

The Sutton Historical Society Bulletin

Dedicated to preserving our historical inheritance for future generations.

Founded December 8, 1969

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Blacksmith-Fran Donnelly

Bulletin Editor-Janice Swindell

OLD SUTTON HIGH SCHOOL

By: Janice Swindell

Written in 2004, at the time of Sutton's 300th anniversary.

We were thirty-two eager freshmen in September 1947, but by graduation from the new Sutton Memorial High School in June 1951, our numbers had dwindled to just sixteen.

Old Sutton High was a rather square building - it was old when we were students there. I was impressed when my mother told me she had graduated in 1918 with Alice Ray and Emma Girard. Such a small graduating class!

I remember

: wooden stairways - so worn in the middle as to be a bit slippery and dangerous

: bathrooms in the basement, dimly lit and scary. We used them only in cases of dire necessity.

: classrooms on the first floor with hooks for outerwear. Imagine our joy at finding lockers in the new high school!

: the coal - burning furnace which at times belched coal dust all over the desks, floors and walls. We inhaled those noxious fumes while struggling to clean our desks. Where was the EPA then?

: two large classrooms downstairs, two more upstairs, with the principal's office overlooking Singletary Ave.

cont...

In spite of the obvious drawbacks of such an old building, I have fond memories of Sutton High School, mainly because of our teachers. Miss Ryan and Mrs. Sherin guided us through English (grammar and literature), each with a fair and gracious manner. Mr. Place tried to teach me math and science, but alas! those were my weakest subjects! Mr. Schwab - "Doc" - taught US History, a course we had to pass in order to graduate. He encouraged us to memorize and recite famous lines: The Preamble to the Constitution, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Webster's reply to Hayes and parts of "Thanatopsis" by William Cullen Bryant, to name a few selections.

Our principal, Joseph A. Sullivan, was a wise and dedicated man who oversaw our educational and emotional growth for four years.

One aspect of our high school education that was not neglected was music - in the form of our Glee Club, directed by Frederick S. Mirliani. "Mr. M." came from Holy Cross College and soon earned the respect of all who knew him. We practiced in a classroom, "Mr. M." directing and Joan Brigham playing the piano. He did not tolerate foolishness, but at times he would do something silly to loosen us up before a concert.

Now, some fifty-three years after graduation, when I reflect on my high school experience, I am glad that I had the opportunity to attend a small country school. Times were simpler and less hectic then, and friendships formed during those four years remain strong today.

Some memories fade, while others remain crystal clear- so it is with my impressions of Sutton High School, 1947 - 1951.



Old Sutton High School, Singletary Ave

2017 - A LOOK BACK!!

By: Christine Watkins

The Society has been very busy in 2017. As we look forward to our upcoming 2018 membership drive, we hope to surpass last year's membership and reach the 100-member milestone or better in 2018. We welcome suggestions for speakers and presentations which interest our membership and hope to see more of our members at our special events.

We have expanded our means of communication with our members to include a Facebook Page - Sutton Historical Society, Inc., a monitored email account - Sutton1704@gmail.com, and a Website - www.SuttonHistoricalSocietyInc.org. We also make an effort to place meeting and event notices in local papers and on the Sutton local cable access channel. The Historical Society Board of Directors (Board) will be uploading various information to the website as we continue to learn and understand how web design works. Be sure to check the site often. Suggestions for content are always welcome. We will continue to send newsletters by traditional mail to all our members with mailing addresses on file.

We held general meetings in March, April and May.

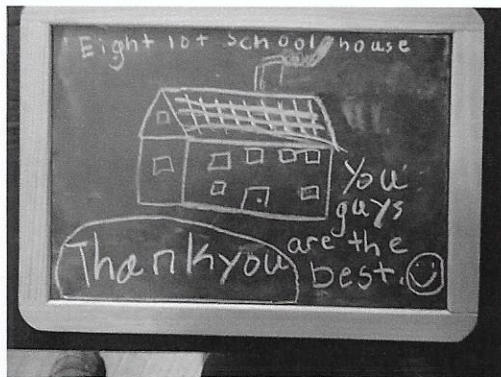
During the Spring months, the Board was focused on responding to the Massachusetts State Architectural Access Board (AAB), Boston, with regard to handicapped access at the Eight Lots School House. Our Request for Variance to the Accessibility Requirements Hearing was held in Boston on March 27, 2017. Our variance was denied on April 26, 2017. We responded to the denial on July 28, 2017 detailing our plans to comply with the handicapped accessibility requirements. A follow-up meeting was held in Boston with Board Members and the AAB on October 2, 2017. As a result of this meeting, we are working towards securing a removable suitcase style ramp, adjusting the grade to accommodate the ramp, and widening the exterior doorway to meet the minimum AAB required width for entrances with minimum disruption to the current facade of the building. Upon final approval by the AAB, we expect to complete all related work by September 2018.

A goal of the Board has been to open the General Rufus Putnam Museum for public access. A new furnace, two directly-drained, stand-alone dehumidifiers, new roof shingles, gutters and downspouts have been installed at the facility and general housekeeping/cleaning and the organization of artifacts and displays has begun. Electrical service was upgraded by the Town to 200 amps. This is a larger project than anticipated, but we are making strides in the right direction. If anyone is interested in volunteering to help with this project, drop us an email or contact Brian Stevenson at 774-708-0582.

In keeping with the Society's goal of promoting research and learning about the history of Sutton, over 100 third grade students visited both the Eight Lots School House in May and the Blacksmith Shop in June, First Congregational Church and Town Hall Facility in June. At the Schoolhouse, the students experienced sitting in old style desks, using writing slates, and participated in discussions and exhibits presented by Board and Society members, Joyce Smith, Alice Shaw and Dave Pizzi. At the Blacksmith shop, Fran Donnelly and Steve Colonies shared their blacksmithing skills with the students, while other Society members acted as tour guides. This event is always a highlight for the members involved as well as for the children.



Society and Board Member, Alice Shaw, with students



Slate completed by visiting student



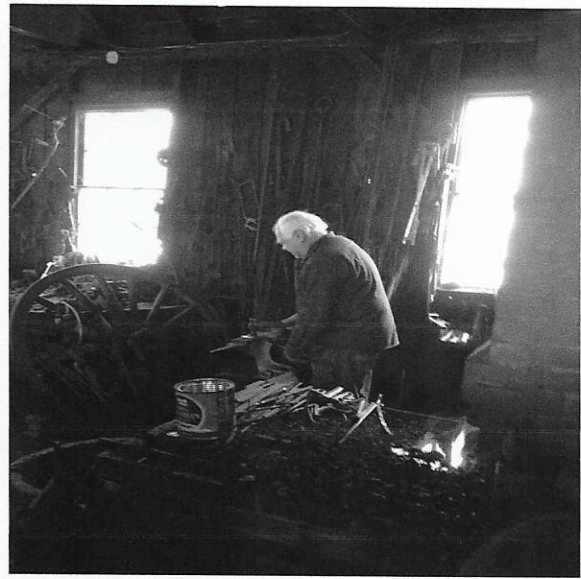
3rd Grade students in Eight Lots School House



General Rufus Putnam Museum Curator, Board and Society member, Joyce Smith, explaining the History of Sutton Center to local 3rd grade students



Steve Colonies - blacksmith



Fran Donnelly - blacksmith



Society members, as well as local friends and neighbors, enjoyed a Cookout/Potluck at the First Baptist Church, Manchaug on June 30. Although a thunderstorm roared in, causing everyone to scramble into the building, the event was a great success. National Park Ranger, Chuck Arning, who operates out of the Linwood, Massachusetts, headquarters of the John. H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, spoke about Baseball in the Blackstone Valley, the competitiveness of the Mill Teams in the area and its impact on the rivalries between towns. It was interesting to learn that the lyrics to the song "Take me out to the Ball Game" describe a young girl's desire to go to the baseball games vs. other locations on her "date" night.

Chuck Arning, National Park Ranger



Above: Interior of First Baptist Church, Manchaug
Left: Cookout/Potluck Picnic

In August, members enjoyed a wonderful summer night and potluck dinner at the Eight Lots School House.

The evening of September 12 was a trip back in time to the Revolutionary War era with Society and Board member, Keith Downer. Keith spoke extensively on muskets and accouterments as well as Sutton's contribution to the Revolutionary War effort. Keith shared with us a Bucks County, Pennsylvania Loyalist Light Dragoon helmet. A loyalist was a colonist who wanted to remain a part of England.

Keith displayed the musket of a Sutton Revolutionary soldier, Nathaniel Whitmore. Whitmore and Asa Waters made a huge contribution to the war effort with their gun powder production. George Washington saw the muskets carried by the Sutton militia and was very impressed. Washington discharged Whitmore and Waters back to Sutton to manufacture more of these excellent muskets. Until 1813, more muskets were manufactured in Sutton (Millbury at that time was actually part of Sutton) than anywhere else in the U.S.



In the Battle of Saratoga, Sutton's militia sent 600 men...more than Worcester. After the battle, George Washington was so impressed with their fighting prowess, that he stated this group from Sutton will no longer be called militia, but will be known as the Sutton Regiment.

Keith shared his knowledge of musket origins, and how the colonists recycled Dutch, English and French muskets.

Outstanding presentation and a wealth of knowledge!!! We would love to have Keith repeat this presentation at some point in the future.

October 1 had the Society participating in and benefitting from a town-wide yard sale. Although the event had to be moved to the Sunday, October 1 rain date, this event was a great fundraiser for the Society as a total of \$855 was raised. We look forward to next year's event.



Society Members hard at work at the Yard Sale. Photos courtesy of Society Member, Sheila Moss

Historical Society members are more than willing to answer questions and perform research on topics relating to the history of Sutton and its residences. Members have genealogical research experience, deed research experience, access to many historical documents and a love of all things Sutton.

Inquiries addressed this year included researching information about the Coleman Store in Manchaug in the 1950s, the many uses of 11 and 19 Depot Street, currently Polyvinyl Films, maker of StretchTite plastic wrap, a request from a homeowner about the history of their home, and initial contact to the Society about the town-wide yard sale. Clearly, social media is making the Historical Society more visible and reachable.

Information about upcoming meetings and special events will be emailed to all members who have provided their email address. Look for **Sutton1704@gmail.com** in your inbox for exciting news and updates from the Society.

SUTTON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT - TIME CAPSULES

By: Christine Watkins

The Sutton Historical Society recently accepted the donation of the 1949 and 1955-time capsules from the Sutton School Department. The time capsules were removed from the demolished school buildings to make way for the current Middle School/High School.

The 1949 capsule which was embedded in the Sutton Memorial High School at its dedication on November 13, 1949 contained:

1. Town of Sutton Valuation and Tax 1945
2. Town of Sutton Annual Report for Year Ending December 31, 1945
3. List of Names of Men and Women Town of Sutton January 1, 1945
4. February 11, 1941 detail of motion forming Special School Site Committee
5. April 29, 1941 Report of Special School Site Committee
4. Minutes of the High School Building Committee from August 6, 1941 through November 8, 1949
5. List of Sutton High School Building Committee Members
6. Questionnaire for Sutton School Site
7. Blank report cards: Grades 1-2, Grades 3-8, High School
8. Blank Public Schools Continuous Pupil Record Card
9. Program of the Sutton High School Commencement on June 9, 1949.
10. Dudley Gendron Post History March 9, 1947 to November 11, 1949 including a list of all members for those years.
11. History of the John Mateychuck Post #390, American Legion founded 1946
12. History of the John Mateychuck Auxiliary dated November 13, 1949
13. List of Sons and Daughters of Sutton Serving in World War II
14. Cornerstone Ceremony Program, November 13, 1949

15. Document detailing purchase of Town of Sutton Baseball Field that was added to the tract purchased for the High School
16. School Directory 1949-1950 and Pupil listings for October 1949 for all town schools: General Rufus Putnam School (Gr 1-4), Town Hall School (Gr 7-8), Manchaug School (Gr 1-7), South Sutton School (Gr 1-4), Wilkinsonville School (Gr 1-7), Sutton High School (Classes of 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953)
17. Handwritten note from the Manchaug School Grade 4 classroom written by 4th grade student Arleen Morro on November 2, 1949 and signed by all classroom students.
18. Various photographs of Building Committee, Building Site and some of the schools located in town.

The **1955 capsule** which was embedded in the first consolidated town elementary school which subsequently became the middle school contained:

1. The Booklet for the 250th Anniversary of the Town 1704-1954
2. The Town Annual Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1954
3. A document dated June 23, 1955 listing the members of the School Building Committee and the School Committee
4. The Specifications for Construction of the Elementary School by Franklyn R. Williams, Inc., Architect, Worcester, MA dated October 4, 1954

These time capsules will be placed in the Sutton Historical Society, Inc. Museum, located in the General Rufus Putnam Building in Sutton Center.

For any Sutton alumni or just interested history buffs, the Sutton Public Library maintains the Sutton High School Yearbooks online. Yearbooks from 1945-2007 can be viewed on your home computer. Simply visit www.suttonpubliclibrary.org, click on Reference and Research in the top menu bar, and click on Sutton High School Yearbooks on the left side menu. You can also simply type <http://www.suttonpubliclibrary.org/yearbooks.asp> into your google search bar.

ANSWERS TO SUTTON TRIVIA (Questions listed in last newsletter)

By: Joyce Smith

1. Where was "Beanville" and how did it get the name?
Answer: Beanville was the vicinity of the Eight Lots School. It was named because beans were the pay-out for a lost bet
2. Almost everyone knows where the Silvermine was located, but what about a gold mine?
Answer: Area where Pleasant Valley Country Club is located
3. Where was the powder house and training field for the militia located?
Answer: Behind the houses on Singletary Ave and Boston Rd, in the field closest to Cole Ave
4. What Sutton inventor made a machine to manufacture common pins?
Answer: Moses Leland Morse. He also invented improved watches with Josiah Wheelock

5. Where is the "singing bridge"?
Answer: Wilkinsonville, behind J&G Foods. The bridge is to be rebuilt in 2018
6. What was built as a combined school and Masonic Hall?
Answer: The General Rufus Putnam School (now the Historical Society Museum)
7. In 1965, what was the first PGA Tournament at Pleasant Valley CC?
Answer: The Carling World Open, won by Tony Lima. PV held 32 PGA tournaments
8. What high school teacher made us memorize "The Touch of the Master's Hand"?
Answer: Donald G. Schwab ("Doc"), made us memorize and recite poetry in History class
9. Who was the last stagecoach driver between Millbury and West Sutton?
Answer: Walter Acker. The two-horse stage left W Sutton for Millbury every weekday at 6:30 and 1:30 and returned at 12:00 and 6:00.
10. There is a plaque at the entrance to Purgatory Chasm State Reservation in memory of which WWII soldier killed in WW II?
Answer: John H. Dudley (tail gunner) shot down over Sicily 1943. His parents gave 70 acres in memory of "Dinty" and his crew, all killed in the same mission. The area is dedicated to "The Outdoor Life of the American Boy"

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please note the annual membership fees are due by February 2018. The fees collected are important funds to help sustain payments of related insurances, utility bills and ancillary bills, the mailing of the news bulletin and various activities. Please help support our Historical Society and use the attached Membership Form in this bulletin. Our Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt charitable organization, we gladly except all donations and all donations are tax deductible.

Thank you.

VOLUNTEER...

We welcome all volunteer help. If you have a special talent, skill or trade, please let us know how you would like to volunteer or what your area of interest is. Please contact sutton1704@gmail.com.

Thank you.

**SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP FORM**
Annual Membership Fee is due February 2018

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone: _____

\$15.00 Individual Fee: _____

\$25.00 Family Fee (including children under 18): _____

Additional Donation _____

Mail to:

Sutton Historical Society Inc.

4 Uxbridge Road

Sutton, MA 01590

The Sutton Historical Society is a nonprofit corporation; all donations are tax deductible

SPECIAL ORDERS

___ Historical Society Stoneware Mug, \$20 plus \$5 S&H

___ 1715 Original Sutton Map (17" x 22"), \$10 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

___ 1795 Sutton Map (18" x 22"), \$20 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

___ 1850 Sutton Houses 1700 - 1850 Map (16" X 22"), \$10 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

___ 1870 Sutton Map (17" x 22"), \$10 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

___ Original 30 Sutton Lots superimposed on current town map (11" X 23"),
\$20 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

___ Original Sutton Land Owners by Name and Location (13" X 22"),
\$10 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

___ Volume I, Town History 1704 to 1876, \$90 plus \$7 S&H

___ Volume II, Town History 1876 to 1950, \$20 plus \$7 S&H

Mail payment to:

Sutton Historical Society Inc.

4 Uxbridge Road

Sutton, MA 01590

Note: Maps can be purchased at Sutton Public Library and history volumes at Town Clerk's Office

SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
4 UXBRIDGE ROAD
SUTTON, MA 01590

2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 6	7:00PM	Special Presentation Keith Downer, "The Real Boston Massacre"	First Congregational Church
April 3	7:00PM	General Meeting	First Congregational Church
May 1	7:00PM	Special Presentation Arthur L. Martin, Author of the novel "Summer of 1840, on the Shores of Singletary"	First Congregational Church
June 15	6:30PM	Annual Cookout/Pot Luck Supper	Manchaug Baptist Church 439 Putnam Hill Rd
August 10	6:30PM	Annual Pot Luck Supper	Eight Lots School House
Sept 11	7:00PM	General Meeting	First Congregational Church
Sept 22	9:00 AM	Town-Wide Yard Sale	Blacksmith Shop
October 2	7:00PM	Annual Meeting	First Congregational Church
November 6	7:00PM	Special Presentation Christine Watkins "The Centennial Anniversary of World War 1, Local Soldiers who fought in the Great War"	First Congregational Church
December 5	6:30PM	Annual Christmas Pot Luck Supper and a review of 2018	First Congregational Church

Anyone interested in any of these events is welcome to join us. Dates and times may be subject to change. Upcoming meetings/events are listed in The Millbury-Sutton Chronicle, The Uxbridge Times, Towns section of the Worcester Telegram, our Facebook page - Sutton Historical Society Inc. and our website www.SuttonHistoricalSocietyInc.org.