

# DOVER TIDINGS

Spring 2006



Volume VII No. 1

Priscilla Pitt Jones

Susanne M. Knowles

Editors

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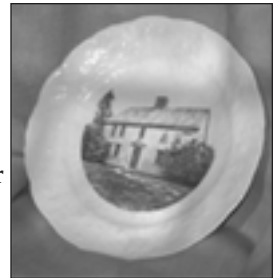
## Upcoming Events

- o April 1 - June 30 - Caryl House, Fisher Barn and Sawin Museum open Saturdays from 1 - 4 pm
- o Sunday, April 9 - "History of Wedgwood Pottery", joint meeting with Wellesley Historical Society, 2 pm. Wellesley Library
- o Saturday, May 20 - Dover Days Fair, Check out DHS table
- o Sunday, June 11 - Caryl House Garden Party, 2 - 4 pm
- o Oct. 1 - Old Home Day, - 1 - 7 pm (see page 8)

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## Bicentennial Plates Auction

The Dover Historical Society announces a Bid-by-Mail Auction of a set of four Bicentennial plates. The plates (shown right) are 10" in diameter and depict the Benjamin Caryl House, Dover Town House, the Dover Town Library and the Dover Church images in sepia on a cream-colored background.



To place a bid, write your name, address, phone number and the amount you are bidding. Mail your bid to Dover Historical Society, PO Box 534, Dover, MA 02030. Minimum bid is \$100. Bidding will close at 2 pm on May 20 at the Dover Days Fair and the plates will be awarded at that time. Bidders do not need to be present to win. For further information call Sue Knowles, at 508-785-0858.

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

[www.doverhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.doverhistoricalsociety.org)

## *A Letter from the President..*

Dear Society Members:

It has certainly been a weird winter and I hope that you have all survived its ups and downs as spring slowly emerges around us. Despite it all, our volunteer groups, at both the Caryl House and Sawin Museum, have been working on projects through the winter months.

We now have a new dipped white cedar shingle roof on the Caryl House and extension. It was completed just as we were decorating the house for a wonderful Holiday Open House in December 2005. Despite the difficulties getting it completed, the roof adds a newness to the Caryl and will look even better as the shakes weather over time.

On February 5 we had our first joint meeting with the Wellesley Historical Society. This program was an afternoon with Dr. Franklin played by the popular Bill Meikle. The interactive presentation was in celebration of the 300th anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth. The performance was given in the community room of the new Wellesley Library and was attended by over 250 adults and children. The school children received extra credit for their attendance. Our next joint meeting with Wellesley is at 2 pm on April 9 at the Wellesley Library and the topic is Wedgwood Pottery.

Dick Vara left all his Dover historical materials, including his website and copies of video and audio interviews, to the society. Those materials have been transferred to the Sawin and Glenda Mattes, assistant curator of the Sawin Museum, has begun evaluating the various items. With the assistance of Doug Adams, we have begun talks with The Trustees of Reservations to plan an appropriate memorial to honor Dick's historical contributions to our understanding of the Noanet Woodlands and the Town of Dover.

I hope that many of you were able to attend our Annual Meeting on March 30 at the Great Hall of the Town House and heard Professor William M. Fowler, Jr., Distinguished Professor of History, Northeastern University, discussing the French and Indian War and his new book, *Empires at War: The Seven Years War and the Struggle for North America, 1754-1763*. Eleven members of our community served in that "forgotten war" which celebrated its 350th anniversary in 2003.

Our most recent program was a public showing of a new documentary film, *Damrell's Fire*, on April 1 at the Chickering School. Damrell has Dover connections and was the Chief Engineer of the Boston Fire Department who was in command when The Great Fire of 1872 (November) struck the city. Damrell's fire helmet is housed in the Dover Fire Department building.

Already, the Sawin curators, Shirley McGill and Glenda Mattes, have begun to plan a new exhibit that will be opened on Old Home Day, October 1. Heather Hodgson DePaola, chairman of the OHD committee, has organized her committee and begun planning a new and even better program. All our activities and events will benefit by volunteer help and assistance. This includes Dover Days, May 20.

Since late last summer, Richard Eells, chair of the Dover Historical Commission, and I, as both a member of the commission and president of the Society, have spent a great deal of time, effort, and thought responding to Dr. Anthony Oliva's wish to present the

1724 Draper House (6 Farm Street) as a gift to the town. That offer has been formally made and the Dover Selectmen have accepted. A formal document of transfer is being prepared. We have been learning a great deal as to the cost and means of moving an antique house to a new home. Richard and I have talked with a number of preservationists, restorers, and movers about this process as well as working with the Park & Recreation Commission who have agreed to the placement of the house on the Howe Lot across from the Old Militia Field.

The 1724 Draper House, the oldest structure built in the town, will be a great symbol of our past, a vital space for our future where historical documents and materials can be safely stored, where the citizens of Dover can meet and share history, where our young people can be exposed to the history around us, and where we can exhibit our wonderful collections long stored away from public sight. The Draper House, owned by the town, will be managed by the Society as we do the Caryl House.

We are beginning to organize a fundraising campaign and would welcome all who would like to be a part of this exciting historical adventure. Look for a town-wide public meeting of all citizens who are interested in being a part of this wonderful community effort to save the oldest dwelling in Dover.. If you have any ideas, want to work, or contribute funds, please call and leave a message at the Dover Town Hall, at 508-785-0032, x221 or x226.

We look forward to a wonderfully active year and hope that you will continue to contribute your time, energy, and financial donations to support our mission to collect, preserve, and present the history of Dover to all. This particular year we would appreciate additional financial aid to support the preservation and restoration of The 1724 Draper House on a new site in the center of the town.

*Paul H. Tedesco, President*

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## Caryl House

New shingles grace the Benjamin Caryl House roof. Sadly, significant water damage to six ceilings and a bass viol occurred as a result of the failure of the contractor to use hole-free tarpaulins during a forecasted rainstorm. Negotiations are underway to deal with these issues. When the bass viol was brought for water damage repair, it became apparent that additional conservation was needed to deal with glue deterioration and other issues of age. You may recall from the last *Dover Tidings* that this instrument belonged to the First Parish Church, now the Dover Church, and was played by Centre Street resident, Moses Draper, before the Church was destroyed by fire in 1838 and by Alonzo Howe, a Dover carpenter, in the new Church. Given to the Dover Historical Society by George Ellis Chickering, this instrument enables visitors to better understand the role of music in daily social and spiritual life. Conservation costs \$1500 and we would welcome your donations for this purpose.

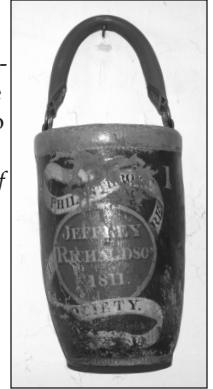


Over the last years, several outdoor animals have sought refuge in the basement by taking advantage of cracks in the stone foundation. Efforts have been made to fill the holes, but new ones appear because of the numerous cracks in the foundation. When

one skunk, one chipmunk, and two snake holes recently were discovered, the Board agreed to have the interior and exterior repaired. In addition, the large stone step at the kitchen door has been pulling away from the House. This has been re-set along with the other stones in order to make safer steps. The cost for this project is \$3300 and if you feel you could make an additional contribution, it will be much appreciated.

If you attended the showing of Damrell's Fire on April 1st you saw the leather fire bucket, which usually hangs in the Entry. Printing identifies Jeffrey Richardson, 1811, of the #1 Philanthropic Fire Society. On this 300th anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's birth, it is appropriate to recall that in 1736 he and nineteen of his neighbors formed the Union Fire Company, the nation's first volunteer fire brigade. This concept spread and in our community, people were encouraged to hang leather fire buckets by their doors in order to help fight fires, which were frequent given the extensive use of fireplaces. I have enjoyed reading Gordon S. Wood's *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, a book noted for cutting through stereotypes.

A highlight of the June 11 Garden Party will be the opportunity to view the miniature room created by Elizabeth Gazmuri, who grew up in Dover and lives in Needham. This artist gives us a different perspective on the Hall and it is a treasure. Please join us at this festive event.



Priscilla Pitt Jones  
Caryl House Curator

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## Fisher Barn

One of the more visible reminders of Dover's agricultural past is Powisset Farm. Frank Smith tells us that Powisset Farm was originally settled by Samuel Chickering (1689-1778) presumably at some point shortly after his marriage to Mary Harding in 1720. Smith adds that the Chickering homestead was situated "near Rattlesnake Rock" which may be the area known today as Powisset Peak, though it is more likely that the home was located in the vicinity of what is now 42 Powisset Street. With the marriage of Samuel and Mary's daughter (and only surviving child) Mary to Samuel Fisher in 1751 the farm passed into the Fisher family. Samuel and Mary's son Captain Samuel Fisher (1757-1822) was one of the town's largest landowners and Smith notes that by 1821 Powisset Farm encompassed almost 500 acres. Captain Samuel Fisher built a sawmill at what is now the first pond north of Powisset Street and, with timber cut from trees lost in a storm in 1815 constructed the farm house which formerly stood on the site of 40 Powisset Street. With the marriage of his daughter Abigail to Timothy Allen, Jr. in 1807 Captain Samuel Fisher removed to Dover Center and the farm passed into the ownership of the Allen family

On Timothy Allen's death in 1869 his heirs sold the property to Bernhard Post of Needham. The Post family ran Powisset Farm as a wholesale milk business and it is highly likely that the present barn was constructed during this period, as was the house at 42 Powisset Street. In 1913 John H. and George E. Post sold the farm to Horatio Hathaway, Jr. of Dedham.

In 1925 Hathaway sold the property to Richard Sheehan "of Marlow, Co. Cork, Ireland" and, in 1930, Sheehan in turn sold Powisset Farm to Amelia Peabody. Miss Peabody was already the owner of Mill Farm, which abutted the property on its northern side. A biographical pamphlet published by the Peabody Foundation states that she purchased the property to

prevent its acquisition by a local flying club for use as a landing field. Miss Peabody raised Hereford cattle and Yorkshire pigs, and erected both the centrally heated pig sty and the large metal hay barn on the south side of the pasture.

With Miss Peabody's death in 1984 Powisset Farm passed into the care of the present owners, the Trustees of Reservations.

*Elisha Lee*  
Fisher Barn Curator

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## Sawin Museum

The Sawin Museum is 100 years old. Our new centennial exhibit will highlight the story behind Ben Sawin's bequest to the Historical Society.

Continuing our focus on old Dover families, we will also spotlight the Wilson-Bond family. Henry Wilson came from Kent, England about 1639. He married Mary Metcalf and settled in the area of Dedham, which is now Wilsondale Street in Dover and Westwood. His descendants remained on the family property until about 1955. Wilson descendants in Dover today are related to many of the oldest Dedham names: Richards, Allen, Bullard, Soule, Draper, Baker, Morse, Bacon, Wight, Battelle. The Society owns a large number of items relating to this family, including parts of our extensive clothing collection. We expect this to be a very special exhibit of Dover's history.

*Glenda Mattes*

Assistant Curator Sawin Museum

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## Website Update

If you haven't looked at our website, [www.doverhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.doverhistoricalsociety.org), recently, take some time soon to check it out. There have been changes. You will soon find a fully searchable copy of The Dover Reporter, Dover's local weekly newspaper from the late 1960's and early 1970's. You might find yourself among its pages.

Also, you will soon find Dick Vara's *Dover Days Gone By* on our website. Dick left this treasure in our care. You will find both his original 1976 publication and his unpublished Millennium Edition. Look under Historic Documents for this and The Dover Reporter!

We are working on other changes and additions so please visit often.

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## Special Library Exhibits

Look for the Dover Historical Society exhibit in the display case at the Dover Library. The exhibit changes monthly. The current collection is Bunnies in honor of the Easter Season. Recent exhibits have included Valentines, Antique Christmas Ornaments, and Antique Household Utensils. If you have a collection you would like to exhibit, please contact the Sawin Museum Curator, Shirley McGill, at 785-0090.

# Who Designed Our Old Doorways?

From a paper written by Frank Smith in 1920

There are no existing examples of the doors made by the first Colonial settlers. From the very nature of the case we know, however, that the doors built by Henry Wilson, James Draper, Andrew Dewing, John Bacon, Nathaniel Chickering, Thomas Battelle, Eleazer Ellis, and Ralph Day, the first settlers in the town, were made from green wood which naturally warped and shrunk. The cracks admitted wind, snow and rain and for protection the skins of the bear, the deer, and perhaps lesser animals, were hung to curtain these rude doors, and protect the family from the elements.

In this connection we will review the building of homes in Dover. While clay suitable for brick making was found in the river and brook bottoms of the town, yet previous to the close of the nineteenth century, brick was never used for building purposes, except in chimneys and the brick ends of the houses of John Brown and Ebenezer Smith on Farm Street, both of which houses are still standing. Several attempts at brick making were made in the years long since passed but building in Dover was from the first of wood because it was everywhere found and lent itself to the design and workmanship of the local carpenters. "These men were masters of their crafts and moreover were men of artistic sense". So it is an interesting question as to whom we are indebted for the simple beauty found in several Dover doorways.

In some of the early houses there was the button door, consisting of two or three vertical planks nailed firmly to a solid backing of horizontal boards held together by rough hand made nails. I remember such doors in Dover houses which always looked to me as though they were made to keep the Indians out.

The evolution in building is well illustrated in the reproduction of the James Draper house on Springdale Avenue in the Genealogical History of Dover. We find this style of house, the low one story cottage giving place to the two story lean-to, early in the eighteenth century, as illustrated by the Joseph Draper house on Farm Street and still standing. The first houses were simple rectangular lines. Their doorways opening arranged for convenience. They were openings offering passage through outside or inside walls.

When the two story design was adopted, there was often an element of beauty introduced in the front door, which is well illustrated in the front door in the Caryl Parsonage and the pictures that have been preserved of the Whiting-Williams Tavern which was built in 1761.

It is hard to account for an entire absence of knockers on the old doors of the town. Hardware has been termed "the jewelry of the house" and little if any has been found in Dover houses in the shape of brass hinges, latches and knockers. Surely the knocker is a symbol of welcome and it always a pleasure to think of the hands that lifted it. The absence of a hardware store may account for this neglect but surely the latch-string was always out to welcome guests.

*You can read Frank Smith's paper in its entirety online by visiting [www.doverhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.doverhistoricalsociety.org).*

# DOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

## Elected at the Annual Meeting 3/30/06

President	Paul Tedesco	508-785-1933 PHT52@AOL.COM
Vice President	Dave Stapleton	508-785-0078 DAVE.STAPLETON2@COMCAST.NET
Recording Secretary	Gary Sawin	508-785-8100 GBSAWIN@CWVILLAGE.ORG
Corresponding Secretary	Betty Brady	508- 785-0790 DOVERHUGH@COMCAST.NET
Treasurer	Jim Marble	508-785-1940 JMARBLE@SPRYNET.COM
Caryl House Curator	Priscilla Jones	508-785-0236 PJONES@SMITH.ALUMNAE.NET
Assistant Curator	Alison Campbell	508-655-2728 ACLANDSCAPEDESIGN@EARTHLINK.NET
Sawin Museum Curator	Shirley McGill	508-785-0090
Assistant Curator	Glenda Mattes	508-785-2171 DOVERGGM@COMCAST.NET
Fisher Barn Curator	Elisha Lee	508-785-1653 EFLJR@COMCAST.NET
Assistant Curator	Tim Wider	508-785-9839 CIVILWAR1863@YAHOO.COM
Fund Raising	Heather Hodgson	508-785-1977 UNPACKINGSOLUTIONS@COMCAST.Net
Hospitality	Louise Crane	508-785-0824
	Dorothy Boylan	508-785-1980
Public Programs	Joy Bushman	508-785-1686 TBUSHMAN@COMCAST.NET
Membership Records	Sue Knowles	508-785-0858 SUSANNEKNOWLES@AOL.COM
Volunteers	Ellen Little	508-785-0949
School Programs	Patty Howe	508-785-9044 PAHOWE54 @COMCAST.NET

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## Wish List

- o Repair of stone wall on west Side of Caryl House driveway. Estimated cost \$3000
- o Put up Hodgson Shed at Sawin Museum.
- o Conservation of Dr. George Caryl's leather saddlebag (estimate being sought)
- o Conservation of miniature needlepoint book crafted by Ellen Miller for her mother. (estimate being sought)
- o Conservation of Moses Draper's coat, 3rd cousin, 4x removed of Shirley Bond

If you are interested in contributing to any of the above projects please contact Priscilla Jones at 508-785-0236.

# Spring 2006 Docent Schedule

## Saturdays 1 -- 4 pm

<b>Date</b>	<b>Caryl House</b>	<b>Fisher Barn</b>	<b>Sawin Museum</b>
April 1	Paul Tedesco	Alison Campbell	Gary Sawin
April 8	Dorothy Boylan		Patty Howe
April 15	Louise Crane	Dave Stapleton	Shirley McGill
April 22	Dave Stapleton		Dorothy Boylan
April 29	Nancy Ferguson	Kay Guild	Emilie Chamberlain
May 6	Louise Crane		Jinny Leonard
May 13	Betty Brady	Jack Hoehlein	Patty Howe
May 20	Pearl Chamberlain		Carl Edwards
May 27	Jane Moore	Paul Tedesco	Glenda Mattes
June 3	Dale Cabot		Paul Tedesco
June 10	Iva Hayes		Dave Stapleton
June 17	Louise Crane		Betty Brady
June 25	Iva Hayes		Shirley McGill

June 11 Garden Party -- Priscilla Jones, Teents Adams, Joy Bushman, Dale Cabot, Emilie Chamberlain, Pearl Chamberlain, Nancy Ferguson, Sue Knowles, Jinny Leonard, Bev Ryburn, Juanita Savage, Gerry Wise.

Additional volunteers are needed at the Fisher Barn. If you can be a docent for one of the open dates above, call Sue Knowles at 508-785-0858.

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## Old Home Day

The Fifth Annual Old Home Day Celebration will take place Oct. 1 from 1 - 7 pm. Events will again include an antique car exhibit, silhouette artist Carol Lebeaux; open houses at Caryl House, Fisher Barn and Sawin Museum; old-fashioned children's games; a parade of hounds and horses from the Norfolk Hunt Club; the Grange Supper and more. An exciting new event this year will be the Craft Fair. An expanded Old Home Day Program in full color will be mailed to all Dover households in September. If you would like to help on Old Home Day or participate in the Craft Fair, please call Heather DePaola at 508-785-1977, e-mail [oldhomeday@comcast.net](mailto:oldhomeday@comcast.net) or visit the website <http://:home.comcast.net/~oldhomeday/OHD.Dover.html>.