

THE SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SUTTON, MASSACHUSETTS



— BULLETIN —

VOL. XXVIII NO. 1 December 1998
April 1999

STAFF

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
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| Editor | Paul Holzwarth |
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Presidents Message

When I was elected president of the society last October, I promised to seek new sources of funding for our activities and to continue recent efforts to transform the society into a more business-like organization. We are now responsible for the maintenance and repair of four historic buildings, we publish this Bulletin four times a year and operate a museum that is frantically attempting to acquire, preserve and catalog artifacts from Sutton's past before they end up in a dumpster. It has been clear for sometime that we would not be able to continue our work much longer without a larger and more secure source of funds.

We are now working on the funding problem from two directions: long term and near term. At a recent meeting of the board of directors, Paul Holzwarth moved that a trust fund be established where contributed capital would accumulate and the directors from time to time could appropriate the interest for expenditures. The motion was approved unanimously and the trust has been established. This is the beginning our long term strategy.

To relieve our near term financial stress, we will offer a number of items for sale. Elsewhere in this issue you will find an order form for volumes I & II of the town history. Volume I hasn't been available for some time and we feel that we are doing a service for the community as well as raising money for a worthy cause. (Please note the discount for ordering early!) Additionally we plan to offer a number of souvenir-type merchandise and some new booklets and reproductions of maps, photos and documents from our collection.

Our biggest activity of 1999 is sponsoring "The South

Comes North" a Civil War re-enactment weekend this August to raise funds to restore one of Sutton's authentic civil war canons. This event is FREE to the public - no parking charge - no admission charge. You only have to pay for food and drink. We hope to see you there.

Finally, I invite you to send comments, questions, contributions or offers to volunteer to: The Sutton Historical Society, 4 Uxbridge Rd., Sutton, MA 01590. Or you can call me nights and weekends at (508) 865-3010 or email: humach@tiac.net

-Carl Hutchinson

Trust Fund Established

A Trust fund has been set up at the Millbury Federal Credit Union, 60 Main Street, Millbury, Ma 01527.

This Trust Fund is to be funded with donations and fund raisers from members and friends of the Sutton Historical Society.

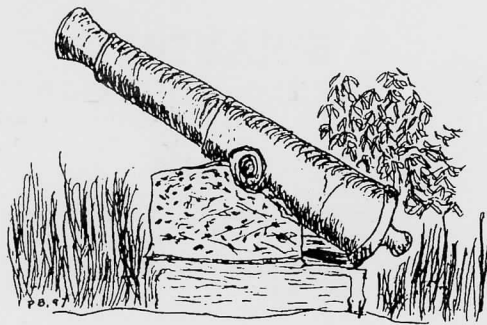
The **principal** shall reside in a savings account at the Millbury Federal Credit Union and is never to be spent for Society expenses.

In October of each year a vote will be taken by the Sutton Historical Society Board of Directors to determine if the **interest only** will be withdrawn for use by the Society.

It is hoped that this fund will grow over the years and will become a source of revenue to pay the expenses of the Sutton Historical Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute should make checks out to: **The Sutton Historical Society Trust Fund**, 4 Uxbridge Road, Sutton, MA 01590

Cannon Restoration Project



Drawing by Paul Brosnihan

Shortly after the American Civil War, four cannon barrels were gifted by Congress to the Town of Sutton in recognition of over 220 men from the Town who participated in the war. These cannon were to have been displayed and cared for by the Town in recognition of the sacrifices of these men. One of these "tubes" has recently been "re-discovered," having been buried in the dirt floor and neglected in a town maintenance barn. The Town's Selectmen voted to turn control over restoration of this one cannon to the Sutton Historical Society. The Society is fortunate to have the guidance of a dedicated group of Civil War reenactors who have also agreed to volunteer resources in restoring the piece.

It is their goal to restore this cannon tube to its original issue condition, complete on historically accurate carriage and running gear. The cannon would be available for educational purposes, parades and civic occasions on behalf of the Town of Sutton. Guidance throughout the project will be from members of Battery F, First Rhode Island Light Artillery who are members of the Newport Artillery Company, and the 25th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry of Uxbridge Massachusetts. Other consultants include licensed cannoneers, and other qualified cannon specialists. 1st Sgt. Geoff Gardner of Battery F has agreed to speak at the Society's meeting on May 4th, 1999, about the cannon, and the lives and role of artillery soldiers.

The cannon has identification markings: CA & Co. ...1862...JPF...No207...This is interpreted to mean Cyrus Alger and Company of Massachusetts, manufactured in 1862. Inspected by Joseph P Farley. Gun number 207. The gun is a bronze smooth bore 6 pound that weighs about 800 lbs. The gun would have shot a ball that weighed about 6 lbs, using a service charge of a little more than a pound of black powder. The tube would have been mounted on a #1 field carriage, complete with implements and limber.

Civil War Weekend

Fund-raising for this project has been ongoing, and will culminate in this year's Civil War Weekend in Sutton Center on August 7th and 8th. The 25th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry will organize the weekend and battle reenactment. They plan to build on the positive momentum from last year's successful encampment and bandstand dedication concert by adding some new elements. The theme for this year's event is "The South Comes North." Both Federal and Confederate Civil War re-enactors will camp in adjoining fields at Fairview Farm in Sutton Center and participate in battles at Waltonthorn Farm on Boston Rd, to the west of the common in Sutton Center. Both these sites have historical significance in their own right, in that Fairview Farm was the site of the original Revolutionary War training grounds for the Town, and Waltonthorn Farm was once owned by John Hancock, and later Civil War veteran Lauren C Hoyle

The weekend will provide 1860's living history events including military, musical, and cultural happenings to acknowledge Sutton's preservation of open land and Civil War era artifacts, as well as to utilize the Town's unique historic character. The centerpiece of the weekend's activities will include a Saturday evening concert and "Hoe-down" style square dance for the public as well as the Union & Confederate troops together under the 'flag of truce'. This will take place on the town common and bandstand featuring the nationally renown 2nd South Carolina String Band.

Civil War reenactors attending this event include units from many parts of the country. Their activities, for the public to view, will include battles, brigade drill, artillery and cavalry demonstrations, weapons firing demonstrations, and various aspects of 1860's camp life. Civilian reenactors will demonstrate the lifestyles of families and refugees who followed the Civil War troops.

The Sutton Lions Club & First Congregational Church and other food vendors from town will help meet the needs of the visitors. All events, exclusive of food, are free of charge to the public. The Sherman Blacksmith Shop & Sutton Historical Society Museum will be open to the public, in the center of town, where the Alger cannon tube will be on display. The society will gladly accept donations for the restoration project during the weekend, or you may make donations payable to "Sutton Historical Society" cannon restoration fund. Please mail any donations c/o Stephen

LeClaire, Benjamin Insurance Agency Inc. 497 Central Turnpike, Sutton MA 01590

Beans the Batcheller Reception

Wager - that John C. Fremont would be the next president of the United States. James Buchanan, Democrat opposed John C. Fremont, Republican, in the US election for President in 1856.

Benjamin Lincoln Batcheller, prominent in the town of Sutton, built Eight Lots into a substantial little village during the 1850's. Eight Lots was fondly called Beanville following the episode of the Buchanan Fremont wager. Stipulation of the wager - the winner to give loser \$200.00

Yesterday, the little boys and the great boys, the fast boys and the slow boys, the long boys and the short boys with a general assortment of citizens in general, were all agog, on the occasion of the arrival of Benjamin Lincoln Batcheller, Esquire of Sutton, Mass., when coming over from that town, wearing snowshoes on his feet, and drawing a barrel of beans on a hand sled in fulfillment of the condition of a wager with T. W. Short of this city, on the result of the presidential election. The comicality of the wager together with the poor example of the Poore reception in Boston, caused the lovers of sport to seize upon the occasion to gratify that propensity.

From Sutton at 10 am. In Millbury at 11:15 am, hailed in Millbury by crowds, hailed in Quinsigamond Village Worcester, at Red Mills, lower end of Green St. at 3:30 pm. C. B. Pratt Esquire led welcoming committee. Chief Marshall, Worcester Concert band escort 3,000 people. Ceremonies in front of Bay State House. Beans delivered to Mr. Short.

Many thousands waited for Mr. Batcheller to appear on the balcony of Bay State House, but physician forbade it. One hundred sat down to bean supper.

SUPPER MENU .50 cents

bean soup
baked beans
rye and Indian bread
Fricasseed beans
Indian pudding
mashed beans
pickles and ketchup
pork and beans
tea and coffee
shaker applesauce
more beans if wanted

Mr. B. exhausted - his physician put him to bed and forbade his keeping up with bean supper, etc.

Benjamin Lincoln Batcheller was born in the ancient Lincoln house, 101 Central Turnpike, Sutton. See Batcheller Genealogy page 360 and 450. Also No. 1 Volume, Sutton History Page 816 and on. He built the homestead buildings now standing at Eight Lots number one, West Millbury Road, Sutton, Mass. No record of actual building can be found, but we know it was previous to 1871 when Fred Lewis Batcheller was born there. To many Sutton old timers "Eight Lots District Number Three" is often referred to as "Beanville", a synonym used following the famous BLB presidential wager affair.

Beans - The Batcheller Reception, copied from 1856 Worcester Spy newspaper at the Antiquarian Society, Worcester Mass., by Phyllis B. MacLaren about 1970.

The Economic Development of My Home Town Sutton, Massachusetts

by Ethel L. Hartness (later Hutchinson)

Sutton was located in 1704 but was not settled until March 1716 by people who wanted homes and a chance to carry on agriculture. The township of Sutton was purchased by certain persons, called proprietors, residing in Boston, from the Nipmug Indians. At this time it was a tract of land eight miles square embracing within its limits an Indian reservation of four miles square, called Hassanimisco. This tract of land, with the exception of a few meadows and here and there a cleared space upon which the Indians raised their corn, was an unbroken forest of pine, oak, hickory, chestnut, birch and maple trees.

Its physical aspect presented many attractive features for those who had a home there. Its surface is uneven and hilly and although none of its hills are of any great height, yet some of them are high enough to reveal from their tops beauty unsurpassed in any other portion of New England. The soil is very well adapted to farming.

The chief economic activities have been cotton manufacturing, shuttle making and farming. Now the manufacture of cotton cloth is a thing of the past and shuttle making and farming remain. The mills were built there because of the excellent water power. The Blackstone River furnishes the power for one mill, the Shuttle Shop gets its power from springs and brooks while the other mill gets its power from the Mumford

River. The Manchaug mill has always manufactured cotton cloth and has run profitably for many years until about a year ago. Now this village is almost completely deserted, because all the mills are closed. Only the oldest families or people who own property remain there. The company, which owns the mills now, claims that it cannot compete with the southern cotton manufacturers, because the labor laws in Massachusetts are so much more strict than elsewhere. They are moving all of their business out of Massachusetts toward the south.

The Wilkinsonville mill used to make cotton cloth but during the war was given over to the making of heavy duck cloth which was used in making aero lanes. Recently the mill has changed hands. The new company has installed new machinery and made other improvements. Late in the summer the mill was reopened as a dye and bleach mill employing about a hundred persons with plans for expansion as the business warrants it. These new owners with their new business have completely changed the population of this section of Sutton. During the war, while the duck cloth was being made, many Portuguese came to work in the mill. All these people have now left and English people are coming in.

The Shuttle Shop is small when considered in comparison with the other two mills but is really the most profitable. This shop has water power and in a dry season when the water is low, it is run by electricity. It is also equipped for steam power in case the electricity should be unavailable at any time. Here shuttles and shuttle irons, which are used in looms, are made. This is surely a profitable business for it has run steadily for years without any complete shut down although at times it has run on short hours.

There are some smaller shops. One is a chair factory employing about ten men. They send out about two hundred and fifty chairs per week. These are wooden chairs such as are used in halls or lodge rooms. The chisel factory, where only four or five men are employed, has electrical power. This is very small but nevertheless its chisel and edge tools are of the first class. Another factory, employing about a hundred men, makes drapery rods.

Outside of these two villages there has been in years past extensive dairy farming. This is still carried on to some extent but is fast passing away because of three very obvious reasons. The first is the difficulty in finding a satisfactory market for the milk; the second is the question of securing farm help and the third is the fact that the young people are leaving the farms to work

elsewhere. About nine years ago a corporation bought several of the farms amounting to about five hundred acres. This they gradually set to apple and peach trees. The apple trees are not yet old enough to bear fruit. In a good yielding year, with favorable weather conditions, about twenty-five thousand baskets of peaches are harvested. In all farming the profit depends entirely on the market price of the article and the cost of labor.....

Sheep raising is another industry which might be developed in Sutton because of the good pastures for grazing, were it not for the inability of the farmer to protect the sheep from dogs.

The economic life of Sutton embraces two phases of industry: manufacturing and agricultural. The two have been carried on side by side for many years and there is no reason to believe that either will supersede the other for many years to come. It is a rural community possessing few of the advantages and none of the disadvantages of a manufacturing community.

grade B on this report.

Professor asked: What about transportation?

Economics 11.2, Simmons College, Oct. 23, 1922

Cattle - The Most Useful of all Domestic Animals

by Carilyn B. Philbrook

“And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind; and God saw that it was good.” Genesis 1:25

There was a high death rate among the “Mayflower” party. One of the reasons for this was they did not bring their cattle with them. So they had no fresh milk to drink.

Captain William Pierce commanded many ships including the “Charity” during the early colonial days. He brought many of the first colonists to this country. Some of his passengers were Edward Winslow, William Bradford, John Elliot, Roger Williams and wife Mary and John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts.

In 1624, Captain Pierce brought another kind of passenger with him this time. He brought the first cattle to New England. Once they got here the cattle had problems. The cows furnished some milk only in the spring, summer, and autumn. The cattle were usually dried up during the winter because of lack of proper food for a good diet.

In 1791, Noah Webster wrote "The Little Reader's Assistant". The school children read the "Farmer's Cathism". The book's last half was agricultural instruction. One of the questions that was asked and answered is as it appears in the book - "Q. Why is farming the best business a man can do? A. Because it is the most necessary, the most healthy, the most innocent, and most agreeable employment of man."

Miss Harriet Martineau in the 1800's said about her cows, "I treat my cows like ladies. Cows are clever beasts. When they are kind and affectionate you do not mind doing a good turn for them." She did her good turn almost daily to her cows. She would wash the cows, curry, comb and provide clean bedding.

In 1704 when Sutton got its beginnings to 1999 there have been dairy farms in Sutton. The Whittier dairy farms is the only one in Sutton, now. The major farms of Sutton that have been through the years are dairy, fruit, poultry and swine. The land is great farmland because of the hillsides, topsides and valleys. Many farms have natural ponds on them because of the hidden springs.

In 1870, there was 100 farms in Sutton, and down to 25 farms in 1950. In 1999, there is only one dairy farm. In Sutton, we had dairy, orchard, vegetable, beef and other marketable products farms. There is also hobby farmers which supply the needs to their own individual families.

The Sutton farmer in 1888 sold his milk for four cents per quart. The average herd which were a lot smaller in number yielded 58 quarts per day. He also sold his milk for making butter. Then in 1925 when the mechanical milk cooler was invented some of the farmers demolished their icehouses.

Early in the depression of the 1930's milk prices were real low. So the farmers set up a milk control board. They wanted it to regulate the local dairy industry.

In the 1940's a farmer's cow would yield 4,000 to 5,000 pounds of milk to pay for its yearly upkeep. In 1999, the cow yields 28 quarts per day or 70 pounds per day. (2.5 pounds of milk equals 1 quart of milk) A cow must produce upward of 25,000 pounds of milk to pay for its yearly upkeep. The average farmer in this area now gets \$13.50 for 100 pounds of milk. If there is high butter fat the farmer gets \$14.00

Do you have milk bottles that you would like to donate to the Historical Society? We would like to have a milk bottle for each dairy that was located in Sutton. Please look in you barn or garage and bring in your milk bottles.

Rules of This Establishment

- Employees working here shall dust the furniture, clean their desks and sweep the floor daily.
- All windows shall be cleaned once a week.
- Each employee shall bring his own bucket of water and scuttle of coal for the day's work.
- Lamps shall be trimmed and chimneys shall be cleaned daily.
- Working hours shall be 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. every evening but the Sabbath, On the Sabbath, everyone is expected to be in the Lord's House.
- Employees are expected to trim their own pen nibs to suit themselves.
- It is expected that each employee shall participate in the activities of the church and contribute liberally to the Lord's work.
- All employees must show themselves worthy of their labor.
- All employees are expected to be in bed by 10:00 p.m. Except: Each male employee may be given one evening a week for courting purposes and two evenings a week in the Lord's House.
- After an employee has been with our firm for 5 years, he shall receive an added payment of 5 cents per day, providing the firm has prospered in a manner to make it possible.
- It is the bounden duty of each employee to put away at least 10% of his wages for his declining years, so that he will not become a burden upon the charity of his betters.
- Any employee who is shaven in public parlors, frequents pool rooms or uses tobacco shall be brought before management to give reasons why he should be continued in employment.

Taken from an 1875 Carriage Shop - Now lets hear about the "Good old days"

Curator's Corner

Sutton Historical Society

Volume 2

Minutes of monthly Society meeting list recent acquisitions to the General Rufus Putnam Museum as follows:

September 1998 Report

Glady Stewart donated the following items:

- old deeds of property in the center of town
- a picture of 3 homes in Sutton Center that have since burned down
- two straight razors and an empty case
- a pair of eye glasses
- cook books and handwritten recipes
- Malcolm Pearson acquired a cider press for the museum.

October 1998 Report

- There is now a complete World War I uniform donated by the Hutchinson Family
- There is a new display of sewing materials in a case, most items donated by Janice Swindell

November 1998 Report

- In 1 1/2 weeks about 200 children had been through the museum. They included 5th graders and girl scouts.
- A silver star and two bronze stars belonging to Jim Fragine have been donated
- An original 1848 Town Report has been cataloged

December 1998 Report

- a November 1889 report card of possibly one of the Stockwell children
- a 1875 assessors report
- a 1905 notice to all property owners from the

- Selectmen with reference to the gypsy moths
- a WW II dinner tray was purchased for \$2.50
 - all the "Cats Meow" pieces are now on display at the museum, donated by the Congregational Church
 - Devonshire Farm stationary stating, "Stockwell & Gifford" Sutton, Mass.

January 1999 Report

- Harold Kilmer donated numerous documents. In particular a "Lidice" poster produced by the Czech government in 1962 and a booklet all about the time of "Lidice"
- Ruth Putnam donated two photographs of school age children, 1921 and 1935
- The town Clerk presented a bound book titled "Records Town of Sutton Proprietors March 18, 1714 to March 31, 1760". Dennis Coll made copies and placed them in the Town Library, the Historical Society Museum, and The Historical Commission. The original remains in the Town Hall in the vault.

February 1999 Report

- a Town Report of the past mentioned Nathan Lombard and noted the coffins he made (two of them) would sell for \$1.50
- Paul Brosnihan showed a wool Navy WW II uniform jacket
- 1946 WW II green wool over coat
- Our Curator, Paul Brosnihan reported that he had inventoried 5,200 museum items to date

Wanted - World War II Items

Currently donations of World War II uniforms of Sutton residents would add to our sparse collection from this era. If available, contact either Paul Brosnihan at 865-5377 or Ben MacLaren at 865-5180.

Historical Society to Re-publish Volume I of Sutton History

Carl Hutchinson, President of the Sutton Historical Society, announced the production of a limited edition of 50 copies of The History of Sutton, 1704 - 1876, Volume I. The Book will be hard bound with a blue cover and gold edging on the pages. There will be a **pre-publication price of \$78.00**, if your money is received by us before May 1st. After May 1st the price will be \$90.00. Please add \$4.00 if you require shipping.

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ORDER BLANK Send money to: Sutton Historical Society, 4 Uxbridge Road, Sutton, MA 01590

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------|
| The History of Sutton, Volume I Pre-publication before May 1 st | No. Books _____ | at \$ 78.00 | \$ _____ |
| The History of Sutton, Volume I after May 1 st | No. Books _____ | at \$ 90.00 | \$ _____ |
| The History of Sutton, Volume II, 1876-1950 | No. Books _____ | at \$ 45.00 | \$ _____ |
| | Shipping \$ 4.00 per book | | \$ _____ |
| | | Total | \$ _____ |

Delivery is expected August 1st, 1999

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MONTHLY MEETINGS

December 1 - The Society met in the General Rufus Putnam Hall at 8 PM. Gary Vaillancourt of Folk Art & Friends spoke about the "Chain of Lights" and their famous chalk ware. They have 3,500 chocolate molds from 1830 to 1940. They produce 30,000 hand painted Santas per year. They have 40 painters and they also produce glass ornaments and Holiday china.

January 5 - The Society met in the General Rufus Putnam Hall at 7:30 PM. Bud Gurney spoke on "Sleighing in New England". Bud discussed the various types of sleighs and their purpose. A handout showed the types of sleights and runners used for specific places, events and cargo hauled. Oxen and horses were used to pull the sleighs. He noted that Wally Johnson has a hearse sleigh left by the Lewis Sherman estate.

February 2 - The Society met in the General Rufus Putnam Hall at 7:30 PM. Paul Brosnihan, curator, gave an informal update to all those present an the various happening at the museum. Paul pointed out the number of displays and their significance to the history of Sutton. These range from personal letters, to journals kept, to documents, photographs, deeds, etc.

March 2 - The Society met in the General Rufus Putnam Hall at 7:30 PM. Karen Board Moran spoke in costume on the First National Women's Rights Convention, in Worcester, on October of 1850. She played the part of Abigail Rawson. Thirteen women spoke at the convention and Society members spoke parts of their speeches.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mr. & Mrs. Chris Sinacola

IN MEMORIAM

Myra L. Pearson Floyd Cranska

(7)

APR. 1999

- For Sale from the Museum Store -

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Sutton Stories, Vol I----- | 43 pages compiled from old Bulletins----- | \$ 5.00 |
| Sutton Stories, Vol II----- | 48 pages compiled from old Bulletins----- | \$ 5.00 |
| Sutton Stories, Vol III----- | 43 pages compiled from old Bulletins----- | \$ 5.00 |
| Drawings of a Past ----- | 36 pages of drawings by Paul Brosnihan----- | \$ 8.00 |
| Views of Sutton ----- | 41 pages of drawings by Paul Brosnihan----- | \$ 8.00 |
| Gifford Diary (1893) ----- | 78 pages of remembrances----- | \$ 6.00 |
| Gifford Collection ----- | 76 pages of letters, notes, pictures----- | \$ 6.00 |
| Asa Bullard Autobiography ----- | 39 pages of remembrances of Asa Bullard----- | \$ 9.00 |
| Kimball Civil War Experiences ---- | 28 pages of memories of the Civil War----- | \$ 10.00 |
| Hancock - Hall House ----- | 41 pages of deeds, history, descriptions----- | \$ 5.00 |
| Stockwell Letters ----- | 55 pages from Nelson Gerber to Wilfred Stockwell----- | \$ 6.00 |
| Sutton Documents ----- | 40 pages early documents, deeds, bonds, notes, indentures, etc.---- | \$ 2.00 |
| Sutton 1904 Bicentennial Pins ----- | 1704 to 1904 pins sold at 1904 Bicentennial----- | \$ 5.00 |
| | Shipping per item | \$ 3.00 |



General Rufus Putnam Hall
 4 Uxbridge Road, Sutton, MA 01590