

Sudbury Historical Society, Inc.

NEWSLETTER



April - June 2002

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From the President

Our programs this past year have been very interesting and well attended (see article on p. 4). Two more programs remain (see back of Newsletter) so mark your calendars and join us in May and June. Our Annual Meeting, June 9, will include the election of Officers and Trustees and I am very pleased with the nominations of three new talented Trustees: Mary Ellen Hoover, Margaret (Maggie) Surwilo and Nancy Somers. As I will be stepping down in June I will leave knowing that nominee Peggy Fredrickson is an excellent choice as next year's President.

Our Volunteers have once again given very generously of their time. Don Bishop, Loren Hayden and Mary Ellen Hoover have been especially dedicated this month. Our foremost volunteer, Lee Swanson, Curator, spends every afternoon working on his many projects. Whether you are a serious researcher or a dedicated browser, Lee will show you what is available at the SHS 'museum'. He has much to share on Sudbury's (and his) own story and can access our extensive collection of material when needed. It's waiting for you to discover upstairs in the Sudbury Town Hall. Members will be given special preference during visiting hours which are 2:00-4:00 pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays or by appointment (Contact Lee at 978-443-3747).

To truly know and appreciate Sudbury's rich history please continue to join us as members of the SHS. We depend on the Sudbury Community for a dedicated and generous volunteer staff. If you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a member or a volunteer, please call the SHS at 978-443-3747 or call me directly at 978-443-8053. It has been a pleasure working with all of you and I hope you will continue to support the SHS in the years to come.

Nancy

Recent Donations

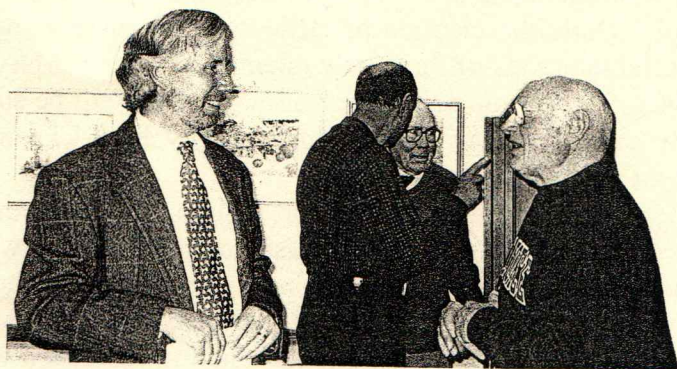
Hill Jewelers, Sudbury
 Wayside Inn via Curt Garfield
 Sheila Mackinnon
 Joan Meenan
 Peggy Fredrickson
 Loren Hayden
 Mary Ellen Hoover

Dennis & Julie Gavin
 Janet Alford

Cliff Bean

Sylvia Throckmorton
 Clay Allen
 Virginia Maenpaa
 Debbie Keeney
 Kirsten van Dijk

Sudbury Commemorative Plate with black Town Seal on 10" white plate
 Records of Sudbury Cos. of Minute & Militia from 1962 – present
 50 plastic magazine holders for Town reports, etc.
 Sudbury Art Association business records
 Floor plans of Sudbury Town Hall
 Flax Hatchel (used to break up flax in preparation for weaving)
 1945/46 schoolroom style world map; JFK related memorabilia; 4 drawer metal lateral file
 Unusual Civil War period loom 39.75 in. wide
 Bound Boston Herald newspapers for month of February, 1919 (contains some material related to Babe Ruth See "Search for Babe's Piano"); War Ration books; 12 programs of Sudbury Players
 1966 November program of Sudbury Players in which he played a leading role
 Sudbury Town Reports
 negatives of extensive photography collection
 home shoe repair last and cast iron base
 1890's brown silk skirt and matching jacket
 book *Child in Painting* formerly owned by Sudbury artist E. Helene Sherman; Native American Fleshing Tool found in van Dijk's back yard; Ruth Ames' recipe collection



In February, 2002, SHS guest speaker Sudbury architect Frank Warner Riepe (left) talks with former SHS Trustee, Clay Allen. Bob Gottberg and George Lewis are in the background.

Special Thanks To:

- ♦ Ed Arees for completing the difficult task of photographing all the works in the SHS Loan Program and to Trustee Kirsten van Dijk and husband J.C. for scanning the pictures onto a CD. If anyone would like to help with the Loan Program, i.e., finding local places which would display the works, please contact the SHS at 978-443-3747.
- ♦ Mary Ellen Hoover for designing and sewing padded canvas bags to hold the SHS sign and the display screens of Gertrude Rice's botanical drawings.
- ♦ Don Bishop who has spent countless hours tackling difficult research projects as well as SHS Finances so that future grant applications will be facilitated.
- ♦ Loren Hayden, Ginny Maenpaa and Charlie Enscore for faithful service every week.

Curator's Corner

Recently the SHS was surprised by donations which were coincidentally related to each other! Laura de Ford, daughter of Dr. Jean Mayer, former Sudbury resident (1967-1977), noted Nutritionist and former President of Tufts University, called and then came to SHS with her son and mother, Mrs. Betty Mayer. They delivered to SHS scrapbooks, books, papers and maps belonging to Mrs. Mayer's sister-in-law Betty Harrington (later Betty van Huysen). Betty Harrington had attended the Red Stone (Mary Lamb) School next to the Martha Mary Chapel and Wayside Inn and the Southwest School. She kept a collection of everything she could find related to the Wayside Inn and Henry Ford in addition to her own memorabilia.

Then just seven days later, Betsy Reid, a friend of Betty Harrington's husband, Dr. William van Huysen of Pittsford, NY, brought more material from Betty's collections without knowing of the previous donation from Laura de Ford. The material had somehow been divided up a while ago and now it is back together!! Betty Harrington had a very good eye and collected interesting material which I have not seen before.

As an added bonus for SHS, the widow and daughter of Dr. Jean Mayer have promised to give us pictures and other material related to their life in Sudbury. Mrs. Mayer noted that they loved Sudbury and their 10 year stay here. One never knows who will stop by SHS.

Grinding Stone Update

Thanks to the support of our volunteers and the current owners, the SHS is preparing to install a fence around the triangular plot which holds the Native American Grinding Stone on Green Hill Rd. We are looking into getting confirmation of the exact location of the plot and then will install permanent markers on the ground.

Pictures of the Grinding Stone, the proposed fence and the proposed plaque on the site will be shown and discussed at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 9. SHS President Nancy Vanderslice adds, "Native American History is so important to our present culture and this is recognized by the Hall and Luis Families who have made the preservation of the Grinding Stone possible."

Wish List:

We now have a leased fax/copier which is making life easier for the volunteers at SHS, but we still have need of:

- ◆ a modern flat file cabinet to hold historic maps
- ◆ a lap top computer
- ◆ Sudbury Assessors' Reports
- ◆ Sudbury Players' business records and memorabilia
- ◆ Nobscot Bottling Co. & Commander Brewing Co.'s bottles and advertisements

Contact Lee Swanson if you know anyone who has any of these items.



Antique kayak expert, Mark Starr of Mystic Seaport, CT (center) discusses George Barton's antique kayak in March, 2002

SHS Sale Items - Buy Now For Birthdays or Holidays!!

The SHS has two of the best 'gift items' for anyone who has ever lived in Sudbury:

- ♦ Curt Garfield's highly readable book: ***Sudbury: 1890-1989 100 years in the Life of a Town*** is nearly sold out in hardcover (\$26.25) but there are still plenty of signed paperbacks left (\$12.60). To order, call Bob Gottberg (978-443-3081) or stop by 2nd Floor Town Hall most afternoons.
- ♦ Framed (\$52.50) or unframed (\$31.50) **1875 de Beers Atlas (four color laser copy) map of Sudbury and Maynard**, with a key on the back explaining unusual features of the map.



Curator Lee Swanson explains a "whatzit" tool and other SHS items at Russell's Garden Center's Open House in February.

Recent Programs SHS Has Sponsored

Once again SHS proved that there are successful programs which can be found by tapping the many resources which Sudbury has to offer!

In February, members and guests learned about the 'appropriateness' of houses in the historic districts in Sudbury. With maps and slides, Frank Warner Riepe, Sudbury architect and member of the Historic Districts Commission gave a very interesting presentation.

In March, the Friends of the Goodnow Library and the SHS co-sponsored the presentation of Mark Starr, antique kayak expert from Mystic Seaport, CT. Mark was delighted to get the opportunity to examine former Sudbury resident George Barton's antique kayak which Barton bought in Greenland and which is now hanging in the Goodnow Library.

In April SHS outdid itself with an marvelous display of clothing and textiles from Colonial times to the 1920's. Sheila Mackinnon coordinated the program and was aided by Betsy Gottberg, Ginny Maenpaa, Mary Ellen Hoover, Lee Swanson and Betsy Cutler who brought her family and friends in costume to enhance the program. Concord Historical Society member Barbara Forman also came in her parson's wife's outfit. Members and guests were treated to an elegant Victorian High Tea following the program. Ursula Lyons coordinated the High Tea with assistance from Nancy Vanderslice, Priscilla Demers, Sally Wadman, Maggie Surwilo, Bonnie Glass and Natalie Eaton.



Audrey Childs (left), clad in an elegant ball gown, explains each item of clothing worn by Kathy Caputo as Kathy's mother, Betsy Cutler, looks on.

Photo by Hal Cutler.

Maps, Maps, Maps

Special Thanks to the Sudbury Companies of Minute & Militia for the \$430 gift to SHS toward the purchase of four different property maps of 1906 and 1908, and to Dr. Robert Maier (see SHS Newsletter April, 2001) for donating two different 1889 property maps of Sudbury.

Search For Babe Ruth's Piano Continues

If you haven't read a newspaper or watched television in the last month, then you may not know about the highly publicized search for the elusive piano which Babe Ruth allegedly pushed into Willis Lake, Sudbury during a party in the winter of 1919.

SHS's Curator Lee Swanson and Town Historian Curt Garfield have also received national publicity as providers of clues to the puzzle which Kevin Kennedy is trying to solve. Kennedy began his sleuthing in the 'Bearly Read Books' shop in Sudbury where he found a copy of Garfield's *Sudbury: 1890-1989: 100 years in the Life of a Town*. On p. 46 he read "Ruth was said to have thrown an upright piano off the porch of his camp and into Willis Pond "

Kennedy thought that if he could find the piano it could be a fundraiser for the Restoration Project, a furniture refinishing program for the mentally ill in which Kennedy volunteers by teaching upholstery. Another benefit to finding the piano could be the end of the fabled "Curse of the Bambino" which many believe has prevented the Red Sox from winning the World Series since 1918 and was a result of the Red Sox's trade of Babe Ruth to the Yankees in 1920.

Divers headed up by Christopher Hugo, a research diver recommended by the state's Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources, have been using sophisticated scanning equipment on Willis Lake. Hugo is quoted in the Boston Globe(4/3/02) as saying "We're going to throw everything technology has at that lake, pro bono." So far nothing has been found that resembles a piano but the search goes on. Stay tuned.



While the divers search for the lost piano in Willis Lake on April 13th, Bob Gottberg and Lee Swanson market Curt Garfield's book which started the search process. Maynard Historical Society Curator Paul Boothroyd (right) helps Lee show the map highlighting Willis Lake.

Save The Dates

For the first time SHS will participate in celebrating Massachusetts Archeological Week from October 6 - 12, 2002. On Sunday, October 6, at Town Hall, Sudbury Archeologist and Curator of the Mashantucket Pequot Museum (aka Foxwoods), Doug Currie, will be the featured speaker. Then on Thursday, October 10 at Town Hall, local archeologists will be speaking and displaying Native American artifacts.



Sudbury Historical Society, Inc.

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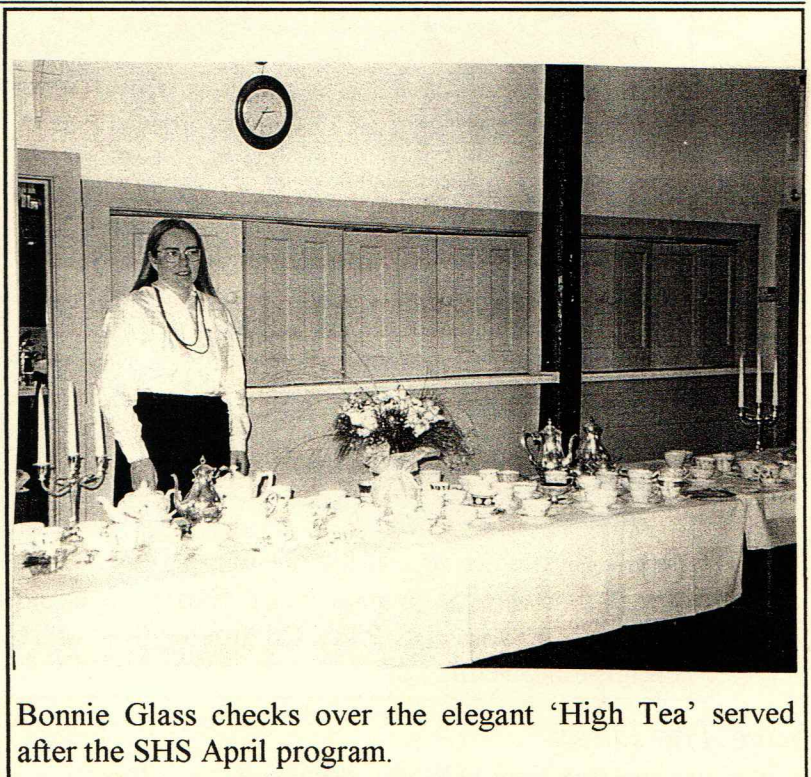
UPCOMING SHS PROGRAMS

SUNDAY, MAY 19th (NEW DATE!) 2:00 pm - **"BUS TOUR OF ABANDONED SUDBURY, PART III"** Curator Lee Swanson will lead the bus tour of the Northwest corner of Sudbury with an overlay of Prohibition, Revolutionary War and Assabet Village's historic sites. Special 'inside scoop' on the search for Babe Ruth's piano (See p. 5). Meet at 1:45 pm at Town Hall. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED. \$10 for members; \$15 for non-members. Call 978-443-3747 for reservations -- tickets are selling fast!

SUNDAY, JUNE 9th 2:00 pm - **ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS** followed by Program - SHS

displays its collections, featuring a timeline through Sudbury's history and a special display and presentation of the SHS Native American grinding stone at Sudbury Town Hall - 2nd Floor.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR BOTH PROGRAMS! 6



Bonnie Glass checks over the elegant 'High Tea' served after the SHS April program.