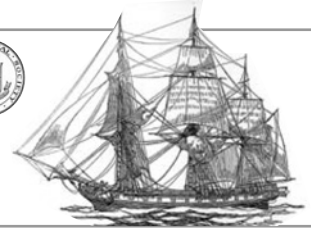


MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



SPRING, 2009

President's Overview



It's a pleasure to be writing to all of you again on the first warm sunny day in a long time! Noticing the appearance of tiny buds in the back yard serves as a reminder that every year, as well as every day, we have the opportunity to start anew and create things of value for ourselves, our families, and our community.

Volunteers One lesson learned from the Civil War Photo show is that volunteer opportunities can be found by people with vision and desire. You don't have to wait for me or anyone else to suggest an activity. If you'd like to do something that's consistent with our broad purposes, bring it to my attention, or to anyone on the Board, and we'll support you if possible.

Speaking of volunteers, we have continued to work hard to increase member activity in the Society. As an all volunteer, publicly supported organization, the membership's time and money are the two equally important currencies that keep

us afloat and enable us to give back to the community. We're expanding our efforts to catalog and digitize many of the documents, photos, and other objects from our huge collection. Remember that the Civil War photo collection was "discovered" in boxes at the Society in 1991. It is now recognized as either the third or fifth most extensive collection in the country. While we don't expect another discovery on that scale, much remains to be examined. Thanks to Fred, our volunteer coordinator, we continue to build our all-important events and house committees. We still have many needs in these and other areas. Please get in touch with me (jwa02155@yahoo.com or 781-395-5138) or Fred Schlicher (fredschlicher@comcast.net or 781-395-7207) to discuss volunteer opportunities at the Society.

Society Officers

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continued page 3

Who is Buried in the Historical Society's Front Yard?

An Adventure in Genealogy



Actually, no one is buried in the front yard of the Historical Society's 10 Governors Avenue headquarters. At least no one that we know about! However, there is an old gravestone prominently displayed amongst the flowers and shrubs. It reads "Frances Ella daughter of Alfred and Harriet N. Wallace, born Sept. 23, 1848; died Feb'y 6, 1869."

Feb. 6, 1869." The stone was uncovered in October 2004 during construction on Ninth Street. Work was stopped until it could be ascertained whether there was an actual grave accompanying the stone. There wasn't, and condominiums now stand on the spot where the stone was discovered.

Who was Frances Ella Wallace? I became curious and searched the state's vital records but found neither birth nor death records. The tombstone was brought to the Historical Society and stored behind the building. The story of the gravestone's discovery was published in the Medford Transcript October 28, 2004.

With a few more quick searches of the many genealogical records available online, I was able to find some information about Frances and her family. I started with the U.S. Federal census (taken each decade) in addition to the Massachusetts state censuses of 1855 and 1865. I found Frances Ella Wallace living with her family in Medford in 1850, 1855, 1860, and 1865. By the 1870 U.S. census, Frances Ella had died. It is

continued page 2

Who Is Buried *continued*

difficult to find information on women in early records particularly if they were not married, so this is all the information specific to Frances I could find thus far. However, I was able to piece together a larger story about her family.

Alfred and Harriett N. Wallace, Frances Ella's parents, moved to Medford some time before 1850. Alfred Wallace was born in New Hampshire and Harriett Newell was originally from Maine. They had two children: Cornelius Royal (born in 1845) and Frances Ella. According to information from the census records, both the children were born in Massachusetts. Exactly where in Massachusetts is unknown since birth records for the children have not been located to date.

In 1850, Alfred Wallace was a real estate broker. He owned property in Medford, presumably the house and land where they lived, which was worth \$4000. On the 1855 Walling map of Medford, the footprint of a house can be seen at the corner of two unidentified streets north of Salem Street. The owner's name is "A. Wallace." These streets are identified in the 1875 Beers map as being Tainter and Court streets and the house along with two adjacent plots along Court Street are labeled "Mrs. A Wallace."

Alfred and Harriett had two more children while living in Medford, Irving (born c.1852) and Isabel (born in 1854). Alfred worked in Boston at a "real estate and board agency" as listed in the 1861 Boston Directory. They lived in Medford at least until 1865 and most likely into the 1870s. The only family member I could locate in the 1870 U.S. census is the oldest child, Cornelius, while the whereabouts of the rest of the family is unknown. However, in 1880 Alfred and Harriet, along with their youngest children, Irving and Isabel, are living in Washington, D.C. Also in their household are Harriet's sister, Sarah, and Sarah's husband, William Champain. Alfred is a broker in a land office, while Irving is a clerk in a bank.

In 1870, Cornelius Wallace was a 24-year-old student at Philips Academy in Andover. He then went on to Yale where he graduated in 1874. There is biographical information on Cornelius in various Yale Alumni publications that are available online. Cornelius became a teacher in New York. He married Anna (Schlumberger) Bach in Stuttgart, Germany on March 6, 1885. Anna was the widow of Frederick Bach. The 1880 census shows Cornelius boarding in the home of Frederick

and Anna Bach. Frederick must have died and Cornelius married his widow. They did not have children together but Anna had three children from her first marriage. Cornelius retired from teaching in 1905, and the couple then resided in Tuckahoe, NY. They went abroad in 1912, most likely to visit Anna's family. Cornelius died in 1944 and left a bequest to Yale.

The rest of the family seems to disappear after 1880. To the frustration of many genealogists, most of the 1890 U.S. census is unavailable due to a fire that left only fragments for a few states intact. By the 1900 census, only Isabel seems to be living in Washington. She is a 44-year-old single woman living with a servant. Presumably her parents, Alfred and Harriet, have both died—they would have been in their nineties at that time. There seems to be no trace of Irving Wallace, the youngest child. By the 1910 census, Isabel has also disappeared. Perhaps she married and changed her surname making her untraceable, or perhaps she too passed away.

Much remains mysterious about Frances Ella and the Wallace family. Without a death record listing a cause of death, we'll never know why Frances Ella died young. The area where her gravestone was unearthed on Ninth Street was apparently swampy land that had been filled with debris. Exactly where Frances was buried in 1869 and why her stone seems to have been tossed away is unknown. Her stone is not amongst the gravestones listed in the 1937 record of those in the Salem Street or Cross Street cemeteries.

While investigating the mystery of Frances Ella's stone, another mystery surfaced—the record of an oil painting of a young boy named Cornelius Royal Wallace. The artist is listed as Henry Willard, and the painting is dated to between 1845-1855. Henry Willard was a Massachusetts portrait painter in the early 1800s. The woman who owned the portrait in 1981 lived in Williamstown, New York. Could this be a painting of our Cornelius? The date of the painting is right for Cornelius to have been a young boy. As an adult, he could have easily taken the painting to New York with him where it remained.

The story so far was uncovered through research easily done on the Internet. To pursue the mystery of Frances Ella and the Wallace family further, I will have to turn to more traditional genealogical sources. I will make use of non-genealogical records at the Historical Society and pursue records located in other states. Perhaps these other avenues of research will provide more clues and further elucidate the Wallace family's story. I look forward to continuing this investigation, so keep an eye on the newsletter as the story unfolds.

—*Sharon Guzik, Vice President*

Newsletter Submissions

The MHS newsletter is published quarterly. 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.

President's Overview *continued*

Current Exhibit If you haven't yet, I urge you to see the fabulous exhibit of Civil War photos on display at MHS through the end of April. What started as an idea in the late Fall grew to fruition during the bleak days of Winter. Some exceptional people came together and volunteered their considerable expertise and enthusiasm to create a professional level exhibit. Each of us, whether or not we participated directly in this effort, can be proud to be supporters of the organization that served to launch this remarkable display.

Spring With Spring comes the annual meeting and election of officers; see the insert regarding this year's slate of officers along with an absentee ballot if you will not be able to attend the annual meeting. You'll also find information about the great programs remaining in this year's lecture series.

Once again, we look forward to receiving applications for the Joseph V. Valeriani Scholarship. One applicant from Medford High School and another from Medford Vocational High School will be chosen. Applicants must demonstrate an interest in Medford history, historic preservation, and a desire to study history or historical preservation. If you know a student who might like to apply this year, please contact MHS.

Spring also brings clean-up day, scheduled for Saturday, May 9. We have a number of home repair type projects as well as clearing out the jumble and jungle that is developing in back of the Society building. Please call Fred or me (see above) if you'd like to participate

Summer Though there are fewer MHS activities during summer months, there are still events to watch for, including attending (or leading!) tours of the Peter Tufts house on Riverside Avenue, reputed to be the oldest standing brick building in America. It was built in the 17th century by the man who donated the land on which Tufts University is built and was rescued from destruction in the 19th century by General Lawrence, the same man responsible for our remarkable Civil War photograph collection. In addition, you might want to consider spending some air conditioned time at the Society participating in one of our volunteer projects. In any case, enjoy the Spring and Summer!

—*John Anderson, President*

Tell the Program Committee

Have an idea for a program? Want to attend a program on a particular topic? Tell the Program Committee! We are interested to hear from our members about their interests. So if you know of a local history speaker or are one yourself, let us know.

You can send ideas and suggestions to committee chair Lou Cohen at cohenl@aol.com.

Member Reception and Annual Meeting

Join your fellow Medford Historical Society members on Friday, May 15 from 6:30-9:00 p.m. for a reception and annual meeting. We'll be serving light appetizers, and you'll have a chance to mingle with your fellow history lovers and talk over the accomplishments of the year.

At 7:00 there will be a presentation by members of the current Board of Directors, with reports about the organization's progress, finances, and plans for the future. Additionally, there will be an election of the next slate of board members. Current members of MHS can sign in at the lobby, then complete and submit their ballot at any time during the evening.

It has been quite a year of accomplishment at the MHS due to the ongoing support of our members. Please come to the reception so we can thank you and, together, look forward to another year of Medford history. Registration is not required, but we would appreciate if you would RSVP to mhsrsvp@yahoo.com in order to help us prepare for what should prove to be a great evening. We look forward to seeing you!

Salem St. Burial Ground

According to John Woods of the Medford Historical Commission, the Salem Street Burial Ground is a city owned cemetery and was used exclusively from the late 1600s to late into the 1800s for the burial of the town's wealthy residents. Initially, the Salem Street Burial Ground was the private cemetery of the Wade family. It was acquired by the town of Medford in May 1717. The earliest stone is dated 1683 and the latest 1938. Records note that there are over 650 people buried there. Records also indicate that there are over 50 slaves buried in unmarked graves in the southwest corner of the cemetery.

On February 1, 2009 the City of Medford submitted a grant application to the Massachusetts Historical Commission - Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund for an extensive research, inventory and planning process in preparation for undertaking a preservation and restoration effort on site at the Salem Street Burial Ground. Approval of the funding by the granting agency on June 20, 2009 will ensure that the Salem Street Burial Ground remains an important local symbol of the past for generations to come.

—*John J. Lonergan, Board Member*





Civil War Exhibit a Success



On Friday, February 27 the Medford Historical Society opened its Civil War photography exhibition, *Of the People: Faces of the Civil War*. Attended by 150 people, the opening provided a glimpse of the size and diversity of the organization's well-known collection of 3,300 Civil War photographs and shed light on the social circumstances of the women, men, children, freed slaves and immigrants who fought for the Union and the abolition of slavery. One visitor, a photography expert from Harvard University, deemed the show "magnificent" for the quality of its images and accompanying text, written by University of Massachusetts history professor Michael Chesson.

As an adjunct to the exhibition, a series of three public lectures has been assembled. The first one, *African-American Soldiers in the Civil War*, was held on March 20 at the West Medford Community Center; and the second, *Fort Warren in the Civil War*, was held March 31 at the Royall House. If you could not attend Mr. Schmidt's Fort Warren lecture, you will be able to view it on TV3. The lecture is the second in a three-part series Medford Historical Society is presenting in conjunction with the show. The lecture will be aired on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings at 6:30 p.m., and on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 9 a.m.

BELOW: Attendees at Opening Night got their first preview of the show.





ABOVE: Jack Egan helped Barbara Kerr sell exhibit booklets.

The third and final lecture, *I'll Pass for Your Comrade: Women Soldiers in the Civil War*, will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 7:00 pm at the Medford Public Library. To date, nearly 600 people have visited the exhibition, and well over 100 people have attended the lecture series.

MHS's Civil War photography collection is the fifth largest of its kind in the world, and it is in exceptional condition. Given the collection's national significance and cultural value, MHS is raising funds to improve the conditions in which it is stored and exhibited. Improvements include upgrading storage containers, improving environmental controls and modernizing light and display options. Fundraising in the current economic climate is challenging, but MHS hopes to raise \$30,000 over the coming year.

The exhibit is currently scheduled to run through the end of April, however MHS is considering an extension due to public enthusiasm. If you would like to learn more about the exhibition and lecture series, or about MHS's conservation campaign, please go to www.medfordhistorical.org. Public viewing hours for the exhibition through April are Saturdays from noon to 3:00 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 4:00 p.m. Special hours can be arranged for schools and groups. Admission is free.

—*Jim Kiely, Board Member*

Volunteers Needed

The tiny kitchen and bathroom off the lobby of our building on Governor's Avenue could use some sprucing up and perhaps re-definition. Each room must do double duty as we have so little space: the bathroom also serves as storage for books and supplies and the kitchen for cleaning and catering supplies as well as some files. I am looking for volunteers who would like to help with upgrading these rooms, to improve function and attractiveness. I would love to see the kitchen supplies hidden behind cupboard doors, and perhaps it would be possible to create a mini-display of antique kitchen utensils and/or tools from our collection to decorate the kitchen. If we were ambitious enough, we could see what's under the dreary dropped ceiling in the lobby, and who knows what's under the indoor/outdoor carpeting! If you'd be interested in contributing your ideas and energy on this project this later this Spring, please contact me at ruthsroper@yahoo.com. Thank you in advance!

UPCOMING LECTURES:

The Boston and Maine: A Lecture by Frederick Nowell, Boston and Maine Railroad Historical Society



Wednesday, May 20 at 7:00 p.m.
at the Medford Public Library.

Rescheduled from March, the B&M Railroad came to Medford in the 1840's. Join B&R historian Frederick Nowell for a look at the long history of the railroad that dominated the northern New England region of the United States for a century.

Local Roadside Memories: Diners and Other Local Favorites from Medford's Past with Larry Cultrera of Diner Hotline



Tuesday, June 16 at 7:00 p.m.
at the Medford Public Library

Both lectures are jointly presented by the Medford Public Library and the Medford Historical Society. The MHS will hold a short business meeting at 7:00 followed by the lecture.

Your Medford Historical Society Newsletter



Children in sack races at Medford Hillside, about 1895



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It's membership renewal time. A red dot on your address label indicates MHS hasn't yet received yours. If you have already sent it in, thank you!