
 Holliston Historical Society
NEWSLETTER

Winter 2022-23



The Asa Whiting House was decked out for the holidays in style by the dedicated Collections Committee and welcomed visitors inside to see displays of vintage toys, trains, and dollhouses on December 4, 2022.

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Holliston Historical Society *NEWSLETTER*
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We occasionally send emails to the HHS membership to let you know about upcoming programs. If you have not received an e-mail from us lately, please check your spam folder. Then tell your e-mail software that we are not spam so that you don't miss any news!

President's Message to Members

We had a great Potluck gathering in January with fabulous food, socializing, a famous person ice-breaker game, and a reading of predictions we made at the 2020 Potluck about what would happen that year! We also started a conversation about Long-Range Planning, discussing the questions “what would you like to see the Society do that we’re not already doing?” and “where would you like to see us in the next 5 to 10 years?” If you’d like to be involved in this planning process, please see or contact any member of the Board.

We would like to find more ways to increase our income, and especially our Endowment, so that perhaps we could decrease our rentals. Hosting many renters is very hard on our 200-year-old historic buildings and grounds. Besides the property rentals—which account for the majority of our income—we also have the Harvest Fair, Car Show, and Oktoberfest. We would like to get fresh ideas for fund-raising through events, grants, and other activities.

One that we’ve tried out in the last year is our Treasure Shop which sells items donated by members and friends. We’ve so far made over \$1,000, but would love to establish it more permanently. We are especially looking for someone to help make an online connection to the Shop. We think having an Antiques, Collectibles, and Curiosities Show sometime this year would be lots of fun too! In addition to our treasure shop, we would ask local dealers to come. If you’d like to be part of this, just let me know: nancybowenlamb@gmail.com.

We’d also like to sponsor a Community Sing this summer at the Society with families especially in mind. We would have food trucks here for everyone to get supper before the sing. Again, members’ thoughts and help are invited!

It would be great to have members more involved in forwarding

the mission of the Society. If you have other ideas about fund-raising or would be interested in joining the Grant Committee, please be in touch. Previous experience is appreciated but not necessary! Your ideas, enthusiasm, and participation are what will make this happen!

For those of you who weren't able to be at the Potluck, this newsletter will help update you on some of our accomplishments since Annual Meeting 2022, upcoming programs and events, and some possibilities for the future. Your support and involvement in all the Society does is so appreciated!

With warmest wishes for 2023,

Nancy Lamb
President



UPCOMING EVENTS

Washington Talk at Holliston Public Library Wednesday, February 22, 2:30 PM

Join members Joanne Hulbert and Ben Clarkson at the Holliston Public Library for a talk in conjunction with One Book One Holliston. The book this year is Travels with George by Nathaniel Philbrick. As you may recall from our program "Along the Indifferent Road" via Zoom last February, George Washington traveled through Holliston in 1789. Joanne and Ben will share information about his time in Holliston as he passed through as well as Mr. Philbrick's as he did research for his book.

St. Mary's Parish History Book Talk

Sunday, February 26, 2 PM



Three years in the making, the book is now finally published: a new history of St. Mary's Parish written for its 150th anniversary in 2020! Come join St. Mary's Parish Librarian and Historian (and Historical Society member) Betty Febo as she describes the research and writing process that was involved in the book's crea-

tion. Betty will present a slide show of highlights from the first fifty years of St. Mary's Parish and offer two mysteries that are yet to be fully solved. The program will be held in the Holliston Historical Society's Asa Whiting House. The talk is free and open to the public. Refreshments will follow. All are welcome!



Speaking of Joanne Hulbert, we are pleased that she was recently named woman of the month by Generation Ratify Holliston. Generation Ratify Holliston is a club at Holliston High School led by students Phoebe Wernborg and Carmen Luisi and advised by Ms. Arnold. Generation Ratify Holliston plans to highlight Holliston women who have made an impact in our community and Joanne is their first honoree! See the full story on Holliston Reporter: <https://hollistonreporter.com/2023/02/hulbert-named-woman-of-the-month-by-student-group/>

Upcoming Events, continued

Genealogy Workshop for Beginners **Saturdays, March 11 and March 25, 1:00-3:00 PM**

The Holliston Historical Society will be offering a two-session Genealogy Workshop for Beginners. This workshop is geared to people who are just starting or think they might want to give genealogy a try. It will cover the basics including some of the various charts used to record your family tree, how to fill out a pedigree chart, and where and how to gather your information. At the end of the first session you will have a pedigree chart that you can start filling in (with pencil or pen).

The second session is two weeks later to give you some time to start your research at home. Session 2 will include help for some of the problems you have encountered and some resources available on the internet. By the end of session 2 (or even by the end of session 1) you may have decided whether genealogy is something you want to pursue.

Carol Kosicki will be conducting the workshop. The workshop is for members and guests (only one guest per member). Registration is required for planning purposes. If you can only attend the first session that is ok.

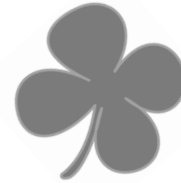
Session 1: Sat 3/11/2023 1 – 3 pm

Session 2: Sat 3/25/2023 1 – 3 pm

If you have questions or to register contact:

Carol Kosicki 508-429-6810 or clkosicki@gmail.com

Movie —"Waking Ned Devine"
With Irish-themed Snacks
Sunday, March 12, 4:30 PM



Come join us Sunday March 12th at 4:30 p.m. at The Holliston Historical Society for a screening of the lighthearted comedy 'Waking Ned Devine'. This quirky film takes place in a quaint Irish village where lifelong friends attempt to impersonate a recently deceased member of the community who holds the winning lotto ticket in hand!

Cost is \$5 and includes freshly popped popcorn from our popcorn machine (with or without melted butter), a sampling of Guinness beer, Irish bread and cheese, a soft drink, something for those with a sweet tooth, and an evening to remember! Cash or check is greatly appreciated and will be collected at the door.

Please RSVP Laura Raney at laraney504@hotmail.com with your guest count as soon as possible-space is limited! Members and friends are invited to sport an Irish attire if desired! This is life-long member, Laura Raney's first event, so show her your support by attending!

Join us at the Asa Whiting house where you don't need a pot of gold to feel rich!



Garden Update

Our gardens are dormant during winter, but it will soon be growing time. In order to get the flower beds in order and ready for our rental season, we are scheduling a **garden workday** for **March 25th**, weather permitting. All are invited to lend a hand. Bring your shovels, rakes, and other garden tools if you have them. More information will be sent as we get closer to the end of March. We will reschedule if the weather does not permit garden work until a little later. If you are interested in joining the Garden Committee, please let me know. We hope to see you for our spring clean-up day.



—Sheila Adams



Display of Artifacts from Littlefield Tavern at Public Library

Speaking of Ben Clarkson (see p. 4), the next time you are at the public library—perhaps to see the Washington talk—check out the display he created on the main level. The items in the display case were collected by Ben and represent years of discards from the Littlefield Tavern that were tossed into Hopping Brook. Littlefield Tavern was opened in 1750 by Ephraim Littlefield and served refreshment to the aforementioned president along with his entourage and his horses in 1789. It is now is a private residence.

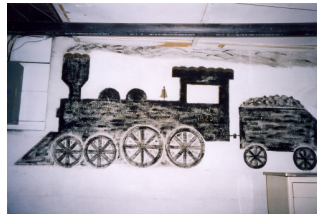
Upcoming Events, continued

Paul Revere is Coming, Paul Revere is Coming!

Sunday, April 23, 2:00 PM



Join us in the Barn on Sunday, April 23rd at 2pm for a visit from none other than Paul Revere. Actor Daniel Berger Jones from Boston Historical Tours will portray the renowned midnight messenger and silversmith. He will recount his days leading up to his midnight journey of 19 April 1775 as a member of the Sons of Liberty and many other stories, including his early apprentice years and his post-Revolutionary days as a successful businessman in the Copper rolling and bell making industries. You might even be surprised to learn that this famous Revolutionary figure had ties to Holliston! Come and find out what those were.



Train Show

Saturday, April 29

The train show is back and bigger and better than ever! On April 29, train buffs of all ages will be happy to see the return of this event to the Holliston Historical Society. The Waushakum Live Steamers will display their steam engines and other train clubs will set up displays in the house and the barn. Look for an e-mail as we get closer to the date or watch our website, Holliston Reporter, Local Town Pages, and HCAT for more details.

More Upcoming Events

Annual Fathers' Day Breakfast and Car Show

Sunday, June 18, 2023 from 8:00-10:00 AM

Our 20th Annual Fathers Day Breakfast and Car Show is scheduled for June 18, 2023. The grounds are filled to capacity with antique and collectors cars. A full country breakfast is served in the barn and trophies are awarded by our sponsors at 10AM, leaving time for dads to celebrate the rest of the day with family. Watch our website, Holliston Reporter, Local Town Pages, HCAT, and your e-mail for details in June.



There were so many cars that attended the 19.5th annual car show last October, Paul had some of them park in front of the Asa Whiting House!

We would like to start a new tradition this summer and host a **Community Sing** for all ages. We are thinking of doing this on a Friday evening sometime in July on the side lawn under the new canopy or in the Barn. We plan to invite some food trucks (who would give HHS a portion of their sales) to serve from about 5 to 6:30 PM with the sing to start at 6:30 or 7. We still need to find a person who is willing to lead the singing of songs from many decades, perhaps while playing a keyboard. Our hope is that this would bring the community together, be something fun that families might enjoy, and tie into our mission. We welcome ideas and suggestions about this event. Please contact Nancy at nancybo-wenlamb@gmail.com.





42nd ANNUAL HARVEST FAIR

Sunday, September 17, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Rain date is Sunday, September 24

Please join us for our 42nd Country Harvest Fair on Sunday, September 17, from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. There will be an assortment of vendors on the front lawn, as well as our auction table with items donated by vendors and members. The Asa Whiting House and the library will be open to visitors. In addition, the Historical Society will have our Treasure Shop booth in the barn to sell donated antiques and collectables. And, of course, refreshments and lunch will be for sale in the Barn, as well as our wonderful apple pies!

Volunteers are invited to help make the pies at Pie Night on Friday, September 15 beginning at 5:00 pm. An email will be sent closer to the time to let Society members know about other Fair volunteer opportunities.

We hope to see you!

—*The Harvest Fair Committee*

Town's 300th Anniversary in 2024

Thoughts on Holliston Historical Society's Participation

In March 2022, six Historical Society members met to brainstorm activities that could be implemented to support the Town's 300th Anniversary Celebration during 2024. After much discussion, the suggestions were narrowed to the following:

1. Participate in the parade (Saturday, May 18, 2024) with a float: either a horse-drawn carriage (restoration of one that is on display in the loft of the Historical Society barn) or construction of something on a flatbed truck. Invite Society members to walk alongside.

2. Strawberry Festival – Sunday, June 23, 2024

Make it a community event, setting up outside and in the barn. Make and sell strawberry shortcakes. Have live music performance. Offer children's activities such as face painting, fishing game, etc. Invite folks into the Asa Whiting House where exhibits will be set up.

3. For a fall date – Coordinate with a group (or groups) who can present an 18th-century encampment or militia impression or reenactment along with demos of 18th-century tasks such as doing laundry and cooking, company drilling, children's drill, spinning wheel demo, setting up a sutlery (a store selling provisions to soldiers), etc.

If you would like to contribute your ideas to the planning, help in any way with any of the activities, or if you would like to take the lead on coordinating any event, please speak up! The members of the planning committee so far are Sheila Adams, Melissa Deutsch, Jane Gilfoy, Bea Hait, Pam Kyrka, Pat Pereira and Victoria Shotton. Please contact me (beatehl@aol.com) or any committee member to express your interest so we can notify you of the date of our first meeting this year, which will be in late February/early March.

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

The Collections Committee now prepares a Society display at Town Hall every quarter on the first floor just outside the Town Administrator's office. We hope you'll check it out when you visit Town Hall. We've also completed installing all the new display cabinets in the House Meeting Room—funded by Gilfoy Art and Framing and a friend of the Society.

Last fall members of the Committee were invited to the Dennis Historical Society to learn how to make mannequins to display clothing from our collections. We plan on having some of our gowns on display during the Harvest Fair. We held two open houses—at the Harvest Fair (160 people, the most we've ever had come through) and for the Holidays on December 4 (78 visitors).

We deeply appreciate the grant from the Town of Holliston's Community Preservation Act fund (CPA) to pay for the cleaning and restoration of our portrait oil paintings. Once the work is completed, we will have a special display of the paintings for members and the public, including information about these early Hollistonians.

GRANT COMMITTEE

The Town of Holliston's American Rescue Plan Act Committee has granted the Historical Society \$25,000 for the replacement of our ancient and failing septic system. The new system should be in place by the end of April when the rental season begins. And the restoration of 2 ell doors is now in process, thanks to the Town's CPA fund. We are so grateful! Our next project is researching grants to sponsor new handicapped accessible bathrooms in the barn. Stay tuned!

Antiques from your Attic

January 19, 2023



This was Ken Van Blarcom's second visit to the Holliston Historical Society and we were honored to have him here to tell us about the current state of antiques and collectibles and to appraise

the items brought that night. Above, Mr. Blarcom examines a child's mechanical toy which he deemed to be in wonderful condition. Three swords (photo of one, at right) were brought in, causing Ken to send photos to his expert, Paul Guidi, who answered with a text within moments. Many people brought in family heirlooms,



but one member brought in this set of ceramic canisters (photo at left) she had purchased at the Treasure Shop at the Harvest Fair. It is worth more than she paid for it, a good reason to visit the Shop this September. You never know

what you might find! If you could not attend the talk, it was filmed by HCAT TV and is available to watch now. Thank you to Bruce Gilfoy who did the filming and to Paul Saulnier who coordinated this program and took these photos.

Smallpox in Holliston in 1833

Is it too soon? Are you still reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic or would you like to read about how Holliston handled an outbreak of smallpox 190 years ago? This article was submitted by Joanne Hulbert who has 30 pages of medical history she could share with us. This editor is not sure of the source of this article, but is guessing it is quite old since it suggests that Mr. Rockwood, who was born in 1824, was still among the living at its writing.

—*mec*

An incident of note we here chronicle, occurred in the spring of 1833. Our relative, Elbridge Luther Rockwood, was seized with the malignant small pox. That he should recover, was regarded by the old and skilful family physician as little less than a miracle.

There were at that time thirteen occupants in the old family mansion, who were shut out from all society during seven long weeks. Many of the medical profession from abroad came to see the sick and learn relative to this malady. During its prevalence, the wants of the family were supplied at seemingly great hazard to the health and safety of the surrounding neighborhood. All were shut in, the roads fenced up, and all regular outward communication cut off! There was a place prominent and particular, where the family was permitted to make known its wants to those in waiting. This was at the top of the "Powder House Hill," so called. Here communications, written and verbal, were responded to from the valley below; and the various articles needed, allowed and called for, were in due time set down at the thither side of the fence full half a mile from the infected district. The house "with all its appurtenances thereunto belonging," was considered infected by this dread malady.

After the restoration of the sick, the house, with the various paraphernalia, including a heterogeneous assortment of odd and antique commodities in the old garret, were ordered to be cleaned by thorough washing, and the process completed by smoking in fumes of brimstone. The place of purification was a small shop hard by the house. Our worthy town officials for the time being, to make things all right, "on a set day" entered and examined the premises and pronounced them clean and safe, every whit.

Thus ended the history of the small pox in Holliston in 1833. "A consummation most devoutly wished" by the whole town.

[Elbridge L. Rockwood, born Nov. 24, 1824. Lives in Holliston. Married Elizabeth Phipps, 1846.]

**Holliston Historical Society
547 Washington Street
Holliston, Massachusetts 01746-1818**

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