



## President's Overview

by John Anderson

I always enjoy the interesting tidbits I come across while thumbing through the MHSM files. In my last column I shared my findings about the USS Supply and the Army's Camel Corps. This month I became interested in a 2018 Medford Transcript article about Native American artifacts and James Gilchrist Swan. Swan was a member of the storied Swan family here in Medford (Swan Street and Swan School). His family led typical lives as educators, lawyers, doctors and a ship's captain while James followed an entirely different path and left a legacy that still resonates today. I'll tell my tale in 3 Acts!



### Act I: 19<sup>th</sup> Century – Travel, Journaling and Collecting

James Gilchrist Swan was born in Medford in 1818. As a child he heard stories about his Uncle William Tufts' 1805 trading expedition to the Pacific Northwest. As a young man, James worked with a ship-fitting firm on the Boston waterfront. At age 23, he was sent on a business trip to Liverpool. He took advantage of his time in Britain to visit Edinburgh and London as a tourist. It was at this time that he began his habit of journaling. He recorded his amazement when he visited London, with its population of over 2 million, compared

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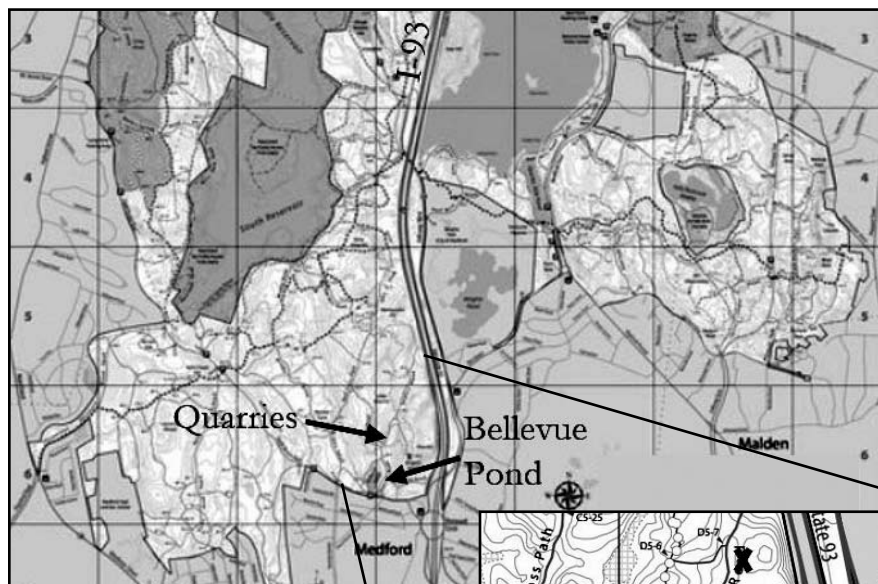
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## Hidden in Plain Sight: Quarries in the Middlesex Fells

by Alison C. Simcox and Douglas L. Heath

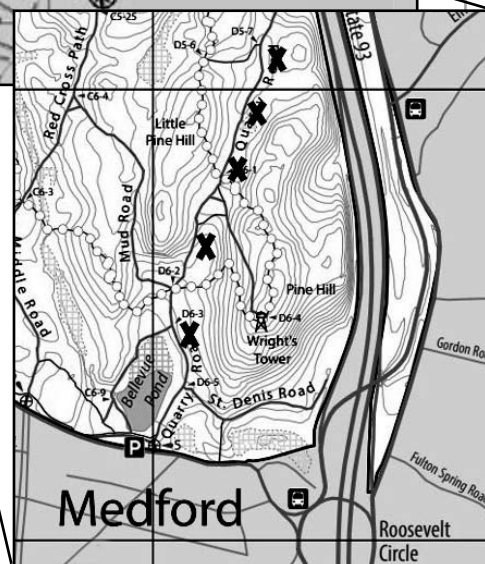


(figure 1) Map showing the location of quarries and Bellevue Pond in Middlesex Fells. Inset marks the location of the major quarries.

A walker in the southern Middlesex Fells may be excused for passing an extensive area of abandoned quarries without being aware of them at all, even though they lie along Quarry Road! This is how well they now blend into the natural surroundings. However, once pointed out, this walker will marvel at the evidence of drilling, cutting, and transport of stone blocks, and at the piles of haphazardly discarded blocks.

### A Brief History of the Southern Fells

Before the arrival of Europeans, land north of Boston that now comprises Middlesex Fells (light-colored area in figure 1) was seasonally inhabited by Native Americans who fished along the coast in summer and hunted in the forest in winter. In 1639, the leader of the Pawtucket, known



as Squaw Sachem, sold land that included the present-day Middlesex Fells to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The land was subsequently bought by various people, who put their signature on each parcel, giving Middlesex Fells a rich history. This includes a colonial mill village, a silver mine, a monument to preservationist Elizur Wright, a street-trolley line, a MIT geodetic observatory, a site known as the "90-mm meadow" where

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## President's Message *continued*



above: Carved Pacific Northwest Native American masks in the Medford Library's collection. left: James Swan, in his office 1890, "rearranged by artists for the sake of effect" (J.G.S)



to Boston's population at the time of a bit over 100,000. Just like the tourists of today, he visited Buckingham Palace, Tus-sauds Wax Museum, St. Paul's, and even saw Queen Victoria through the window of her coach!

After returning to Boston, life changed for young James. In 1841, he married "above himself" to Matilda Loring. She was from a prominent Boston publishing family. During their eight years together they had 2 children but began living separately in 1849. According to Ivan Doig's biography of Swan, *Winter Brothers*, this may be because Swan "took on the world's whiskey as a personal challenge." In 1850, leaving his family behind, he followed the Gold Rush and left Boston for San Francisco. He did not try his luck at mining but worked a variety of jobs including purser on a steamboat, office work harborside, and signing onto a schooner that went to Hawaii for a load of potatoes. In one of his rare letters to Matilda, Swan described a Hawaiian luau. While describing the food and dances, he commented that while the Hawaiians are theoretically now Christians (or Missionary as they described themselves), one Hawaiian, pointing to his mouth laughed that he was a missionary there but the rest of him was not missionary. Back in San Francisco, according to Doig, "His routine indeed seems to have been all but identical to the career left behind him in Boston except he could do it at about half speed and without regard for hometown opinion: laxities which have been high among the rewards of the West ever since there was an America."

In late 1852, Swan's life changed again. Recruited by an entrepreneur, Swan traveled north over 600 miles to Shoalwater Bay to join an operation harvesting oysters for shipment to San Francisco. While enjoying the bounties of nature -seafood of every kind washed down with lots of whiskey, they hired Native Americans to do most of the work. To celebrate July 4<sup>th</sup>, Swan and his buddies built a bonfire so huge that it caused a forest fire that raged for several days. Eventually moving on, Swan secured a homestead from the government of 160 acres plus another 160 in the name of his Boston wife! Things were rough during the first winter months, and he retreated to San Francisco to earn money. While in San Francisco, he landed a position as Customs Inspector for a large stretch of coastline near his homestead. This turned out to be an exceptionally easy job, as there was no foreign trade going on in his area, at least none that he noticed. In addition, he picked up work as a journalist for local and San Francisco newspapers.

It's at this point in his life that he became an ethnographer and naturalist. He lived not with the Native Americans, but alongside them. He became friends with many, including Swell, a young chieftain of the Makahs. They both had experienced life outside their cultures. Swell had worked as a sailor and a pilot among the white men. Swan had become adept with a cedar canoe, learned native languages and socialized with the people.

Swan returned to the East Coast in 1855, settling in Washington D.C. where he wrote his book, *The Northwest Coast*, published in 1857. Next, he worked for Isaac Stevens, Washington Territory's delegate to Congress. In 1859, Swan returned to Port Townsend, Washington, where he spent the rest of his life, except for a trip to the east coast in 1874. He continued his journaling, facilitated treaties with native peoples, wrote for newspapers, taught and managed a school for Native American children, scouted routes for a railroad, and even practiced law and become an elected judge! Historylink.org summarizes his more important accomplishments: "He wrote one of the earliest books describing life in Washington Territory, two Smithsonian monographs, many newspaper articles and technical publications, and more than 60 volumes of still-unpublished diaries. These works document not just pioneer society but also the Northwest Indian cultures that pre-dated non-Native settlement and existed alongside it. Swan's appreciation of and efforts to record Indian art, technology, history, legends, and language made him a rarity among early Washington settlers." He died poverty stricken in Port Townsend in 1900 at the age of 82.

### Act II: 2006 – Rediscovery

I knew nothing of James Gilchrist Swan when I became active at MHSM in 2006. At that time, there was an unlocked cabinet in the vestibule full of Native American items. They were clearly visible as you entered the building. My wife Heather had been an art history major, and we had recently taken a course at the MFA on American art. Finally, Native American art was given the attention it deserves. Heather looked at the MHSM artifacts and found them to be not only interesting but potentially quite valuable. She called an auction house seeking an expert but they weren't very interested. Heather emailed pictures. The next day a representative arrived who estimated the value of the collection at \$100,000 or more. Needless to say, we locked the cabinet! Next, we spoke to Barbara Kerr who, in addition to directing the Medford Public Library, was also in charge of collections at MHSM.



Barbara's research determined that the items had been donated by James Swan in 1880. We knew he was a collector because we have a picture of Swan in his "office," probably in Port Townsend with his collection behind him mounted on the walls. However, the collection was given to the Library, not MHSM. It's a mystery how and why they wound up in our display cabinet. Perhaps they were moved to 10 Governors Avenue when the old Library was torn down in 1957, but in any case, it was time for them to go "home." They were moved to a secure storage area in the Library.

### Act III: 2018 – Reckoning

Barbara Kerr and the Library Trustees were struggling to raise money for Medford's new library. Selling these artifacts seems to be the logical thing to do. The artifacts were not from Medford or even New England. MHSM's Native American artifacts, collected locally over the years, are mostly stone implements, such as very heavy mortars and pestles. The Swan collection includes wooden masks, rattles, and other ceremonial artifacts.

The auction house chosen for the sale was delighted to put the Swan collection in their upcoming auction and even put them on the cover of the catalog.

The auction attracted the attention of the North American Indian Center of Boston, an advocacy group who objected to the auction in the strongest terms saying that the sale was unethical and possibly illegal. Unfortunately, they directed most of their criticism towards our library and the City as was reported in the Boston newspapers in November, 2018. I'm confident that the City and the Library offered the items to the auction house in good faith and with full disclosure. The onus should have been

on the auction house, as the experts, to work with Native authorities to verify that the sale was legal and ethical. Given the well known history of theft and other unethical "collection" of Native American objects, the newspaper article speculated that the items may have been procured by violence or "traded out of need for food...or other basic necessities." Many of the items were said to have religious significance. Based on what we know about Swan's close friendships with Native Americans, it also seems quite possible that many items were gifts. The Northwest people had a tradition of the Potlatch, an opulent ceremonial feast in which goods are given away to display wealth or prestige. Native Americans were also producing goods for sale to visitors or for export similar to the "export trade" done in China. But this is only speculation on my part. We hope that there can be further research by Native scholars and other knowledgeable people.

I am now following up to find out what has become of the collection. I've heard that the collection is secured in a vault at City Hall awaiting determination as to how to proceed. Another source said that Tufts University is holding it for safekeeping. As far as I know, the situation is still unresolved. MHSM had a similar experience when we discovered a box containing human remains in the basement that appeared to be Native American. It took us a number of years to research the situation satisfactorily and responsibly pass the remains on for respectful burial. The ideal place for the collection is at an established museum, preferably in the Northwest run by Native Americans where it can be curated and displayed along with similar artifacts. I will let you know what I learn.

## What Can ChatGPT Tell Us about Medford History?

### What Did it Get Wrong?

by Kyna Hamill, but mostly ChatGPT



With so much anxiety about AI in the news, I thought it might be interesting to do a little experiment. What does ChatGPT know about Medford's history? In this article (which I barely wrote), we learn how AI has narrowed

down some basic and *incorrect* narratives that emerge from a system that has been trained on hundreds of billions of extant words scraped from the internet. Some of the volunteers here at MHSM immediately noticed some problems and errors. How do you think it did? Email us at [medfordhistorical02155@gmail.com](mailto:medfordhistorical02155@gmail.com) to let us know what you think it missed and got wrong. We will post corrections in the next newsletter.

My input prompts (questions) are in *italics* followed by the output by ChatGPT.

*Hi, I am a local historian and I am interested in learning about Medford, Massachusetts. Can you tell me a bit about the history of the town in 300 words?*

Certainly! Medford, Massachusetts, has a rich history dating back to its founding in 1630 by English

Puritans. Originally part of Charlestown, it became a separate town in 1754. The name "Medford" is believed to have been inspired by the town of the same name in England.

In the 18th century, Medford was primarily an agricultural community with a strong shipbuilding industry. Shipbuilding became a major economic driver, and the trade expanded during the Revolutionary War when privateers and naval vessels were constructed to support the war effort.

Medford played a notable role in the lead-up to the Revolution. In 1775, Paul Revere and William Dawes rode through Medford to warn of the approaching British forces on their way to Lexington and Concord. The "Shot Heard 'Round the World" was fired shortly thereafter, marking the beginning of the American Revolution.

The 19th century brought further industrialization to Medford. The Middlesex Canal, completed in 1803, connected Medford to Boston, facilitating trade and transportation. Tufts University was established in Medford in 1852, contributing to the town's educational and cultural development.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw Medford transforming into a suburban community, with the advent of streetcar lines and increased residen-

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tial development. The Mystic River, flowing through the town, became a focal point for recreation and industry.

Medford continued to evolve through the 20th century, facing challenges such as urbanization and economic shifts. Today, it is a diverse and vibrant community, known for its historic architecture, parks, and cultural institutions. The Royall House and Slave Quarters, a preserved colonial-era estate, stands as a reminder of Medford's complex history, including its connections to slavery.

As you delve into Medford's history, you'll discover a community that has played a significant role in shaping the story of Massachusetts and the United States.

***This tells me a little bit, but can you tell me more in 200 words?***

Certainly! Medford, Massachusetts, has a multifaceted history that reflects its evolution from a colonial settlement to a thriving suburban community. Initially an agricultural town, Medford gained prominence in the 18th century with a flourishing shipbuilding industry, contributing vessels to the Revolutionary War.

Notably, Paul Revere's midnight ride in 1775 passed through Medford, marking its connection to the early events of the American Revolution. The 19th century brought industrialization, highlighted by the Middlesex Canal's impact on trade and the establishment of Tufts University in 1852. Medford's landscape transformed in the 20th century, becoming a suburban enclave with improved transportation infrastructure. The Mystic River became a focal point for both recreation and industry. Despite challenges like urbanization, Medford retained its historic charm, featuring landmarks like the Royall House and Slave Quarters, offering insight into the town's colonial past and its ties to slavery.

Today, Medford stands as a dynamic community, blending historical significance with modern amenities, making it a compelling subject for local historians exploring the diverse layers of its past.

***Great, but some of this is not new to me. What can you tell me that I might not know?***

Certainly! Delving deeper into Medford's history, you might find it intriguing that the town was home to one of the first vocational schools in the United States. The Medford Vocational Technical High School, established in 1896, was a pioneering institution aimed at providing practical skills to students. This early focus on vocational education contributed to Medford's reputation for innovation in the education sector.

Additionally, during the 19th century, Medford was known for its bustling brick industry. The clay deposits along the Mystic River facilitated the production of bricks, and Medford became a significant center for brickmaking. These bricks were used not only locally but were also shipped to various parts of the country, leaving a lasting impact on the architecture of many buildings beyond Medford.

Moreover, the Grace Church, constructed in 1869, is an architectural gem in Medford. Designed by renowned architect H.H. Richardson, it is an excellent example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

These lesser-known facets of Medford's history add unique dimensions to its story, showcasing the town's contributions to education, industry, and architectural heritage.

***Thanks, if I wanted to learn more about Medford's history and its diverse population, what could you tell me?***

To explore Medford's history and its diverse population more deeply, you might want to focus on several key aspects:

**Immigration and Cultural Diversity:** Research the waves of immigration that have shaped Medford over the years. Understand how different communities contributed to the town's cultural mosaic. For example, the Irish, Italian, and Portuguese communities have played significant roles in Medford's history. Investigate cultural institutions, events, and landmarks that reflect this diversity.

**Historical Landmarks and Museums:** Visit local museums and historical landmarks that showcase the town's diverse heritage. The Royall House and Slave Quarters, for instance, provides insights into the colonial era and the history of slavery. The Isaac Royall House, a Georgian-style mansion, is an important site to explore.

**Oral Histories and Community Archives:** Connect with local residents, especially those from longstanding families or different ethnic backgrounds, to gather oral histories. Community archives and historical societies may hold valuable resources and personal accounts that offer a more intimate perspective on Medford's history.

**Cultural Events and Festivals:** Attend cultural events and festivals that celebrate Medford's diversity. These gatherings often showcase traditional music, dance, cuisine, and art, providing a living expression of the town's cultural richness.

**Local Libraries and Archives:** Utilize the resources available in local libraries and archives. Medford's historical society or library may house documents, photographs, and records that delve into the experiences of various communities.

**Modern Community Initiatives:** Explore contemporary community initiatives that celebrate and preserve Medford's diverse identity. This could include cultural exchange programs, community forums, or projects that highlight the contributions of different ethnic groups to the town.

By combining these approaches, you can gain a comprehensive understanding of Medford's history and the vibrant tapestry of its diverse population.

***Ok, these are certainly ideas. But what could you tell me specifically about Medford, Massachusetts and diversity?***

Medford, Massachusetts, has experienced demographic shifts over the years, contributing to a diverse and inclusive community. While predominantly Euro-American in its early history, the town has seen waves of immigration that have shaped its cultural fabric.

Irish immigrants played a significant role in the mid-19th century, drawn to opportunities in industries like shipbuilding and the Middlesex Canal. The establishment of St. Joseph's Parish in 1867 reflects the growing Irish Catholic community's presence in Medford.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Italian immigrants arrived, contributing to the town's cultural diversity. The Italian-American Club, formed in the early 20th century, remains an emblem of this community's impact.

More recent decades have seen increased diversity with the arrival of residents from Portuguese, Brazilian, and Asian backgrounds. This demographic evolution is reflected in the town's neighborhoods, cultural institutions, and culinary offerings.

Medford's commitment to diversity is also evident in community initiatives and events. The city hosts events like the Medford Multicultural Arts Festival, celebrating various cultural expressions through music, dance, and food. Additionally, local schools and organizations actively promote inclusivity and cultural understanding.

While challenges and discussions around diversity persist, Medford's ongoing efforts to embrace its multicultural identity contribute to a

dynamic and inclusive community. Exploring specific neighborhoods, attending community events, and engaging with local organizations can provide more nuanced insights into Medford's diverse and evolving population.

### ***Thanks! Have you ever been to Medford?***

No, I don't have the ability to physically go to places as I am a computer program developed by OpenAI. However, I can provide information and answer questions to the best of my knowledge based on the data I've been trained on. If you have more questions about Medford or anything else, feel free to ask!

### ***Interesting. Just one more thing. Can you write a Shakespearean Sonnet about Medford, Massachusetts?***

Upon yon Mystic's banks, Medford doth stand,  
A tale of history, rich and profound.  
In ships and canals, labor's echoes resound,  
A town shaped by time, by a craftsman's hand.  
In days of old, the Irish found a place,  
Their toil and faith woven in Medford's earth.  
Italians, too, brought tales of home's warm hearth,  
Adding flavors unique to this embrace.  
As sunsets paint the sky in hues so grand,  
Diverse voices blend in a vibrant song.  
In every street, a tale of life prolonged,  
A harmonious chorus, hand in hand.  
Medford, thy story writ on each brick laid,  
In every soul, a part of thee is made.

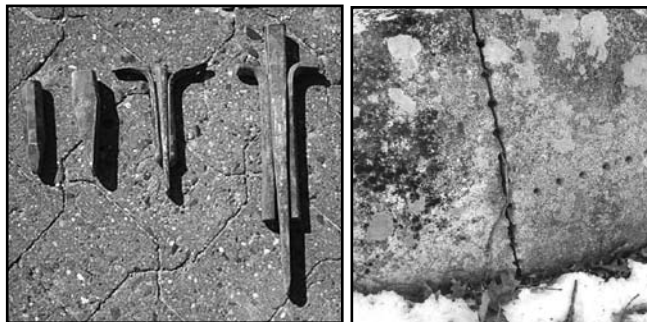
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## **Hidden in Plain Sight** *continued*

the US Army placed anti-aircraft guns in the 1950s, a pig farm, a zoo, and public water supplies. The least known historical fact is that quarrying occurred for more than fifty years in the southern Fells just north of Bellevue Pond. Figure 1 shows the location of the five largest quarries.

The first recorded owner of the land that contains the quarries was Peter Tufts, who arrived in the Bay Colony from Norfolk, England, in 1635 and acquired the land in 1664. [Charles Tufts, who donated land for Tufts College (now University) in 1852, was a direct descendant of Peter Tufts.]

(figure 2) ***"Plug and feather" tools and holes drilled in a quarry block.***



In 1658, surveyors from Charlestown established woodlot boundaries north of Medford by laying out east-west range lines, marked by stone walls a quarter of a mile (1320 feet) apart. (Remnants of these range lines are still visible in Middlesex Fells; the second range line marks the southern boundary of the quarry area.) These woodlots provided wood for home heating, shipbuilding, and fuel for brickmaking. From about 1650 to 1855, brickmaking was a major industry in Medford and deeds show that the southern Fells provided wood for brick kilns. For example, in 1733, brickmaker Samuel Page bought woodlots from eight property owners north of the quarries.

In the early nineteenth century, another industry developed in New England – the stone industry. Colonial settlers had long used boulders and cobbles on the land surface to build walls and roadbeds. However, commercial quarrying did not begin until after 1818 when the "plug and feather" method for splitting stone was introduced in Massachusetts.

This method involved scoring a line on a stone surface in the direction of preferential breakage. Quarrymen then used "double-jacking" to drill holes along the line. To drill each hole, one man held a sharp steel rod while two men alternately hit the rod with sledge-

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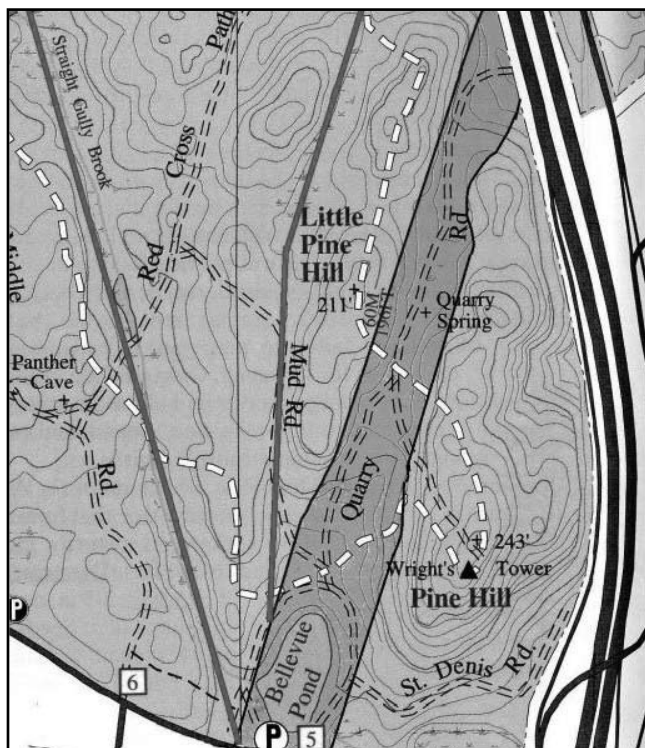
hammers. Next, they hammered an iron plug (or wedge) into each hole between two tapered “feathers” (figure 2). A loud ringing sound indicated when the plug was tight. Eventually, the stone split apart.

With this improved method of splitting stone, the quarrying industry quickly expanded, providing stone for wharves, bridges, foundations, buildings, and for other architectural and aesthetic uses. Many quarries appeared throughout New England, and some, such as those north and south of Boston in Rockport and Quincy, grew into major operations.

In 1836, a wide seam of dark, coarse-grained igneous rock in the southern Fells, later called the “Medford Dike” by geologists, caught the attention of stone cutters from New Hampshire, brothers-in-law Benjamin Ackerman and Newell Philbrick. That year, they leased fourteen acres of land along what is now Quarry Road from Joel Tufts, a descendant of Peter Tufts. The lease also gave Ackerman and Philbrick access to local roads and *“a right to build a shop for the purpose of sharpening and fixing their tools & also to build a shed to hammer stone renders.”* They named their business “The Medford Journeymen Granite Company.”

In 1838, the pair purchased the property from Tufts for \$2000 (\$66,000 today) with a \$1000 mortgage from Thomas Russell of Cambridge. The deed mentions “valuable stone quarries,” indicating that the quarries were already a profitable business. Ackerman and Philbrick erected derricks and hired local laborers to cut stone and to carry it out in wagons

(figure 3) **Map showing location of Medford Dike (dark area) west of Pine Hill.**



pulled by oxen and horses. However, in 1843, they declared bankruptcy and Thomas Russell became the new owner. Ackerman moved to Quincy and Philbrick traveled to California to seek his fortune during the Gold Rush.

In 1863, Russell sold the quarries to Caleb Mills, who already owned Pine Hill and adjacent land. Six months later, Mills sold all this land to Elizur Wright, best known as a key advocate for the creation of Middlesex Fells. Mills, however, retained ownership of *“all the stone now quarried and all the wood and posts now cut on said premises.”*

### **Quarrying Operations**

The quarries were all located in the 304-million-year-old Medford Dike. This dike consists of previously molten rock that filled a fracture in the much older surrounding bedrock. At over a mile long, this “river of stone” extends from Somerville to Stoneham and is about 500-feet wide at Bellevue Pond. It is one of the largest known dikes in New England (figure 3).

Under the ownership of Ackerman and Philbrick, quarrying in the southern Fells began as a small operation using manual tools and grew with the demand for stone for buildings, bridges, and paving materials. While larger quarries, like those in Quincy and Rockport, increased production by using blasting and steam-powered derricks for hoisting rock, there is little evidence of significant blasting in the Fells quarries.

After quarrymen split stone blocks using the “plug and feather” method described above, they used hammers and axes to further shape the blocks. Men transported the finished blocks on horse- or oxen-drawn wagons north or south along Quarry Road. Both directions led to Forest Street (now Route 28 on the east side of I-93), which connected markets via Stoneham to the north and via Medford to the south. According to a 1980 report by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, forty-five men worked at the quarries in 1845 (then owned by Thomas Russell). Quarrying continued until the 1890s, by which time quarrymen had excavated the most accessible parts of the Medford Dike.

### **Uses of the Quarried Rock**

Historical records show that the quarries provided stone for the Cradock Bridge over the Mystic River in Medford, for five “Wyoming Estates” mansions built in 1847 and 1848 on the east side of Spot Pond in Stoneham, and for window trim in New Bedford. The quarries also provided gravel for walkways in Mount Auburn Cemetery and the Boston Common.

Of the five mansions, only one still stands. William Bailey Lang, an iron and steel merchant, designed this mansion for William Foster, a prominent Boston merchant. It now serves as the Middlesex Fells Visitor Center (or “Botume House”). In addition, a stone barn (“the Tudor Barn”) survives; a walkway once ran from this barn to a mansion owned by Fanny Foster Tudor.



(figure 4) **left: Photo of quarry taken by Nathaniel Stebbins in 1894. right: Same scene as it appeared in 2014, largely unchanged after 120 years.**

Tudor is best known for donating twenty acres, which she called “Virginia Wood” in memory of her daughter, to the newly formed Trustees of (Public) Reservations in 1891. In 1923, the Trustees gave this land to the Metropolitan District Commission, which incorporated it into Middlesex Fells.

### **Evidence of Quarrying**

The quarries are accessed from the parking lot for Bellevue Pond on South Border Road in Medford. Starting at the information kiosk, and walking north along Quarry Road, the first evidence of quarrying is near the northeast corner of the pond. In a carved-out area on the right side of the road, there are in-situ stone blocks with rows of drill holes and drill grooves along rock edges.

A short distance farther on the left side of Quarry Road is a wall and cement picnic table built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s as part of their project to create the Bellevue Pond recreation area. On the west (pond) side of the wall not visible from the road, there are rectangular drill holes in an outcrop of the Medford Dike, indicating that the WPA filled in and built over part of the first quarry. Quarrymen used a “cape chisel” to make these rectangular holes, a method that pre-dates use of round drills.

Farther along Quarry Road near “Skyline Trail” and “Mud Road,” there is a rectangular post composed of quarried stone, with holes on either side that were used to transport it. This post marked the boundary between properties belonging to Isaac Tufts (descendant of Peter Tufts) to the west, Thomas Russell (owner of the quarries) to the east, and Nathaniel Bishop (Medford rum distiller) to the south. A gate once existed at this location to keep out grazing cows.

A short distance past the sign for “Skyline Trail” on the right is the largest quarry. The volume of rock removed from this quarry is about 60,000 cubic yards. Evidence of drilling exists throughout the excavation, including two historic objects on its west side near Quarry Road: an eye bolt embedded in a drill hole and a plug with iron “feathers” in a block of quarried stone. Near the northern end of the quarry is a spring, called Quarry Spring on nineteenth-century maps, which still flows after rain.

Continuing along Quarry Road is another quarry set back on the right. Of the five main quarries, this

is most obviously a quarry to a casual observer. Notably, it contains two excavated depressions with vertical walls, which usually contain water. The walls on the south side of each excavation have clearly visible drill holes and drill grooves along split rock edges. Some drill holes still contain pieces of iron plugs.

In 1894, Nathaniel Stebbins, best known for his nautical photographs, took a photo in this quarry and included his assistant, Edward Gleason, to provide scale. Gleason is barely visible as a tiny figure in the center of the photo. In 2014, we took a photo from the same vantage point. The similarity of the photos shows that quarrying at this location had ceased by 1894 (figure 4).

Another quarry is located farther along Quarry Road. The rock face at the north end of this quarry is 16-feet high and has metal holds installed by rock climbers. Here, as in the other quarries, there are stone blocks with rows of drill holes and drill grooves along rock edges as well as piles of discarded quarry rock. Just north of this quarry, on the left side of the road, quarrymen left an iron drill in a rock crack. This, like the eye bolt and “plug and feathers” in the largest quarry, appears to be a unique historic object in the quarries.

Just north of this, on the right-hand side of the road, is the last well-defined quarry. Like the largest quarry, an extensive volume of rock (about 16,000 cubic yards) was removed. At its north end is a steep wall with the now-familiar evidence of quarrying. Like the previous quarry, rock climbers have installed hand holds for climbing.

Just beyond this is a pile of discarded quarry blocks, some of which have two series of drill holes at right angles to each other (see figure 2). However, despite the effort of drilling these holes, these blocks were not completely split. Beyond this point, there is rock debris on either side of the road that highway workers discarded during construction of I-93 in the late 1950s.

For more information about the history of Middlesex Fells and the quarries, see Middlesex Fells, *The Lost Mill Village of Middlesex Fells* ([www.arcadia-publishing.com](http://www.arcadia-publishing.com)) and *A Trail Guide for Bellevue Pond, Pine Hill, and the Quarries of Middlesex Fells*. Signed copies of all of these are available by contacting us at [acsimcox1@gmail.com](mailto:acsimcox1@gmail.com) or [dougheath28@hotmail.com](mailto:dougheath28@hotmail.com).



# MHSM Events Calendar

## JANUARY

**Lizzie Borden and John Best: Knowlton's Trials That Grippped Boston's South and North Shores**  
**Speakers: Douglas Heath and Alison Simcox**

*Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library*

Hosea Knowlton is best known as the chief prosecutor of Lizzie Borden, whose 1893 trial for the murder of

her parents created a national sensation. During his tenure as Massachusetts Attorney General, Knowlton tried more murder cases than any man who had held that office. As notorious as the Borden trial was at the time, one of his last cases, the trial of John Courtney Best, also involved a horrific axe murder. In their talk, Alison Simcox and Douglas Heath will reveal the facts and bizarre circumstances of this shocking murder and you can decide whether Knowlton's famous

ability to incisively question trial witnesses and present eloquent arguments ensured that justice was served.

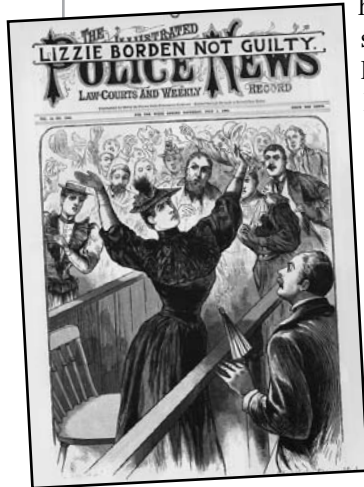
Alison Simcox is an environmental scientist, local historian, and author. Douglas Heath is a hydrogeologist and local historian. Alison and Douglas have co-authored five books on the history of Boston's North Shore. Their most recent book, and first true-crime book, *Murder at Breakheart Hill Farm*, was released in 2020.

## FEBRUARY – BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**The Power of Truth: Early Diversity in a Medford Neighborhood**  
**Speaker: Dee Morris, Local Historian**

*Thursday, February 1, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library*

Thomas (b 1777) and Margaret (b 1781) Revalyon, free Black Bostonians, moved their family in 1828 to a new house on Cross Street in Medford. Thomas owned a popular Main Street barber salon while Margaret attended to the household. After growing up amid Yankee ship carpenters, three of their children married notable partners. Younger Margaret wed a Black abolitionist, Charlotte married a local West Indian barber and Robert became the soul mate of Keziah Gould a Native American descended from Massasoit, the Wampanoag who befriended the early Pilgrims. Several Revalyons have found eternal rest in the Cross Street Cemetery section of Oak Grove. The story of their in Medford demonstrated the historical diversity of our community.



## MARCH - WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH & IRISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Finding My Medford Roots**  
**Speaker: Patricia Saunders, Local Photographer and Author**

*Sunday, March 10, 2024, 2:00-3:30 p.m., MHSM, 10 Governors Avenue*

Edward H. Larkin, the 10<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Medford (1927-1931), was born in Boston, MA in 1877 to Patrick and Isabelle Larkin. While working in Boston as an agent for the Railway Express at South Station, Edward met Mary Agnes Dyer who was born in Medford in 1871 to Patrick and Maria Dyer. The Larkins were Patricia Saunders' maternal great grandparents, and through her extensive ancestry research she was able to find relatives she never knew she had. Saunders will speak of their journey, how they lived and died, and the hardships they endured.

Patricia Saunders was born in Boston and grew up in Medford. She was one of the founding members of the formerly known Medford Arts Center, Inc. She is a local photographer who currently lives in Tewksbury near her children and grandchildren. Saunders authored *Medford, Then and Now* and co-authored *Medford Through Time*.

## APRIL – POETRY MONTH

**Adaptations: A Night of Poetry and Song**  
**Speaker: Max Heinegg, Poet**

*Thursday, April 4, 2024, 7:00-8:00 p.m., MHSM, 10 Governors Avenue*

Join Medford High School English teacher and poet Max Heinegg for *Adaptations*, a night of poetry and song. For the last 26 years, Max has taught English and poetry in the Medford Public Schools and has recorded nearly 20 adaptations of poetry from the public domain. Come hear classic poems read and adapted into song, along with brief talks about the poets who created these canonical works, from Romantic poets like John Keats and Lord Byron, to American poets like Robert Frost, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson.



**Medford Poet Laureates: Past, Present, and Future**  
**Speakers: Terry E. Carter, Vijaya Sundaram, and Max Heinegg, Poets**

*Thursday, April 25, 2024, 7:00-8:00 p.m., MHSM, 10 Governors Avenue*

Join Medford Poet Laureates -- past, present, and future -- for a night of poetry in celebration of national poetry month. Come and hear past poet laureate Terry E. Carter, current poet laureate Vijaya Sundaram, and poet laureate elect Max Heinegg as they read from their new books.



## MAY

### Meet "Kaiser"!

**Speakers: Sunday MHSM Volunteers**

*Sunday, May 5, 2024, 1:30-3:00 p.m.,*

*MHSM, 10 Governors Avenue*

A special Sunday afternoon MHSM program for kids and families to see and learn about the museum's stuffed carrier pigeon, "Kaiser." The program will share information about carrier pigeons—how they were trained, how they carried information, and how they were an important part of the communication internet in the past. We will introduce the pigeon named "Kaiser" who served in WWI and explain how he came to Medford, where he became a local celebrity. The program will be specially designed for children and families. The information will be geared toward a young audience from preschool through elementary school (plus any others who are interested!). It will include a craft project with craft paper and supplies that lets kids make their own paper carrier pigeon with flappable wings and attach a handwritten message for their bird to carry. Snacks and bird-shaped cookies will be provided. The event will be fun, free, and open to the public!

### **The Murder Trial of Sacco and Vanzetti: Inciting Passions a Century Later**

**Speaker: Hon. Dennis J. Curran, Justice,  
Massachusetts Superior Court (Ret.)**

*Thursday, May 23, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte  
and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library*

*Co-Sponsored by Friends of the Library*

On April 15, 1920, a robbery and double murder in South Braintree, Massachusetts, led to the arrest of two Italian anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. They were tried and convicted at Dedham Superior Court in 1921. No one could have foreseen that this local criminal case would become an international affair.

Arguably the most famous trial in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this murder trial propelled two Italian immigrant anarchists into the international media spotlight.

It divided a nation in the 1920s, and has continued to arouse deep emotions, giving rise to enormous literature.



*The Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee called for a nationwide strike to protest against the death sentence issued by Judge Webster Thayer on April 9, 1927. People in the crowd raise their hands in agreement.*

**REGISTER NOW!  
SPACE IS LIMITED**

Registration is free at  
[www.medfordhistorical.org/events](http://www.medfordhistorical.org/events)

## JUNE

### **The Great Abolitionist: Charles Sumner and the Fight for a More Perfect Union**

**Speaker: Stephen Puleo, Author and Historian**

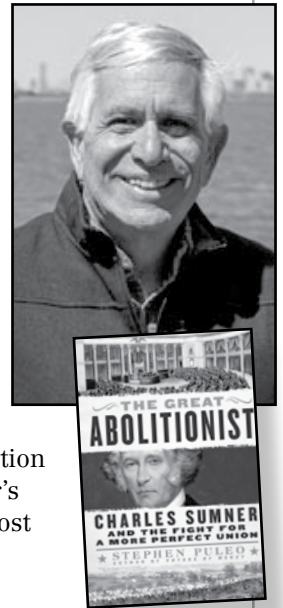
*Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and  
William Bloomberg Medford Public Library*

*Co-Sponsored by Friends of the Library*

During his presentation, The Great Abolitionist, historian Stephen Puleo will relate the story of one of the most influential non-presidents in American history, transporting attendees back to an era when our leaders exhibited true courage and authenticity in the face of unprecedented challenges.

In the tempestuous mid-19th century, as slavery consumed Congressional debate and America careened toward civil war and split apart—when the very future of the nation hung in the balance—Charles Sumner's voice rang strongest, bravest, and most unwavering. Where others preached compromise and moderation, he denounced slavery's evils to all who would listen and demanded that it be wiped out of existence. More than any other person of his era, he blazed the trail on the country's long, uneven, and ongoing journey toward realizing its full promise to become a more perfect union.

Before and during the Civil War, at great personal sacrifice, Sumner was the conscience of the North and the most influential politician fighting for abolition. Throughout Reconstruction, no one championed the rights of emancipated people more than he did. Through the force of his words and his will, he moved America toward the twin goals of abolitionism and equal rights, which he fought for literally until the day he died. He laid the cornerstone arguments that civil rights advocates would build upon over the next century as the country strove to achieve equality among the races.



*Andrea Breen (left) of Medford Family Network accepted a donation of toys collected from MHSM members and friends in December. Karen Gresenz (right) of the Events Committee helped to make this happen.*



*If you missed the in-person lecture featuring Lydia Moland presenting her recent book on Lydia Maria Child, you can still catch the streamed version on C-SPAN. Go to [MedfordHistorical.org](http://MedfordHistorical.org) and click on the link.*

LYDIA MOLAND

Author, "Lydia Maria Child: A Radical American Life"

AMERICAN  
HISTORY  
C-SPAN

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