



## MHSM's House Marker Program Uncovers California Gold

For over 10 years MHSM has offered a House Marker Program. For \$195 (\$175 for members), the House Marker Team led by Will Tenney will research your house, provide a written history, and deliver a custom-made marker with the MHSM seal and the year the house was built.

Every house has a special history but sometimes our research takes an unexpected turn. Such is the case of 41 Warren Street and its connection to the California Gold Rush of 1848-1855. Captain Henry Smith retired and lived until his final days in this Warren Street home. He was a sea captain and gold rush adventurer. There's a second Medford connection to this story. The ship Captain Smith sailed around the Horn on his way to California was the *Edward Everett*.

The *Edward Everett* was named for a famous Massachusetts politician, ambassador, minister, President of Harvard and general Renaissance man. Everett married Medford's own Charlotte Gray Brooks, daughter of Peter Chardon Brooks. Not only did he secure a long and happy marriage but he also received the financial backing needed for his political career. Medford chose to name a street and a school after him. The school is gone, but our museum has a plaster bust of Edward Everett and the street remains.

### Henry Smith and the Edward Everett Part 1: Outbound - Medford to San Francisco

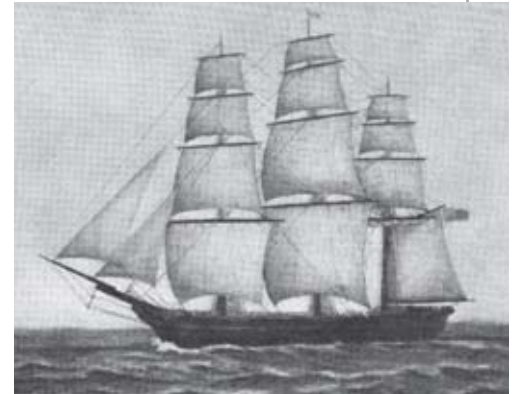
by Will Tenney

Captain Henry Smith is perhaps best known for his famous 1849 voyage. He captained the *Edward Everett*, a 622-ton ship built in Medford by James O. Curtis in 1843.

Henry Smith was born in Boston on April 18, 1806, son of Henry and Betsey Smith. When he mar-

ried Harriet M. Nourse of Boston on May 23, 1830, he was only 24 years old, yet his occupation was already listed as "Captain." He may or may not have known that his new wife descended from Rebecca Nourse, or Nurse, one of the supposed "witches" hung in Salem in 1692.

Smith's early sailing experience probably resulted from working the South American sailing routes. It was not uncommon for mariners to sail outbound as crew and return home as passengers. Records show him in both roles. On March 16, 1837, he arrived in Boston as a member of the crew on the brig "Black-Hawk" under Master J. P. Baker. On May 14, 1845, he was listed as "Capt. Henry Smith, Mariner," a passenger aboard the bark "Elizabeth Hall" of Boston under Master William Cobb.



Captains shared in the profits (or losses) of the voyages under their command. The profits could be enormous and Smith appeared to have been very successful. He may also have invested in and profited from the voyages of other ships.

In late 1848, a group of investors and adventurers banded together and formed "The Boston and California Trading and Mining Association." Their goal was to work the newly discovered gold fields of California. The group elected Captain Henry Smith to be the President of the Association, as well as the Captain of the ship purchased for the journey. According to the *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier* of January 10, 1849, the group consisted of: "merchants, tin plate workers, bakers, painters, engineers, mariners, jewelers, machinists, boat builders, farmers, five printers, blacksmiths, ship carpenters, house carpenters, boot and shoe makers, masons, clerks, founders, teamsters, doctors, hatters, geologists, tailors – two or more of each; and one surgical instrument maker, varnisher, furrier, glass blower, smelter, surgeon, barber, lawyer, editor, reporter, and coppersmith."

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**Edward Everett** *continued*

The *Edward Everett* left Boston on January 11, 1849 with 150 passengers.

**LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.**

**FOR CALIFORNIA.**—The ship *Edward Everett*, Capt. Henry Smith, belonging to the California Mining and Trading Company, cleared at this port yesterday, for San Francisco, California. She has one hundred and fifty passengers, and her manifest comprises one hundred and twenty-three articles of entry—mostly ship's stores.

Boston *Atlas*, Jan 10, 1849

Ship *Edward Everett*, owned by the Boston and California Mining and Trading Company, Capt. Smith, cleared yesterday for San Francisco, under the command of Capt. Henry Smith. She has one hundred and fifty in her company, and her manifest embraces one hundred and twenty-three articles of entry—all necessaries of life. The company had a present of a select library of books from Governor Everett of Harvard University.

Boston *Courier*, Jan 11, 1849

The ship *Edward Everett*, Capt. Smith, for San Francisco, has hauled out into the stream, with a large number of her passengers on board. Henry Smith, Captain of the ship, goes out also as President of the Association; William V. Wells, 1st mate; Thomas Bryant, 2d do.; L. D. Pike, 3d; T. J. Ware, 4th. The crew is composed of eighteen men, all of whom give their services as seamen for the passage. There are two cooks and three stewards. The Vice President of the Company is Timothy Rix, Esq.; Secretary, William B. Farwell; Directors—Enoch Jacobs, William A. Egery, John E. Dix, James L. Bates, E. P. Abbe, Abiel Carter, Lucius Flagg, J. C. Whipple.

Boston *Atlas*, Jan 12, 1849

In his book *Gold Dust* published in 1980, Donald Dale Jackson described the voyage:

*The Bostonians aboard the Edward Everett, still clinging to their Bibles and New England civilization, probably lived more comfortably than anyone else on the Cape Horn run. The organizers provisioned the ship with a dispensary, a board of health, a police force, and a weekly paper. They also thought of food and while men in other companies lived on salt pork and salt beef, the men of the Everett enjoyed such delicacies as cheese, potpie, apple sauce and plum pudding. They snacked between meals from a barrel of hardtack. To remind themselves of home the Boston men attached familiar names to the corridors between decks: Beacon Street, Ann Street, Riggers Row and North End. They educated each other in weekly lectures on geology and other scientific subjects. Two ministers took turns preaching on Sundays. On holidays and other special occasions, the company*

*enjoyed concerts by its own orchestra of four violins, four flutes, and several guitars.*

The idea of their own on-board newspaper was quite novel. It was likely the first attempt of its kind to include a "Press on Shipboard." Word of the voyage spread quickly around the country. On January 15, 1849, the *New Orleans Weekly Delta* printed the following:

*For California.*—The ship *Edward Everett*, belonging to the Boston and California Joint Stock Mining and Trading Company, shipped her crew on the 28th ult., consisting of sixteen men and three mates. The *Boston Transcript* says: The foremost men have all heretofore acted as mates. They go the voyage *gratis*, considering their services equivalent to the passage money. Besides these there are some eight or ten whaling captains and mates, who belong to the company. The ship is to be employed during the time the Company are at the mines, in conveying passengers from Panama to the Gold Region.

The company consists of 150 effective men, 76 of whom are mechanics. They are all to be well armed, each with a rifle and revolver, and accoutrements to act in case of emergency, against Indians or marauders.

Records tell us that the 174-day voyage went generally well. The ship stopped at Valparaiso, Chile around April 28 to replenish supplies. The company pulled into San Francisco Bay on July 6, but the harbor was already crowded with ships, so they sailed north a few miles to the newly established port of Benicia. Most of the company and crew departed for the gold fields but some stayed behind to assemble the sidewheel steamboat they brought with them. That the company had the foresight to bring the parts necessary to assemble a side-wheel steamboat is a testament to their careful planning.

We know of the first days of the crew in California thanks to Octavius Thorndike Howe who described what happened:

*The company had been advised to begin mining at Mokelumne Hill and soon after their arrival at Sacramento they took up their march for the gold fields. They had three six-mule teams for the baggage, and the men, armed with rifles and revolvers, marched by their side. After crossing the American River the heat became so oppressive that the guns were piled on the wagons and many of the party, faint and footsore, had to be carried also. With that ignorance characteristic of new arrivals in California they did not fill their canteens at the river and as the day wore on some became delirious from thirst. When at sundown they reached the river they were too exhausted to pitch tents and after drinking immoderately sank down on the ground to sleep the sleep of utter prostration. Some never recovered from this march. They finally reached*

*the mines and began work, but the results were not favorable. Some were lazy, some sick, and it was voted to disband.*

On August 24, William V. Wells, who had been appointed captain of the little steamer brought out from Boston by the company and later was a mayor of San Francisco, wrote from Benecia:

*I have only a few minutes to tell you we are alive and well. The Company has dissolved. The votes of a majority in the mines did it. Being among those engaged in transporting provisions up by boat I did not hear of it until now. I am at present bound up to join L— at the mines. We are to operate together while the mining season lasts. The dividend will amount to about \$175 per man. The company dissolved after about two days' digging. One-half of them would not work. I made one trip up to Sacramento as Captain of the Pioneer, the first steamer to run on the river. We have sold her to Simmons and Hutchinson for \$6000. The ship will not fetch more than \$15,000; I can go Captain of her for \$300 a month if I wish.*

After the vote to disband, the members of the company dispersed. Some raised the money and went home. Some remained in San Francisco or Sacramento. A large number tried mining on the Feather River and were fairly successful but the cost of living ate up all the profits. Then chills and fever broke out and confined half the party to the camp. The *Edward Everett* was finally sold for eleven thousand dollars. The chaplain of the *Edward Everett*, the Rev. Mr. Benton, preached a farewell sermon to the company August 5, and then took charge of a church in Sacramento.

Although the fate of the Boston and California Company may seem tragic, they fared better than many of the companies that followed. They reached California without incident, in perfect health and at small expense, no doubt because of the experience and skill of Captain Smith in planning and executing a long voyage. But when it came time to mine, their expectations were unrealistic and they lacked knowledge of what was needed to mine successfully. In retrospect it is not surprising that group cohesion failed when one hundred and fifty men, soft from their long voyage, suddenly faced the hardest of manual labor and exposure to the worst climatic conditions. They also had no luck at the mines. Working less than two miles away, a common sailor from the *Edward Everett* took out more than ten thousand dollars worth of gold dust in just a few days.

Life in California was never what the company expected. On September 17, 1849, The *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier* published the following:

#### **Letter from a Passenger in the Edward Everett.**

The following is an extract from a letter written by a member of the 'Boston and California Mining and Trading Co,' who sailed in Jan, in the *Edward Everett*, dated at San Francisco, July 9:

*"The news here is cheering. The city is flooded with gold. Everything is high except dry goods, flour and provisions. Salt beef is \$3 per bbl, flour \$5 to \$8; clothing, cheaper than in Boston. Rents high; land \$35 per foot. For a spot to pitch a tent upon, you must pay \$1800 to \$2000 per year. The Parker hotel rents for \$150,000 a year. Board \$21 per week; washing \$6.00 per dozen. The reason that board is so high is because it is so difficult to get any one to do the cooking. Milk 50 cts per quart; butter \$1.50 per pound. Wages from \$16 to \$22 per day. Lumber \$300 to \$450 per M. These are the prices if you wish to buy. If to sell they are less. We have been offered \$300 per M for our lumber. Saleratus [soda bread or biscuits] is very high. The brig Forrest sold what cost \$3 tor \$187. If you were not so well acquainted with me, you would not believe these stories.*

*Several members of our company have had offers of \$250 to \$500 per month, to stop in the city, but they have refused. Money appears to be of no account. You can hardly pass a person that has not his thousands in gold carried in a small bag.*

*Yesterday I saw a man just from the mines. He had with him a bag containing about \$7000. I inquired of him how long he was in getting it, and he said 'in one week.' Some of the pieces were as large as a medium sized bean, and from that down to dust, and perfectly clean. I have seen a great many breast pins made of a lump of gold just as it came from the mines, weighing from two to three ounces. Gamblers are doing a great business. I went into several of their houses, and saw a man lose \$20,000 in one evening. After losing it he very quietly said, 'Well, I shall have to go up to the mines again.' "*

The *Edward Everett* was put up for sale and quickly sold. The purchaser of the *Edward Everett* was Dr. Abbe of Boston, the same gentleman who along with Smith, donated bibles to all the men on their departure. A return voyage was arranged, advertisements placed for passengers, and a large group of travelers signed on, many of whom were injured, sick, discouraged, or financially ruined. The *Boston Courier* from 20 September, 1849 reported that the company had broken up and the *Edward Everett* had been sold for \$11,000. The ship left Boston with 150 passengers and returned a year later with 200, although the return trip occasioned more challenges.

Stay tuned for Part two in the next MHSM Newsletter to learn what happens on its way back to Boston.

## President's Overview: A New Look at 10 Governors Avenue

by John Anderson



The building has been repainted! But there's a lot more to talk about. First, thank you Sue Gerould for the color scheme which the Board approved a few months ago. The building has been gray for over 15 years. Budget concerns and the need for more pressing repairs held us up.

We had significant problems with the Stucco exterior and it took a long time to find a qualified person for a reasonable price. The mason had his work cut out for him as the pictures show. This is just one of many areas he repaired.



Before

Changes inside are at least as significant. The Pandemic forced us to close the building a year and a half ago. We had to adapt when it became clear this was a long-term problem. We shifted all our events online which actually boosted attendance. We miss the refreshments and fellowship! But the closure gave us the opportunity to do major improvements inside.

In 2018, we received a Community Preservation Grant to install a new gas heating system integrated with central A/C. Our two AC units (one upstairs and one in the main hall) were old and really couldn't keep up. The project involved running a gas line into the building and all new equipment and ductwork in the basement and entry hall. The project was delayed because of a National Grid work stoppage in 2018 and the explosion in Lawrence, resulting in a huge backlog of high priority work. Once we could start, most of the space in the



basement needed to be emptied. Everything in the bathroom, vestibule and entrance area had to be completely protected or moved into the main hall. It took a massive volunteer effort to do all this. Of course, the collection volunteers ("The Tuesday Team") saw this as an opportunity to re-arrange, sort, and clean everything. Once the HVAC project was complete, volunteers cleaned and repainted the basement collection storage room and converted the former small "workroom" into a room where our newspaper collection and less frequently used reference materials can be stored and reviewed. This is actually the culmination of an effort that started 15 years ago. Here are pictures from 2006 and today.

After

Before



Before



After



The Community Preservation Grant also included funds to refurbish the 2nd floor including insulation. Similar to many projects in older buildings, this one grew in scope once the walls were opened up. But first, everything needed to be packed up and moved. This picture shows just a fraction of what needed to be packed and moved downstairs.

Once the upstairs room was empty, it was not a pretty picture! The dirty yellow flimsy cardboard-like walls had stains and peeling paint from decades old problems. Black, sticky stains on some of the surfaces probably dated from the smoky

fire of 1947! The original plan was to take down the crumbling ceiling, remove the cardboard-like walls, then insulate and put up plaster. But, the cardboard walls were attached to thin strapping nailed directly to the masonry walls so the entire room needed to be re-framed to allow space for the insulation and to provide something solid to support the plasterboard.

Before



After



Before



PM 4:16 JAN/ 4/2021

## President's Message *continued*

Since there was no insulation at all on the second floor, we now understand why we needed fans in the summer and space heaters in the winter. Once the filing cabinets were removed, there were islands of a different color in the middle of the floor. Years ago, the floor was painted without moving all the furniture.

Next, the walls and ceiling went out the back window (literally)! Foam insulation was sprayed on the walls and ceiling, then plaster and paint. The floor was refinished. We now ask people to take their shoes off when they come upstairs.

As usual, the chore of moving everything provided an opportunity to "build back better" if you'll pardon the political riff. We emptied all the good file cabinets and cleaned them. The ones in poor condition or that didn't fit were replaced. Bookcases were taken apart and cleaned. Furniture was repaired, cleaned or painted as needed. Now that the walls were a bit thicker, the old desk wouldn't go up the stairs, so it was replaced with a built-in. Most dramatic of all, we have all new lighting and wall sockets. I removed a bucket full of unsightly old wires that ran along the ceilings and the outside of the interior walls in the main hall and other first floor rooms! Another 30 feet of electrical conduit that ran on the outside of the building is gone too.

There are so many volunteers to thank! The heavy lifters, haulers, cleaners, and painters included: Sue Gerould, Will Tenney, Eric Menn, Luke Pomorski, and Heather Champigny

MHSM is not just a building! MHSM programs have continued using Zoom with increased success. Meg Bowen has captured all the email addresses of the hundreds of new people who attended one or more of our programs. This all happened because Susan Fedo and the Program Committee (Beth Hayes, Laura Duggan, Meg Bowen, Martha Reagan, Patricia Saunders, and Nancy White) have continued their work planning events, finding speakers and applying for grants to fund their efforts. Kyna Hamill continues to promote us online using our website, facebook page and occasional email blasts. Even book store sales have been a bit astonishing, due to unsolicited online inquiries! The "Tuesday Team" collection people including Martha Reagan, Sue Gerould, Heather Champigny, Sandy Lawrence, Roseann Zumbo, Eric Menn, Charlotte Swartz, and me have continued working at home entering inventory data and transcribing documents. We have also worked in the building in very small groups. At this point every paper document and historical object has been touched, sorted, and inventoried in computers!

**Given the current situation, it's important that we can reach you by email.** We may need to adjust our schedules as things change. If you haven't been receiving our occasional emails, please email me at [JWA02155@yahoo.com](mailto:JWA02155@yahoo.com) and I'll make sure you're on the list.

Looking forward to seeing you in person as soon as we can and best wishes and sincere thanks. —John Anderson



## MHSM Events Calendar

All programs presented via Zoom. Details and registration information on the events tab at [www.medfordhistorical.org](http://www.medfordhistorical.org).

### **Crossroads in Community: What "Then" Says to Us "Now"**

*Co-sponsored by the West Medford Community Center, the Medford Historical Society & Museum, and the Royall House and Slave Quarters.*

Join three of Medford's signature cultural organizations for a powerful series of conversations, explorations, and perspectives on the convergence of neighborhood, race, legacy, equity, social justice, and change. Follow this trio of Zoom presentations over the course of three evenings as we highlight aspects of Medford's dynamic Black history from colonial times to the current day.

**Thursday, October 21, 7:00-8:30 PM**

### **Royall House and Slave Quarters Virtual Tour: A View of the African American Presence in Colonial Medford**

To quote Executive Director Kyera Singleton, "The Royall House and Slave Quarters is a museum that seeks not only to get the history of slavery right, but also to function as a site of memory." This virtual tour and discussion will give viewers an opportunity to look, listen, and learn about an important piece of Medford's Black history that still resonates today.

**Friday, October 29, 7:00-8:30 PM**

### **West Medford, Then and Now: A Roundtable Conversation with Members of the Local Community**

Long-time West Medfordite Neil Osborne joins a diverse group of residents in an important discussion of the neighborhood's past, present, and future. The provocative round table conversation hopes to hold a mirror up to the city-wide issues of culture, gentrification, community preservation, social justice, diversity, and the evolution of neighborhoods over time.

**Friday, November 5, 7:00-8:30 PM**

### **Pride and Poetry of the Ville: An Evening with Medford's Poet Laureate and Friends**

Medford's inaugural Poet Laureate and local favorite son Terry E. Carter is joined by several artistic comrades and fellow poets in a savory artistic salute to the historic and dynamic community of West Medford. Carter and friends will explore the unique culture, continuity, and challenge of change to this vibrant Medford neighborhood.

*This series is supported in part by a grant from the Medford Arts Council, a local commission that is supported by the Mass Cultural Council and the City of Medford.*



## History Book Group 2021 via Zoom

### **Theme for Fall 2021: "Lives Lived"**

Co-sponsored by the Medford Historical Society & Museum and the Friends of the Medford Public Library. We will gather via Zoom. Register for these events, on the MHSM website [www.medfordhistorical.org](http://www.medfordhistorical.org) events page and the zoom link will be sent. Books for each session will be available at the Library at the beginning of the previous month. Call the Library at 781-395-7950 to have a copy checked out to you for no-contact pickup or if you need assistance registering.

**Wednesday, October 20, 7:00 PM**

### **The Collector of Lives: Giorgio Vasari and the Invention of Art 2017, led by Kyna Hamill**

In this book by Ingrid Rowland and Noah Charney, we learn about the achievements of Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), a sculptor, painter, architect, writer, and scholar, best known for his new genre of artist biography entitled the Lives of the Artists (1550).

Kyna Hamill is a volunteer with MHSM and is the Director of the Core Curriculum at Boston University and runs a "Core in Florence" program each winter for students.

**Wednesday, November 17, 7:00 PM**

### **The Education of Henry Adams, by Henry Adams 1907/1918, led by Rich Carle**

In this autobiography by Henry Adams (1838-1918), we hear a first-hand critique of 19th-century educational theory and practice in America. Adams also has a Medford connection as the grandson of Peter Chardon Brooks (1767-1849), one of the 100 richest men in the country when he died. Brooks lived in Boston but had a summer home in Medford, and is now buried in Oak Grove Cemetery. The book is available for us from the library, and it is also a free downloadable book on Kindle.

Rich Carle is an active Medford retiree, avid history book reader, and has been a frequent participant in MHSM/Library Book Groups.

### **Special Lecture:**

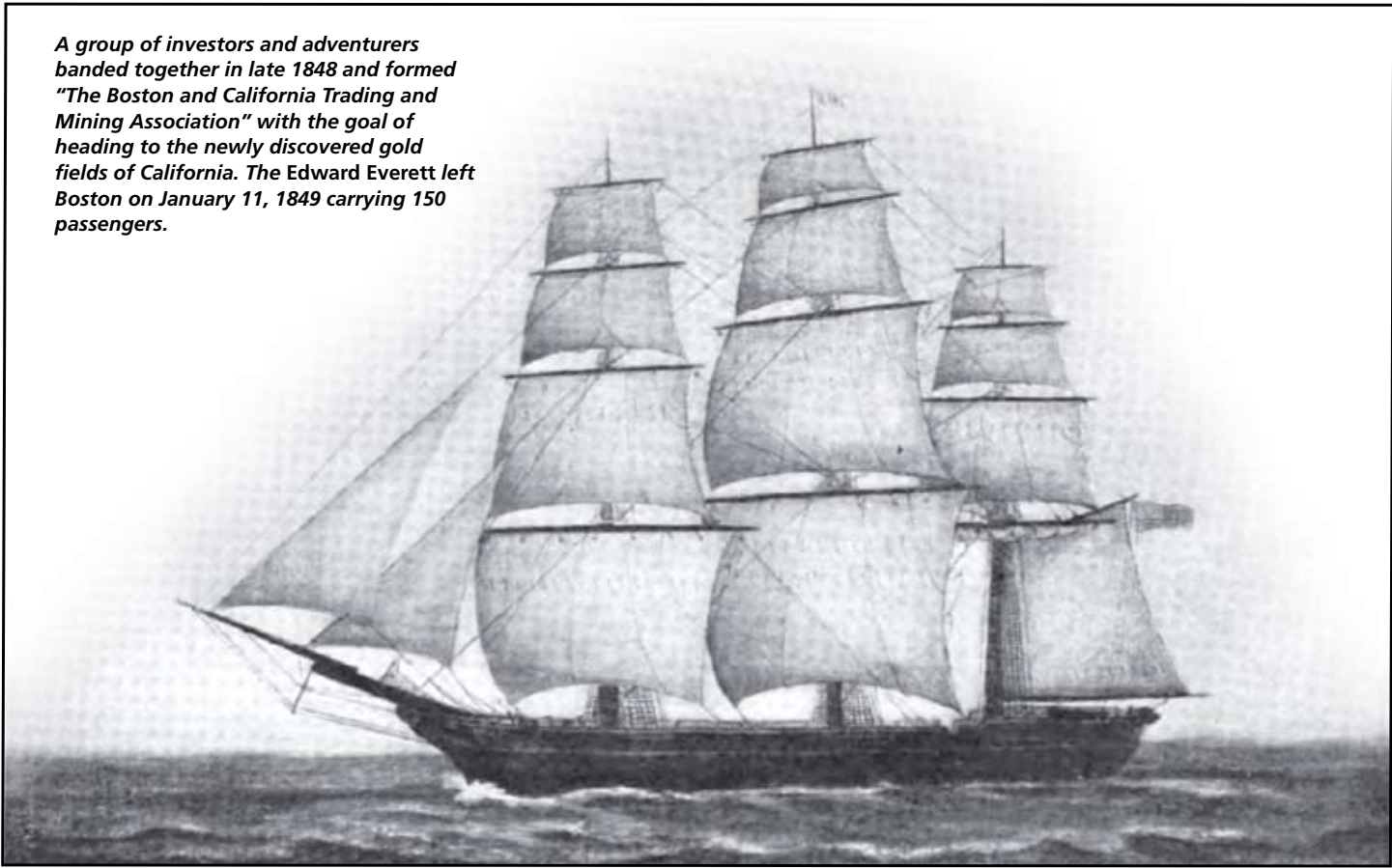
**Wednesday, December 8, 7:00 PM**

### **Anthony Sammarco with his new book The Other Thin Line: Washington Street, From Scollay Square to the Combat Zone**

*The Other Red Line* is a fascinating glimpse into the adult entertainment districts of twentieth-century Boston. Watch for addition information and registration information in future *What's Happening at MHSM* emails and on our MHSM website, [www.medfordhistorical.org](http://www.medfordhistorical.org). If you haven't been receiving our occasional emails, please email [jwa02155@yahoo.com](mailto:jwa02155@yahoo.com) to join the list.

Co-sponsored with the Friends of the Charlotte and William Medford Public Library.

*A group of investors and adventurers banded together in late 1848 and formed "The Boston and California Trading and Mining Association" with the goal of heading to the newly discovered gold fields of California. The Edward Everett left Boston on January 11, 1849 carrying 150 passengers.*



***Your Medford Historical Society Newsletter***

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM**  
10 Governors Avenue  
Medford, MA 02155

