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 Holliston Historical Society  
**NEWSLETTER**

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**Winter 2023-24**



A group of elves decorated the Asa Whiting House for the winter holiday season.

**Dates to Remember.....**

- January 20, 2024—Members and Friends Potluck (p. 4)**
- January 30—Ruth Bader Ginsburg at Public Library (p. 4)**
- February 17 and 18—Winter Open House (p. 5)**
- March 19—Restoring Squire Bagley House Talk (p. 8)**
- May 11—Town Parade (p. 12)**
- June 16—Father's Day Car Show**
- June 23—Strawberry Festival (p. 12)**

Holliston Historical Society *NEWSLETTER*  
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Mary Curran, Editor  
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Harvest Fair	Beate Hait
300th Committee	Beate Hait

Karla Alfred, who keeps the Historical Society on the so-  
cial media platforms, reminds people to follow us on:

[www.facebook.com/HollistonHistoricalSociety](http://www.facebook.com/HollistonHistoricalSociety)  
[www.instagram.com/hollistonhistorical/](http://www.instagram.com/hollistonhistorical/)  
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## President's Message to Members

Dear Members,

2024 is now upon us. I want to thank you for your membership and your support of the Holliston Historical Society. We have many opportunities to participate in events taking place at the society this year, and I hope we will have many volunteers to help us with the projects.

In addition to holding our annual events such as the Annual Meeting, the Car Cruise, the Harvest Fair and Oktoberfest, we will join in celebrating the 300th Anniversary of the founding of Holliston. We are planning on participating in the parade on May 11th. We are holding a strawberry festival on June 23th at the Historical Society, and on November 2nd, we will be the site of an encampment.

Volunteers are the heart of the Society, and we greatly appreciate all the hours that we ask you work. But we all know that this participation brings rewards to the volunteer and to the group. We learn new things and make new friends. We accomplish a great deal. Our mission is to preserve Holliston history and educate our community on that history. But we can have fun doing it. I hope when you are asked to lend a hand, you will say yes. We are grateful for the contribution our volunteers make, and we look forward to seeing many of you in 2024.

May 2024 be happy and healthy for all.

Sheila Adams

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Members and Friends Pot Luck Dinner January 20, 2024 5:30 PM Social Hour, 6:30 PM Dinner.**

Start off 2024 with fellow members and friends at the Society's Pot Luck Dinner on Saturday, January 20th. Social hour begins at 5:30 p.m. and dinner will be served about 6:30 p.m. Please bring an appetizer, main course, salad, side dish, or dessert to share. Tea, coffee, wine, beer, and soft drinks will be provided.

Planning is still in progress, so watch for an e-mail with updates about a theme. RSVP to Sheila Adams at [adamssjt1@aol.com](mailto:adamssjt1@aol.com) or 508 429-4876 by January 18th. We hope you will join us for this fun event!



### **Ruth Bader Ginsburg – “I Dissent” Program at the Holliston Public Library Tuesday, January 30, 2024 from 7-8 PM**

In cooperation with the Friends of the Holliston Public Library, the Historical Society is pleased to co-present Sheryl Faye as Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Tuesday, January 30th at 7:00 PM. The performance will be at the Public Library. **To reserve your seat, please visit the Library's website: [hollistonlibrary.org](http://hollistonlibrary.org) and search on the events calendar.**

As stated on Ms. Faye's website [sherylfaye.com](http://sherylfaye.com),

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was an American lawyer and jurist who served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1993 until her death in September 2020. She was the second woman and the first Jewish woman ever appointed to the

Court and became the longest serving Jewish Justice.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg's life continues to be one of achievement: as a lawyer, professor of law, a judge, and then a Supreme Court justice, she stands out because she was not afraid to dissent, disapprove, and disagree with conditions of unfairness and inequality. This show is the inspiring story of how she changed her life—and ours.

Ms. Faye is a local woman who works full-time as an actress, a goal she worked hard to achieve. She attended Emerson College in Boston where she received a BFA degree and has worked throughout the US. Currently, Ms. Faye works on films, television, and theater in the Boston and New York areas. If you visit her website, look closely at the publicity pictures; you may recognize some of the backdrops!

—*mec*



**Winter Open House**  
**February 17th from 10 AM-Noon**  
**and February 18th from 1-3 PM**

We thought we'd try something new this year—an open house for our community during the winter instead of at holiday time, and for two days instead of just one! Please come for exhibits, refreshments, and socializing in the warmth of the Asa Whiting House on Saturday morning, February 17 from 10 AM to noon and Sunday afternoon, February 18 from 1 – 3 PM. (Snow dates: February 24 and 25.)

**SPECIAL GUEST!** An historic Boston Tea Party participant will join us to share his experience and answer questions in obser-

vance of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Enjoy special exhibits of antique lighting, winter ice-harvesting (did you know that ice used to be harvested from Houghton's Pond each winter?), information about the Boston Tea Party, and selections from our 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century clothing collection. Our research Library will be open with Historian Joanne Hulbert available for your questions.

Refreshments will be served in the Kitchen both days, and your culinary skills would be most appreciated! If you'd like to contribute savory or sweet finger food or help set up or serve, please contact Sheila Adams: [adamssjt1@verizon.net](mailto:adamssjt1@verizon.net) or call 508-429-4876.

The Treasure Shop will also be open in the Dining Room. If you have an item you'd like to donate for this enjoyable on-going fund-raiser, please contact Melissa Deutsch to send a photo and information: [melissa.deutsch@cbrealty.com](mailto:melissa.deutsch@cbrealty.com) or call: 781-535-9945. (No fabrics/textiles, please, and no furniture this time because of space constraints—thanks!)

And if you'd like to volunteer as a host on one of these days, please contact Nancy Lamb: [nancybowenlamb@gmail.com](mailto:nancybowenlamb@gmail.com) or call: 508-667-2618. We'd love your help!

We hope you'll join fellow Society members, friends, and neighbors for this winter gathering. It would be great to see you!

—Nancy Lamb

## **The 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party**

December 16, 2023 marked the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party. One hundred and forty-two chests of East India Company tea, aboard 3 ships that were anchored at Griffin's Wharf, were ripped open and dumped into Boston Harbor that evening. The English parliament had declared a midnight deadline to collect the 3 pence per pound (\$2.38 per pound today) of tax forced upon the colonists. A last minute appeal to Boston's Royal Governor, Thomas Hutchinson, was met with contempt and thus prompted John Hancock to exclaim, "let every man do what is right in his eyes," A round of blood curdling war whoops echoed from a band of young men who had disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians and were waiting outside the meeting. A large crowd followed them to Griffin's Wharf, intent upon their mission to destroy the chests of tea, rather than pay the tax. As word spread, that action helped to lead to the American Revolution.

The Upton Tea Imports Company, based in Holliston, provides historical information along with their blends of imported teas.

—*Joanne Brown*



## Upcoming Program

### **Restoring An Old House: The Squire Bagley House Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM**

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, we welcome Holliston resident, Denis Semprenon, owner of Beacon Hill Restoration, to the Holliston Historical Society. Denis will speak about his work restoring the Squire Bagley House in Amesbury. As per the website, [www.longyear.org](http://www.longyear.org),

Built circa 1780, this house was expanded over the years to meet the growing needs of the Bagley family. Squire Lowell Bagley married Sarah Osgood in 1811, and the couple raised three daughters here — Emmeline, Mary, and Sarah. It was their daughter Sarah who, nearly fifty years later, offered shelter here to Mary Baker Eddy.

In an interview with Stacy A. Teicher (article from May 2022 found at <https://www.longyear.org/learn/research-archive/an-old-house-made-new/>), Denis said preserving historic houses is “very rewarding, because you’ve left your mark.” In her article Ms. Teicher writes:

As the owner of Beacon Hill Restoration, Denis was equipped with decades of experience renovating historic buildings. Longyear hired him to serve as a preservation consultant, and he and his staff mentored the Longyear staff as they trained them in preservation techniques. He guided the project as longtime issues surfaced, including rot, caused by moisture and insects, that was hidden in parts of the 18th-century timber frame.... The goal was to save as much original fabric as possible, and when original material wasn’t available, Denis found the most historically accurate replacements.... To structurally repair damaged cornerposts, the crew spliced in new wood—a technique that reminded them of working on a three-dimensional puzzle. And just as the Bagleys would



have done, Longyear purchased many of its supplies nearby. Board sheathing was custom-made at the Bartlett Sawmill in neighboring Salisbury, Massachusetts, based at a family farm that goes back more than 10 generations. The nails used on the exterior came from Tremont Nail in Mansfield, Massachusetts, which still makes steel-cut nails the way it did in the mid-1850s.

We hope you will join us for what should be an interesting talk about this project! Refreshments will follow the talk which will be held in the Great Room of the Asa Whiting House.

Now owned by the Longyear Museum, a museum founded by Mary Beecher Longyear to advance the understanding of the life and work of Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, the Squire Bagley House is open to the public in the summer months.

—*mec*



## Now

The photo (at left) of the Squire Bagley House was taken in 2022 after the renovation was completed.



## and Then

This picture (right) was taken at the turn of the 20th century, according to Denis. Photos and evidence in the house itself helped guide the historical accuracy of the renovation.

**WRITTEN FOR THIS PAPER**  
**Holliston Traditions**

Messrs. Editors: - We have noticed in your paper several articles on old traditions, facts of olden time, etc., and have thought some of Holliston's traditions might not be uninteresting – some that have come down to us from the time when Washington and the War for Independence were present realities.

There is a house in this town which was standing then, for how long previous to that time the writer was never informed. It has, however, always been kept in repair, and so added to and modernized that no one would guess its age; and if the owners of those days could come back to view the old home, I doubt if they would recognize it. The original is still there, however, on the same spot; it has never been sold since then, but is owned and occupied by descendants of the same family.

One day during the Revolution a company of soldiers passed through the town on their way to join the army at or near Boston. The well at the farmhouse was then, as now, quite near the roadside. They halted for a drink from "the moss-covered bucket," but the good lady of the house was anxious to do something for her country or her country's defenders; and as she had brewed a barrel of beer for the use of the haymakers, and which was just ready for use, and she proffered this to the thirsty, weary men.

The record fails to state whether the beer was good or not, but does state that when the soldiers took up their march again the barrel was empty! But let no one suppose for an instant that the beer was of an intoxicating nature, for this record has come down that the mistress of the farmhouse, was a sworn foe to everything of that nature. Her husband "was a soldier too," and perhaps all soldiers were especial objects of her sympathy and care on that account. He, however, passed safely through the perils of war to meet death in time of peace, dropping dead in the hayfield.

During the war a wealthy lady came from Boston to board at the farm one summer, her husband coming occasionally. It was at the time when to have tea in one's possession was to be very unpopular, if not looked upon as positively disloyal; but this lady having some which she was not willing to part with, was sorely troubled how to transport it. Her woman's wit, however, devised a way.

She was about making for herself a quilted silk petticoat, this she proceeded to make in a manner rather out of the usual way. The outside and lining were securely sewed at the bottom, then lines of quilting run from top to bottom, much wider apart than on ordinary quilted skirts. When this was done she proceeded to fill the long, narrow, bay-like spaces thus formed not with cotton, but with the precious but forbidden herb, fastening the band at the top; and this is the way the tea was smuggled into Holliston.

How she won over her hostess to overlook her disloyalty, and even sometimes to share her forbidden luxury, we have no means of knowing; but the record says she was very winning in manner, and a real lady, so she overcame her scruples.

Their manner of enjoying their treat was on this wise: A shovelful of coals was taken from the wide old fireplace and placed in the mouth of the big brick oven; then the tea was put in a half-pint porringer, as it was called, boiling water poured on it, and then the dish placed on the coals in the oven, the door closed, and all safe from prying eyes or noses of children or neighbors. After the precious fluid was all drained, the tea-grounds were carefully buried in the ashes and coals of the fireplace, and nobody was any the wiser.

The husband of the Boston lady however was not a tee-totaler, for on coming from Boston one night with something stronger than tea in his stomach and brain, he stumbled over the threshold and fell head long into the room breaking in his fall a case bottle as it was called, which he carried in his hand filled with some expensive liquor the aroma of which filled the house, and cause the hostess, good staunch temperance woman though she was, to say, "Well, if all liquor smelled like that, it wouldn't be quite so strange for people to drink it."

Tradition tells us, too, of the big snow storm during the war, when the house and barn were almost entirely buried in the snow, with such an immense drift between them that the mother and her boys were obliged to tunnel through to get to the barn. The well was so covered that for several days they were obliged to melt snow for the cattle to drink. How cheaply the rights and privileges are valued at the present day, which cost our forefathers and their families so much of hardship and suffering to purchase for us!

O these houses of olden times! If their complete histories were written, what romances, what comedies, what tragedies we might read! And yet they would only be pictures of human life today, with different settings; for the human heart is something that does not change with the ages of the world.

ANTIQUARIAN.

Holliston, February 4, 1897.

Note: This article was first published in one of the local newspapers in 1897, then carefully clipped and placed in a scrapbook in the Society library. Joanne Hulbert suspects the author, "Antiquarian," to be John Mason Batchelder, the founder of the Holliston Historical Society. —*mec*

## Knights of Columbus Donation

For the second year in a row, Saint Mary's Knights of Columbus Chapter 14224 has donated \$1,000.00 to the Holliston Historical Society. President Sheila Adams expressed her gratitude to Grand Knight Al Scaramella, left, for the Knight's generous donation. Paul Saulnier, member of both The Knights and the Historical Society, nominated the society for its work in preserving Holliston's history.

The Knights raise money through its annual raffle, golf tournament and other fundraisers, which so far exceeds \$320,000.00 in the past 15 years.

—Paul Saulnier



Grand Knight Al Scaramella, left, presents the donation to HHS President, Sheila Adams, and Paul Saulnier.

## Celebrating the Town's 300th Anniversary

The Society is planning some special events to help celebrate the Town's 300th Anniversary in 2024. One of them is a Strawberry Festival on Sunday, June 23. If you would like to attend the January meeting to help plan this event (or let me know that you'll offer to bake shortcakes in June), please contact Bea at [beateh1@aol.com](mailto:beateh1@aol.com) or 508-429-3564.

Here are the other dates to note:

Saturday, May 11 – The big parade! The Society will have a wagonette with horse and driver. Society members are invited to walk alongside. Details forthcoming in April.

Weekend of November 2 – An 18th century military encampment and militia impression/demonstrations on the lawn of the Society.

—*Beate Hait*



Official logo for the Strawberry Festival—note the O in Holliston is a strawberry!

### **WEBSTER 18 November 1900**

In a corner of Lake Grove Cemetery just beyond the brook is an area that looks mostly empty with a few scattered gravestones. This is the Potter's Field. A Potter's Field is a place for the burial of unknown, unclaimed or indigent people. At Lake Grove a few of the graves in the Potter's Field are marked with stones. When I first discovered this area this fall, I was curious about one stone that only had the name Webster. Who was this? I called up Hester Chesmore who keeps the records for Lake Grove and she found the record:

Grave #13 Webster F. Mooreside age 6 died 18 Nov 1900.

He must have died in Holliston. What could I find out about him? First, a trip to the Town Clerk's Office to look up his death record. He did die in Holliston but I found a very disturbing thing: Parents Unknown. A 6 year old died in Holliston but no one knew the names of his parents. How could that be? I looked online in Familysearch.org and couldn't find any Mooresides living in the area but remembered the informant on the death record was Gage the local undertaker. We had received from the family of Elinor Stevens Kampersal the undertaker and funeral home records of W. Gage and the Stevens family. Maybe I could find something there. A trip down to the HHS library was needed. There was an entry for Webster. He was a ward of the state. That explained why he was buried in the Potter's Field since the state handled the funeral costs and maybe why parents were unknown. But where had he been living? Luckily he died in November of 1900 so he might be listed in Holliston in the 1900 federal Census dated June 1900. I found Webster living in the household of Fred and Emma Clark and ten year old son Forest Clark on Central Street.

From the 1900 Census:

**Clark, Fred .....**

-----, **Emma .....**

-----, **Forest S. son W M Jan 1890 10 .....** at school

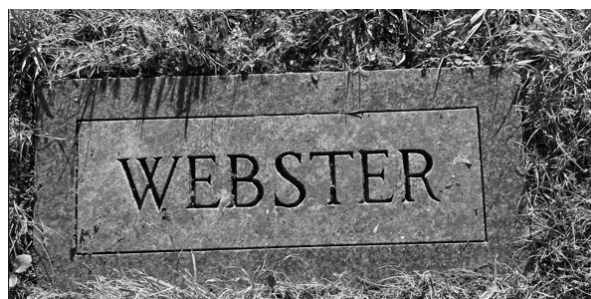
**Moreside, Webster F. Boarder W M June 1894 5 .....** at school

The record lists him as a boarder with a birth date of June 1894 and also (not shown above) his place of birth and parents' place of birth as Massachusetts. I saw other young children living at a neighbor's house also listed as boarders. They may have been wards of the state too.

I probably found out all I can about Webster. I hope the Clark family treated Webster kindly and in June celebrated his birthday. The state would pay for his funeral but not for a cemetery lot or a stone so someone thought enough of Webster to place a stone on his grave.

Thanks to Bea Haite for the picture of Webster's stone that she took when we were at Lake Grove Cemetery on Dec. 16 for Wreaths across America.

—*Carol Kosicki*



**Holliston Historical Society  
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