

The Sutton Historical Society Bulletin

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President's Message

The Sutton Historical Society has been busy since we published our last newsletter in March. We hosted two guest speakers. In April, Joe Iamartino, President of the Thompson Historical Society, presented on the Nipmuc Lithic Trails, and in May, Carol Crossed traveled from Rochester, NY, to present on the topic of Woman's Suffrage in the early 20th Century.

On June 4, the Society was represented at the 2nd Annual Coffee with Cows on the Town Common, an event sponsored by the local 4-H. On June 9, thanks to the efforts of Joyce Smith, we hosted a brown-bag picnic reunion for students who attended the General Rufus Putnam School prior to its closure in 1954. What a great showing of about thirty people. On June 12, we welcomed the Sutton 3rd grade Town Common tour. The students walked up from the school and visited our General Rufus Putnam Museum, the Town Hall, the First Congregational Church, and the M.M. Sherman Blacksmith Shop. We also held our annual Town-wide Yard Sale on June 17. We were fortunate that the rain held out until early afternoon.

I want to give a big thank you to the Sutton Lions Club, the Dudley Gendron Post 414 American Legion Riders, and the whole Dudley Gendron Post 414 organization. These organizations have been very generous with their support of our cemetery restoration project. This team presented the Flags on the Common this past Memorial Day weekend with proceeds going to the cemetery project. THANK YOU!

We have continued with the cemetery restoration project at the Armsby Cemetery. This is the old cemetery past Pleasant Valley Country Club, up on the hill. We meet every Thursday 5:00 to 7:00 and Sunday mornings 9:00 to 12:00. Volunteers are always welcome.

Joyce Smith and new volunteer, Charlie Wilson, are making some noticeable progress in the museum. Plans to change the exhibit for our September 30 celebration of the building's 200th anniversary are underway.

Don't forget about our returnable bottle/can drive July 8 through July 16. We will leave a trailer at the Blacksmith Shop, 6 Singletary Avenue. Just leave your cans, and we will process them. Additionally, every 4th week beginning June 26, the Society will collect and return bottles/cans from the local transfer station green shed with the proceeds benefitting the Society. If you want to hold your cans until our week, just drop us a quick email at sutton1704@gmail.com to confirm our collection date.

Check out our website, suttonhistoricalsocietyinc.org, for all other future events.

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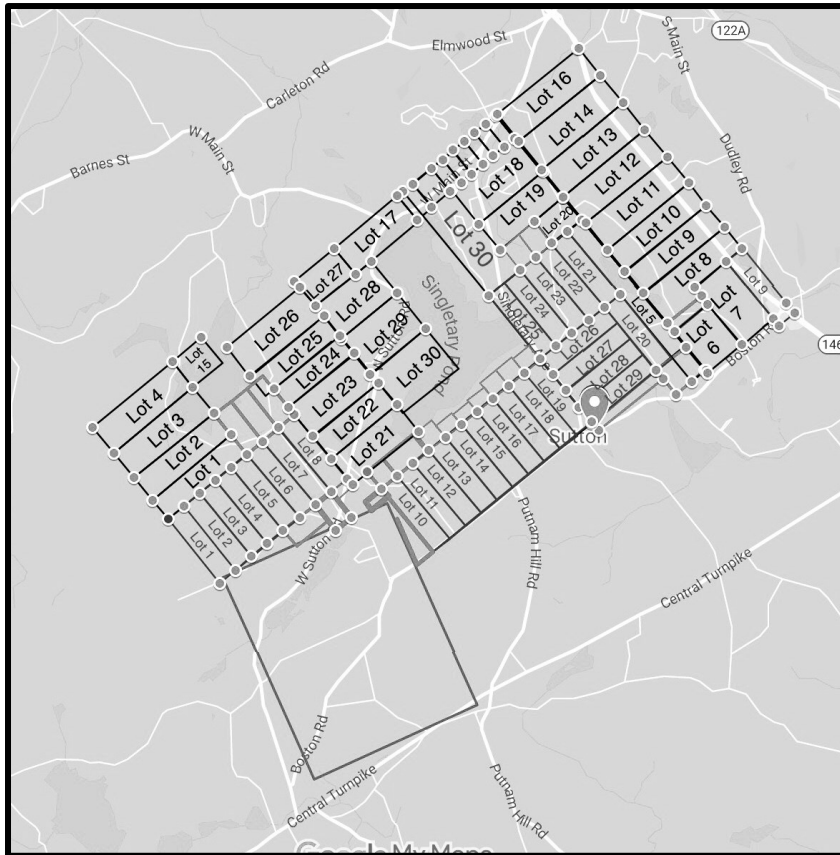
The Records of the Sutton Town Proprietors

By Peter Michelson

The Sutton Historical Society Board of Directors is happy to announce that the Records of the Proprietors of Sutton have been re-discovered. We are indebted to Society member, Ross Weaver, for obtaining these records from the LDS Family History website at the Worcester Public Library (www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/268557). The records are a compilation of two books; the first are the records of the Town Proprietors, the second is a record of the Proprietors of the 4,000 Acres - essentially the first 30 settlers. The original books are stored in a safe at the Sutton Town Hall. These two books were scanned by the Genealogical Society of Salt Lake City, Utah in 1971. The Historical Society has the original microfilm copies in its possession.

Proprietors of a New England town were the original purchasers of a township from the General Court of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay or perhaps from Native Americans for towns established prior to King Philip's War. These Proprietors held land in common ownership and maintained exclusive control over the tracts of land granted to them. The Proprietors were responsible for the improvement of the new township as well as inducing settlers and locating home lots for the settlers. The Proprietors originally controlled both the political and economic activity in the town. The responsibility of the Proprietors changed over time. When Sutton was settled in 1716, the concept of a Proprietor evolved to include both resident and non-resident persons that had a right to a share in the division of common and individual lands. This group included grantees of the township and people that may have purchased proprietary rights. The first Proprietors of the Township of Sutton were non-residents. The first 30 settlers had control of 4,000 acres as an encouragement to settle in the new township. These first 30 settlers called themselves the Proprietors of the 4,000 Acres. The records for both groups of Proprietors were maintained in separate books totaling hundreds of pages of documents from the settlement until the first decade of the 19th century and covering approximately 41,000 acres.

The Proprietors Records of Sutton include details of seven divisions of property in the remaining 37,000 acres of land which included Millbury, Grafton, Wilkinsonville, South Sutton, Manchaug, and parts of Northbridge and Upton.



This map shows the approximate boundaries of the Proprietors of the 4,000 acres original land divisions

Small font numbers refer to those lots granted in the First Division. Large font bold lot numbers were those granted in the Second Division. For more detailed information, visit suttonhistoricalsocietyinc.org/research.html

These Proprietors' records provide original source information not recorded elsewhere which is invaluable to researchers of land transactions, town history, and genealogy. For the town of Sutton, the granting of the original 40,000 acres contained in the Town's two Proprietor record books would not have been recorded with any Registry of Deeds office. Therefore, Proprietors' records provide a clear starting point for original land parcel boundaries and included maps. In Sutton, the granting of the original 30 settler lots in the initial 4,000 acres are only recorded in the Proprietors Records. These transactions were described as "lots" in the First and Second Division and each had a unique number. The metes and bounds describing deeds in the Suffolk or Worcester County records would not be sufficient to determine where the original settlers were located unless it included the original lot number and the map. Case in point, is the "Stockwell Family Genealogy" published in 1983 by Mabel Stockwell Kennedy, with an appendix of "Deeds and Wills" which includes a summary of Suffolk County and Worcester County Sutton Stockwell land transactions researched by Charles Putnam.

The Stockwell Family are some of the earliest settlers in Sutton. There were three Stockwell families in the group of the first 30 settlers of the town. The three families were those of William Stockwell, Sr. and two of his five sons, John Stockwell and William Stockwell, Jr. All seven children of William Stockwell, Sr. eventually relocated from Essex County to Sutton.

The analysis of these family relationships and their residences in the early years of settlement in Sutton is well documented by Charles Putnam as mentioned above. Unfortunately, it appears he did not have access to the Proprietors' records which include land transactions not on file with the Registry of Deeds. Without these records, he may not have been able to accurately describe where they settled. Additional information obtained from the Settler's Proprietors' Records can now be shared that completes our knowledge of where these families settled and demonstrates the utility of the Proprietors' records for genealogical and town history research. Many of the subsequent land transactions after the Second Division of the 4,000 acres were made to allow the Stockwell siblings to live within close proximity of one another, and these are the transactions which were recorded with the Suffolk County and Worcester County Registry of Deeds.

Using the Settler's Proprietors' records, it is confirmed that William Stockwell, Sr. was granted Lot No. 24 in the First Division in 1717. The southern boundary of his 40-acre home lot can now be located on what we know as Wheelock Road. This road was created to allow the settlers to travel to their Second Division lots on the eastern border of the 4,000-acre Settler's Land. The Lot No. 24 boundary began 40 rods easterly from the Mill Road, now known as Singletary Avenue. William Stockwell, Sr. sold this land to Freegrace Marble in 1718. Freegrace was then granted Lot No. 8 in the Second Division of the Settler's Land. Additional land acquisitions bordering this property (Lot No. 8) allowed Freegrace to establish a large property that he was able to share with his heirs. Part of this property bordering Burbank and Sibley Roads became a National Historic District in November 1989 with a Massachusetts' Historical Preservation Restriction added to the property in January 2000.

From deeds recorded, William Stockwell, Sr. purchased 40 acres from his son, John Stockwell, for £10. His son, Jonathan, also purchased 40 acres from his brother, John, for the same amount. These two plats were adjacent to each other, and bordered the western shore of Crooked Pond (Singletary Lake). Proprietors' Records prove this was the 80-acre tract that was Lot No. 29 in the Second Division of the Settler's Land.

John Stockwell was granted Lot No. 6 in the First Division located adjacent to Eight Lots Road. His Second Division grant extended his home lot to Ramshorn Pond. In addition, he had a right to Second Division Lot No. 25 which he sold to Robert Knowlton. John participated in many land transactions in Sutton, including acquiring the First Division property of Samuel Bixbee (Lot No. 4) which also gave John the right to Lot No. 29 in the Second Division as referenced above.

William Stockwell, Jr. acquired Lot No. 11 in the First Division from Oliver Gosse which gave him the right to Lot No. 23 in the Second Division. Referencing the map above, the eastern boundary of Lot No. 23 Second Division was adjacent to the western boundary of Lot No. 29 Second Division which was owned by his brother, John, as mentioned previously. This boundary is described as a "range line" in the Settler's Proprietors' Records. The metes and bounds of subsequent land transactions found in deeds will reference this location. On the western side of the range line are Second Division Lots 21-26. Second Division Lots 27 through 30 continue on the eastern side of the range line. We can be certain that William, Sr., Jonathan, and William, Jr., all shared a border in the Second Division of the 4,000 acres. The road that

goes from the Eight Lots School House to Singletary Lake traveled through the properties of lots 29, 22, and 21 - now known as West Sutton Road.

The right of Second Division Lot No. 21 belonged to Ebenezer Cutler, who was also the husband of Mary Stockwell, the daughter of William, Sr. The boundaries of Lot 21 included Crooked Pond to the East, Lot 22 to the North, and to the South the extension of First Division home lots 10 and 11. In 1726 the 20-acre extension of Lot 11 was sold by William Stockwell, Jr. to his brother-in-law Joseph Severy, the husband of his sister Sarah. Ebenezer Stockwell inherited his father's 40 acres. David Stockwell settled nearby. All the siblings of the Stockwell family were living in close proximity in 4000 acres west of Crooked Pond.

This summary demonstrates the usefulness and value of the Proprietors' Records. The information obtained from these records completes and corrects the work of Charles Putnam published in the Appendix of "The Stockwell Genealogy".

Members of the Historical Society are available to assist in research with the Proprietors' Records.

When is a will not a will?

By Charlie Wilson

This is the story of a single document and how much it can tell you. Five pages of densely packed, badly spelled, but reasonably legible 18th century handwriting, sewn together book-form. Our document, discovered in a drawer in the General Rufus Putnam Museum in Sutton, begins with the standard language of a land deed - but is not copied in the official books, appears to have some wording of a will - but is not a will, bequeaths sums of money to children - but the payments are made on behalf of someone else ... for a genealogist, and curious person this was an irresistible puzzle.

Genealogy is a fascinating, yet frustrating hobby. Your ancestors are sometimes tantalizingly out of reach, and the very basic details of their lives can remain elusive. I call myself a genealogical detective, seeking the hidden narratives of my ancestors' lives, on a hunt worthy of Sherlock Holmes! To do this I must go beyond the bread-and-butter records of a family historian - Birth, Marriage, Death (BMD), and Censuses - to the many other resources out there waiting for researchers.

Documents such as land deeds, indentures, letters, diaries, ledgers, and wills may be overlooked in favor of the simpler (both to find and to understand) BMD records. But if the latter are missing, brick walls can spring up to halt your family history journey.

A will mentioning children in birth order, a niece or uncle, or an in-law, can help you break down those brick walls. That offhand remark about a property in a gossipy letter may be the clue you need to locate an ancestral home. The debt owed by an ancestor could lead you to a relationship that solves a longstanding mystery.

These documents can also add color to your family history, taking it beyond dry facts. I have an ancestor, Richard Southgate, who was living as a farmer and nonconformist in Suffolk, England in the early 1700s. Nonconformity meant that he did not belong to the "established church", i.e., the Church of England and very few BMD records exist for Richard and his family.

But I can tell you exactly where he was on May 3, 1716--Leicester, Massachusetts, purchasing his future home--because the man who persuaded him to emigrate, Thomas Prince, kept a detailed log of every single letter he received or sent for several decades.¹ I filled in some gaps in Richard's life, and added detail that the BMD triad could not provide.

Wills might reveal a favorite, or less favored, child, or describe a special item of furniture deemed worthy of being passed down the generations. A young child, indentured to a master would be listed as 'servant' on a census record, but the indenture itself tells you of the dire poverty that your ancestor once found themselves in.

The main challenge, beyond reading the handwriting, in utilizing these slightly more unusual documents for genealogy or research is discovering them in the first place. Considering the millions of published and handwritten items that exist in Massachusetts alone, only a tiny fraction is properly documented and easily findable.

1793
 To all People to Whom these Presents shall Come, Greeting
 Know ye that I Jacob Severy, of Sutton in the County of Worcester
 Commonwealth of Massachusetts, yeoman - for and in consideration
 of the sum of Five Hundred and fifty Pounds, to me in hand
 before the Enacting hereof well and truly paid by Jacob Severy
 of Sutton in the County and Commonwealth aforesaid yeoman -
 the Receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge and my self, Thenceforth
 fully Satisfied and Contented of every Part and parcel thereof
 do Request and Discharge him the said Jacob Severy his Heirs
 Executors and Administrators forever by these Presents Have
 Given Granted Bargained Sold Conveyed by these Presents
 and Confirmed unto him the said Jacob Severy his Heirs & former
 Four Certain Tracts or parcels of Land lying and being in
 said Sutton primarily in the westerly parts of the Town the
 whole containing one Hundred and fifty Eight acres betwixt
 Sam may or his and is the whole of the Farm Buildings
 and other Lands that my Honored father gave me a
 Deed of having even Date with this Deed, and is butted
 and bounded as followeth (viz) - The first Piece
 contains about one Hundred and thirteen acres being the
 same Farm with the Buildings standing there on bounded
 as followeth beginning at the Southeastly Corner with a List of
 Stones by the Road, thence Westly bounding on Land of Stephen
 Stockwell Noah Stockwell & Amos Stockwell thence Northly
 bounding on Land of Elijah Brown & Jonathan King thence
 Eastly by said Kings and thence Northly by said King
 thence Eastly bounding on said King and Land of Ebenezer
 Marsh thence Northly and Westly by several angles on Land
 of said Marsh thence Northly bounding on Land of John
 Haven to a Heap of Stones at the Road thence Eastly bound-
 ing partly on said Road & partly on Land of Solomon Marble
 to a Stake & Stones thence Southly or Southeastly bounding
 partly by Land of said Marble & partly by Land of Stephen
 Stockwell & on said Road to the Bounds first mentioned
 Second Piece of Wood Land contains about five Acres and is
 bounded as followeth beginning at the Southeastly Corner with
 a Stake & Stones thence Westly bounding on Land of said Nathaniel
 Whitmore to a Stake & Stones at Oxford New Line thence Northly by
 said Line to a Stake & Stones thence Eastly to a Stake & Stones at
 Office thence Northly on said Line to a Stake & Stones thence
 Eastly by Land of Amos Stone to a Stake & Stones thence Northly
 by Land of said Stone to a Stake & Stones thence Northly by
 Bond & Severs two rods & sixteen Links to a Stake & Stones thence
 Southly by said Bond & Severs Land about 4 rods to the Bounds first
 mentioned, with a Priviledge to pass and Rec. pass to said Land
 as may appear by a former Deed of said Land.

Cared over

This is certainly the case at the Sutton Historical Society's General Rufus Putnam Museum. I am a volunteer, assisting Joyce Smith, our curator, to organize and catalog our collections. Many items do have catalog entries, and we are working hard to create a usable index for researchers, but I know there are genealogical and historical treasures waiting among the boxes of uncatalogued donations and shelves of books.

But back to our document. A cursory scan told me that it was going to provide lots of juicy detail and plenty of names that would be of interest to you, our readers, and the wider research community. A note from a previous SHS curator read "1795: Moody Severy to Jacob Severy; Interesting division of house stock etc.; property on De Witt Rd I think". I agreed - it was fascinating. So, I took the time to transcribe and investigate further.²

Moody Severy (1765-1848) was the son of Jacob and Abigail (Rhodes), who had married in the town of Marblehead in 1755 and moved back to Jacob's hometown of Sutton to raise a family. Jacob and Abigail had at least twelve children, of whom eleven were living when our document was signed on April 17, 1793.

It begins "To all people to whom these presents shall come - Greetings ..." which was a common legal form for land deeds at the time. I assumed it was such a document, and indeed the first section confirms that Moody Severy is selling four tracts of land, made up of 158 acres, a farm and buildings in Sutton, to Jacob Severy (his father) for the sum of £550.



The land is carefully and lengthily "butted and bounded" (i.e., delineated using landmarks) in our document, providing us with a wonderful list of Moody's neighbors:

- Stephen, Noah and Amos Stockwell
- Elijah Brown
- Jonathan King
- Ebenezer Marsh
- John Haven
- Solomon Marble
- Lieutenant Nathaniel Whitmore
- Ambrose Stone
- Bond & Severs
- Folsambe Chase
- Simon Fuller
- Jonathan Putnam
- James Taylor
- Nathan Sibley
- Simeon Carpenter
- Phinebus Putnam
- Ezekiel Cole
- Abner Sibley

The History of the town of Sutton³ describes the location of the farm, originally settled by Joseph Severy (1690-1761), as being west of Jonathan Stockwell's property. Joseph was married to Jonathan's sister, Sarah. By 1878, when the History was written, the farm was in the possession of Benjamin A. DeWitt, but the book states that the property was owned by the Severy family for 134 years.

The farm is marked on a map, printed in 1831.⁴ You can see "M. Severy" marked south of the S. Stockwell property on the now-named DeWitt Road.

The plot thickens

So far, our document conforms to what was normal for a land deed of this period. However, we do have one curious line: Moody states that this land is that which his "*honored father gave me a deed of bearing even date with this deed*". So, this document is Moody selling land to his father on the same day that his father gave it to him?

Worcester County deeds are available online at masslandrecords.com and on the FamilySearch website⁵, and it is possible to trace the ownership of many properties back to 1731, if you employ a little detective work. The deed wherein Jacob sells the land to his son does appear in the official records, but our document does not. The deeds bear the same date, the same witnesses, pertain to the same land, and are notarized by the same Justice of the Peace, Solomon Leland. So why was our document not logged with the land records office?

The answers lie beyond the description of the land, and in the conditions of the deed.

The second section of our document begins:

"Always provided and these presents are upon the following consideration anything herein aforwritten to the contrary notwithstanding that if I the said Moody Severy my heirs executors or administrators shall well and truly perform all the yearly dutes & payments and priveledgs here after named and expressed "

In order for this deed to be considered valid, Moody must:

- Allow his father and mother to live in the easterly half of the dwelling house
- Provide them access to half the cellar, an "*equal priveledg upstairs and down*", equal rights over the chickens, the well for water and the yard, as well as half the barn and cow house
- Carry on the farm with good husbandry
- Return to his parents 2/3 of all the produce and pay 1/3 of all the taxes for the first three years
- Then return 1/2 of the stock to his father and carry on farming as before, but giving his parents 1/2 of the produce and paying 1/2 the taxes for the remainder of his father's natural life

If his father dies before his mother, Moody gets 3/4 of the livestock and must provide his mother 1/4 of the produce, but he will be responsible for all the taxes from that point on.

These complex terms don't end with the death of Moody's parents. At that point he gets all the livestock, but he has to allow his sisters, Mary and Ruth, to live in the East Room of the dwelling house, and have access to the cellar and well as before (as long as they remain single women, of course and "*not to bring in any other famely or parson exepting only for nursing*").

Further Moody must undertake to:

- Provide sufficient firewood for his parents, "*ready cut at the door fit for the chimney and brought in if required*"
- Put hay in the barn
- Tend the cattle, summer and winter

Finally, the deed includes payments for all the living Severy children. Each child gets £35:5:8 except for Joseph, eldest son, who receives £17:10:8 and Archeball who only receives £15:5:8. The amount paid to Sarah, the eldest Severy daughter who was married to Phinehas Goodnough Jr. in 1793, was left up to Moody's discretion.

One explanation for the existence of this document

The average life expectancy for a man of 20 in 1790's USA was 41⁶ - Jacob was already 58 in 1793, and perhaps hoping to retire. Could he have wanted to ensure the land was maintained to higher standards than he was able to, now he was becoming elderly? Maybe he wasn't keen to write a will but wanted to make sure his property and money was distributed according to his wishes (and indeed Jacob died intestate in 1826 at the grand age of 90, making this deal not quite as good as Moody might have expected - 33 years bringing in firewood!). Jacob was "*spoken of as one who was often employed in the settlement of estates ... He was also for a long time a collector of taxes*"⁷ - did this experience tarnish his view of the probate system enough to make him want to distribute his wealth another way?

His motivation, alas, remains obscure, but this deed does read like a living will - ensuring that Moody, as *de facto* executor of his father's wishes, is held accountable by the document, allowing him possession of a large amount of valuable property, if he fulfills the conditions. The farm was finally owned by Solomon Severy (1805-1886), son of Moody and Judith (Holman), confirming that Moody Severy did indeed succeed in bringing in that firewood and sharing the household with his parents for many years in order to inherit.

Final thoughts

Although I could wax lyrical about the joys and fascinations of this unusual document for far longer, I will end with two final observations that help us understand the lives of the people mentioned, beyond the scope of vital records.

Firstly, an addendum to our document was signed in 1795. On that date, two of Moody's brothers, Aaron Severy and Archibald Severy received sums of money "*twords ye portion ought of my Honered fathers estate*". This was well before the death of their father, but perhaps they persuaded their parents and brother it was for a good cause. Aaron and Archibald, with their brother Asa, used the money to take themselves north to Dixfield, Maine, following in the footsteps of their cousin-by-marriage, Jonathan Holman, who had been granted land there after the Revolutionary War. They settled and many of the Severy descendents ended up living in the area.

Finally, property has traditionally been passed on to the first-born male child. Joseph Rhodes Severy, the eldest living son, only received a sum of money from the conditions of the deed, and it was a smaller payment than that received by his siblings. Why was this the case?

Another recently discovered document from the museum gives us a clue. In 1810, Lydia Severy (1797-1856), Joseph's daughter, was the subject of an indenture signed by the Overseers of the Poor of Sutton, as her father was "*unable to maintain her*"⁹. The town History has more to say on this topic, describing Joseph with his three children Benjamin, Lydia and Libra as living in a shanty near a saw mill in Manchaug⁸. Was Joseph a wastrel and considered by his father to be unable to run the family farm? Or did he become impoverished because he was deprived of his inheritance?

Perhaps we will find the answer to this question as we dig deeper into the Society's collections.

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2. *Moody Severy's Mortgage Deed to his Father*. Uncatalogued deed from the collections of Sutton Historical Society. Transcribed by Charlie Wilson, 2023. https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Space:Moody_Severy%27s_Mortgage_Deed_to_his_Father.
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4. *Map of Sutton from actual survey by Zephaniah Keech by order of the Select Men, January 1831*. Photocopy of an original map from the collections of Sutton Historical Society.
5. Worcester County (Massachusetts) Register of Deeds. *Worcester County (Mass. deeds (1722-1866) and index to deeds (1731-1889)*. (digital images) <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/210594>
6. Hacker J.D. *Decennial Life Tables for the White Population of the United States, 1790-1900*. Historical Methods. 2010 Apr; 43(2):45-79. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2885717/>
7. *History of the town of Sutton, Massachusetts, from 1704 to 1876*. p. 233.
8. *History of the town of Sutton, Massachusetts, from 1704 to 1876*. p. 203.
9. *Indenture, September 17th 1810*. Binding Lydia Severy as an apprentice or servant to Stephen Monroe. Original copy in the collections of Sutton Historical Society.

What you Learn from Genealogy

By Joyce Smith

In the Fall of 2022, the Sutton Historical Society presented a program on King Philip's War by Michael J. Tougias from Mendon. He presented slides and a talk that gave information about local happenings in the 1670's. I was surprised at the number of my King Philip's war ancestors that I had when heard collectively.

I have been interested in genealogy since I was in high school. Before cell phones, we used to tell family stories at holiday gatherings. (Especially since Bud Gurney was a relative.). I think I was especially interested because I am an only child. I could read both volumes of the Sutton History and learn about relatives.

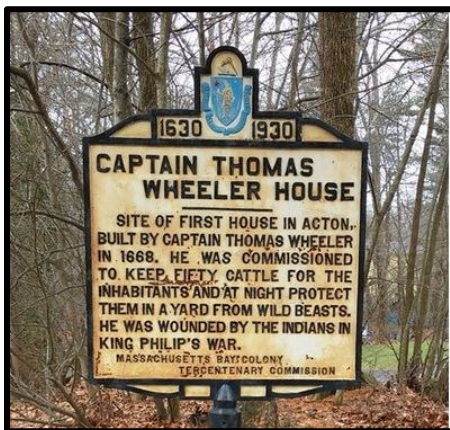
I eventually realized the most recent immigrant I have found came in 1704. Almost all go back to either 1620 or the Puritan Migration in 1630. A few of my ancestors were mentioned in the talk, a few more in the book, and a few more I know about from research.

My grandmother was Jennie Tyla Holbrook (daughter of a Civil War soldier) who married Fred Southwick Smith (Pleasant Valley Mills). My maternal grandmother was Nellie Adams (descendant of Wheelers in Lancaster) and maternal grandfather was Charles W. Putnam. (If you are a Putnam, you are practically related to the Town of Sutton.)

Imagine emigrating from England to the wilds of 1600's North America and getting killed during King Philip's War. That's what happened to the following ancestors of mine.

Capt. Thomas Wheeler (1610-1676)

His birth was in Cranfield, Bedfordshire, England and the first written record in America was taking the freeman's oath in 1642 in Concord. He was in Connecticut in 1644 where he purchased a "right to trade" with the Native American tribes for twenty-five pounds. He probably had an understanding of the natives through his trading. He later returned to Concord where there is an historical marker in Acton on the site of his house, built in 1668. "He was commissioned to keep fifty cattle for the inhabitants and at night protect them in a yard from wild beasts".



All males above the age of 16 were required to serve in the Militia. Thomas was made captain in 1671. As a military escort to Captain Edward Hutchinson, they were sent to Brookfield to talk to the natives about a treaty. They found no one at the agreed upon location. On the advice of Brookfield citizens assuring their safety, they proceeded toward the native's village. They were led into an ambush known as Wheeler's Surprise.

Thomas had his horse shot out from under him, and was wounded. He was saved by his son, who returned and gave his father his horse. Thomas, Jr. was also wounded, and caught a loose horse for himself. Captain Hutchinson was wounded as well as many others being wounded or killed. They made it back to Brookfield to a garrison house. What ensued was a 2-day siege. All of Brookfield, except the garrison house, was burned. A lucky

thunder shower saved them from a burning cart pushed against the garrison house. One person escaped and went to Marlboro for help. Major Willard and Captain Parker of Groton, with a group of soldiers, arrived that night to save them.

Thomas returned home, and wrote an account of his experiences. It can be found as an appendix in Michael Tougias' book, King Philip's War. The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict, as well as online at the West Brookfield Historical Commission website (westbrookfield.org/?page_id=93).

Thomas died in 1676 from complications of his wounds.

Richard Wheeler (1614 - 22 Aug, 1675)

Richard was born in England. In the course of writing this, I found he was a half-brother to the previously mentioned Thomas, with different mothers. They are from different branches of my grandmother Adams' family. Richard was married when he immigrated and had 7 children born in Massachusetts. He married Sarah Prescott in Lancaster after the death of his first wife. Marriages occurred quite soon after the death of a wife because someone had to care for the children. Often the second wife was a spinster sister of the first wife.

Lancaster was the edge of the frontier when it was settled. Garrison houses were where residents of surrounding farms would go for protection in an attack. Richard was attacked on Aug. 22, 1675, and he was killed. During the same attack, Richard's 20-year-old son, Joseph, (by his first wife, Elizabeth) was also killed in the Sunday afternoon raid. One-eyed-John or Monoco, a Nashaway sachem, led the raid which was the first of two on Lancaster. The eight killed were in different locations so as to not cause a big alarm.

Mary Rowlandson and her children were captured at the Rowlandson garrison during the second attack on February 10, 1676. She later wrote the first American best seller about her experiences. Redemption Rock, near Mount Wachusett, is where she was ransomed. Monoco was captured the next year, and executed on Boston Common.

Abraham, Richard's son by his second wife, Sarah Prescott, returned to Lancaster after it was resettled. Unfortunately, he was killed in 1695. On a Sunday morning, he was going from the garrison to his own house. He was shot by an Indian that had lain in ambush. Though mortally wounded, Abraham wrested the gun from the Indian. He carried the gun toward the garrison and was met by his friends. He died a few days later. His widow was captured by Indians September 11, 1697. Her fate is not known.

Capt. Isaac Johnson (1615 - December 19, 1675)

Isaac Johnson was born in Ware, England, in 1615 and came to Salem in 1630 with his parents. His father, John Johnson, settled his family in Roxbury, probably with Governor Winter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Isaac married Elizabeth Porter in Roxbury in 1637, and they produced 10 children. Isaac became Captain of the Roxbury Company in 1663 and the Narragansetts Expedition of 1675.

The Narragansetts Tribe, in what is now Rhode Island, had previously fought with the Pequots and Mohegans from Connecticut. Thus, they were on opposite sides. The Narragansetts were supposed to be neutral and signed agreements in July and October of 1675 to turn over any individuals who fought against the English by October 28. They continued to give safe haven to Philip's supporters and his wounded. The Connecticut Mohegan and Pequots aided the English.

In December 1675, over one thousand English and several hundred Indian allies prepared to attack the Narragansetts. The staging area was the trading post of Richard Smith of Wickford. A Narragansett named Peter was captured, and on threat of being hanged, told of the location of a large village surrounded by a stockade. Hundreds of warriors and their families were located there with food for the winter. Peter led them into the village located on an "island" in a swamp, accessible only by crossing a large tree that was felled across a depression that acted as a moat. It was later thought that Peter may have been "captured" to lead the English into an ambush at the narrowest opening.

That day was cold and snowing. The water in the swamp froze so did not act as the moat was intended to. Captain Isaac Johnson was at the front of his men and is supposed to have been the first to attempt to cross the log into the fort. He was instantly killed by those waiting. He was 60 years old.

Isaac's youngest son, Nathaniel, and his wife, Mary Smith, were founders of "New Roxbury", a town sanctioned by Massachusetts. It was later found that it was actually within the bounds of Connecticut and many border towns changed states. New Roxbury became Woodstock, CT.

I have two lines from Isaac Johnson. Lewis Torrey, who lived near the dam on Manchaug Pond, was a descendant. Another line is from Woodstock, VT. It was settled by people from Woodstock, CT. My grandmother Adams' mother was from Plymouth VT, descended from Johnsons who went to VT from CT.

Lt. Thomas Leffingwell (1624 - 1714)

Thomas was in Connecticut at 14 years old. He lived with Uncas and the Mohegans and could speak their language. In 1645, the Narragansetts surrounded Uncas and the Mohegans on a point surrounded by water and were starving them. Uncas sent word to Thomas Leffingwell at Saybrook that they needed food. Leffingwell loaded a canoe with beef, corn and other food, paddled to the Mohegan encampment, arriving at night. The Narragansett withdrew when they saw that the Mohegans were saved.

Uncas deeded land to Leffingwell. This act created a good relationship between the colonists and the Mohegans. Connecticut's native population did not side with Philip and was spared most of what the other colonies suffered. The Mohegans and Leffingwell sent aid against the Narragansetts and were present at The Great Swamp fight.

It is suspected that James Fenimore Cooper used the true-life exploits of Thomas Leffingwell as the basis for his fictional character in *The Deerslayer*.

Historical Society members that are descendants of both Leffingwell and Johnson include Alice Rosebrooks Shaw, Ross Weaver, and myself. If you like to do detective work, are interested in history, and want to know where you come from, it's never been easier to delve into genealogy. You discover surprises.

Sutton, Not So Uncommon

By Christine Watkins

As children, many can remember the first time they found someone with their name or birthday. It was a moment which led to an understanding that they were not as unique as believed. The same can be said for the name of the town in which we live. Take Sutton, for example. A quick Google search indicates at least 58 communities in the world, with 16 in the United States, named Sutton. Right here along a 300-mile stretch between Massachusetts and Canada are four Suttons. There is the Sutton we all know and love as well as three more –Sutton, Vermont; Sutton, New Hampshire; Sutton, Province of Quebec. On a recent trip to Vermont, I drove past Sutton, VT and discovered an interesting connection to our own town.

Sutton, VT was settled in 1782, and currently has a population of 913 living in its 38.26 square miles. Sutton, MA founded in 1704 and settled in 1716, had a 2022 population of 9,799 living in its 33.94 square miles. Sutton, MA had the Wheeler Plains in Manchaug Village in the area which became the Darling Farm and Darling Lane. Sutton, VT has Wheeler Mountain with Darling Hill Road and Darling State Park a stone's throw away. Interesting, but connections between the Wheelers and Darlings of the two areas was not researched by the writer due to time constraints. If any ambitious reader researches these connections, please share them with us.

Sutton, MA was named, some believe, by Governor John Dudley in honor of an English branch of his family. Sutton, VT was first chartered to John Arnold and associates of Rhode Island as Billymead a name derived from Arnold's son. Unfortunately, the town's namesake became a disruptive individual who was not well liked by the townspeople. In 1812, the townspeople voted to change their name to Sutton based on the recommendation of a resident, named Joctan Putnam, born on May 1, 1750, to Elisha Putnam and Lydia Chase in Sutton, Massachusetts. Lydia's father, Philip Chase, was an innholder in Sutton, MA as early as 1731.

Who was Joctan Putnam? A reading of the Sutton Town History, Volume 1 and an Ancestry.com search provide his history. A quick fact is that Joctan was the nephew of General Rufus Putnam of Revolutionary War fame and the namesake of our Historical Museum. In 1758, when Joctan was 8, his father, Elisha, oldest brother of General Rufus Putnam, lost his life while serving in the Provincial Army in the battle of Ticonderoga during the French and Indian War. Joctan became the ward of John Taft, moved to Uxbridge, married his wife, Anne (Harris) in 1770, moved to Gloucester, RI and eventually to Billymead, VT as evidenced by his inclusion in the 1810 census. He was buried in Sutton, VT in 1839.

Sutton, NH is 43.3 square miles and had a 2020 population of 1,978. Sutton, NH, was granted in 1749 by the Masonian Proprietors to inhabitants of Haverhill, Newbury, and Bradford, MA, as well as Kingston, NH. It was called "Perrystown" after Obadiah Perry, one of the proprietors. But the French and Indian War delayed settlement until 1767, when David Peaslee arrived. Many proprietors forfeited their claims, even with an extension in 1773, so the town was regranted in 1784. The second group of settlers included people from Sutton, MA. Baruch Chase, born in Sutton, MA, April 8, 1764, son of Dudley Chase and Alice Corbett, Mendon, MA. Baruch is credited with being a captain, lawyer, and judge during his life. Baruch is noted in Volume 1 of the Sutton, NH history as giving the town its name.

Sutton, Province of Quebec, was first named Dodge, after a tavern of the same name, and renamed Glen Sutton in 1861 by a Scotsman who was a member of parliament in neighboring Brome. The Dodge Tavern was run by Daniel Dodge and his wife, Hannah, in 1851 into the 1870s. Daniel and his wife were both born in the U.S., probably Vermont, but again, due to time constraints their genealogy and potential tie to Sutton, MA, were not researched by this writer; however, it would be interesting if the Sutton Dodge's had some connection to these Dodge's as well; albeit probably through an original immigrant to the U.S. from England.

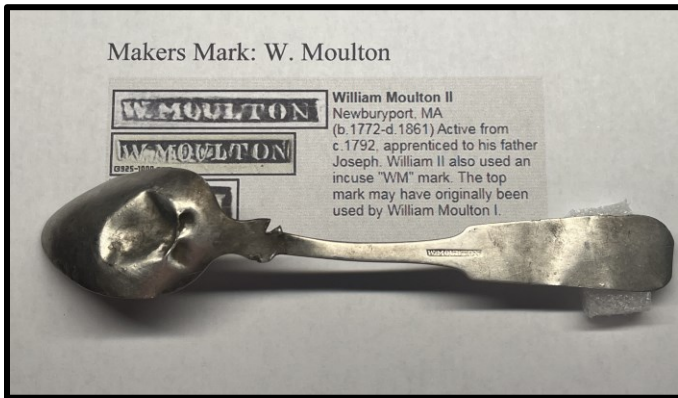
So even though Sutton, as a community name, is somewhat common, our own Town of Sutton can be credited with being the source for at least two other Sutton's in the U.S. For anyone motivated to do research, the other Suttons are in Alaska, Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Washington, and West Virginia. Hancock County, Maine, also boasts the private Sutton Island. If anyone does research these other communities, please share your research with the Sutton Historical Society.

The Ground Speaks “Digging History One Beep at a Time” Ed Chrostkowski By Christine Watkins



The Sutton Historical Society has an amazing collection of historical items, including documents, old-time farm tools, textiles, and much more. Nothing, however, surpasses the talents of the Society's many members. These valuable talents include expertise in genealogy, deed research, cemetery conservation, collection archiving, local history, re-enactment skills, as well as the knowledge of how to fire a civil war cannon, and much more.

Member Ed Chrostkowski's talent is metal detecting. Ed does not simply find items in the ground, he researches their origin and ties the items to the residents who lived there, and the history of the property. Ed wants to tell the story behind the objects. To him, those stories are more important than the artifact itself. Over the years, Ed has metal detected at several properties in Sutton having shared his finds with both Society members as well as visitors to the General Rufus Putnam Museum during the annual Chain of Lights events in December.



Recently, Ed spent several days on a 50-acre parcel of land located on Darling Lane in the Village of Manchaug, known to many as the Picard Farm. The Village of Manchaug today looks nothing like it did in 1746 when Jonathan Wheeler and his family settled here from Concord, MA. This family was the first to reside in this area, and were the ancestors to the Darling family, who continued to own the property into the 1940s. The Darling Barn, located at Waters Farm Preservation, Inc., was originally located here, and moved to Waters Road in March of 1991 to preserve it.

Having been present when Ed discovered the intact silver dime spoon manufactured by Moulton in the mid-1800s, was like witnessing someone winning the lottery. This piece had L. Darling engraved onto the handle. Mrs. Lydia Darling is believed to have been the owner of this teaspoon. She passed in 1868. Her son, John D. Darling, was a bugler in the cavalry during the Civil War. The cavalry button discovered in the field is believed to have belonged to him.



Recently retired, Ed is interested in other locations in the area to showcase his over 50 years of experience as a metal detecting enthusiast. What is hidden in the ground in Sutton? If you would like to reach out to Ed to have sections of your property explored, simply email the Society at sutton1704@gmail.com, and we can put you in touch with this talented member to help you uncover what secrets may be resting "in the ground".



The Boston Road Sycamore Trees

By Brian Stevenson

The pictured Sycamore tree was located at the corner of Boston Road and Unified Parkway, was estimated to be 250 years old, and measured 78 inches (6.5 feet) across when cut down in June 2023. It was a beauty, and many residents fought to keep it standing. Unified collaborated with the Sutton Town Planning Department to design their Unified Parkway entrance to save the tree.

During the winter of 2023, a large limb fell from one of two sycamore trees located at 126 Boston Road severely damaging two vehicles. No one was injured. These two trees were on town property. This prompted a detailed, professional arborist inspection by Bartlett Tree. Based on the report, it was determined that all three trees were in unstable condition and had to be taken down. The detailed reports can be found at

suttonma.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3901/f/uploads/c_bartlett_tree_107sycamorefinalreport_4.10.23.pdf

and suttonma.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3901/f/uploads/d_bartlett_tree_126sycamorefinalreport_4.4.23.pdf



Sycamore tree at Boston Road and Unified Parkway



Sutton Historical Society President, Brian Stevenson, with sycamore remains at 126 Boston Road and at Unified Parkway

Behind the Scenes at the Museum

By Charlie Wilson

Sutton Historical Society (SHS) is fortunate to have an amazing building in which to house its collections and share the history of the town with visitors. The General Rufus Putnam Hall, built in 1823, has had many uses over the years: Masonic meeting hall; school; library ... and is now home to the SHS collection and museum. I started volunteering there recently, and have been working hard with Joyce Smith, our curator, to organize the collections and begin the process of updating our storage and preservation procedures, to ensure that the items kept within the building are not lost to time and decay.

Over the past few months (including those rather chilly days back in the winter - a shock to the system for this Brit, I can tell you!), we have been sorting, tidying, and trying very hard not to get distracted by the fascinating documents and personal items that we uncover. Our process has been to separate the items that have already been accessioned (formally accepted into the museum's collections) from those that have been donated more recently. The former will be inventoried and their storage and preservation need assessed so that we can safely make them available for researchers and visitors to see. The latter will be prioritized and accessioned into the collection as soon as possible.

In each newsletter, we will share with you a few behind-the-scenes snippets from the museum - the interesting or unusual items we find, documents that shed light on times past, beautiful calligraphy, curious photographs ... as well as sharing some of the challenges. While many were sensibly stored at the time they were added to the collection, artefacts are delicate, and now is the time to make sure they are properly preserved so that they last beyond our

lifetimes. The collection is large, and we will need to buy specialist boxes, folders, shelving, packing materials, and cleaning tools to save these items for future generations to use and enjoy. We will be making a wish list if anyone would like to donate to our efforts. We are always happy to share what we are doing, and welcome visitors to the museum as we work to bring Sutton's history to life. We can be reached at sutton1704@gmail.com.

A Busy June

Brown Bag Reunion Picnic – June 9

Alumni of the General Rufus Putnam School and several spouses gathered for a brown-bag picnic at the First Congregational Church in honor of the 200th anniversary of the school building. Tours of Society properties were provided after the lunch for those interested. Family members of Gwen Seaver Marchese, who attended the school, graduated from Sutton, and moved to the West Coast, were in attendance to share memories of Gwen. A display of some of her mementos was exhibited at the luncheon held in the First Congregational Church. In addition to a generous bequest to the Society, the family presented the Historical Society with two drawings completed by Gwen during her lifetime.



Display of Gwen Seaver Marchese Mementos

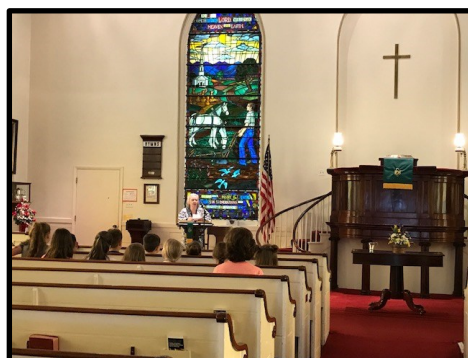


Joyce Smith and Pam Seaver Roberts with artwork

Thanks to Museum Curator and alumnus, Joyce Smith, for organizing this event.

Society Members Host Sutton Third Graders – June 12

Society members, Brian Stevenson and Mark Brown, hosted students at the Blacksmith Shop. Curator, Joyce Smith and Christine Watkins, provided a tour and information at the General Rufus Putnam Museum. Member, Rochelle Forsythe, shared her knowledge of the history of the First Congregational Church. The third graders also visited the Town Hall finishing their tour with lunch on the Town Common.



2023 Calendar of Events

Dates and Times may be Subject to Change
Events open to Members and the General Public

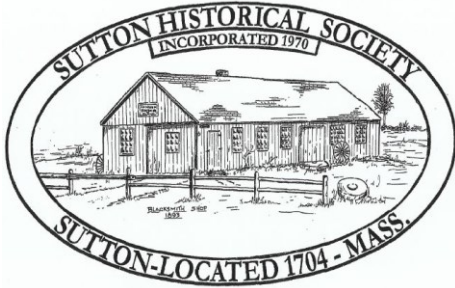
July 8 -July 16		Can/Bottle Redemption Drive Drop off your returnable cans/bottles at your convenience 24-hours	M. M. Sherman Blacksmith Shop 6 Singletary Avenue
August 4 Friday	6:30 pm	Annual Potluck Supper	Eight Lots School House 54 Eight Lots Road
September 5 Tuesday	7:00 pm	Andrew Noone, Author Bathsheba Spooner: A Revolutionary War Murder Conspiracy	First Congregational Church 307 Boston Road
September 30 Saturday	12:00 pm – 4:00 pm	200 th Anniversary Celebration General Rufus Putnam Building	General Rufus Putnam Museum 4 Uxbridge Road
October 3 Tuesday	7:00 pm	Annual Meeting Officer Election	First Congregational Church 307 Boston Road
October 28 Saturday	7:00 pm	Historic Cemetery Tour Re-enactors will tell the tale of early Sutton settlers buried in the Sutton Center Town Cemetery	Sutton Center Town Cemetery 4 Uxbridge Road
November 7 Tuesday	7:00 pm	Mark Savolis, Thompson Historical Society The Mass15th of the Civil War and Sutton Soldier, Wilder Holbrook	First Congregational Church 307 Boston Road
December 2 Saturday	Various	Chain of Lights Annual Town-wide Christmas Event	Eight Lots School House General Rufus Putnam Museum M. M. Sherman Blacksmith Shop
December 5 Tuesday	6:30 pm	Christmas Potluck	First Congregational Church 307 Boston Road
December 31 Sunday	Midnight	Last Night Cannon Firing Cannon Club	M. M. Sherman Blacksmith Shop 6 Singletary Avenue

**2023
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Please note the annual membership fees are due by **March 1, 2023**. 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. If you have not received your 2023 membership card, please renew today.
We gladly accept all donations.

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 and your area of interest. Please contact sutton1704@gmail.com.



Mail all payments to:

**SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.
4 UXBRIDGE ROAD
SUTTON, MA 01590**

email: sutton1704@gmail.com
suttonhistoricalsocietyinc.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM

**Annual Membership Fee is due March 1, 2023
Checks Payable To: Sutton Historical Society, Inc.**

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

\$15.00 Individual Fee: _____

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

Additional Donation: _____

The Sutton Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.
Consult your tax professional for the deductibility of all donations

**IF YOU DID NOT RENEW DURING OUR SPRING MEMBERSHIP DRIVE, PLEASE MAIL IN
YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!!**

**PLEASE SHARE THIS MEMBERSHIP FORM WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS.
Membership open year round**

SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
4 UXBRIDGE ROAD
SUTTON, MA 01590

NEWSLETTER SPONSORED BY:

GEORGE "NED" FREELAND

Thank you!!!

Interested in sponsoring a future newsletter, reach out to us at sutton1704@gmail.com



Recently donated to the Society by David Tela, this display about John Henn, who was shot down during the Vietnam War at the Battle of An Loc, reported missing in action May 1972 and later declared dead, includes images printed from negatives that were discarded when John's belongings were being packed up to be returned to his family. His roommate, David Toms, retrieved the negatives. 30 years later the negatives were digitized and sent to David Tela to print. David Tela realized that one image included a heat seeking missile in the distance. John was shot down a month after the photograph was taken.

John Henn attended the General Rufus Putnam School graduating from Sutton with the Class of 1966.

A memorial on the Sutton Town Common commemorates John's service to our Country.

His sister, Judith Henn Schindler, survives him and is also a Sutton High School alumus. His mother, Dorothy Henn, was the school nurse in Sutton for many years.

Although the museum does not maintain regular hours, our curator is always willing to open for a tour. Sutton1704@gmail.com