



President's Overview:

A Hundred Years Ago, A Tumultuous Political Year in Medford

by John Anderson



First, a Happy New Year to all our members and supporters! By now, you should have received our annual appeal letter. If you've already responded, thank you! Your support makes the difference. If you haven't responded, it's not too late!

In this issue, you'll find an article by Kyna Hamill that challenges some of the myths about Jingle Bells. Also, please check out our announcements for upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

As regular readers of this column know, I am frequently inspired by the Society's journals published quarterly from 1896 to 1943. They provide a great window into what people were thinking during those years.

I always start by looking at the journals of 100 years ago. I wondered how Medfordians in 1915 viewed the unprecedented carnage World War I was inflicting on Europe, Africa, and Asia. The US was still officially neutral, but neighbors and friends such as Canada and Great Britain were already at war. I was surprised when I found no references in our *Registers* to WWI. I decided to look further. I wondered what events overshadowed this major world conflict.

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Upsotting the "One Horse Open Sleigh": The Blackface Origins of "Jingle Bells"

by Kyna Hamill

In the vertical files of the Medford Historical Society & Museum under "Jingle Bells", there is a folder with the following caution, "Savannah Generated James Pierpont Information—beware!" Inside is a series of articles written between 1946 and 2012 wherein the cities of Medford and Savannah each lay claim to the song that originated in "their" city. The historical societies of each city pressed the disagreement to the point that even the mayors got involved to defend the title. Medford claims the song was written in the Simpson Tavern in 1850, while Savannah claims it was written as a Thanksgiving song before being published in 1857. A bronze plaque claiming the origin of the song can be found in both cities, and this musical North/South discord carries on to this day.

The man at the center of the argument is James Lord Pierpont (1822-1889), the composer of "Jingle Bells, or One Horse Open Sleigh." Born in Boston in 1822, Pierpont resided in Medford with

his father when he was not off "wandering." He seemed to have many career attempts and failures while pushing the limits of moral character.¹ James' father was the famous Unitarian minister Reverend John Pierpont Sr. whose difficult personality and controversy with the Hollis Street Church in Boston made him a public figure. In 1845, the Reverend John Pierpont Sr. was in Troy, and it was here where James married his first wife, Millicent "Millie" Cowee on 4 September 1846. Later, John Sr. was appointed to the First Parish in Medford in August 1849 and built a house for his family on Mystic Street (destroyed in 1949). James, Millie and their two children followed Rev. Pierpont to Medford and lived with him off and on between 1849 and 1857.

¹ James married Millicent "Millie" Pierpont in 1847. She died 17 August 1856 in Medford; James married Eliza on 24 September 1857 in Savannah. According to census records, it seems that James had a child out of wedlock with Eliza Purse (who would be his second wife) while he was still married to Millie.

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President's Overview *continued*

I found some clues in the annual town and city reports archived at our Museum. It was easy to see why no one was thinking about Europe. A lot was happening at home! From 1830 to 1939, the town, and later the city, published comprehensive annual documents including reports from all city departments and a detailed list of income and expenses. After Medford became a city in 1892, the annual report also included a "state of the city" address written by the Mayor and delivered to the Board of Aldermen on the first business day of the New Year.

The Annual Reports from 1914 and 1915 were eye-openers! There was nothing about the War, but the Mayor's speeches demonstrated Medford was in the midst of a huge political battle. Our 2015 local politics and election, the most energetic in decades, now seems tame by comparison.

On January 4, 1915, the newly elected Mayor Haines spoke to the Board of Aldermen. "You, the Board of Aldermen, have been elected to co-operate with me for the good and welfare of the City for the ensuing year." As his speech progressed, it sounded as though he did not expect that result. "It remains for us to demonstrate by our official acts whether or not we conduct our municipal affairs successfully and to the satisfaction of the majority of our citizens."

Having dealt with the Board of Aldermen, Mayor Haines turned his attention to the municipal workers: "Unfortunately, many employees of the City have the habit of looking upon public office as a place requiring less of their time and energy... than private or commercial service... It sometimes happens that public officials long continued in office forget the requirements of their positions, and their true relations to the public." Later in his speech, he said "There are many minor positions in the City of Medford which for years have received petty salaries and small attention. Some of the positions are of no importance and the pay taken for them is unearned... I shall ask that the ordinance be amended and such positions be either abolished or the pay be taken away."

The Mayor became more specific regarding certain departments: "The conditions within the City of Medford in regard to public health are deplorable... If it were not for the fact that perhaps the present Board are unaware of these circumstances, I should demand their resignation at once. I am justified in saying that the Board of Health have been woefully negligent in their duty, and I shall give them a reasonable length of time to remedy those conditions."

The police department got no mercy: "The Police Department of the past few years has been subject to much public comment and adverse criticism. There are many indications that such criticism is justifiable. ... The present chief, in many instances, has shown himself either incompetent or unwilling to enforce the law."

His most surprising comments concerned the City's financial condition. "Insomuch as the accounts of the City are being thoroughly examined by State Officials, I will make no attempt at this time to comment... The present condition in regard to the examination of our accounts is unprecedented, and I feel it would be a violation of courtesy to rely wholly upon our own auditor or upon our own officials when we were awaiting the report of the officials of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

Benjamin Franklin Haines, Alderman 1908-10, Massachusetts House of Representatives 1911-14, 8th Mayor of Medford, 1915-1922. Later, moved to Florida and elected Mayor of Altamonte Springs in 1932.



A few months later, the City Clerk was indicted for larceny of over \$9,000. In today's dollars, this would probably be equivalent to \$100,000.

On January 3, 1916, Mayor Benjamin Haines, starting his second year as Mayor, announced: "The transition has taken place. Tonight a new City of Medford comes into being – to our people the most important and significant occurrence in the history of this community since its settlement as a town, 285 years ago. The case of the board of aldermen of 1915 against ... the City of Medford has been tried before the highest Court of Appeals and the electors sitting in judgment on election day have rendered the verdict." It's not clear whether he's talking about an election result or a court case.

Addressing the Board of Aldermen, he said "You were elected to aid, to assist and to co-operate with me in furthering those policies which I have ever advocated for the good and welfare of our people and which policies the people have approved by their unflinching support of every measure which I have advocated. Any divergence from a loyal support of these measures becomes a breach of faith and will meet with severe rebuke...." The Mayor reported that he made major changes at City Hall. He replaced the entire Board of Health. Regarding the Cemetery Board, he said "The trustees of the cemeteries have fallen far short of my conception of the trust imposed in them and I have already removed two of the board. As they are at present defendants in an action brought by the City against them for negligence, it would be unfair for me to go further into details."

Mayor Haines next took on the School Board: "The financial management of the school department is to me far from satisfactory. The committee disburses over one-half of our total tax receipts. Is it not apparent that this board should be composed of competent business men? The personnel of our school committee is composed of members untrained in finance... Many hundreds and even thousands of dollars could be saved if the people would choose carefully persons for the school board who in a business career have shown ability."

What sort of man was Mayor Haines, and what was happening in Medford in 1916? This was a time of major change for Medford. In his doctoral thesis about Medford, written in 1979, Dr. Joseph Valeriani pointed out that in 1873 the Town

of Medford depended on shipbuilding, rum manufacture, and the making of clay bricks. By 1915 brick making was nearing an end. Shipbuilding and rum making were long gone. In fact, Medford was a dry city! Medford was growing quickly in 1915 due in large part to immigrants. A housing boom was underway fueled by Medford's transition to a bedroom community. Dr. Valeriani stated: "Canadian, Irish, and Italian immigrants were moving into the community where land was predominantly owned by a small number of families...With the arrival of the immigrants many of the wealthy, and formerly leading citizens of Medford, fled to the more affluent outer suburbs." During this stressful time, Mayor Haines won a highly contested and close election.

I turned to the *Boston Globe* to see how they covered the election of 1914 and subsequent events in Medford.

In November, 1914, the *Globe* reported that there were three Mayoral candidates: the incumbent Charles Taylor, Benjamin Haines, and Michael Dyer. Incidentally, there were also a huge number of candidates competing for the 21 seats on the Board of Aldermen. That's three times the size of our current City Council!

On December 5, 1914 the *Globe* reported that the city was "Aglow with Red Fire and Oratory at Big Rallies for Three Candidates. The City never witnessed before such large crowds as tonight attended the rallies of the three candidates...From shortly after 7 o'clock until close to midnight the city was aglow with red fire and political oratory and at one time Medford Square was packed with several thousand people."

December 8, 1914: Benjamin Haines won the three-way race by 130 votes!

Analyzing the election on January 4, 1915 the *Globe* stated: "It is certain that the new Mayor's election was largely due the desire of the residents of the newly built-up southern and eastern sections to 'get a footing in City Hall.' The three wards comprising the Glenwood, Fellsway and South Medford districts went so overwhelmingly for Haines that he was able to wipe out a big plurality up in the four remaining conservative wards for Mayor Taylor." The new Mayor was quoted as saying "Medford has been in rut for many years. Many provisions of the charter are antiquated and must be changed."

During 1915 the *Globe* provided Mayor Haines with a lot of publicity! After firing the Chief of Police and appointing himself acting Chief, Mayor Haines got busy:

March 20, 1915: "Mayor Haines, as acting Chief of

Police tonight ordered all the restaurants in the Medford Square district closed after 8 p.m. because of altercations started in some of them by youths who have used them as loafing places...The Mayor notified the proprietor of a local theatre today he had learned that disrespectful remarks had been made about him and heads of the city departments by a vaudeville actor. The proprietor, a Malden man, was warned that steps will be taken to revoke the license if there is a repetition of such remarks. Then manager assured the Mayor that stringent measures will be taken to prevent any reflections on city officials in future."

After appointing a new Chief, Mayor Haines continued to help out as reported in the April 19, 1915 edition of the *Globe*: "Chief of Police John F. Walsh made the biggest liquor raid in years tonight. Five Italian boarding houses on Linden and Hall Streets, in the brickyard district of Glenwood, were searched by 18 officers...in three cars. Mayor Haines was in the first car, which made the start from City Hall and returned in about two hours with six prisoners, three women and three men... A wedding supper was being served to a newly married couple...when the trio of officers arrived. Seven kegs of beer, a barrel of wine, eight cases of bottled beer and ale, 20 quarts of whiskey, wine, cognac and bitters, several hundred empty beer bottles and several empty kegs were seized...Mayor Haines stood guard over the seized liquor while [the Sergeants] directed the raid. More than 50 relatives and neighbors walked to Police Headquarters and arranged for bail. Outside Police Headquarters and along Main St. at City Hall a crowd blocked the sidewalks when the news of the big raid spread over the central section of Medford."

Speaking of liquor, shortly afterwards, an Alderman accused the Mayor of misuse of City property involving alcohol consumption.

April 27, 1915: "The customary diversion was created at the Alderman's meeting tonight by a charge made by Alderman Richard Dwyer that Mayor Haines had been using the fire chief's automobile to take him and two members of the fire department to a Boston barroom. Last Friday, he said, at least 20 persons, including Medford residents, saw this car standing outside a barroom at 10 Faneuil Hall...and saw the Mayor

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There were plenty of scandals and controversies in the administration of Mayor Benjamin Haines who went after citizens who broke liquor and gaming laws, yet who notoriously flaunted the perks of his office.



HAINES FINED FOR SPEEDING IN NAHANT
Mayor of Medford Appeals From \$10 Assessment.
Motorcycle Officer Testifies Auto Was Going 42 Miles an Hour.

Special Dispatch to the Globe.
 NAHANT, Sept. 2.—When accused in Police Court today of driving his automobile 42 miles an hour on the Nahant Shore Boulevard, Mayor Haines of Medford smilingly told Judge Southwick that he was not guilty, but motorcycle policeman Timothy J. Leahy of the Park Police contradicted the testimony and the judge imposed a \$10 fine... Mayor Haines gave policeman Leahy quite a race. The Mayor didn't know he was being pursued, but finally Leahy pulled out from behind the Mayor's car and, riding alongside, commanded the Mayor to stop. According to the Park Police, the speed of the Mayor's car was about the highest they have noted this season, and patrolman Leahy had to do some tall sprinting to catch up with the automobile."

and two members of the fire department come out of the barroom and enter the car... This charge the Mayor subsequently characterized as an "outrageous lie," and said that Alderman Dwyer was attacking him because two months ago he had been ushered out of the Mayor's office in an intoxicated state."

A few weeks later, the Mayor moved on to Sunday observance laws.

May 31, 1915:

"Police officers were sent this morning to warn Medford youths who have indulged in tennis and scrub baseball that such sports would not henceforth be tolerated on Sunday. Warning too was given to those who have been enjoying hurling matches on the old golf links, itself the scene of a Sunday anti-pleasure crusade some years ago. At noon, the Mayor descended on Medford Common... and broke up the crap and card games that were going on almost in the shadow of the First Baptist Church. This was only warning day, so no arrests were made, but several names were taken and cards, dice and change were seized."

In September, the Mayor was fined for speeding in Nahant.

Sept 2, 1915: "When accused in Police Court today of driving his automobile 42 miles an hour on the Nahant Shore Boulevard, Mayor Haines of Medford smilingly told Judge Southwick that he was not guilty but motorcycle policeman Timothy J. Leahy of the Park Police contradicted the testimony and the judge imposed a \$10 fine... Mayor Haines gave policeman Leahy quite a race. The Mayor didn't know he was being pursued, but finally Leahy pulled out from behind the Mayor's car and, riding alongside, commanded the Mayor to stop. According to the Park Police, the speed of the Mayor's car was about the highest they have noted this season, and patrolman Leahy had to do some tall sprinting to catch up with the automobile."

In December, all the Aldermen, but not the Mayor, were up for re-election. The Mayor recruited a slate of Aldermen and the "pro-Haines" candidates won 15 out of the 21 seats! This explains why the Mayor said "The case of the board of aldermen of 1915 against ... the City of Medford has been tried before the highest Court of Appeals and the electors sitting in judgment on election day have rendered the verdict."

With such a victory, you would think that things would settle down. But my column is only Chapter 1 in the history of Mayor Haines and Medford. He next embarked on more ambitious projects including building a new City Hall to replace the one where Andrews Realty and Carroll's Restaurant now stand. These efforts rekindled conflict with some citizens as well as the Board of Aldermen, and accusations of misconduct and executive over-reach wound up in court. Over the years of his term and even beyond, conflicts and court cases continued. There will be more to come in later newsletters.

Best wishes for the New Year. May 2016 be more peaceful both at home and abroad.

Jingle Bells *continued*

During this time, he can be found sporadically in the census records in Medford, but he can also be traced to residences in San Francisco (1850-51), Savannah (1853-54 and 1857) and Boston (1857). Meanwhile, his wife Mille and their children remained in Medford until she died on 17 August 1856.

The question of where Pierpont's song was first written might be less important than where it was first performed. The song was published by Oliver Ditson and Co. of Boston in 1857 as "One Horse Open Sleigh," and it can now be confirmed that the first public performance of the song was at Ordway Hall in Boston by the blackface performer, Johnny Pell. When it was published by Ditson, Pierpont dedicated it to John P. Ordway, the founder of Ordway's Aeolian Minstrel Troupe, a detail that has often gone unnoticed. The song endured as part of a conventionalized catalog of blackface minstrel songs embracing the popularity of a sleigh riding culture in the Antebellum North. Nothing to do with Christmas or Thanksgiving until the twentieth century, "One Horse Open Sleigh," re-copyrighted as "Jingle Bells" in 1859, is an example of how local history can sometimes go sentimentally off-course.

In nineteenth-century Boston, sleighing was a mode of transportation that evolved not only to accommodate the climate, but also the urban development of a peninsular city surrounded by water and accessible by an isthmus known as the "neck" along what is now Washington Street. Commuters from smaller towns moved in and out of Boston for business along this road, or by bridges coming from the North. Louis-Antoine Jullien's "Sleigh Ride Polka", composed in Boston in 1854 and dedicated to the Boston City Guards, gives a light-hearted musical description of these kinds of rides.

New York Daily Times. 18 January 1854,

There is a new Polka, descriptive of a sleigh ride, and composed in honor of a Boston military company. Boston is a capital place for sleighing, and if M. Jullien has imparted to his polka the gayety and merriness of a ride on the 'Neck' he has done something worth hearing.

In a humorous commentary on sleigh riding published in *Bizarre Magazine*, the author describes how listening to Jullien's *Sleigh Polka* invokes feelings of the experience.

One feels the inspiration of a big sleigh into which you fancy yourself stowed with surroundings of feminine flesh and blood, or an enchant-

Jingle Bells *continued*

ing mélange of furs, cloaks, shawls, sighs, smiles, chatter, hand-squeezing, waist encirclings, stolen kisses, and attempts at stolen kisses, while high above the whole party in front sits the well muffled driver, urging onward at the highest speed his "team" of six fast horses. (Bizarre 271-72)

If speed, distance, and flirting were the essential qualities of a sleigh ride, then it is only natural that alcohol was also involved in the activity, and temperance societies began warning "look out for the combination of cold sleigh rides and hot punches."² Sleigh riding in the middle of the nineteenth century was known for a certain kind of youthful activity inhibited only by the snow banks into which the sleighs might crash. Songs and stories about sleigh riding inevitably conventionalized the exploits of a country sleigh ride to outer towns like Medford. Many songs of the period narrated the romance of a sleigh ride and the speed, amusement, and accidents involved in such activities. In the *Complete Catalogue of Sheet Music and Music Works* published by the Board of Trade in 1870, there are 67 songs with "sleigh" in the title. The most familiar, of course, is "One Horse Open Sleigh."

Pierpont wrote songs since at least 1852 for the singers of Ordway's Aeolians located in the Old Province House on Washington Street in Boston. This theatre specialized in Northern blackface minstrelsy, a musical review by white men that featured a blackface "Dandy." The tradition lampooned "upstart" blacks from the South who thought only of "courting, flashy clothes, new dances and their looks."³ In a 1946 article in the *Boston Globe*, Gladys Hoover makes the first claim of the song's origins in Medford when she wrote explicitly of Pierpont's tradition of writing "Songs for Minstrels." After listing some of his song catalog, she identified his songs as being in the "style of Stephen Foster" though lacking some of Foster's "grace." This polite euphemism for the unspoken blackface tradition associated with Foster seems to have enabled the localized history of the song to go unmentioned throughout the "Jingle Bell Wars."

Because James' first published song with Oliver Ditson and Co. was called "The Returned Californian" (1852), it has often been assumed that he left for California for the gold rush around 1850. Mrs. Otis Waterman, who has been "documented" as verifying his presence at the tavern in 1850 (according to the plaque on High Street) would have been 23 years old in 1850, while James would have been 28. The likelihood of this meeting at this date seems shaky, and we have no documented sources to verify this meeting, while we do have documented sources that he was in San Francisco. Newspaper advertisements locate James Pierpont, "Daguerreotype Artist", in San Francisco between March 1850 and May 1851. His studio over Woodruff's on Clay Street then burned down in

one of the city's great fires on 4 May 1851. Letters from San Francisco to his father confirm his residency there and, I argue, nullify Medford's claim that he wrote the song at the Simpson Tavern in 1850, although seven years pass until its first performance.⁴

On 2 March 1852, "The Returned Californian" premiered at Ordway Hall, which had newly opened in its location behind Washington Street "in the former Province House."⁵ Ordway's establishment was known for clean, family-oriented, middle-class entertainments with "Children under 10 admitted for half price" and "Colored persons admitted only to the gallery, with seats assigned to them." Pierpont continued to write songs for Ordway's Aeolians and in April, 1853, the ballad, "The Colored Coquette", published by Oliver Ditson became a regular song at Ordway Hall throughout in the 1853/54 season. The song, written, composed, and arranged by Pierpont was the first instance in which he used racialized burlesque ballads and ventriloquized "negro dialect." Other racially burlesqued ballads also connect Pierpont to the minstrel tradition including "Kitty Crow" (1853) and "Poor Elsie." (1854)

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² *The New World*, 12 October 1844, (IX:15) 469.

³ Toll, Robert.C. *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America*, 1977, pp. 68-69.

⁴ Having left his family in Medford, in a letter to John Pierpont Sr. on 1 March, 1851 from Sacramento City, James tells his father that he has been writing to his wife, "I have been a true husband." Located in the Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum.

⁵ See a plaque to the building at 333 Washington Street in Boston.

"One Horse Open Sleigh" re-titled "Jingle Bells" in 1859, narrated the romance, speed as well as the accidents inherent in the 19th Century's youthful passion for sleigh racing.





Imagined rendering of the Old Province House on Washington Street which became Ordway Hall.

“One Horse Open Sleigh” received its first professional performance as sung by Johnny Pell in Boston on Tuesday, 15 September 1857, one day before Oliver Ditson copyrighted the song. Nine days later on 24 September, James Pierpont married Eliza Purse in Savannah, so his presence at the opening remains unknown. Pell continued to perform “One Horse Open Sleigh” with Morris Bros., Pell & Huntley troupe even after they broke away from Ordway in early 1858. The billing of the song also continued to include the original title as late as 1861 even though the song was re-copyrighted as “Jingle Bells, or the One Horse Open Sleigh” by Oliver Ditson in 1859. It is unclear why Pierpont re-copyrighted the song under the new title for which we now associate it. Perhaps he was hoping to make more money, or perhaps he was beginning to separate himself from his musical friends in the North as he became a Southern sympathizer. By the Civil War, Pierpont published songs for the Southern cause such as: “We Conquer or Die” (1861), “Our Battle Flag” (1862), and “Strike for the South” (1863), and he even enlisted to fight in the Confederate Army.⁶

⁶ James Pierpont joined the First Georgia Cavalry (later the Fifth Georgia Cavalry) of the Confederacy and served from 1862-65.

Events Calendar

January: MHSM and Medford Public Library Fundraiser

Trivia Night at the Library

Saturday, January 16, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM, at the Medford Public Library, 111 High Street

Tickets are \$20.00 per person and include food, snacks, coffee, dessert and that warm fuzzy feeling that comes with supporting your local library and historical society. Brush up on your trivia, bring your friends, and don't be surprised if there are some questions about the books, authors you love, and our Medford history. There will also be raffles and other surprises! This event is sponsored by Salvatore's. There will be

a cash beer and wine bar, so all attendees must be age 21 and older. Trivia hosted by Kevin Richman.

Tickets on sale at the Library Information Desk and at Salvatore's restaurant, 55 High Street. They are also be available at the Medford Historical Society & Museum on Sundays between 12:00 PM and 4:00 PM.

Don't miss this opportunity to party at the Library. No peeking at reference books allowed!!!

Contact Barbara Kerr at the Library (bkerr@minilib.net.) or Susan Fedo at MHSM (SusanRFedo@gmail.com) if you would like to help.

February: Book Launch and Talk by Local Authors Medford Through Time

by Barbara Kerr and Patricia Saunders

Sunday, February 21, 7:00 PM

at MHSM, at 10 Governors Avenue

Medford has changed a great deal over the centuries. On February 21, join local authors Patty Saunders and Barbara Kerr for a sneak peek at their new book *Medford Through Time* which pairs vintage photos with modern images of the same place or subject. In addition to historic sites, you'll recognize some favorite twentieth-century hangouts.

March: Historical Book Presentation

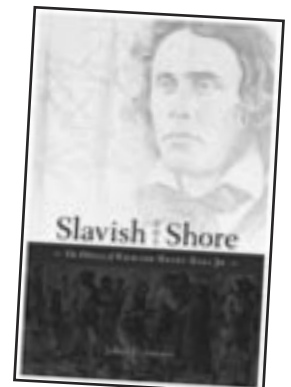
Jeffrey L. Amestoy, author of Slavish Shore:

The Odyssey of Richard Henry Dana, Jr.

Tuesday, March 29 at 7:00 PM, at Medford Public Library

In 1834, Harvard dropout Richard Henry Dana Jr.

sailed to California as a common seaman. The ship he sailed on, the brig *Pilgrim*, was built in the Medford shipyards of Sprague & James in 1825. Dana's account of the voyage, *Two Years Before the Mast*, quickly became an American classic. In later life, inspired by his maritime experience, Dana became an advocate for the disadvantaged. In this lecture based on his book *Slavish Shore*, author Jeffrey



Amestoy will tell the story of Dana's unflagging determination to fight injustice in the face of the Boston society in which he had been born and bred.

Amestoy is currently a Fellow at the Center for Public Leadership, Harvard Kennedy School.

He served eight terms as Vermont Attorney General, followed by his appointment as Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court.

May: Annual MHSM Tea Fundraiser
Mothers / Daughters / and Friends Tea
Saturday, May 7, 2:00 to 4:00 PM,
at 10 Governors Avenue

This year we will celebrate closer to Mother's Day and avoid the snowstorms that have been part of our highly successful past two Valentine's Day teas. We'll talk a little about the history of Mother's Day, and there will be raffles galore! Watch for the Spring Newsletter or visit our website for updates. If you would like to help this year, please contact Susan Fedo at SusanRFedo@gmail.com or Barbara Kerr at bkerr@minilib.net.

Live Theater at MHSM

Letters to Medford: A Play About the Past According to the Future by Kyna Hamill, directed by Wanda Strukus.
Late May (TBA) at 10 Governors Avenue
Tickets \$15 Adults; \$12 Students and Seniors

If you missed this charming show last October 2014, the show will be mounted again at the end of May 2016. Inspired by a letter to the future written by the Medford historian Reverend Charles Brooks in 1855, the play weaves together excerpts from historical and contemporary letters, and brings the past, present, and future together in a tale that is both a charming ghost story and a spirited debate about history and the future. When the spirits of Reverend Charles Brooks, Lydia Maria Child and Lucy Osgood, historical figures with ties to Medford, return to see how the future has turned out, they learn a thing or two from modern-day Medford teenagers who have their own strong opinions about the future.

Stay tuned for the Opening Night date. MHSM will host a gala opening to celebrate the 100th anniversary year of our building. You will meet the writer, director, and some of the actors. Dates TBA. Tickets \$30.

June, July, August:
Historical Wedding Dress Exhibit and Talk
Opening reception, Friday, June 10 at 7:00 PM
Exhibit hours: Sundays, June 12 through August 28
from noon to 4:00 PM, at 10 Governors Avenue

Everyone loves a wedding! The textile collection of the MHSM contains several lovely examples of 19th and 20th century wedding dresses. This summer, we will display our dresses and other examples of wedding fashion for your viewing pleasure. Our wedding celebration will include a lecture on wedding dresses by Karen Herbaugh of the Lowell Textile Museum (date TBA). Medford's own Dee Morris will also share some love stories of early Medford in new lecture entitled *Intense Feelings and Broken Hearts: Roman-*



The MHSM costume collection has several beautiful examples of 19th and 20th century wedding dresses.



tic Love in Early Medford (date TBA). If you would like to loan your wedding dress to the exhibit contact Barbara Kerr at bkerr@minilib.net.

Watch for additional program news (or any changes) on our website, www.medfordhistorical.org in our weekly Club News column in the Transcript, and in future Newsletters. If you do not already receive regular email updates, please send us your email at medfordhistorical@yahoo.com.

WANTED! VOLUNTEERS



Here are a few of the volunteer opportunities that are available now:

- Participate in examining and cataloging items from our collection
- Publicize events and raise public awareness of MHSM
- Host visitors during Sunday Open House
- Assist with the third grade class visits
- Assist at public events
- Shovel snow in the winter or tend the front yard in the summer
- Join in program planning & hosting events
- Small repairs and building maintenance

There's something for everyone. For more information, contact Kyna Hamill, volunteer coordinator at 617-869-0259 or kynahamill@gmail.com.

Boaters, enjoying a day out, have set up a tent and are enjoying a drink at the Upper Mystic Lake.



Your Medford Historical Society Newsletter

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