



President's Overview

by John Anderson



March is Women's History Month and that will be the focus of this Newsletter. From the beginning, women have always played an essential role at the Society. Four of the nine founding members signing our Constitution in 1896 were women. Examining our "Register" publications (1896-1943) clearly reveals the active role women have played in the organization. Although the top officers were predominately men, women have done most of the committee work.

In this issue, we have an article by Medford resident Phil Primack about a remarkable lady whose diaries reveal the transitions in gender roles that gathered momentum in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Phil's research, now a book "Put it Down on Paper" will be the topic of discussion at an upcoming book talk at the Medford Library.

Lifelong MHSM member and former curator of manuscripts at the Harvard Radcliffe Schlesinger Library of women's history, Eva Moseley has recently published her autobiography, "Skirting History." It chronicles her life - birth in Vienna in 1931, family flight to New York to escape the Holocaust, subsequent education, and, as an adult, life in Macao, Hong Kong, England and

continued page 2



Journaling Through History: Mary Folsom Blair and Changing Times for Women

by Phil Primack

Medford Historical Society & Museum and the Medford Public Library are co-hosting a talk at 7 p.m. on March 16 by Medford writer Phil Primack about his decades-long search to track down the life and writings of an otherwise little-known woman from whose estate he purchased land in 1974. This article is adapted from 'Put It Down on Paper' – The Words and Life of Mary Folsom Blair: A Fifty-Year Search (Loom Press). Phil's book is about her and his journey.

As the 20th century dawned, women were experiencing new roles, challenges, and opportunities. The words and life of Mary Folsom Blair, who was born in 1881 and spent most of her life teaching in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, reflect that era as well as "the pain and sorrow this world holds for a woman," as she wrote in her journal.

In 1973, Mary Folsom Blair was nothing more than a name on a listing sheet when I bought

her Epping, New Hampshire land. But I soon began to hear things about her. Active Quaker. Real nature lover. Interesting teacher. I spent most of my professional life as a reporter and my ink-stained wretch bones began to twitch. Little did I know that I would spend four decades tracking down Mary's life, loves, words, and work.

Mary Evelyn Folsom was born on July 8, 1881, in Epping, the youngest child of Thomas Charles Folsom and Mary Bickford Folsom. Mary's forebears tended to live long lives, as she would herself; Mary's own and her inherited recollections spanned the arc of American history, from just after the revolution through the presidency of Richard Nixon.

Mary's maternal lineage also ran deep. Her application for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution cites a Bickford ancestor, John Pease, who "gave material aid to the colonists during the war with Great Britain" and was "a member of

continued page 2

Society Officers

President **John Anderson**

Vice President **Will Tenney**

Treasurer **Vacant**

Assistant Treasurer **Joan Tolson**

Recording Secretary **Meg Bowen**

Corresponding Secretary

Anne Marie Gallagher

Director of Collections

Heather Champigny

Directors at Large

Susan Gerould

Charlotte Scuderi

Martha Reagan

Jay Stott

Mary Folsom Blair *continued*

Col Nicholas Gilman's Company raised to reinforce the Northern Continental army."

Mary's journals reveal the fine writing of a sharp and insightful intellect. She entered adulthood as the "New Woman" began to emerge. "By the last decades of the nineteenth century, unexpected and unprecedented changes and opportunities had altered the facts of women's lives," wrote scholar Loralee MacPike in 1989. Less restricted by Victorian norms, this New Woman could imagine and even pursue a life beyond the confines of domesticity and family.

Like many late nineteenth-century women, Mary used her journal to help navigate that changing world.

The bicycle with two equal sized wheels had become an enormous cultural and political force, and an emblem of women's rights at the end of the 19th century. Mary made sure she got one as soon as she could.



Her entries track her growth as she raised questions and expressed thoughts otherwise kept private from society and certainly from her family.

Mary's first entry, which she wrote when she was 15 in 1897 and living with her older sister in Charlestown, NH, reflected the carefree life of a teenager enjoying a stream of social events ("I had a partner for every dance and danced them all but two."). As life became more complex, the entries became more reflective, at times bitter. A life turning point – from carefree child to more somber young woman – came with the sudden deaths of her sister and two girlhood classmates, upending Mary's comfortable world and shaking her faith.

Bitterness also grew from challenges to her classroom ways, many of them decades ahead of the school hierarchy and norms of the era. "With me, discontent with my own lot, anger because I can not do the things I would and have to do the thing that I would not, covers such a pit of darkness that I am half afraid to take the lid off and look within," she wrote in 1904.

Typical of the era, Mary was 19 with only a secondary education when she began teaching in the same schoolhouse she attended as a girl, but she was already expanding her role beyond reading and writing. Hungry students, she knew, do not learn, so she kept stew brewing on the wood stove. Her annual school registers reflected tough times. For one week in 1918, "no school on account of epidemic". The struggles of families in this rural village were seen in Mary's attendance log for 1920-1921. Reasons for absences included: "Mother sick." "No Rubbers" "No Clean Clothes" "Chicken Pox" "Fear of Contagion." In 1923, two students missed classes because of Whooping Cough; another was out "watching cows." But when I interviewed them when they were in their 70s and 80s, her former students recalled Mary with respect and lasting appreciation.

Mary's journals and correspondence reflected contemporary events. One startling example is an October 18, 1898, letter from a young beau, Will Smith, who was stationed as an Army ambulance driver at Camp Wheeler in Huntsville, AL. Among the units recovering in Huntsville from the just-completed

President's Message *continued*

New England. Activism has been and continues to be a major theme of her life. I first met her during the Nuclear Freeze movement of the 1980s and to this day she continues working to promote justice for Palestinians, reduced population growth, green burials, and civil rights for all.

Other newsletter offerings include:

- Re-launch of our popular House Marker Program
- Announcement of online access to our Municipal records

- The rescue of a monument to Medford's Revolutionary War hero Sarah Bradlee Fulton. It has been moved from obscurity in the DPW yard to a prominent new location.
- Upcoming Programs for late winter and spring, thanks to our very creative Events Committee – all women, I might add!

It's the many contributions from members of their time and money that keeps us going. As always, thank you for your continued support.

Family and Quakerism were bedrock for Mary, but the longest lasting and most impactful piece of her life was as a teacher. This is the West Epping school in the 1940s. Still standing, though now as a private residence, the school was around the corner from the Quaker Meeting House.



Spanish-American War was the 10th Calvary, one of four Black regular Army regiments known as the Buffalo soldiers. Members of the white 16th Calvary got into a skirmish with the Black soldiers almost as soon as the latter arrived in Huntsville.

Will's letter offered this son of a New Hampshire farmer's first-hand account of one of the many ignoble moments of American racial history.

There were 11 men shot and three killed. I was down to the depot and not fifty feet from the fray in an ambulance. I tell you the bullets whizzed one went straight through the Ambulance. ... We put [them] into the ambulance and brought them to the hospital. One of them said to the driver that he was dieing. The driver told him he could not help it and he died about five minutes after... Well I guess I have told you enough of army life and won't cause you to have the nightmares although I confess I had funny dreams that night myself.

Will's experience likely contributed to his alcoholism, which so troubled Mary and eventually was a factor in his death. Today, he would probably be diagnosed with PTSD.

Mary went on to have deep relationships with two women, especially with Anne Reed, which my book explores at length. But Anne ended up marrying a man she met – cruel irony – at Mary's lakeside bungalow -- and married and moved to Arkansas, leaving Mary convinced of her fate as "spinster that was, and is, and ever more shall be! ... I'd even try loving some man if I could if it would do any good and I was sure ... he was decent enough so I wouldn't feel ashamed of him. But I haven't seen anyone I thought ideal enough for such medicinal purposes this many a long day."

But in 1915, at the age of 36, Mary did meet a suitable man, Edmond Blair, whom she met while skating in MA in 1915, a year after Anne moved to Arkansas and two years after Mary spent her one year of college as a "special student" at Radcliffe.

Folsom family members were not happy about Yankee Quaker Mary's love for French-Canadian

Catholic Edmond, as Mary's nephew made clear in a 1916 letter: "I read your letter with great interest when I read about the man. But don't tell me he belongs to that heathen set!! If he does – you know what I think of him."

Religion was not the only cloud over their relationship; so was the looming draft as World War I raged in Europe. Writing to Mary on April 12, 1917, Edmond was torn between patriotic duty and his love of Mary as he saw local men enlist.

I felt very funny as the train pulled out of the station... It was not because I thought of the actual horror of actual combat, the bursting of shrapnell. The fumes of poisonous gas, the deadly curtain of fire or the dreadful liquid fire. ... My dear I pray that this awful thing that is going on will come to an end and that peace shall again be restored and save many young lives and broken hearts.

Edmond managed to avoid the draft by securing work at the Portsmouth Navy Yard. Mary married her "hero on ice," in 1918 – with no Folsom family members present – and Mary spent the rest of her life in Epping, teaching until 1958 in her old school house. She was also active in 4-H and other get-kids-outdoors efforts and wrote and directed her students and community in historic pageants, one of which was recorded by the BBC in 1945. She also struggled to keep alive the West Epping Quaker Meeting; her great grandfather was Epping's first Quaker.

In 1902, Mary noted how her journal had become her confidante. "I want to talk to someone dreadfully," she wrote. "I want to see the pros and cons set down like little tin warriors in a mimic battle. And there is no one that I can or will talk to. Shall I put it down on paper? Yes I will. It may be that I shall regret putting anything down in black and white for folks to read when I am dust and ashes."

I pondered those words as I researched and wrote about Mary. But everyone I met – family, friends, former students, and others familiar with Mary – encouraged me. I do not think that Mary would regret the record of her words and life.

House Histories and Fascinating Finds

Medford Historical Society & Museum Board Member Will Tenney has been the primary house history volunteer researcher for the Historical House Marker Program for the past five years or so. At the Medford Public Library on the evening of January 12, 2023, he presented a brief overview of the process he goes through and listed some of the resources he uses to research the history of houses here in Medford. Then he introduced a fascinating character he had found while researching a property, a larger-than-

life nineteenth-century self-made man who left quite a legacy here in Medford, a person almost no one knows anything about.

If you missed the lecture in person, a video of his presentation and a copy of the accompanying handout can be found in the Events section on the MHSM website. For convenience, point your smart phone at the this QR code:



Historic House Marker Program Restarted

After a hiatus of almost a year, the Medford Historical Society & Museum is delighted to announce that the Historical House Marker Program is back up and running.

The Historical House Marker Program is a community pride outreach effort sponsored by the Medford Historical Society & Museum and sanctioned by the Medford Historical Commission to celebrate the historical heritage we enjoy and want to preserve in Medford.

Besides a date, each custom-made marker displays the official logo of the Medford Historical Society & Museum. House markers measure 11 inches high



by 14 inches wide, with a graceful cove molding at the edge. They are built to withstand outdoor conditions, painted white with black lettering on weather-resistant board. Holes are pre-drilled and screws are provided for installation.

Markers with their accompanying house history cost \$295 for Society members and \$320 for non-members which includes a free, one year membership to the Society. Proceeds from the marker program will support the Society's ongoing programming and conservation efforts. Participation in the marker program does not imply or impose any restrictions on the property.

For more information or to download an application, go to the MHSM website or point your smart phone with this QR code:



Medford Municipal Records Collection Now Online

by Will Tenney

In the collection of reference materials at the Medford Historical Society & Museum are a number of valuable resources for researchers. The most heavily used titles are the collection of municipal records, often used by researchers investigating names and addresses of former Medford residents.

Many of the volumes were printed on poor quality paper, and every time one of these delicate books is opened and searched, small bits of paper can fall off, potentially losing pieces of Medford's history. To mitigate this situation, over the past two and a half years, over one hundred volumes of these reference books (so far) have been scanned and converted to a searchable digital format. They can now be found on the MHSM website as well as on the in-house computers. The delicate originals can remain on the shelves undisturbed.

The original printed versions of these documents did not have indexes, making searching for specific information sometimes difficult. These scanned volumes now can be searched for a name, a street, an occupation, or any other search criterion.

The Medford Municipal Records Collection consists of the following categories: Directories, Annual Reports, and Tax Lists.

Directories

These directories list the inhabitants (usually only males until about 1920), the institutions, manufacturers, business firms, societies, churches, etc. in Medford. MHSM has only a select few of these directories in its collection. Currently we have digitized the following: 1870, 1885, 1890, 1893, and 1895 with several more

to come over the next several months. However, some digitized Medford Directories not in the MHSM collection are made available only on the computers in the reading room at MHSM (but not online) as a courtesy to researchers, including: 1868, 1869, 1872-73, 1874-75, 1876-77, 1878-79, 1880, 1886, 1888.

Annual Reports

For the years 1838-1892, these documents consist of municipal expenses, receipts, annual reports, and lists of taxpayers and taxes assessed. A few years (1875, 1880, 1885, and 1890) also include extensive lists of the properties owned (including locations, square footage, basic property descriptions) and the taxes paid by each taxpayer.

After 1846, comprehensive Annual Reports of the different departments and commissions were included with the financial statements in one annual volume.

Currently, MHSM has scanned and digitized Annual Report volumes from 1838 to 1916, with more being added as they are completed.

Poll Tax Lists / Lists of Persons

After Medford became a City in 1892, a separate annual report was published listing the names of those paying a "poll tax" or "head tax," a standard tax which was levied on every adult male resident. It had nothing to do with the ability to vote. Poll tax payers were listed by Precinct in 1892 and by Ward starting in 1893. These books are sometimes known as the "Medford List of Persons" books.

Starting in 1921, the books no longer listed poll taxes paid only by men; women were then also listed and the title of the document was changed to "Persons Listed as Residents of Medford."

Currently, MHSM has scanned and digitized the following volumes: 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1899, 1903, 1905, 1913, and 1915, with more to come. Volumes missing from the MHSM collection can be found on the shelves of the Medford Public Library in the Local History Room.

How to Use These Records

Using the digital versions of documents in the MHSM collection, a researcher is now able to perform searches that were not possible before. For example, in the past, using the Directories, it was a fairly simple task to look up in the book a given person by name. But suppose one wanted to know who else lived on that person's street? That kind of research could not be performed with the original printed books without tremendous, painstaking, and time-consuming effort. Now, one can perform a search for the name of the street and see all of the results. Similarly, one can do a search for all the people engaged in a particular occupation, since each resident's occupation was listed in these books. For example, if one wanted to get a listing of all of the "gold beaters" in Medford in 1885, it is now a simple search.



The Annual Reports offer a researcher a wonderful view into 19th and early 20th century life. There is a wealth of information in these volumes, information about how the town grew, when streets were first established, what the town paid for (and to whom). For example, you can discover how much the town was paid by a pig farmer in Woburn to haul away our household wet garbage ("house offal"), how much the city paid for cigars supplied at meetings of the Board of Aldermen, how many cases of whooping cough there were in a given year, or how many cows (258) and pigs (800! Who knew?) were living in Medford in 1914. Some of the annual reports of the various departments make fascinating reading, a real peek at how our town was run.

The Tax Lists / List of Persons, originally part of the Annual Reports, offer a researcher clues about when a taxpayer might have erected a house in Medford, indicated by when his tax went up from a simple head tax to a more substantial sum indicating that he now had some property.

So suppose one is researching their ancestor who they believe lived in Medford in the late 19th century. Using these various documents, it is possible to find information about this person as well as some details about his life, his occupation, where he lived, and whether the town paid him to perform a service or supply a product to the town.

And of course, using the MHSM website on the Internet, one can access these files any time, any place, whether one is here in Medford or in California or in Prague, dressed for the day or still in pajamas.

All of these documents may be found on the in-house computers at 10 Governors Avenue, To find the Medford Municipal Records Collection on the MHSM website, point your smart phone at this QR code:



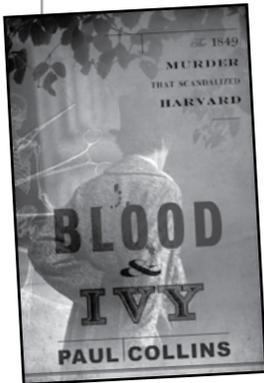
MHSM Events Calendar

All events will take place at Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library

MARCH

History Book Club: Blood & Ivy – Part 1: The 1894 Murder That Scandalized Harvard by Paul Collins, Discussion Leader: Nancy Denise White

Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 7:00 PM



Join us to discuss *Blood & Ivy*, a compelling true-crime story of scandal and murder at America's most celebrated university. On November 23, 1849, one of the Boston's richest men simply vanished. Dr. George Parkman, a Brahmin who owned much of Boston's West End, was last seen visiting Harvard Medical School. Police scoured city tenements and the harbor, and offered hefty rewards for leads for the whereabouts of Dr. Parkman. But one Harvard janitor held a much darker suspicion: that Dr. Parkman had never left the Medical School building alive. His shocking discoveries in a chemistry professor's laboratory engulfed America in one of its most infamous trials: *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. John White Webster*. It became a landmark case in the use of medical forensics and the meaning of reasonable doubt. Join us on April 13th when we discuss the trial and the legal principles it established!

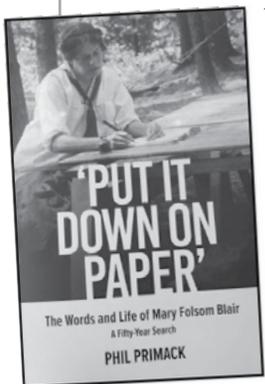
During the book discussion, we will examine the character of the victim, the accused, and the hero, the police investigation and compare the 19th century investigation methods to contemporary methods. Intertwined in the story are characters and families you may be familiar with including writer Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Co-sponsored by Medford Historical Society and Museum and Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library. FREE, Sign up www.medfordhistorical.org/events

Co-sponsored by Medford Historical Society and Museum and Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library. FREE, Sign up www.medfordhistorical.org/events

Journaling Through History: Mary Folsom Blair and Changing Times for Women, Speaker: Phil Primack

Thursday, March 16, 2023, 3, 7:00 PM



When Medford writer Phil Primack, purchased land in 1974, Mary Folsom Blair was just the name on the deed. Over the next four decades, Primack dedicated himself to researching the life of this fascinating woman. The life and words of Mary Folsom Blair, who was born in 1881 and spent her life teaching in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, reflect that era.

After his talk and discussion, Phil will be available to sign copies of his new book,

Put It Down on Paper: The Words and Life of Mary Folsom Blair – A Fifty-Year Search (Loom Press, 2022). Co-sponsored by MHSM. Register through the Library Calendar at: www.medfordlibrary.org/events

A Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library Program

Getting to Know Amelia Earhart, Speaker: Melanie Perkins McLaughlin, Ed.M

Thursday, March 23, 2023, 7:00 PM

An inside perspective from Medford School Committee member, Melanie McLaughlin, who was the Associate Producer on the PBS American Experience Amelia Earhart biography, "The Price of Courage". The program will include a screening of the 60-minute documentary as well as a presentation on the research involved including rare archival footage and a question-and answer period.



Melanie Perkins McLaughlin, Ed.M. is an Emmy-award winning investigative filmmaker with over 20 years' experience in broadcast media production. Her life's work has been as an advocate for social justice. Melanie has worked on films for PBS, ABC, HBO, the BBC, the History and Discovery Channels. McLaughlin produced, directed and narrated the Emmy award-winning story of trauma and resilience, "Have You Seen Andy?" Melanie is also a member of the Medford School Committee.

APRIL

Blood & Ivy – Part 2, The Trial - Murder at Harvard Medical School: The Disappearance of Dr. George Parkman, Speaker: Honorable Dennis J. Curran, Justice, Massachusetts Superior Court (ret.)

Thursday, April 13, 2023, 7:00 PM

The case *Commonwealth v. Webster*, the most legally historical trial in the history of Massachusetts, established the legal principal "proof beyond a reasonable doubt" a requirement that has since been adopted by most other states. This was the first trial to use forensic science, forensic evidence, forensic experts and dental forensic evidence in trial. It also defined "murder" and "manslaughter". Few, if any, cases have produced the number of fundamental legal principles used throughout our nation today



as Commonwealth v. Webster. This presentation will address the compelling and intriguing facts behind this landmark decision on so many issues in criminal jurisprudence. We will also discuss the trial and the legal principles it established. This trial changed the law and it all started in Boston. Presentation Supported by a grant from the Medford Arts Council.

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.



MAY

Chasing Me to My Grave: An Artist's Memoir of the Jim Crow South, Speakers: Patsy Rembert and Erin I. Kelly

Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 7:00 PM



Patsy Rembert and Erin I. Kelly, will discuss Winfred Rembert's memoir, *Chasing Me to My Grave: An Artist's Memoir of the Jim Crow South*, which in 2022 was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in the category of biography. This program will include slides of his remarkable paintings on leather. Winfred Rembert grew up in Cuthbert, GA, where he picked cotton as a child. As a teen-ager, he got involved in the civil-rights movement and was arrested in the aftermath of a demonstration. He later broke out of jail, survived a near-lynching, and spent 7 years in prison. Following his release, in 1974, he married Patsy, and eventually settled in New Haven. At the age of 51, he began carving and painting memories from his youth onto leather, using skills he had learned in prison. Rembert was honored by the Equal Justice Initiative in 2015 and awarded an United States Artists Barr Fellowship in 2016.

Patsy Rembert met Winfred while he was in prison and doing forced labor near her home in Turner County, GA. After four years of letter-writing, the two married upon his release in 1974 and moved north, settling in New Haven, CT, where they raised eight children and Mrs. Rembert became a longtime youth advocate. It was Patsy who first convinced her husband to pursue art seriously, and to tell his life story visually, using the leather-tooling skills he'd learned in prison.

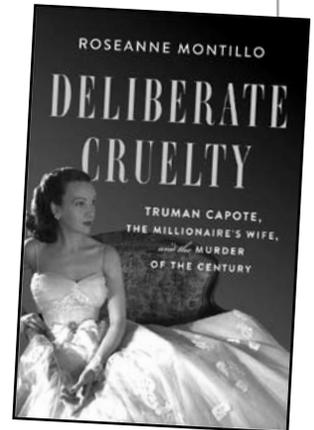
Erin I. Kelly is Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University and co-author of *Chasing Me to My Grave*. She is also the author of *The Limits of Blame: Rethinking Punishment and Responsibility* (Harvard University Press, 2018). She writes and speaks about ethics and social justice, especially in connection with criminal law. Her current work aims, among other things, to develop a philosophical understanding of restorative justice as an alternative to retributive accounts of punishment.

Presentation supported by a grant from the Medford Community Fund.

History Book Club: Deliberate Cruelty: Truman Capote, The Millionaire's Wife, and The Murder of the Century, Discussion Leader: Barbara Kerr

Wednesday, May 17, 2023, at 7:00 PM

When Ann Woodward shot her husband, her life changed forever. Though she claimed she thought he was a prowler, few believed the former showgirl, and no one was more obsessed with the tale than Truman Capote. Capote decided the story of Ann's turbulent marriage would be the basis of his next masterpiece—never thinking that it would eventually lead to Ann's suicide and his own scandalous downfall. Roseanne Montillo, the author, lives outside of Boston, and is a former resident of Medford.



Register through the Library Calendar at: <https://medfordlibrary.org/events/>.

Co-Sponsored by Medford Historical Society and Museum and Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library

JUNE

"Coming Together" with Frederick Law Olmsted, Speaker: Brianne Cassette, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

Thursday, June 15, 2023, at 7:00 PM

As the nation's first landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted designed parks with purpose- and none more important than for people to be their best selves. To better connect with their health, their spirit, with nature and with each other. Olmsted wrote how time spent in a public park could animate local citizens "with a common purpose, not at all intellectual, competitive with none, disposing to jealousy and spiritual or intellectual pride toward none, each individual adding by his mere presence to the pleasure of all others, all helping to the greater happiness of each," that we "must come together, and be seen coming together." Join staff from Olmsted National Historic Site to discuss Olmsted's lofty goals and how he aimed to achieve them in his public works. We will also look at how some key design ideals and features can be seen in the work of his sons and their predecessors in community planning, public buildings, and private estates.

Please follow MHSM Events on our website at www.medfordhistorical.org for additional events, updates, and registration information.

The Sarah Bradlee Fulton Memorial Stone Resurrected



In the 1980s, the Medford Historical Society & Museum began placing brass markers mounted on heavy granite blocks around town memorializing historical events and people in Medford. One of the plaques commemorated the Revolutionary War hero Sarah Bradlee Fulton.

Sarah Bradlee Fulton was born on Christmas Eve, 1740 in Dorchester. In 1762, Sarah Bradlee married John Fulton. They had ten children, and all but one survived to adulthood. John worked at the Medford rum distillery owned by the Hall family. In 1772, John and Sarah Fulton moved from Boston to Medford. They lived in a rental house just south of the Cradock Bridge on a street that no longer exists.

Sarah became deeply involved in the Revolutionary War. She helped plan and outfit the Sons of Liberty for the famous 'Tea Party.' As the leader of the Daughters of Liberty, Sarah promoted the boycott of British goods. Following the Battle of Bunker Hill, Sarah helped set up a make-shift hospital for wounded Patriots in Medford. She is said to have removed a bullet from the cheek of one of the Patriots! Sarah personally "liberated" an oxcart of wood taken by the British soldiers, later sending it to the rebel soldiers

The Sarah Bradlee Fulton marker has recently been positioned near the site of her former Medford residence close to the Cradock Bridge. The DPW volunteered to move it from their yard and to professionally reinstall it.

stationed in Cambridge under General Washington. She risked her life acting as a spy for General Washington. She walked from Medford to Charlestown at night and then rowed herself across the waters to Boston's North End, delivering important dispatches from General Washington to Patriots behind enemy lines in British-occupied Boston.

After the war, the family moved across the Mystic River to a farmhouse at what is now 260 Fulton Street. On October 29, 1789, President George Washington

visited Sarah at the farmhouse to personally thank her for her help during the American Revolutionary War.

Sarah died a month short of her 95th birthday on November 9, 1835. The town renamed the street where she lived Fulton Street. She is buried in Medford's Salem Street Burying Ground. Her grave marker was installed there by the Sarah Bradlee Fulton Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The stone used was originally her doorstep on Fulton Street.

Several decades ago, the Medford Historical Society placed a brass plaque near Cradock Bridge in the vicinity of her first Medford home. Over the years and continuing to this day, the area is the site of many major building and road construction projects. Fortunately, the Medford DPW moved the marker for safekeeping to the DPW yard where it remained for some time.

Last year, Chris Donovan, Medford history enthusiast, noticed the marker at the DPW yard and showed it to Laura Duggan, hostess of the Medford Community television show "Looking Back at Medford History." Laura is a huge fan of Sarah Bradlee Fulton and performs re-enactments based upon her life. Laura's friend Dee Morris, a well-known Medford researcher and public speaker, suggested that Laura contact City Engineer Tim McGivern. Tim volunteered to have the stone moved if a new location could be identified and approved by the Medford Historical Commission and MHSM. John Anderson, MHSM President volunteered to find the original house location. Over the years, the southern bank of the river has been greatly altered. Most old landmarks were obliterated and roads and streets altered or eliminated. Using a surviving 1855 building on the north side of the river as a reference point, the location appeared

to be under the eastbound Mystic River Parkway bridge just after it crosses Main Street. Laura scouted the entire area on foot and suggested using a plot of land between the river and an offramp on the westbound side of the Parkway. It's a surprisingly pleasant location with views of the river and easily accessible on foot from Medford Square. The Medford Historical Commission was happy to support this recommended location.

More hurdles remained. The land is owned by Mass DOT and there's a rather daunting process (as there should be) to get permission to place anything on state property. Doug Carr, architect and Historic Commission member, supplied drawings detailing the proposed location of the stone. MHSM completed the other forms and submissions. We also needed a traffic plan from the City of Medford which Laura secured with the enthusiastic support of Traffic Commissioner Todd Blake. She also enlisted the support of Representative Donato to facilitate the speedy review and approval of our application at the state level. DOT graciously waived the usual \$500 fee for a permit!

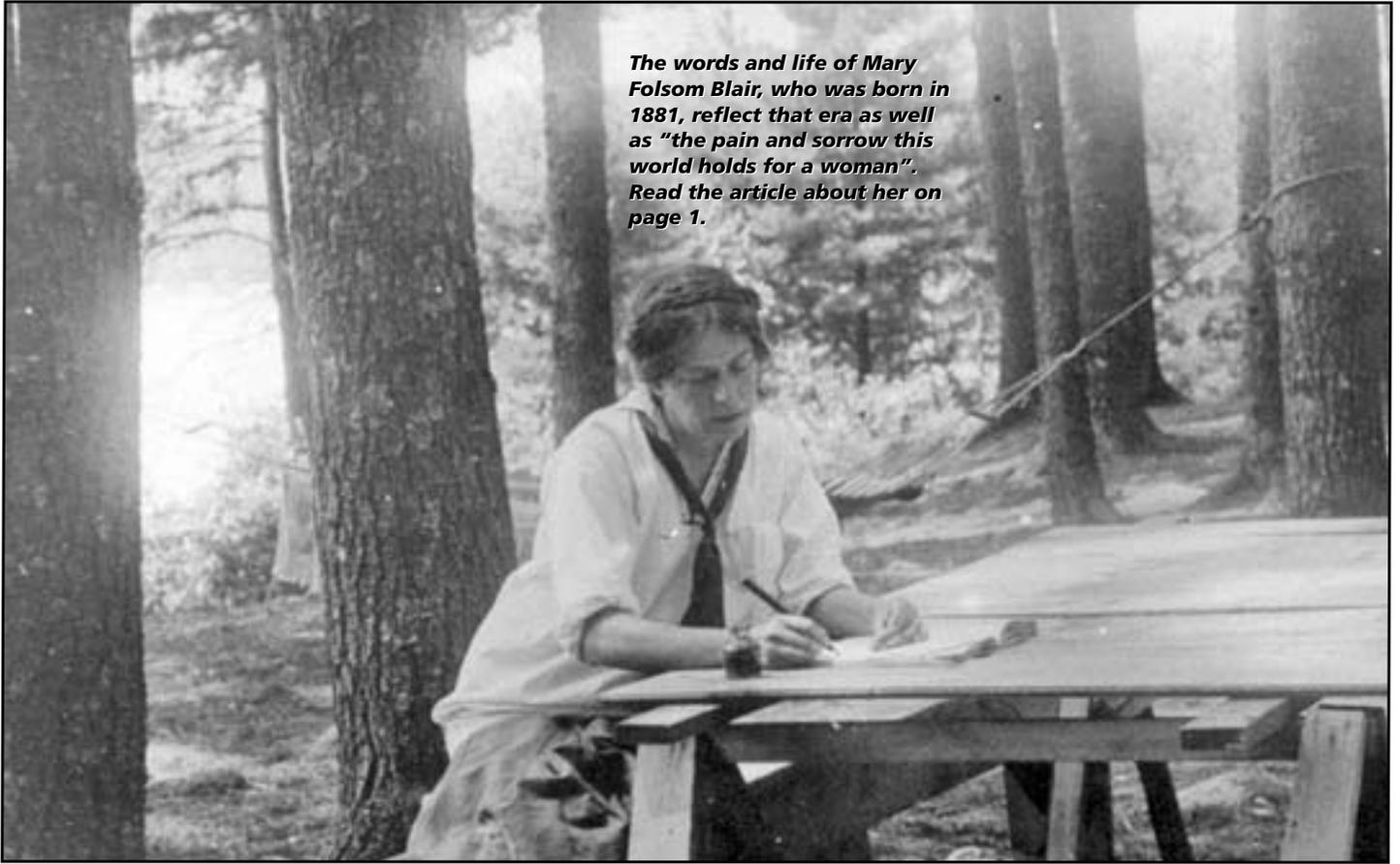
The DPW crew did a great job of preparing a base for the memorial stone and moving the very heavy monument into place. The original plan was to re-dedicate the stone on Sarah Bradlee Fulton Day, 10/1/22, but the entire weekend was a wash-out. The dedication is now planned for SBF day in October 2023.

Thank you, Doug and the entire Medford Historical Commission, Commissioners McGivern and Blake, Representative Donato and the great DPW team who handled the actual move. And thank you Laura for taking the lead on this effort, supplying the SBF biographical information, and documenting the chronology of the project.

The DPW set a strong new foundation for the new site.



The words and life of Mary Folsom Blair, who was born in 1881, reflect that era as well as "the pain and sorrow this world holds for a woman". Read the article about her on page 1.



Your Medford Historical Society Newsletter

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

