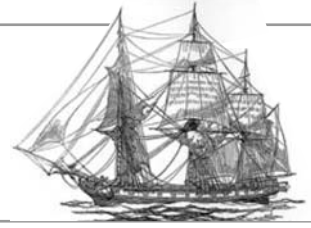


# MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER, 2007



## President's Overview



The year 2007 has been a busy one for the Medford Historical Society. Medford history comes in all shapes and sizes, and the MHS board and members have worked on a wide variety of projects. Here are some of the highlights:

- Over 93 WWII veterans have been interviewed and recorded for posterity. These oral histories will become part of the Library of Congress.
- Society members Dee Morris and Lorna Wilkerson have created a Medford history orientation program for incoming Tufts freshman to premiere in 2008.
- In June, scholarships were presented to two Medford graduating seniors, one from the High School and one from the Vocational School, who showed interest in history or historical preservation.
- Cataloging and archiving of the Society's collection continues at an impressive rate.
- The basement of the headquarters at 10 Governors Ave. has been cleaned and painted, and storage units have been installed. Further work on the building is planned for 2008.
- A new book, *Glimpses of Medford: Selections from the Historical Register*, was published in the spring, and royalties will benefit the Society.
- The Society has presented four historical lectures this year as well as a number of special sales and other programs. More events are planned for spring 2008.

- The Society implemented the Historic House Marker Program, which involves homeowners in the history of their property and neighborhood.
- The Peter Tufts House has been inspected and cleaned, and plans are being made for its future.
- The West Medford Remembrance Project exhibit has been installed at the Medford Public Library with a new protective cover.
- The Society is partnering with Tufts University and other groups on an archeological quest to determine the location of a slave burial area in the Salem Street cemetery.
- The Society has continued its partnerships with the other historical organizations in the city, and future collaboration is planned, including a Medford History Day in 2008.
- Since 2006 our membership has increased from 50 to 300, and membership recruiting continues.

### Society Officers

*President*  
**John Lonergan**  
*Vice President*  
**Sharon Guzik**  
*Recording Secretary*  
**Susan Gerould**  
*Treasurer*  
**Penny Outlaw**  
*Assistant Treasurer*  
**John Anderson**  
*Director of Collections*  
**Barbara Kerr**

### Directors at Large

**Lorna Wilkerson**  
**Jim Kiely**  
**Robert White**  
**Jim Owens**  
**Betty Owens**

We look forward to your support, encouragement, and your suggestions in 2008.

Happy holidays to all! –John Lonergan

## The Civil War Archiving Project Moves Forward

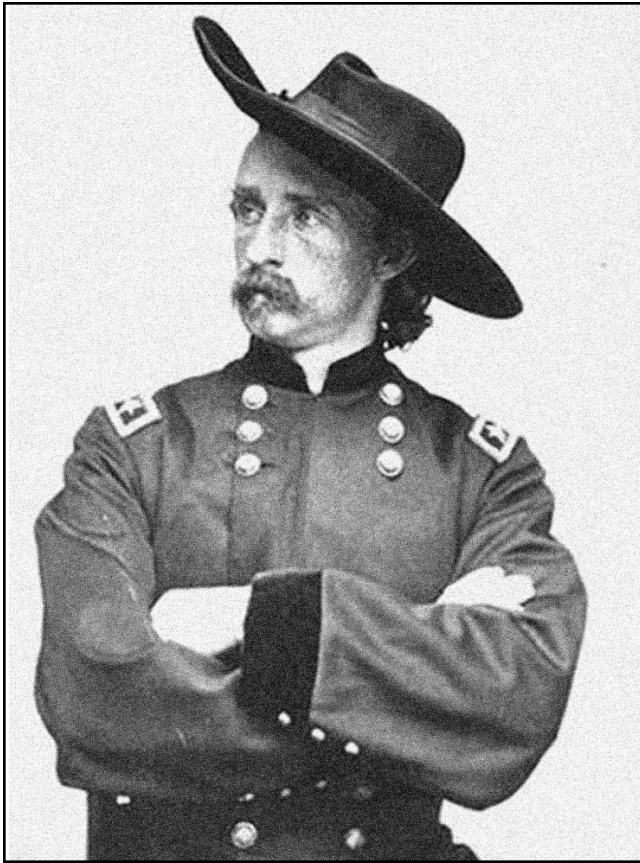
MHS owns one of the largest collections of U.S. Civil War photographs in the nation. "Rediscovered" in the early 1990s, the collection contains more than 5,000 photographs as well as field books, letters, and soldier's personal effects. The photographs show scenes of Antietam and the ruins of Atlanta, platoons marching to war, and individual soldiers whose faces portray the misery endured by the nation as a whole. Unfortunately, only a small portion of the MHS Civil War collection has been seen by the public, most notably through the book *Landscapes of the Civil War* published in 1996, small exhibits, and the online resource Corbis.

This year MHS has undertaken a project that will eventually give the collection the attention and

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*"Dunkard Church, Antietam, Maryland" from the MHS Civil War Collection, depicting the 1862 battlefield and the diminutive church that served as a makeshift hospital*



◀ *The collection includes this portrait of General George A. Custer who, on the verge of what seemed a glorious victory, led the Indian attack that was one the greatest fiascos of the US Army history.*

## Medford Historical Society Presents House Markers

The first Medford residents to participate in the Medford Historic House Marker Program were honored at the home of MHS President John Lonergan on the evening of October 24, 2007. Over hors d'oeuvres, wine, and cheese, participants swapped old house stories and got to know a little more about the history of each other's houses and neighborhoods. Judy Lonergan and MHS Recording Secretary Sue Gerould then handed out the house markers and certificates of authenticity, which indicate that MHS had verified each house's date.

The Historic Marker Program was created to raise funds for MHS, and to encourage homeowners to celebrate their part in Medford's history. Every Medford house is a part of Medford's history, and each historic marker adds a little bit more to what we know about how Medford grew. The marker program is ongoing, the markers make great gifts, and (coincidentally) the holidays are coming up soon! Orders received by December 15 will arrive in time for Christmas.

Medford homeowners who wish to honor their house histories or give a marker as a gift should contact Sue Gerould at 781-393-8218 or visit the MHS web site at [www.medfordhistorical.org](http://www.medfordhistorical.org) for a printable order form. Additional order forms and a sample marker are available at the MHS headquarters 10 Governors Avenue. It is open on the first Thursday night of each month from 5:30-8:00 and every Sunday afternoon from 12:00-4:00.

public accessibility it deserves. The goal of the Civil War Archiving Project is to catalog and scan the entire collection, and eventually make it accessible through the internet. The project, under the direction of Director of Collections Barbara Kerr, will utilize volunteer cataloguers who have been working to organize the MHS research library located in its Governors Avenue headquarters.

Since last May, Kerr and board member Jim Kiely have been hard at work to acquire the nearly \$12,000 needed to purchase the hardware, software, and archival materials necessary for this enormous effort. Through generous grants from Project Local, the Salem Street Business Association of Medford, and the Blue and Gray Education Society of Danville, Virginia, the Society is now able to purchase these resources and plans to begin the project this winter.

The success of the Civil War Archiving Project will depend upon the energy and commitment of volunteers. According to Kerr and Kiely, potential volunteers have a rare opportunity to work on a project that is of national significance. Starting in midwinter, Kerr will begin training "anyone who would like to learn how to perform the basics of handling rare objects, recording them, and packaging them for posterity." If you are interested in working on the Civil War Archiving Project, please contact the society at 781-391-8739 or use the e-mail form at [www.medfordhistorical.org/contactus.php](http://www.medfordhistorical.org/contactus.php).



*Recipients hold their house markers and certificates of authenticity. Back row from left to right: Hank Turner, Jeannine Panico, Joe DeCroteau, Bob Paine, Marianne and Anthony DeSalvo, Terri and Nino Susi, Charas Berck, Leonard and Barbara Henson, Penny Outlaw. Front row from left to right: John and Judy Lonergan, Sue Gerould, Ruth Roper, Katrina and Jeff Jansen, Jonathan White, Betty and Jim Owens. Photo courtesy of Will Tenney.*

## Announcements

### **Historical Society Joins AASLH**

In fall 2007, MHS joined the American Association of State and Local History, a professional organization that supports museums and historical societies involved with the interpretation of local history. Our membership gives us access to grant, education, and development information as well as some great discounts for museum software and publications. There is a lot of support and information available for small museums like ours, and this membership gives us a good connection to the larger community.

### **And the Cataloging Continues...**

Since the beginning of the year, MHS's volunteer cataloging staff has logged over 450 hours and the results are impressive. All of the city reports and directories, newspapers, and framed images have been inventoried as well as the Fire Department, Lawrence Light Guard, and Women's Relief Corps collections. We also have inventoried maps, scrapbooks, photo albums, bound sermons, ledgers, tax records, organizational records, textiles, and a huge variety of items donated by individuals and families. Currently the catalog is in an Excel spreadsheet with over 500 records, which represent several thousand items.

Early in 2008, we hope to make this catalog accessible on our website. In the meantime, work is continuing on the Society's large collection of documents as well as our photograph and postcard collections. Volunteers are needed for several cataloging and transcription projects—see "Volunteer Opportunities" elsewhere in this newsletter for more information. Thank you to all our volunteers for their very hard work!

### **Medford History Blog**

Are you a Medford history buff? Do you have questions about your neighborhood's history but don't know where to turn? You're in luck! In early 2008, the Medford Transcript will be offering a Medford history blog—a place for everyone to chat about Medford history. Keep your eyes on the Transcript website at [www.wickedlocal.com/medford](http://www.wickedlocal.com/medford), or check out the MHS website at [www.medfordhistorical.org](http://www.medfordhistorical.org).

### **H. H. Richardson Program a Great Success**

MHS's first program of the 2007-08 season took place on October 18 at Grace Episcopal Church. Architectural historian Alan Galper delivered a lecture on the architecture of Henry Hobson Richardson, who built many notable buildings in the late-nineteenth century. His works include Boston's famous Trinity Church in Copley Square

and Medford's own Grace Church. An audience of more than 100 people attended the lecture, and the church provided sumptuous refreshments. The program was co-sponsored by MHS, Grace Church, and the Friends of the Medford Public Library. We look forward to future collaborations!

### **A Blue and Gray Visit**

On Thursday, October 25, MHS hosted a visit from 35 members of the Blue and Gray Education Society, and their guide, notable historian Ed Bearss. The Blue and Gray Society, based in Virginia, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of the lessons of the Civil War, and is among MHS's latest benefactors. The Blue and Gray will be providing MHS with funds for computers and scanners for our Civil War Photograph Archiving Project (see the article on tpage 1 for more information).

The group from the Blue and Gray was in the Boston area on a tour of Revolutionary War sites. Their guide, Ed Bearss, is the former chief historian of the National Park Service, and a legendary tour

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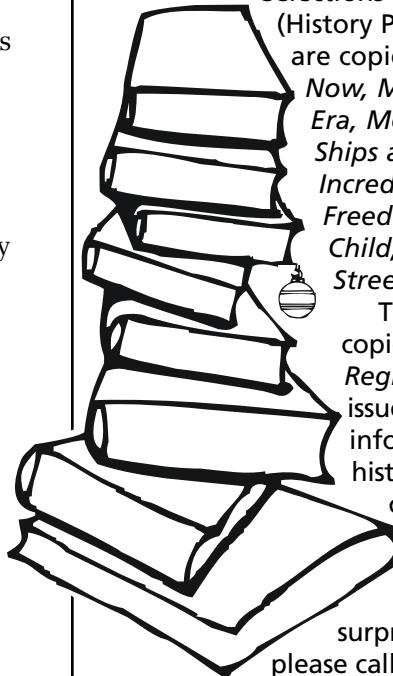
## History for Sale at the Medford Historical Society

Looking for gifts for Medford history buffs? You'll find a wide variety of choices year-round at the Medford Historical Society, including the most recent Medford publication *Glimpses of Medford:*

*Selections from the Historical Register* (History Press, 2007). Also available are copies of *Medford Then and Now*, *Medford in the Victorian Era*, *Medford on the Mystic*, *Old Ships and Shipbuilding Days*, *The Incredible Ditch*, *Crusader for Freedom: The Life of Lydia Maria Child*, and *Your House in the Streetcar Suburb*.

There are also hundreds of copies of the *Medford Historical Register* on sale for \$5.00 an issue. They contain a wealth of information on Medford's long history and copies are available only through MHS. Also for sale are limited edition Royall House Christmas ornaments, and some other surprises. For more information,

please call (781) 391-8739 or use the e-mail form at [www.medfordhistorical.org/contactus.php](http://www.medfordhistorical.org/contactus.php).





*From left to right – Historian Ed Bearss, Sharon Guzik (MHS), Sue Gerould (MHS), Barbara Kerr (MHS), Len Riedel (Blue and Gray), in front, Ari Beusmans (history buff)*

### **Announcements** *continued*

guide of American history sites. The board invited the group to visit MHS headquarters to view an exhibit of our Civil War photographs. Most of the members of the tour group were very knowledgeable Civil War buffs and the photographs and other displays of Civil War memorabilia were a big hit.

We are very pleased to have had the opportunity to welcome the Blue and Gray and to show off the quality of the Medford Civil War Collection. We look forward to a very fruitful collaboration and many future visits.

### **Tufts Community Day**

Thank you to volunteer Carrie Conaway for staffing the MHS table at Tufts Community Day on October 1. An estimated 1,000 people attended the event.

### **West Medford Exhibit**

If you haven't seen it yet, stop by the Medford Public Library and visit *Place, Race, and Memory: Remembering West Medford's Afro-American Community*. This remarkable exhibit,

which is now installed in the rear hallway of the library, celebrates the lives and achievements of members of West Medford's Afro-American community. The exhibit was a collaborative effort of Tufts, Brandeis, and MHS. Thank you to those members of the MHS board who recently contributed their own funds to provide a Plexiglas cover for this precious community resource.

### **Satisfying Statistics**

During 2007, 83 visitors signed our guest book. Several dozen more who did not sign in visited MHS headquarters during our book sale, member preview night, and the Victorian Stroll, bringing the total to over 100 visitors this year. That's up from 63 in 2006!

We can also report that there have been over 140 inquiries by telephone, regular mail, and e-mail. Our research volunteer Carrie Conaway reported that "the lion's share of the inquiries related to genealogy, historic homes and buildings in Medford, the Civil War photograph collection, and student and professional research projects." Thank you to Carrie for all her hard work during the year.

### **History in Our Time Group Forming**

In 2008 MHS will start an informal, monthly discussion group. Each month the group, called "Medford History in Our Time," will address a different topic on Medford history. The topic used to begin the discussion group will be Medford in the twentieth century. People who wish to share their personal knowledge or who are simply interested in learning more about local history are cordially invited to participate.

Details are still being worked out, but the first group meeting is tentatively set for the evening of Monday, January 7, 2008, at Cafe Baccini (394B Main Street, Medford). Please contact Jerry Hershkowitz with questions or comments at [gjer\\_com@comcast.net](mailto:gjer_com@comcast.net).

## **South Medford's 101 Bus Route**

*by Jerry Hershkowitz*

Many of us have seen the MBTA's 101 bus traveling along Main Street in South Medford. Perhaps you've even ridden on it. Have you considered the long history of the route along which the bus travels?

The original Craddock Bridge (where Main Street crosses the Mystic River heading to Medford Square) is mentioned in the records of the Massachusetts General Court as early as 1639, and is believed to have been built about 1630. This bridge was the farthest point east to cross the Mystic river, and roads were built leading to it. What is today Main Street was built in colonial times to allow travel from Charlestown along

today's Broadway in Somerville, over Winter Hill, and then down the hill to the Craddock Bridge and Medford Square. For many years there was a slate milestone next to the bridge showing the distance south to Charlestown as four miles, and the distance northeast to Salem as 16 miles. (In 1894, Medford Mayor Samuel Crocker Lawrence donated this milestone to the Mason's Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and it was recently on display at the National Heritage Museum in Lexington.)

The story of Paul Revere's ride is well known. After rowing to Charlestown and riding his horse across the Charlestown Neck (near today's Sullivan

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*This 1870 photo of omnibus at High and Winthrop Streets is similar to the one that traveled Main Street. INSET: a modern Paul Revere*

### **South Medford's 101 Bus Route** *continued*

Square), there were two roads that would lead him to Lexington. Some British officers blocked his more direct route through Cambridge, so he took the other choice: along today's Broadway, over Winter Hill, and down the hill along Main Street to Medford Square. Revere's route is noted by the existence of Paul Revere Beverage, the liquor store at the corner of Broadway and Main Street, and the small marker on the corner across the street that was erected in 1876.

The route remained a main thoroughfare in the 1800s. It was probably the route of the 25-cent omnibus to Medford from Boston's Brattle Square, as listed in the 1849/50 *Boston City Directory*. Omnibus travel, while convenient, was not very comfortable as the horse-drawn omnibus carriage would bump and rattle over all the ruts in the road. James M. Usher's 1886 revision to Charles Brooks's 1855 *History of the Town of Medford* relates that in 1855, the Medford and Charlestown Railroad Company was incorporated to improve the situation by building a horse-drawn trolley route on rails over the same route. Tracks were laid on Main Street to Medford Square in 1860, and the trolley began running late that year. The trolley originally ran once an hour, but was increased to once every 30 minutes by 1861. Unfortunately, in 1869 a

dispute arose with Somerville, and by 1873 the connection at Broadway and Main Street was removed. It was not until 1884 that the tracks were reconstructed, and trolleys once again travelled between Sullivan Square and Medford Square. (In 1885, the extension to Malden was opened.)

Eventually, the trolley line was electrified. In 1939, the New England News Company's *Street and Street Car Guide* showed that with a 10-cent fare a person could transfer at Sullivan Square to the "Salem St. (Medford)-Sullivan Sq." trolley line at the upper level of the Sullivan Square station. The trolley still travelled over the same route: Broadway, to Main Street, to Medford Square, and then along Salem Street to the Salem Street car barn. On April 19, 1947, the trolley route was converted to a "trackless trolley" electric bus route, powered by overhead wires. At some point, the route became known as the 101 route. Finally, on March 16, 1959, construction of I-93 at Medford Square caused a disruption of the overhead wires, and the Metropolitan Transit Authority converted the route to a diesel powered bus.

As we can see, the means of transportation along this route have changed over time, but even after almost 400 years it is still the principle transportation route for the South Medford area.

#### **Newsletter Submissions**

From now on the MHS newsletter will be published quarterly and sent out each December, March, June, and September. We are looking for submissions for future issues. If you would

like to submit an article about a topic of Medford history or a reminiscence about your personal Medford history, please send it to [bkerr@minlib.net](mailto:bkerr@minlib.net).



*Remember to renew your Medford Historical Society membership.*

*40,000 spectators showed up to see champion trotting horse, Smugler win a \$10,000 purse at Mystic Trotting Park in 1874.*



Medford Historical Society  
10 Governor's Avenue  
Medford, MA 02155

*Your Medford Historical Society Newsletter*