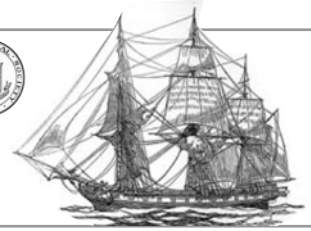


MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



FALL, 2008

President's Overview



A warm welcome to Fall! I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer and is reenergized for a productive season in our careers, civic activities, and preparation for the holiday season with our families.

This summer marked the first time in years that the Peter Tufts House was open for tours and the first time that the tours included the entire house, including the attic with its 17th century structural bones still visible in roof rafters and joints fastened with wooden pins. It was especially gratifying to show the house to Janelle Tufts, a direct descendant of Peter Tufts, who was vacationing in New England. That same day I also had the pleasure to show the house to a woman who had grown up in Winchester and was in the Boston area with two of her children and grandchildren visiting local colleges. She had spent many days in the Tufts house with her grandparents during the 1930s and early 1940s, including an extended stay of several weeks in an upstairs bedroom while she was quarantined with a childhood disease. The emotional response from these very different visitors reminded me, in a very personal way, why our work in preserving Medford's artifacts is so important. This summer was sort of a "beta test" for scheduling and running tours with a rather limited schedule and only one brand new docent (me!). Next year, we plan to have a more extensive tour schedule; I hope many Society members can visit this unusual treasure under our stewardship.

We reviewed our finances and activities over the summer and concluded that we need to move the

Society to a higher level of activities, membership, and support in order to fulfill our current mission and start new initiatives in the community. Much of the activity in the last 15 years – building maintenance, utility bills, exhibits, open houses, memorial plaques, book publishing - was funded with cash from the liquidation of Society assets. This is not a practice we want to continue, nor can we for long. We need a membership and donor base sufficient to cover the day-to-day operations of the society – building maintenance, member events, and so forth – without dipping into our limited endowment or selling significant items from the collection.

As an organization with absolutely no paid staff, our volunteer base is our most important asset. As a result of work done the last few months, this newsletter includes a number of volunteer opportunities, both large and small. Please take some time to look over these. There is a wide variety of opportunities for many different interests and talents.

During the summer, the Events Committee planned our exciting Fall schedule and began the process of lining up our Spring events. More details are elsewhere in this newsletter. The Board and Officers look forward to seeing you!

John Anderson, President

Society Officers

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Vice President

Sharon Guzik

Recording Secretary

Susan Gerould

Corresponding Secretary

Beth Fuller

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Gerald Hershkowitz

Assistant Treasurer

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Director of Collections

Barbara Kerr

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Lorna Wilkerson

The "Baloon" Book

There are many items in the Medford Historical Society's collection. Some of them are informational, some are valuable, some are weird, and some are, quite simply, charming. One of the most charming pieces is "The Baloon Book" (and, yes, balloon is spelled incorrectly).

Moses Mann was amongst the founders of the Medford Historical Society and was the author of many articles on Medford history. Over the years, he donated many personal and local history items to the Society. Among these is a large scrapbook filled with hundreds of clippings from the 1900s and 1910s about early aviation – Mann was apparently very interested in the development of flight.

While I was cataloging the scrapbook, I found a second, small scrapbook tucked between the pages. Made out of brown paper, its cover announces in the tell-tale crayon of a child's hand, "Baloon Book Grandpa from Thomas". On a label inside the front cover is typed:

My wish for your birthday

A Happy Birthday May Yours Be.

For I Know Your Seventy Three.

To. Mr. M.W. Mann

From His Grandson Thomas Carlisle

The little book is full of clippings from December and January, 1920 that follow the story of a U.S. Navy balloon crew that was reported missing in Vermont.

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Balloon Book *continued*

The crew turned up later in Moose Factory, Ontario and had to be escorted out of Canada via dogsled by Canadian Mounted Police. Young Thomas cut out and pasted these clippings, recording this wonderful story from beginning to end.

When I think of history, I often think of the grand scale – the rise and fall of nations and the lives of very famous people. But much history, particularly local history, is made up of smaller stories. We make connections with the past through the experiences of the people who lived in and formed our communities. Moses Mann was quite important to the development of Medford in the late 19th and early 20th century, but much of what we know about him has to do with his public stories.

I think the “Balloon Book” tells a poignant personal story about Moses Mann and his family.

Thomas Carlisle was six years old in 1920, and he created the little book with great effort and a lot of love. It appears obvious, from the ragged edges and not so accurate spelling, that Thomas made the book himself. Add to this that his grandfather was an avid follower of aviation, and you start to see a very clear image of Thomas, armed with his crayon, brown paper and glue, creating a gift that he knew his grandfather would treasure. And it seems to me that Mann, indeed, did treasure it since it was still safe and sound, protected by the pages of his larger scrapbook, when I found it 87 years later.

Moses Mann died in Medford in 1933 at the age of 87 and Thomas Carlisle died in Watertown, New York in 1992 at 78. You don’t hear very much about ballooning these days, but it is as much a part of Mann’s beloved aviation history as Thomas’ book is a part of the history of Moses Mann. *BK*

Volunteer Opportunities Available – There’s Something for Everyone

For about 100 years, the Medford Historical Society has been working to capture, preserve and celebrate the history of one of New England’s oldest cities. From Pre-Columbian America, through the Civil War and on to the present day, MHS’s collection of artifacts, art work, books and documents is continuously expanded and preserved by volunteers. History is today, and we welcome your participation! Volunteering at MHS is a great chance for you to

- learn more about our city’s complex evolution
- acquire new skills
- use your creativity meet new and interesting people
- help a public organization flourish

Below is a sampling of volunteer opportunities. Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you would like to participate or if you have new ideas.

Collection Committee

– **Barbara Kerr at bkerr@minilib.net**

1. Collection Specialists Become familiar with MHS’s object, print and image collections and help develop policies for their acquisition, maintenance and use. We are particularly interested in volunteers with experience in developing collection inventories and policies. People are needed for one-time special projects related to the management and circulation of our vast Civil War photo collection and for ongoing activities such as volunteering at Saturday open houses or monitoring eBay and other resources for items suitable for acquisition.

Time: The committee meets four evenings a year for 2 to 3 hours. Any other time commitment would depend on the nature of a special project.

House Committee

– **Fred Schlicher at fredschlicher@comcast.net**

1. Additional Committee Members Help us assess the maintenance needs of MHS headquarters and the historic Peter Tufts House and develop long-range maintenance and energy-efficiency plans. Participation is open to everyone, particularly those who have construction, electrical or facilities management background. Our primary goals are to oversee energy audits, make interior repairs and work with the MHS Landscape Subcommittee to improve and maintain the grounds of our headquarters.

Time: The committee meets four evenings a year for two to three hours. Any other time commitment would depend on the nature of a project.

2. Light Housekeeping Brigade The exhibition area of MHS headquarters needs regular, light cleaning. We are looking for a volunteer or volunteers to come in once a month to vacuum, dust and tidy up a bit. On occasion we also need help setting up and taking down exhibitions at the headquarters.

Time: Once a month for one to two hours

3. Saturday Staff We are planning to expand the open hours of MHS headquarters to include the first Saturday of each month, from 10 AM to 2 PM. To do this we are seeking several people who would like to meet visitors, introduce them to MHS’s catalogue system and help them research questions. Volunteers would be introduced to the entire MHS collection and trained to use our research and filing systems.

Time: After training, four hours on the first Saturday of the month.

Volunteer Opportunities *continued*

4. Snow Shoveling When the snow flies we need a healthy soul to come by MHS headquarters with a shovel and broom to clear and sweep its front entryway and adjacent sidewalk.

Time: *An average of four times a snow season. If a snow accumulation is less than a foot, the effort should take around 30 minutes. The volunteer must be in good general health and fit for the task, and have access to a snow shovel and broom.*

Event Committee

– **Barbara Kerr at bkerr@minilib.net**

1. Additional Committee Members Join our committee to help plan programs, lectures, member events and educational activities. The sky's the limit when it comes to innovation, diversity and good cheer. As a committee member you would help formulate a calendar of events, establish a "road show" of displays, help out with event tables and arrange for refreshments at MHS programs.

Time: *The committee meets four evenings a year for two to three hours. Other time commitments would depend on the nature of a special event.*

Fundraising Committee

– **John Anderson at jwa02155@yahoo.com**

1. Additional Committee Members Join this committee to help plan fundraising events and develop outreach campaigns so MHS can pursue projects and keep its operations going. Participation is open to everyone, particularly those who have marketing and fundraising experience. The committee's primary focus is on formulating fundraising strategies and events, identifying external grant opportunities and working with MHS's Historic House Marker Committee (see below).

Time: *The Committee meets five evenings a year for two to three hours. Other time commitments would depend on the nature of a campaign or special event.*

Historic House Marker Committee

– **Susan Gerould at gerould@comcast.net**

1. Publicist Working with the fundraising committee, members will generate and manage publicity materials to inform Medford homeowners about the program and encourage their participation. We are particularly interested in volunteers who have marketing experience and/or writing skills to promote this growing program. Volunteers will receive layout and design support as needed.

Time: *Estimated 40 to 60 hours a year.*

Historical and Genealogical Research Projects

– **Jerry Hershkowitz at gjer_com@comcast.net**

1. Display Specialists Develop "Medford Historical Overview" display poster – Create a poster or set of flip charts to orient visitors to MHS headquarters with the collection and the basics of Medford history.

This project is a creative opportunity that could be expanded or modified to fit your vision. It will involve several volunteers with basic visual-communication skills such as research, writing, layout and production.

Time: *Estimated 30 to 50 hours over several months.*

2. Transcribe Historic Medford Taxpayer Lists The Boston Public Library owns microfilmed copies of Medford town and treasurer records from the 1600's, 1700's and early 1800's. They contain handwritten taxpayer lists, which are among the most important of primary materials to historical research. MHS seeks volunteers to transcribe some (or all) of these lists so the public will eventually be able to search them electronically. When done, this project will be of huge value to all Medford historians and genealogists.

Requirements: *Familiarity (or interest in learning about) Colonial handwriting styles, access to a laptop computer, time to attend meetings with the MHS Collection Committee to develop an index system and/or time to make several trips to BPL to perform transcription. This will require a number of volunteers.*

3. Researchers Research and write biographical sketches on Medford Families buried in Salem Street Burial Ground - There exists a great deal of internet-based information on Medford's early residents who are buried in the Salem Street Burial Ground. We would like to compile this information to create biographies that would expand the public's knowledge of their ancestors and of those who contributed to the development of our city.

Requirements: *Familiarity with internet and genealogical basics, access to a personal computer, and time to conduct research and compile biographies. This project will include several volunteers.*

2. Index images contained in the Medford Historical Register For decades MHS published the *Medford Historical Register*, a compendium of research into the history of our city since its founding. An index of all of the images contained in the *Medford Historical Register* would be of great value to researchers and historians. Work to generate the index can be performed at the Medford Public Library, at MHS headquarters and/or at home.

Requirements: *Access to a personal computer. An estimated 20 hours of work is involved.*

Thank You

Not just one, but many thanks go to the Red Hat Society and Doug Packer for the care and maintenance of the Society's landscape. We look forward to the fall planting!

Upcoming Events Schedule

October 19 at 1:30 PM – Field Trip to the Old Middlesex Canal Fall Walk

Join other MHS members for a “field trip” to the Middlesex Canal Museum’s 27th Annual Fall Walk on Sunday, October 19. The walk will be conducted in two segments, including two watered sections. The walk will begin at 1:30 PM from the parking lot at the Woburn Cinemas, located on Middlesex Canal Drive, off Route 38, just south of its intersection with Route 128 (I-95) at Exit 35.

The first segment will proceed south along the watered canal from the parking lot to Winn Street and return. After returning to our cars, we will drive to another parking area for the second segment, north of Route 128.

Leaving the Cinemas parking lot on Middlesex Canal Drive, we’ll take a left back onto Route 38 North. After passing under Route 128, we’ll take a right turn at the lights onto Alfred Street toward the Baldwin Mansion, a few hundred feet farther along on the left. The second segment of the walk will proceed north from the parking lot behind the Mansion, currently a Chinese restaurant.

If you wish to carpool from Medford to Woburn, please meet at the MHS Headquarters, 10 Governors Avenue, between 12:30 PM and 12:45 PM. For information about carpooling from the MHS, please contact the Society at MHSRSVP@yahoo.com.

For more information about the walk, please call Roger Hagopian (781-861-7868) or e-mail Robert Winters (robert@middlesexcanal.org).

October 22 at 7:30 PM – Lecture: The Middlesex Canal

The theme of this year’s lecture series is Roads, Rails and Waters: Medford on the Move. For our first lecture, we are delighted to welcome Nolan Jones, the president of the Middlesex Canal Association, who will talk about the history of this waterway.

Construction on the Middlesex Canal began in October of 1794 and was completed on schedule on December 31, 1803. The canal originated at the Merrimack River in Lowell, passed through Medford, and ran to the Mill Pond in Charlestown, a distance of twenty-seven miles.

For the next forty years, the canal represented the most economical means of transporting goods between Lowell and Boston and was directly responsible for the development of Lowell as the first industrial city in Massachusetts. It wasn’t until the early 1840s, as the Lowell railroad opened alongside the canal route, that the use of the canal had diminished to the point where toll income was not sufficient to meet the costs of maintenance and repair. In the early 1850s, the proprietors dissolved the canal corporation.

The Middlesex Canal had an enormous impact on the development of Medford as well as the other

cities and towns on the route. Don’t miss this look at the history of one of Medford’s earliest transportation routes.

A Medford Historical Society business meeting will take place at 7:00 PM. Doors will open and refreshments will be served at 6:30 PM.

November 7, 2008 from 6:00 PM – Antique Appraisal Night

Have you ever pondered the actual value and origin of those items you have inherited, found at garage sales or purchased at flea markets? In the spirit of “Antiques Road Show,” MHS will give you an opportunity to find out! On Friday, November 7 from 6:00 to 10:00 PM, an appraiser from the Kaminski Auction House in Beverly will be on hand at MHS headquarters to examine anything that has roused your curiosity – from furniture to photographs.

This event is a fundraiser for MHS. The cost of appraisal will be just \$15 an item, with a limit of three items for each person. No registration is necessary and appraisals will be done on a first come, first served basis.

If you have something too big to bring with you, please note that an appraisal can be done from photographs. The only requirements are that the item be photographed from multiple angles and that identifying marks be captured. This would include a manufacturer’s name or seal.

For more information, please contact MHS at MHSRSVP@yahoo.com.

December: Victorian Stroll – (date to be announced)

Please keep on the lookout for the date of Medford’s 3rd annual Victorian Stroll.

January 21, 2009 at 7:30 PM – Working Animals of the Horse-drawn Era

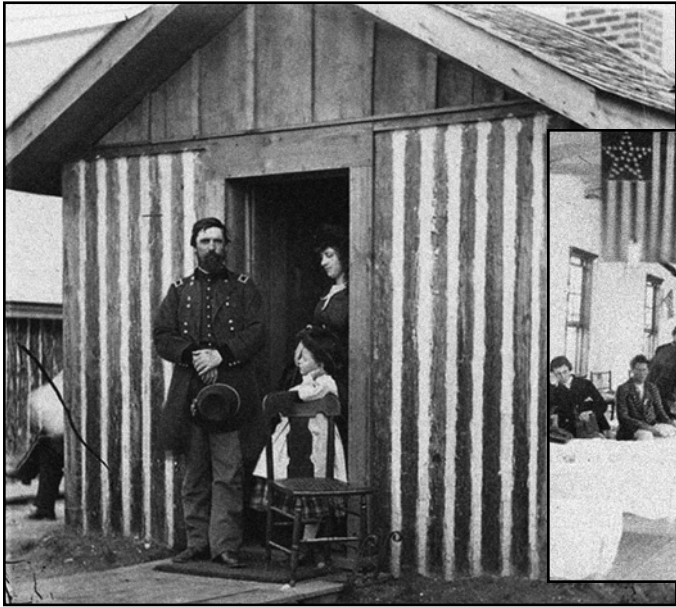
A captivating lecture from our beloved local historian, Dee Morris.

March 18, 2009 at 7:30 PM – Local Roadside Memories

A slide lecture by Larry Cultrera of Diner Hotline.

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 vickihh@verizon.net.



◀ left: General John A. Rawlins, wife and child at City Point, below: Ward in Armory Square Hospital, Washington
▼



volunteers to follow. If you signed up to volunteer last year, we haven't forgotten you! We want to make sure that this project is done as efficiently and carefully as possible. Be assured that we

will be looking for more volunteers in the coming months and will be in touch with those of you who expressed prior interest in volunteering for this project. *BK*

Civil War Photo Project Update

CWAP, Medford Historical Society's *Civil War Archiving Project*, is moving along at a sure and steady pace. New museum software was installed and tested in August, and volunteers began to input the first batch of photos in September. The photo information will continue to be put into the software, then the images will be scanned and stored both in that museum software as well as in external storage. At the end of the project, the Society will have both a definitive inventory of the collection and a digital archive of the images.

A small group of volunteers is working with the first few batches of photos to figure out the best and safest procedures as well as how to write up good directions and set up a structure for later

Display Your Pride in Medford's History

The Medford Historical Society is offering historical markers displaying the date your house was built.

Your participation in this program will help to support ongoing historic preservation programs at the Society. It will provide information about the City's architectural development and build a sense of pride in our community. For more information and an application contact Sue Gerould at 781-393-8218 or gerould@comcast.net.

Medford History Gifts

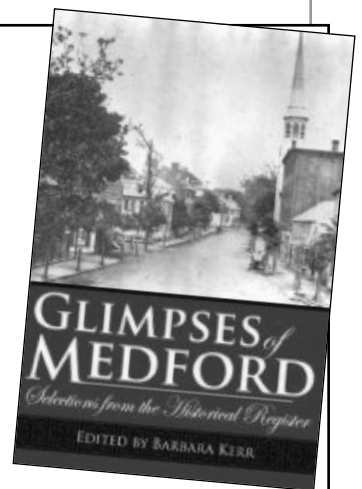
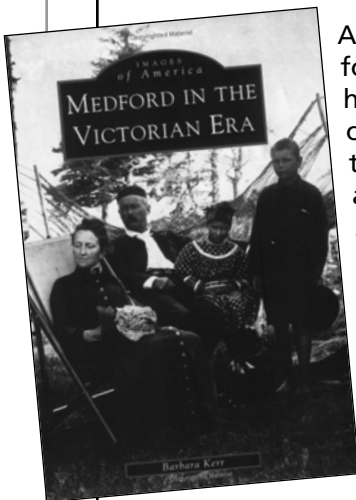
As the holidays draw near, don't forget the Society's bookshop. We have a plentiful stock of signed copies of the latest Medford history titles: *Glimpses of Medford* and *Medford in the Victorian Era*. Both of these titles sell for \$20.00. We also have copies of *The Incredible Ditch, a history of the Middlesex Canal*, which is suitable for both adult and younger readers. *The Incredible Ditch* sells for \$20.00, but is on sale for \$10.00 with the purchase of any other book.

We are also happy to offer a limited number of the classic titles: *Medford on the Mystic* (\$20.00), *Old Ships and Shipbuilding Days* (\$10.00),

and *Crusader for Freedom: the Life of Lydia Maria Child* (\$10.00).

Also for sale are Royall House ornaments. The ornaments are made of enameled brass and are the perfect addition to a holiday tree.

For your shopping convenience, the Society is open 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM on Sundays and will also be open during the Chamber of Commerce Victorian Stroll (date to be announced). Books and ornaments can also be purchased by mail. Order forms and shipping costs are available on the Society website at: <http://www.medfordhistorical.org/museumshop.php>.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! Read details enclosed.



*View of High Street looking west with
the Public Library on the right, 1915.*



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