

Menotomy Minutes



NEWSLETTER OF THE ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AUTUMN 2016



President's Message

Hello Society members,

As we enter into the fall of 2016, many positive changes are afoot at the Historical Society. You are holding one of our big changes—the re-introduction of our printed newsletter, Menotomy Minutes! The Historical Society published a printed newsletter under this name for many years, but for reasons of economy the Society switched to an e-mailed newsletter some years ago. Those goals were certainly sensible in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007-2008 and its consequent effects on our Society's financial position. As a Society trying to convey an important message involving history, preservation, and permanence, that presents a challenge: e-mail is simply too ephemeral to carry our message. It's a read-and-forget medium.

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Our volunteers continue to digitize items from the massive collection donated in 2012 by William Mahoney. This 1952 photograph shows Arlington Fire Department Engine 4 in front of Koski's Auto Body Shop.

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By contrast, a printed newsletter is a vehicle for considered, thoughtful information. It's something you can hold in your hand, read at your leisure, and return to again and again. The Society will continue our e-mailed notices and event reminders to all persons on our contact list, both members and non-members. The printed newsletter, however, is a benefit we send only to you, our members. Hopefully the newsletter, as a communication channel, will add value to your membership and will deepen your relationship with the Society.

Several other changes have occurred at the Society. We have our new exhibit "Connecting Threads". Many of you have already visited this new exhibit in the assembly room area. Beverly Douhan, Doris Birmingham, and Sara Lundberg identified artifacts we have in our collection which might be used to occupy the space. Sara developed a more cohesive theme, drafted labels, and designed interpretive panels for the new exhibit. We would also like to thank intern Chelsea Bright and volunteer Kenton Rhoades for their help with research, writing, and design.

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newsletter, however,
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Our board has also recently promoted Sara Lundberg to role of Society Director. Sara has been with us for about three years, and in that time she has put her mark on the Society. Sara provided capable leadership putting together the "Connecting Threads" exhibit including securing funds from the Arlington Cultural Council. Along with Paul Fennelly and George Parsons, she applied for and won a \$15,000 grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to support an architectural and engineering study of work needed to preserve the Jason Russell House for future generations. She has made many other contributions, and continues to do so. Please congratulate Sara on her new position the next time you see her.

If you have ideas about how we can further our mission of preserving the Jason Russell House and stewarding Arlington's history for future generations. Please let me know!

My best wishes,
Stuart Brorson
Arlington Historical Society President

Reenactment 2016

On Sunday, April 17, the Society was very pleased to again feature a reenactment of the Battle of Menotomy around Jason Russell's house. Besides Arlington's own Menotomy Minutemen, Colonial soldiers from the Danvers Alarm List Company, Gardner's Regiment (Charlestown), and the Acton Minutemen participated. The 10th Regiment of Foot (Lexington), and the 4th King's Own (Sudbury) participated on the British side. We were thrilled at the great turnout of reenactors!

Beautiful weather greeted several hundred viewers who gathered to witness the spectacle. Jim McLean, the current captain of the Menotomy Minutemen, was honored with the role of Jason Russell himself. Jim's starring role was well deserved due to his hard work in organizing the reenactment and bringing it back to the Jason Russell House lawn after a hiatus of a few years.



Photo by Ron Richmond

We thank the various reenactment companies who made this year's reenactment a success. ❖

Collections Activities

In addition to our programs, the Arlington Historical Society is also a collecting institution. We house a significant collection of objects and archives, caring for over 13,000 individual items. We continue to catalog and digitize our collections and records so that they may be of use to scholars, researchers, and the public. If you would like to know more about some of our collections, visit our website (arlingtonhistorical.org).

If you would like to help with digitization, consider volunteering or donating today.

Recent Gifts of Note

Marcelyn Cote of Granby, CT along with her son **Gregory Cote** from Edwards, IL, donated a sampler completed by their ancestor, Sarah Ann Russell. She was the great-granddaughter of Jason Russell, and the sampler was completed in 1827.

Charles Allen donated a baseball passed down in his family for generations. The game was "Menotomy vs. Picked Nine" and the score was 20-3.

Allan Lawson donated a Monopoly-like game called "Wheeler Dealer" made by the Lions Club. It features Arlington locations and businesses.

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One section of the recent gifts received from Susanna Adams, that with earlier donations forms a new "center stage" exhibit at the Smith Museum.

Spotlight: A New Collection

by *Richard Duffy*

This past spring, I was delighted to return to the home of Susanna Adams in Portland, Maine, where I was welcomed to receive on behalf of the Society many fine and varied items pertaining to many Arlington branches of her family tree: Winn, Prentiss, Wellington, and Hill.

These paintings, photographs, ceramics and silver enrich our knowledge of life in Arlington, from the Colonial era into the middle of the twentieth century. Each item has its intrinsic interest; collectively, the diverse objects relate to one another by having been passed from generation to generation before "coming home" to Arlington.

The Winn family was deeply involved with the Arlington Historical Society from its organization in 1897. In 1998, Lisa Welter and I were pleasantly surprised to have been contacted by Susanna Adams to come to Portland and review items she had received after the passing of her mother, Barbara Winn Adams.

The "sleeper" coming out of that initial visit were diaries of Susanna Adams Winn and

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Recent Gifts (Continued from page 3)

Jeanne Meister donated a game manufactured in Arlington in the 1960s called "Facts in Five."

Robert Fredieu donated a sampler completed in 1818 by Mary S.W. Brooks.

Bill Mahoney (formerly of Arlington, now of Champaign IL) continues to donate items of ephemera he has collected, especially items related to Arlington industries of the past (such as market gardening, ice tool manufacturing, and the local railroad).

David Morine of Great Falls, VA, donated two bicycle license plates from his childhood in Arlington.

Elizabeth Durfee Hengen of Concord, NH, donated photographs, plans, and specifications for the home built by her grandparents at 19 Maple Street.

Linda Maloof of Boscawen, NH donated four Victorian photograph albums featuring members of the Blood, Clement, Dickey, Durgin, Isley, Moore, Owen, Parker, Proctor, and Simonds families.

Susanna Adams of Portland, ME donated a painting of the Winn children having a tea party painted by Susanna Adams Winn along with the bow saw depicted in many "SAW" paintings.

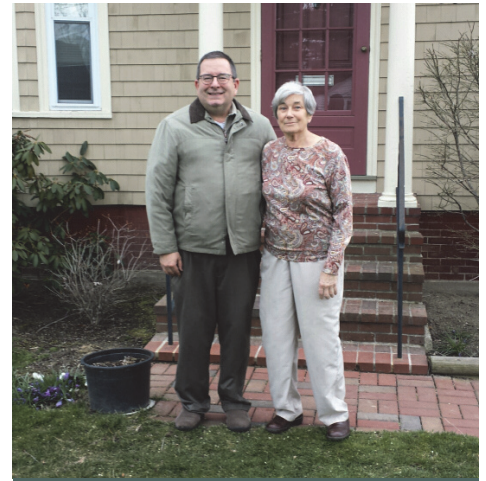
Mary Gaffney of Tewksbury donated a 1935 class photo of the graduating class of Junior High East.

Spotlight: a New Collection (Continued from page 3)

Nina Winn, the latter of which has achieved nearly cult status thanks to years of daily faithful transcriptions and internet postings by Society member Stu Galley, which literally bring social history from the Arlington of a century ago into our modern lives.

Over the years, other gifts have been received from Ms. Adams, some featured in the "Prentiss-Winn Families" display case at the Smith Museum. The breadth and depth of this year's donations inspired the mounting of a special exhibit to welcome them to the Society.

We'll be taking some closer looks at individual items and featuring these on the Society's web site blog in the coming months, and we're grateful that these will lead us into deeper research and wider sharing of new aspects of Arlington history. ❖



Richard Duffy and Susanna Adams pause in front of her Portland home before saying good-bye, after a day of preparing an array of historical treasures to make the journey back to Arlington.



Charming children's tea set in shapes of strawberries and leaves, donated by Susanna Adams in 2016. Photo by Keira Tom, Society Intern

This Old House Comes to Arlington

The Society was pleased to contribute to the production of the PBS series "This Old House," which kicked-off its current (37th) season with an Arlington home in the Arts and Crafts style. Two panoramic landscape views in our collection happened to capture the house under two phases of construction in 1909. Richard Duffy shared the fruits of his extensive documentary research of local neighborhood development and architectural history, appearing on camera leading a brief "walking tour" featuring other Arts and Crafts inspired homes in Arlington. Richard also interprets elements of earlier Arts and Crafts design influences at Waltham's "Stonehurst," the Robert Treat Paine Estate. The Arlington project is currently being broadcast on WGBH-TV, with past episodes available for on-line viewing at thisoldhouse.org. ❖

Arlington Historical Society Receives Preservation Grant



One of the oldest photos of the Jason Russell House, c. 1870-1880

The Arlington Historical Society was recently awarded a \$15,000 grant to conduct a Preservation Study of the Jason Russell House. The grant, from Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, is a matching reimbursement program for properties listed in the State Register of Historic Places. The \$15,000 will be matched with \$15,000 from the Arlington Historical Society will be devoted to a planned Preservation Study. The study is needed to document existing conditions and to determine the plan and requirements for continued preservation and immediate stabilization of some weakened parts of the House structure. The Society welcomes contributions to help with the matching funds. If you would like to contribute to matching

funds for this effort, please visit arlingtonhistorical.org/donate/.

The Jason Russell House is listed both on the State Register of Historic Places and the National Register, and has both local and national significance as the site of the most intense fighting between retreating British soldiers and local civilians on April 19, 1775. It is currently interpreted as a historic house museum, owned and operated by the Arlington Historical Society. This captivating story is interpreted for the public through docent-led tours and a robust education program for area schools.

Not only does the Jason Russell House present the story of an important event in American history but is a tangible connection to the past. Successive owners did little to alter the original house. As a result, the house retains many of the original historic features, including musket ball holes from 1775. The Society purchased the home in 1923. The Society has been able to maintain the home for over 90 years; however, some urgent preservation needs have arisen, and a considerable amount of restoration work is needed. This assessment will become the core planning document, guiding and prioritizing projects, and ensuring that all conservation and rehabilitation projects are within best-practice standards for historic preservation.

The Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, established in 1984, supports the preservation of properties, landscapes, and cultural resources in the Commonwealth. Historic cultural resources frequently suffer from deferred maintenance, incompatible use, or are threatened by demolition. By providing assistance to historic cultural resources owned by nonprofit or municipal entities, the Massachusetts Historical Commission ensures their continued use and integrity. ❖

Remembering Richard Erickson *by Sally Rogers*

The 14th president of the Board of Directors of the Arlington Historical Society, Richard E. Erickson, passed away on February 11, 2016. He served as the Society's president from 1996 to 1999.

Richard had a long enjoyment of history, participating as a tour guide in our Jason Russell House, as well as working for tour companies throughout Boston and New England. He specialized in talking about the wit, wisdom and superstitions of traditional Yankees. He was a favorite story teller at many local organizations.

A highlight of his term as president was the event "A Victorian Evening", held at Town Hall on November 8, 1997 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Arlington Historical Society. All Arlingtonians were invited to this celebration, which featured the Commonwealth Vintage Dancers, the Proper Ladies with songs and ballads from Victorian days, and



a musical group which provided period music. Victorian attire was encouraged, and dancing and refreshments were enjoyed by all.

At a special celebration of the Society on February 4, 2007, nine former presidents including Richard were present. Each gave a brief history of his term in office, and a brass plaque commemorating each name was displayed for the first time. That plaque now hangs by the front door of the Smith Museum (across from the tour guide desk).

In his professional life, Richard was a local florist and the owner of Park Florist in Arlington and Rogers Flower Shoppes in Brookline. In this role, he designed flowers for many noted occasions. His wife Susan preceded him in death by only a few months and a funeral service for both Richard and Susan was held on May 14, 2016 at the Park Avenue Congregational Church in Arlington Heights. ❖

Upcoming Lectures

Our regular location for our Tuesday 7:30 p.m. programs will be the Masonic Temple, 19 Academy Street (disabled access is at rear)



Tuesday, October 25

CHAPEL OF ST. ANNE: A LIVING MASTERPIECE IN OUR MIDST

Doreen Stevens

This Arlington Heights landmark by celebrated architect Ralph Adams Cram recently observed its centennial. Like the Episcopal religious women's Order of Saint Anne for whom it was built, it has endured yet also evolved to meet contemporary needs.



Tuesday, November 29

HOUSE-MOVING: NEW MOTIVATIONS FOR SAVING OLD HOMES

Bob Fredieu and Jonathan Nyberg

Moving structures in Arlington was a not-infrequent practice to give new life to buildings in the era before power tools lowered construction costs. Today, relocating houses is a creative way to save historical treasures threatened by high value of the land on which they sit. Enjoy seeing houses on the move!

Thanks to Our Supporters!

Jason Russell Circle

Anne F. Brooke
Stuart & Colleen Bronson
Richard A. Duffy
Pamela & Steve Meister
Robert L. Fredieu & Rosemary Schulze
Jerome Goldstein – Kaplan Goldstein
Family Foundation

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Beverly A. Douhan
Robert & Wendy Kenney
Patsy & Chuck Kraemer
George & Carolyn Parsons
Ralph D. & Ella M. Sexton

Silversmiths

Katharine & Paul Fennelly
Lenore & Howard Winkler

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Robert Bowes – Bowes Real Estate
Robert & Juliana Brazile
Margaret L. Clarke
Barbara Costa & Eric Stange
Jim Danaher
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The Menotomy Minutemen
The John Mirak Foundation
Angela Olszewski
Theodore & Jane Peluso
Sally Rogers
Doreen & Al Stevens
Robert Tosi, Jr.
Carl Wagner
John & Patricia Worden
Jean Yoder

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Membership

New memberships and renewals can be completed on our website with any major credit or debit card, go to <http://www.arlingtonhistorical.org/contribute/membership/> Otherwise, please complete the attached form and mail it in with your check payment: (address in panel to right). Make all checks payable to "Arlington Historical Society."

Name: _____ Email Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ [] New Membership [] Renewal

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

[] Adult, Individual \$30

[] Family \$50

[] Sustaining \$100*

[] *Donation* \$ _____

*Sustaining Membership includes two free guest passes to the Jason Russell House or any society lecture, and membership in North American Reciprocal Museum program, which includes free admission in 842 museums across the country.

The Arlington Historical Society is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Contact Us

Office Hours:
Tues-Thurs 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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