

DOVER TIDINGS

Spring 2010

Volume X No. 1



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Editor

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A Message from the President

The “Jake Place” has always fascinated me. Situated at the top of a ridge overlooking the valley of Noanet Brook, it has survived the centuries better than many of the other cellar holes that dot the south side of Strawberry Hill. Our Town Historian, Frank Smith, wrote in 1914 that the place was once home to an African American known to us only as “Jake”, whose wife was a white woman and “a native of Strawberry Hill”. It’s a curious spot, situated well north of the cart path that probably linked Jake with his closest neighbors, and with no visible evidence of a barn. Was this house an adjunct to another property or did Jake simply have no livestock to shelter? About 350 yards to the west is another cellar hole that Smith attributes to Samuel Wilson, noting that Wilson sold that property to John Jepson in 1791. About 450 yards to the east is the Larrabee site, which was extensively excavated in the 1970’s and has been reliably dated to about 1778. Whoever he was, Jake probably lived here at some point between 1780 and 1810.

One clue to Jake’s identity may lie in the 1790 Federal Census, which identifies the heads of the 89 households then comprising the town of Dover and further identifies the number of free non-white individuals residing in each. Only four people in the town were so classified and of them, only one can be tied to a household in the vicinity of Strawberry Hill. That still unknown individual resided with the household of Jabez Baker (1737-1823). Could Jake have been a farm hand who married a local girl and settled on a section of her family’s land?

In this remote cellar hole I find the embodiment of all that I love about local history. Who were these people, when did they live here, and what became of them?

That they are unrelated to me in no way diminishes my interest in their story. I am reminded of a visitor to the Sawin Museum who once suggested that the place was nice enough, but that her family didn't come from Dover and thus it really wasn't "their" history. True enough, few of our ancestors actually lived here, but all of them all lived somewhere, all have stories, and some of those stories led here. Dover may not be a part of that visitor's history, but by virtue of living here, she, her family, and indeed, all of you, are now a part of ours.

As always, I thank you for your continued interest and support.

Elisha Lee

Caryl House

Curators often get letters from folks asking for help in resolving little mysteries relating to their ancestors. My most recent such inquiry has been a source of pleasure and puzzlement and a lesson in the problems of historical research. For starters, how could you not want to help a fellow by the name of Thurlow Weed? If you were exposed, as I was, to the then-standard curriculum for New York State 4th grade civics, the name must ring at least a dim and distant chime. Thurlow Weed (1797-1882) was an influential newspaper man and political wheel-dealer who cast a long shadow on 19th century state and national politics. And he was the brother of my correspondent's great-great-grandfather.

My Mr. Weed is also a descendent of John Griggs who owned the former Ellis farm on Dedham Street that was purchased by the Reverend Benjamin Caryl in 1764. Mr. Weed seeks to confirm his source which asserts that our Caryl House was not built from scratch but was instead "expanded and improved" from the earlier Ellis farmhouse "building in part on the old foundation and using oak and pine cut from the farm." ³ Thus begins my amusing journey that benefitted considerably from the thoughtful work of Pam Kunkemuller and Priscilla Jones.

"It is presumed that the Caryls borrowed or rented their first home from John Griggs, a widower, who married in May 1763 his neighbor Sarah Wight (widow of David Wight), and moved into her adjoining farm." ² The original plot plan of the Rev. Caryl's land holdings "Represents Sixty-five acres of land with the buildings thereon purchased of Mr. John Griggs by the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Caryl in the 4th Precinct of Dedham: Surveyed June 14, 1765 And Delineated by a scale of two chains of 100 links to an inch." ¹ While the purchase from Griggs occurred

in July of 1764, the survey was conducted eleven months later. The plot plan resulting from that effort shows a single house and barn, and the Wight property as an eastern border.

Might this map inform Mr. Weed's question? Here appears the Griggs farmhouse, set back more from Dedham Street than I would have expected. But where on Dedham St. was it relative to the location of our Caryl House? What, if anything, should we make of the fact that the plot pictures 65 acres while the property was elsewhere characterized as "40 acres of uplands and meadow"? 2

All this uncertainty bodes ill for Mr. Weed. The reality is that early plot plans are of less utility than one would think. Their purpose was to identify property boundaries, and they were pretty good at that in so long as the impermanent landmarks ("black oak hereabouts") to which they make reference survive. 2 They are quite useless to us today in reestablishing the boundaries of the original parcel. The location of structures on such maps was rarely accurate, as their position was not measured in the field but sited on the plan from memory as a desirable but unnecessary detail. So the question of the proximity of the Griggs farmhouse to the later Caryl house remains unanswered. The issue as to whether the Caryls "rebuilt the house they were already in or started from scratch" is also considered unresolved, "but according to experts at Boston University, architectural and social history support the premise that the current house is original to the site." . . . However, "the paneling in the kitchen and lathing in the kitchen chamber have been recycled from an older house or houses. By 1777 they had completed their new home, on their own land, and with material obtained from that land. Documentation for the date of the house comes from a poem, written by Ellen Miller, their great granddaughter." 2 Ultimately the Caryls would acquire additional acreage resulting in an 80 +/- acre farm.

The plot plan has been in storage for a couple years and is coming back on display this season... Please pay us a visit and take a look at this wonderful artifact. Many thanks to those of you who contributed to a warm and convivial Holiday Party by your presence and your artistic and culinary talents. Thanks to all of you for your abiding support for the work of the Caryl House.

Barbara H. Palmer
Caryl House Curator

1 998.186, "Plot Plan of "land...purchased of Mr. John Griggs by Rev. Mr. Benjamin Caryl. . June 14, 1765"

2 Electronic correspondence: Jones to Palmer, 3/3/2010, Summary of home lot research conducted by Pamela Kunkemueller and Priscilla Jones.

3 Kathleen Kamm Jones and Donald E. Jones, "Some Ancestors of Pearl Griggs Kamm, Part I - Colonial New England Lineages." Self-published, 1993, p. 21.

The Fisher Barn

The Fisher Barn has a wide array of tools and equipment on display. They showcase the effort required for day-to-day living and sustenance in a time gone by. It doesn't take long before one realizes that life was hard, even for the well-to-do.

This is not to say that life today isn't hard! Many magazines and news shows feature the struggles of couples with young families, and how a modern day husband and wife juggle and divide the many chores of house cleaning, maintenance and shopping. How did the couples of 100, or 200 years ago divide the household chores? Was it along gender lines?

It wasn't that long ago that you could not separate the household chores from that of tasks in the barn, the fields or tending to livestock. They were all required and necessary, often coinciding with seasonal dictates, and perhaps not as gender specific as you might imagine.

To Toil the Livelong Day is a book edited by Carol Gronemen and Mary Beth Norton that details America's working women in New England from 1780 through 1980. Research from diaries and news accounts in the region describes an agricultural society where men were responsible for the construction and maintenance of the house, barn and outbuildings and for the provisioning of fuel for heat and cooking. Women were generally responsible for cleaning, tending fires, sewing, mending and laundering. However, the allocation of tasks between men and women was somewhat flexible, perhaps much more so than today. When frost jeopardized the winter vegetables, bugs took over the potato patch or rain threatened the hay, it was all available hands to service!

On a July day in 1875, a prideful George Riley wrote in his diary that his wife "helped me hay as good as a man." We read that there were general areas of gender defined roles, but it was probably more out of convenience or necessity

than living within a society of defined stereotype roles. Women of the era found no shame in doing “men’s” work, nor men doing “women’s” work. Whatever chore had to be done at the time it was required, men, women, families and communities did what was needed.

When the Flax Breaker needed to be used or the butter churn was required, was it the woman of the house, or the man of the house who tended to the task? Chances are, it was both.

The Fisher Barn has fine examples of the tools and tasks required for a life of self sustained efficiency. On display are items such as the horse drawn flap rake, hay rakes, flax breaker, scrutches, apple cider press and perhaps many other items that were household necessities at one time. And probably used by all members of the family!

Jack Hoehlein
Fisher Barn Curator

Sawin Museum

Sawin Museum's collection has an extensive collection of artifacts related to Dover's history. Many of the objects in Sawin Museum, and much of the archival material has been cataloged, most of it by the previous Curator over a number of years. However, much of it remains uncataloged, and/or needs to be digitally photographed, as an initial step prior to cataloging. We have projects both large and small. Dover Historical Society (DHS), also, provides community service credits to students who would like to work with us, and we will gladly review possible tasks with them to provide them with a suitable experience.

DHS is pleased to note that we will have Rose Killelea, a Dover resident and senior student at Dana Hall in Wellesley, volunteering at Sawin Museum during the month of May, in order to complete her senior paper. She will be putting our extensive collection of historical clothing on our mannequins, and documenting it by digital photography.

Rosie and her family toured Sawin Museum last Fall. She states that she loves history and has been working in her school's archives and with artifacts, mostly historical clothing. She has experience handling, folding, photographing, and cataloging old clothing, and says she would love to help out in any way she could. She hopes to major in history in college, and possibly intern or work in a museum someday, so she thought she would like to use her senior project with DHS as a way to get some practical experience. Depending on how long photographing the clothing collection takes, she may be able to do some of the cataloging of the pieces into our computer system. She will then write her senior paper on this experience and will present it at Senior Project Night on June 4th, with pictures of some of the clothing she worked with and some information about how the clothing in the museum fits in with the common styles from the time period it is from.

We are very pleased that Rosie has asked to come in to work and do her paper with us. We would like to encourage other students in Dover to contact us if they are interested in incorporating some of our collection into their school papers and projects. We are thrilled to be able to assist her! Welcome Rosie!

Anyone interested in volunteering with DHS for a school project or for community service hours should contact us by calling the DHS number (508-785-1832) or email DHS at info@doverhistoricalsociety.org. Opportunities will be accepted on a first come first serve basis, as supervision is required.

Fay Bacher

Sawin Museum Curator

Call for Help

The Dover Historical Society has openings for volunteers to help in the following areas: Old Home Day, setting up exhibits, fund-raising, publicity, hospitality and docents to serve as guides in the Society's three museums. Training is provided.

For more information, please contact Priscilla Jones at 508-785-0236.

Dover Historical Society

Officers and Board of Directors

Elected at the Annual Meeting 3/18/2010

President	Elisha Lee	(508)785-1653	eleejr@verizon.net
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Advisory Board

Pam Kunkemueller
Dale Cabot
Dierdre Windsor-Bailey
Judy Schulz
Shirley McGill

Spring 2010 Docent Schedule

Saturdays 1 --4 PM

	Sawin Museum	Caryl House	Fisher Barn
April 10	Fay Bacher	Kay Guild	Patty Howe
April 17	Dorothy Boylan	Jinny Leonard	Rich White
April 24	Ursula Gray	Clare Burke	Olivia Tedesco & Priscilla Jones
May 1	Shirley McGill	Dorothy Boylan	Bob Bond
May 8	Patty Howe	Jane Smith	Erika Lert
May 15	Nancy Ferguson	Louise Crane	Olivia Tedesco & Priscilla Jones
May 22	Clare Burke	Jessica Hall	Bob Bond
May 29		Olivia Tedesco & Priscilla Jones	Emilie Chamberlain
June 5	Rich White	Sue Knowles	Jack Hoehlein
June 12	Fay Bacher	Dale Cabot	Jack Hoehlein
June 19	Barbara Palmer	Louise Crane	Jack Hoehlein
June 26		Nancy Ferguson	Betty Brady

Caryl House Garden Party: Sunday, June 13, 2-4 pm:

Fay Bacher, Dorothy Boylan, Clare Burke, Dale Cabot, Louise Crane, Nancy Ferguson, Priscilla Jones, Pam Kunkemueller, Ellen Little, Jane Moore, Miriam O'Day, Barbara Palmer, Bev Ryburn, Jane Smith

If you can fill one of the open dates above, please contact Priscilla Jones at 508-785-0236 or priscillapjones@yahoo.com.

Mark Your Calendar

You're invited to attend the Caryl House Garden Party on Sunday, June 13th from 2 to 4 PM at the Caryl House. Period refreshments will be served.

There will be open houses at Caryl House and Fisher Barn, 107 Dedham St., and Sawin Museum, 80 Dedham St., from 1 to 4 PM on Saturdays from April 10th through June 26th. All those interested in Dover history are invited.

The 9th Annual Old Home Day Celebration will take place on Sunday, Oct. 3rd, 2010. Applications are now being accepted for the Craft Fair and Car Show. For information, see the website: www.DoverOldHomeDays.org.