



WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

110 Main Street, P.O. Box 177, Westminster, MA 01473  
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September 2013

## HISTORY MYSTERY

By Betsy Hannula, Curator

This image has been a mystery to me since I first saw it in our photo collection many years ago. For what reason are these folks dressed up in these weird costumes? It's apparently summer time because of the trees, so dressing up for a Halloween event in late October was not a satisfactory answer. It also looks like they're in a park, so perhaps someone had a costume party in the summer.

I finally came across a reference to an "Ancient and Horribles Parade," somewhat of a tradition in

the 1800s in New England. After some research, I have a strong hunch our mystery photo could very well be a group of people celebrating their own Horribles parade in Westminster. Here is what I found out about this strange tradition in my research.

According to Wikipedia, the oldest known "Ancient and Horribles Parade" was in Lowell, Massachusetts on July 4, 1851. The name comes from a parody on the quite somber Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts, which was the oldest military organization in the United States. New Englanders in several cities used parades on July 4 to make fun of political situations. They dressed in



*Mystery Photo: Note the grotesquely dressed figures in the bottom left of photo: a man in a skirt and black mask, a tall man with a big nose looking at a someone with a net over his head and a very macabre looking Uncle Sam figure. A few in the crowd are amused but most are seriously focusing on being photographed.*

(Continued on page 4)

**2012-2013  
OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS**

<i>President</i> .....	Roni Beal
<i>Vice President</i> .....	Beth Bowen
<i>Clerk</i> .....	Joan Longcope
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<i>At Large</i> .....	Stephanie Boucher
<i>At Large</i> .....	Melody Gallant
<i>At Large</i> .....	Betsy Hannula
<i>At Large</i> .....	Ann Honkonen
<i>At Large</i> .....	Darlene Johnson
<i>At Large</i> .....	Tom Marien

**STAFF**

<i>Administrative Assistant</i> . . . .	Liz Maillet
<i>Assistant Treasurer</i> .....	Michelle Valentino
<i>Curator</i> .....	Betsy Hannula
<i>Genealogy Researcher</i> .....	Darlene Johnson
<i>Historian</i> .....	Patricia Lasky
<i>House Director</i> .....	Rob Johnson
<i>Housekeeper</i> .....	Christy Lombardo
<i>Newsletter Editor</i> .....	Patricia Gendron
<i>Registrar</i> .....	Joan Longcope

If you've ever had an interest in being on a committee or the Board, we're looking for additional members. Call Liz to talk about it.

**MEETINGS**

Meetings are held October through June on the 3rd Tuesday at 7 pm at the House, and are free and open to the public.

**HOUSE & GIFT SHOP HOURS**

The Historical Society House is open Mondays 7-9 pm and Fridays 9-12 Noon. and other times by appointment.

**MISSION**

The Westminster Historical Society's mission is to save and share Westminster's past.



**LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear Friends of the Historical Society,

We are nearing that time of year when a great deal of time and energy is expended in preparing for the annual Flea Market, which takes place on Saturday, September 28. Items are being stored in large tent donated to us. The House & Grounds committee erected this tent on a platform where the summer-house used to be located. Thank you to Phil Young, Rollie and Stephanie Boucher, and Eddie and Betsy Hannula for building the platform.

The Society hired Rob Johnson as the new House Director. Ken Marien decided to retire from climbing ladders and heavy lifting and we offer a big "thank you" to Ken for his dedication and help over the past few years as House Director. We welcome Rob, who is a former Westminster resident and now lives in Ashburnham. Rob repaired two front windows and while working on this project he discovered the side of one window frame was completely rotted. Like most older homes, the Society house is always in need of some kind of repair. If you see Rob out mowing the lawn, please stop by and say "hello".

One would think that summertime would be a quiet time at 110 Main Street. and sometimes it is quiet. However, the board has been busy planning programs for 2013—2014. One new and exciting event for March 16 will be a Westminster Ski Day at Mount Wachusett. Princeton has sponsored a Ski Day for years and now Westminster will finally have a special day at Mount Wachusett. It will take a great deal of preparation to plan ski races and other activities for adults and children. If you are interested in helping with this event, please contact me.

I would like to say a special thank you to Vincent Barkley, who donated a great of time helping Betsy Hannula, Liz Maillet and me reorganize computers and set up a new computer in the front office. His patience and kind manner were an inspiration to us all.

Sincerely,  
Roni Beal  
President

## CURATOR'S CORNER

We are pleased to accept the following donations to the collections at the Historical Society. Our mission is to save and share Westminster's history and we take seriously our responsibility to save these items and then share them with the public. We thank the following people:

*Fitchburg Historical Society*: early songbook  
*Sharon Halloran*: photo collection and copy of Westminster Times newspaper  
*Jane Kelley*: archival documents about Baker Grove  
*Michael Lore*: photo of a Finnish clambake with Bill Jamsa's father pictured  
*Mary Lyons*: collection of Finnish books and calendars  
*Bette Roy*: photos of her father Allen Waromaa during World War II  
*Ann Sargent*: 3 diaries written by Ann's grandfather, Judson Foster  
*Julie Scapparone*: photo of the Ship's Lantern tea room  
*Roger Smith*: two photos of trolley workers  
*Ruediger Volk*: wooden school desk

We are also grateful to persons who lent us photos so we can copy them for our collections: Peter Janhunen, Julie Scapparone, and David Seppelin.

We've been very fortunate to have two volunteers working with the collections this past year. One is Stephanie Boucher, a Westminster native, who has joined us in her retirement years. She's very organized and diligent in everything she does – a pleasure to have on our team! The other is Ashley Reven, a newcomer to Westminster. She works full time but volunteers on Monday nights. She is delightful – and very competent with computers. It's wonderful to see the progress being made, since collections are at the heart of our mission. If you would like to join us for a few hours a week, for any period of time, just contact Betsy Hannula and we can find a place for you. We need you and will welcome you!

One of the treasures we received this spring was a set of three diaries from Ann Sargent. Her grandfather, Judson Foster lived on Spruce Road and was engaged in farming and a multitude of other things to piece together a living as all farmers did. He was born in 1858 and started a series of diaries in

1868. His writings are precious! Simple and direct. Here's some samplings "One days work at Merriam & Holden's" (This was a chair company located on Spruce Road, using the sluiceway that runs across the road for power.) "Went to Gardner for seating. Got 25." This means he went to a chair company in Gardner and picked up 25 chairs that needed to have the seats filled with cane – an 8 hour process for each seat with persons who are experienced. This was a very common way to earn money in Westminster, often done by children and women in addition to men." In May "Joined the military company. Isaac sheared sheep." Also in May "Went to church with Merriam wore my best suit." Also "Went to Fitchburg with Mother. Got some gloves." What we can learn from these diaries is astounding! Now, we need to have someone who would like to type these into more readable documents. Is anyone interested in helping us with this project?

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## TOWN WIDE YARD SALE

Gorgeous weather prevailed on the day of the Town Wide Yard Sale! For the first time we had 50 households participating and people took advantage of the sales all over town. The center of Town was hopping too, with the Library holding their annual book sale and ice cream sundae event. It was also a good opportunity to sell some furniture that had been donated to us for sale. Thank you to all who helped with the event!



Our Flea Market is scheduled for Saturday, September 28, so if you have donations please drop them off in the barn behind the house.

*(Continued from page 1)*

crazy kinds of costumes which were meant to satirize politicians and other public figures. The tradition died out in most cities by 1900 but was revived by some communities in the 1920s.

Quoting again from Wikipedia, "A 1926 newspaper article about July the Fourth celebrations in the White Mountains of New Hampshire notes: Old-time celebrations are to be held tomorrow at Littleton, Lancaster and Conway, with all the usual features of street parades of horribles and grotesques, brass bands, decorated automobiles and vehicles, exhibitions by fire departments, basket picnics in convenient groves..."

The history of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts is interesting. Governor Winthrop granted its charter in 1638 and elections of officers have been held on the Boston Common every June since then. Members cast their votes on a drum head just like it was originally done. Its members have fought in every war the United States has been engaged in since its settlement: the French and Indian Wars, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, and the Gulf War. Four presidents were members: James Monroe, Chester A. Arthur, Calvin Coolidge and John F. Kennedy.

Since 1746, the headquarters of the Company has been located in Faneuil Hall. In this armory, the company maintains a military museum and library containing relics from every war in which the United States has been engaged since its settlement. The armory is open to the public daily. The group's motto is "Acta Non Verba" which is a Latin phrase meaning "Deeds Not Words". However, referring to its well-known references to a rather quiet history, some people have suggested its unofficial motto is "Invincible in peace, invisible in war."

Founded in 1926, the Ancient and Horribles Parade in Chepachet, Rhode Island continues this tradition, even to this day. A local Rhode Island newspaper stated, "The irreverent Ancients and Horribles parade made its way through Chepachet. Gov. Lincoln Chafee was there, so were Providence Mayor Angel Taveras, Senator Jack Reed and Congressman Jim Langevin. They lead the

parade, which included floats making political statements about Obamacare and genetically modified foods. There were also veterans, clowns, marching bands and a stream of fire trucks."

Another press release had stated the parade divisions would include: HORRIBLES: These floats are the spirit of the Parade. They are defined as any entry creatively commenting upon, and/or using sarcasm, wit, or satire, on national, state, or local politics, personage or current events.

I suppose we'll never know if our mystery photo really is a group of folks dressed for a Horribles parade. For now, it's a plausible idea. If so, I wonder what ideas they came up with for political satire in Westminster during this time. Were they commenting on local issues or state or national issues? It would be a great topic for more research!

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## **MA HISTORICAL COMMISSION GRANT RECEIVED!**

The Westminster Historical Society was excited to receive its first big grant for the Upton School. The Massachusetts Historical Commission will grant us \$50,000 in matching funds for structural repairs to the roof. The beams in the attic will be stabilized so that there will be no movement in the future and eliminate cracking in ceilings and walls.

The most vulnerable area of the exterior of the building is the slate roof which is now 101 years old. Slate is normally useful for only 100 years. The roof is failing in many places and will continue to be a problem, so that will be included in this project.

Specifications for the project are being fine tuned now and after approval by the MA Historical Commission, the Request for Proposal for contractors will be advertised and chosen by October 1. They will work through the winter, and all work must be completed by June 30, 2014.

*"This property, which is listed on the State Register of Historic Places, has received a matching grant from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of the Commonwealth, William Francis Galvin, Chairman."*

## WESTMINSTER GARDEN CLUB

The garden club toured four local gardens on July 20. The tour started at Emily D'Onfro's house on South Ashburnham Road, which is a lovely spot along the river way leading to Crocker Pond.



*Emily D'Onfro took us on a guided tour of the front and back yard gardens at her home.*

Our next stop was on Overlook Road at Susan Taylor's home. Susan's main garden is located around her swimming pool, a mix of flowers and vegetables. We all piled into our cars and drove over to Betsy Hannula's house on Harrington Road. Betsy and her husband manage a vegetable garden, several fruit trees, and raspberry, blueberry, currant and blackberry bushes. Fresh current juice was served along with coffee and a variety of delectable savory and sweet treats.



*Garden Club participants enjoying refreshments are Marion Knoll, Jennifer Safron, Emily D'Onfro, Ralph Carey, \_\_\_\_, Roni Beal, and Ellie Carey.*

From Betsy's home, some of us drove over to Ellie and Ralph Carey's home on Wyman Pond for a pontoon boat ride. Ellie and Ralph have a wonderful vegetable garden, thanks in part to their colorful chickens that roam around in a first class chicken coop. Each unique garden was made the tour very enjoyable.

If you'd like to join the Garden Club, just contact us and ask to be put on our mailing list. It's free and you're welcome to come to any events throughout the year as you have the time in your life.

## WISH LIST

- Snowblower
- LCD monitor

## MEMBERSHIP

If you're not yet a member, please consider joining today. It's easy. Just fill out the form below and send it along with your check to the Historical Society. Your membership support is essential to us.

Thank you if you have already renewed their membership this past year. If you are unsure of your status, just call Liz at the office (978-874-5569). You will want to be a member in order to take advantage of the ten percent discount on all items in the Gift Shop! If you are 75 years of age, your membership is free!

### WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
 e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Individual	\$25
Family	40
Senior (over 65)	15
Contributing	50
Friend	100
Honorary (over 75)	0

All members receive a 10% discount in the Gift Shop.

Please contact me about volunteering. These are some of my interests:

- Sorting, cleaning, and cataloging items.
- Putting data about items into a computer database.
- Helping with newsletters and brochures.

Please send form to Westminster Historical Society, Membership Committee, P.O. Box 177, Westminster, MA 01473.

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

This fall – in time for the celebration of the 101<sup>st</sup> year of the Upton School - we will be sending out brochures to all our members and the residents in Westminster. We also plan to send a brochure to families who attended the Upton School. There were thousands who attended the Upton School from 1912 to 1999 and, as you can imagine, finding their descendants is a huge task. There will be opportunities to leave a legacy from your family for a project that will preserve a historic building in town while enabling the Historical Society to fulfill its mission.

We have also begun a project of offering a tour and program at the Upton School for Westminster students from the classes from Oakmont Regional High School which are celebrating anniversaries. We recently provided this for the ORHS Class of 1978 which held its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. It was



*Beth Bowen gave a presentation on the Upton School.*



*Roni Beal, Betsy Hannula and John Bowen gave tours of the Upton School.*

well attended and everybody was enthusiastic about being in the Upton School again. We were able to pull together some of their class photos for people to examine. It was fun seeing them!

We will be providing a program and tour for the first six classes to graduate from Oakmont on Saturday October 12, 2013 as part of the reunion activities for the Class of 1963 which will be honored for their 50 years since graduation.

If your class is holding a Class Reunion in the future, please pass along the word that the Historical Society will be happy to host a tour and program at the Upton School. We are also actively collecting photos of all classes which attended Westminster Elementary School, Westminster Junior High School, and Westminster High School. If you have any, please contact us.

## UPTON UPDATE

Members of the Upton Building Committee have been researching several things as we prepare for the first construction project at the Upton School. One is the feasibility of using solar panels in the shape and size of slates (called sun slates in the industry) on the back two sides of the hip roof.



*The attic holds massive air ducts which were essential to the natural aeration of the classrooms. Air flowed up and down from the cupola.*

We are concerned about sustainability and want to be sure that when the renovation of the Upton Building is completed, energy consumption will be as low as possible.

We received word that the MA Historical Commission will not allow the use of photo voltaic panels to replace roofs on historic buildings. We can understand why. They are committed to preserving historic buildings as they are in the best way possible for the future. Photo voltaic panels are a fairly new industry and sun slates are the newest concept in this field. The life span of solar panels is only 20 years, and the life span of slates

is 100 years.

We have had several slate contractors examine the roof. We have found help in many places; one is the Green Slate Co. in Vermont that examined a slate to compare it to new ones to help us determine the life expectancy. We think this Upton School project will bring many topics like this to the forefront, and we will do our best to keep you – our members – and the public informed as we go along.

Another important project connected to the roof is the replacement of the cupola. It is clear from inspections that the original cupola had large openings and because it was unstable the metal shutters were installed early in its life.

We will remove the cupola and rebuild it exactly as it is. We have received a grant for materials from the Montachusett Society for the Preservation of Historic Buildings. Phil Young, a talented wood worker and member of the Upton Building Committee, will begin this project this winter.



*Phil Young examining the cupola*

## WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY GIFT SHOP

When looking for a unique gift for birthdays, anniversaries, and other holidays or special occasions, be sure to browse the WHS Gift Shop. Whether shopping for yourself or someone on your gift list, you are sure to find the perfect gift here. The Gift Shop is open on Mondays from 7-9 pm and Fridays from 9 until noon and other times by appointment. Members receive a 10% discount on all purchases.

### Books

<u>Cemetery Inscriptions</u> . . . . .	25.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , 1832 by Hudson . . . . .	5.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , 1893 by Heywood. . . . .	96.00
<u>History of Westminster 2008</u> by WHS . . . . .	95.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , by Tolman . . . . .	20.00
<u>Homestead Heritage of Westminster</u> , by WHS . . . . .	25.00
<u>Images of America</u> , by WHS . . . . .	19.99
<u>Olin Warner, Sculptor</u> , by Hyson . . . . .	4.50
<u>200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Westminster</u> , . . . . .	5.00
<u>Wajusett Gatherings</u> , by Sinclair (hardcover). . . . .	30.00
<u>Wajusett Gatherings</u> , by Sinclair (softcover) . . . . .	20.00

### Tapestries

Cotton afghan in green, navy, burgundy . . . . .	45.00
Tapestry wall hanging . . . . .	35.00

### Other

<i>New Wachusett Mountain</i> charcoal drawing . . . . .	60.00
Calligraphy sampler . . . . .	12.00
Cross stitch sampler Kit “Mosman” . . . . .	36.00
<i>Cracker Factory</i> print. . . . .	45.00
framed pen & ink of <i>WHS house</i> by Santora . . . . .	28.00
Map of Westminster 1855. . . . .	6.00
Notepaper Westminster scenes, pkg.12 . . . . .	3.50
<i>Downtown Westminster 1831</i> by Peckham . . . . .	30.00
Postcards . . . . .	3/1.00
Children’s books . . . . .	7.95
Paper dolls, Assorted . . . . .	5.00
Tobacco Shed pottery . . . . .	priced as marked
Tote Bags . . . . .	priced as marked

Westminster Historical Society  
110 Main St., P.O. Box 177  
Westminster, MA 01473

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### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

- **Oct. 5—Scarecrow Contest**
- **Oct. 6—Upton School Birthday**
- **Oct. 25—WHS Annual Meeting**
- **Nov.**

### **ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 25**

The 93<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Westminster Historical Society will be held on Friday, October 25 at the Old Mill Restaurant. Registration will begin at 5:30 pm followed by a buffet dinner at 6:00 pm. To attend, please send the reservation form with this newsletter along with your check (each meal is \$30.00 includes tax and tip) to the Historical Society.

Jan Whitaker, author of “Tea at the Blue Lantern Inn” will be guest speaker at the meeting. She is a freelance writer and editor who is interested in women’s history, food and eating habits, and the history of American consumer culture. Her discussion will focus on the social history of the tea room craze in America.

### **UPTON BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

Come help celebrate the 101st year of the Upton School on Sunday, October 6 from 1 to 4 pm. We’ll have notebooks with photos of all the classes that attended the Upton School to examine and a classroom set up with old desks and chairs for children to learn how to use old fashioned ink pens—all set up under a tent next to the school. Refreshments will be served and groups can tour the building.

On display on the front lawn will be homemade scarecrows, our second annual Scarecrow Contest. Everyone in town is invited to create a scarecrow and bring it to the school lawn on Friday afternoon between 3 and 6.



**You are cordially invited to attend**

**The ANNUAL MEETING**

**Of the**

**Westminster Historical Society**

**Friday, October 25, 2013  
at the Old Mill Restaurant**

5:30 pm Registration – Cash Bar

6:00 pm Buffet Dinner

7:00 pm Business Meeting

7:15 pm Program: Social history of the tea room craze

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people attending: \_\_\_\_\_ X \$30.00 per person

Amount of check \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Please make check payable to:

Westminster Historical Society and send by October 15, 2013 to:

P.O. Box 177, Westminster, MA 01473

Buffet menu: Seasonal Melon wedge, Cold Entrees and Salads, Baked Scallops, Baked Stuffed Chicken, Chicken and Broccoli Ziti, Teriyaki Steak Tips with Peppers & Shallots, Potato of the Day, Vegetable DuJour, Corn Fritters with Syrup, Dinner Rolls and Fresh Baked Pecan Rolls, Coffee, Tea, and Ice Cream with Strawberries



*The post card to the right is of the Old Mill Tea House owned by Miss Mary Keough.*

1165. Sawmill, 1765. Tea House, 1922, Westminster, Mass.