our future. To paraphrase Santayana, those who forget their history are doomed to repeat it.

To be sure that we continue to pursue our mission, we need your financial support. As a non-profit organization, the Historical Society owes a debt of gratitude to all those members of the community who donate their time and money to protect Dover's history.

You may have noticed that the renovation of the Caryl House Caretaker's Apartment has begun. We hope that it will be completed by the time of the Holiday Gala, December 10, and before the first snow so that Bob Smith, our wonderful caretaker, will have a more pleasant winter than in the past.

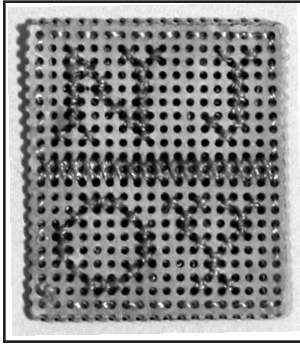
You should have just received my All-Town Appeal Letter asking for your continued financial support. Please join the Society and join the 2006 Annual Appeal for donated funds to help us fulfill our mission

Happy Holidays to All,

Paul H. Tedesco
President

CARYL HOUSE

Currently, the Benjamin Caryl House illustrates the 1790's, a period when the Reverend Benjamin Caryl and his son, Doctor George Caryl, lived in the House with their families. A recent effort shares stories of additional family members, as the House remained in the family until 1898. Newly framed with acid free materials, Sarah Messenger Miller's



(1821-1871) exquisite paper cuttings affirm her devotion to God, the Union, and her brother, George Lewis Miller, who died in the Civil War in 1863. Her sister, Ellen Miller (1836-1898), is remembered with her recently conserved punched paper book whose pages are approximately one inch square. The message, "DEAR MOTHER ACCEPT THIS ON NEW YEAR'S DAY MAYST THOU ENJOY A HAPPY NEW YEAR ELLEN M", is cross-stitched in silk in the book. Conservation cost \$500 and contributions are welcome. Ellen's

numerous letters and poems mention her fondness for her family's belongings, especially the toys, books, and sermons. Her faith in God is paramount. She describes Mother Ann, Aunts Sarah and Pamela, and herself as weary and sad.

...Our paths have been hard, and the rosebuds few,
And the thorns have sprung to find us;
But the roses may bloom in another world,
And the thorns we may leave behind us...

Ellen's concern, however, that her home would "pass into the hands of some careless stranger" was unfounded.

Please plan to attend the Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 10, from 2-4pm. Diane Jones will play the harpsichord and she and Michael Jones will lead the singing. Children's activities will include pine cone birdfeeders, a spinning demonstration, needle weaving, and a treasure hunt. Refreshments will be served. In keeping with the new displays from the 1800's, a hand painted porcelain punch bowl, circa 1890, will be used. Painted by Harriet Anira Marshall, paternal grandmother of Betty Brady, current Historical Society Board Member, it was donated on the occasion of the centennial celebration of the Sawin Museum.

Priscilla Pitt Jones
Caryl House Curator

FISHER BARN

Several recent visitors to the barn have expressed curiosity as to the function of a large wooden bench with a hinged bar that was recently relocated from the second floor of the Caryl House. The object is, in fact, a flax brake.

Since prehistoric times flax has been grown from seed for the production of linen. Sown by hand, the mature plant was harvested and bound in bunches. When dried it was taken to the barn and flailed to remove the seed, which was pressed and used in the creation of linseed oil for paint. The dried plants were then retted, a process which entailed either leaving them on a field in the morning dew or submerged in slow running water until the stem's woody exterior had separated from the fibrous core. The plants were then dried once again, placed on the brake, and "broken" to remove the last of the unwanted exterior before being beaten against a board with a wooden knife in a process known as scutching. Finally, the fibers were straightened and aligned by pulling them through a succession of progressively finer steel combs or hackles. The end result of this labor intensive process was a strick, or half pound bundle of long gray fibers that could be spun into thread and woven to create linen.

Elisha Lee

Fisher Barn Curator

SAWIN MUSEUM

It's nice to report that the majority of the objects are now cataloged. So, as we sort through boxes, files and drawers full of paper, we often run across interesting information.

Recently, we found the minutes, written by Eben Higgins in 1905-06, of the committee appointed by Benjamin Sawin, in his will, to have charge of locating, planning and constructing the Sawin Memorial Building. The other two members of the committee were George Ellis Chickering and George L. Howe.

After some specific bequests, Ben Sawin left to the Historical Society "all the residue of my personal property of every description; and all of my real estate consisting of:"

1. My homestead and farm on Claybrook Rd
2. A wood lot and meadow, known as the Peat Meadow, on Claybrook Rd
- 3 My triangular lot of land in Dover.

Personal property consisted of \$2500 from Eudora Sawin's estate and about \$3000 from Ben's estate.

Initially a much larger building was envisioned, and Philip B. Howard, Architect, submitted a proposal for this building in December of 1906. However, "after getting an approximate estimate, it was decided by the Committee that we should not be justified in starting so elaborate a building on the expectation of realizing a large sum from the sale of the Sawin property..." The plans and a drawing for this larger building are currently on display.

Bids were obtained separately for the building and the foundation. Eventually George B. Welch of Wellesley signed the contract (\$600) for the foundation. He was chosen partly because "of the known preference of Mr. Sawin for his work." On July 16, they "struck a ledge in the bottom of the cellar much to the surprise of all. It extends over the whole cellar so that the foundation of the wall will rest on the ledge all around the building.... The stone for the face on outside of basement are quarried from a ledge on the Parson Caryl estate, a very hard and close grained stone." Burnham Brothers of Newton Centre provided the door & window frames, finish for the porch, inside finish and mouldings and finished stair stock for \$400.

Glenda Mattes

Assistant Curator Sawin Museum

Did You Know?

o John Battelle was the first person to be buried in the Highland Cemetery location in 1729. The original 1746 burial ground, bequeathed by Nathaniel Chickering, was separated from the street by a stone wall in 1892. Soldiers' graves dating to the French and Indian War constitute the first rank of graves.

o...what the foundation of the Soldier's Monument is made of? The foundation contains the remains of the Williams-Whiting Tavern cellar foundation, which burned down in January 1908. The monument, sited on the Old Training Field, was dedicated on June 18, 1910.

o Dover's area covers 15.3 square miles. Its perimeter is 23.51 miles long, of which 10.87 miles is the Charles River. The first settlement was recorded in 1640.

DHS SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

2006 - 2007

- Sunday, Dec. 10 2 - 4pm - Holiday Open House at the Caryl House.
- Thursday, Feb 8 Ken Gloss, Brattle Book Store will give a lecture, followed by some book and autograph appraising, at the Dover Library; 7 pm refreshments; 7:30 pm lecture.
- Thursday, Mar 29 Annual Meeting of the Society; with a speaker from the Charles River Watershed Association.
- Thursday, Apr 12 7 pm - Joint meeting with the Wellesley Historical Society and Needham Historical Society at the Wellesley Library "Paul Revere in Person".
- Saturday, May 19 Dover Days Fair - Check out DHS booth.
- Sunday, June 3 2 - 4 pm - Caryl House Garden Party.
- Sunday, Oct. 7 Old Home Day. Activities will include the Antique Auto Show, Craft Fair and open houses at Caryl House, Fisher Barn and Sawin Museum. Watch the Old Home Day website www.DoverOldHomeDays.org.

All welcome ** No Charge ** For further information, contact Joy Bushman (785-1686)

KEY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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