

WANTED

YOUR INPUT, YOUR KIDS, AND YOU!

Seriously, do you have a few minutes or a few hours to spend? Do you have some thoughts or ideas to share? What do you think about while you're weeding the garden, doing the dishes, or driving to work? What do you talk about around the dinner table? Do you love to take photos or write memoirs, tell your children and grandchildren of the good old times? So, join us!

QHS regularly presents interesting and informative programs - two upcoming are an historical bus tour of the area on September 12, and a program, on November 5, by historian, gun expert and author Nick Chandler on guns manufactured in Hardwick, MA. (These events are described elsewhere in this newsletter). Additionally, schools and libraries are provided outreach programs from Old Sturbridge Village at no cost. Special programs are offered at holiday times, and often extemporaneously for no reason at all. Signs for Quaboag Plantation are maintained, as is the museum, where exhibits are changed, photos and documents framed, and files are available for research when possible. We wish we could be open on more days, more hours. Additionally, the society promotes an interest in Quaboag Plantation's beginning and continuing existence. The museum is open monthly (First Saturday) and always by appointment. Reference materials are available, artifacts are on display, and attendance and participation are welcomed.

Each April, at the society's annual luncheon meeting, three awards are given; the recipients are chosen by the board from nomination letters from the public. Each of them is selected for their volunteer service to their communities according to the famous words of Lucy Stone "Make the world a better". The Lucy Stone award is presented to a resident of a Quaboag area town, as is the outstanding service award. The J. Irving and Jane England award is presented to a resident of West Brookfield.

Indeed, our society is fortunate to have the continuing support of the England fund, which was instrumental in the purchase of the museum building, and allows us to provide programs and also to work in concert with and offer support to other committees and organizations in the area - libraries, historical organizations and events, schools and such. All other funding comes from museum memberships and donations.

Although the present committee is pleased to provide these benefits, always free and open to the public, what is hoped for - okay, NEEDED - is representation and participation from more people! Young people, old people, school kids, business people . People with cameras and a nose for new old stories to tell. Lively, interested, interesting people who care about our heritage and how it will be passed on to future generations. One new person with a fresh viewpoint and a great idea might spark another's interest. And so on. Think about it - think about young Tyler Nickerson of North Brookfield, who created videos of his town's beginnings. His grandparents encouraged him to expand upon a school assignment, and that's all it took for a youngster who loved his town.

It is our hope that everyone who reads this will pause to consider who might be a willing and active member, who might have a great idea, who has a story to tell and a talent to share.

Contact the Quaboag Historical Society, PO Box 635, West Brookfield, MA 01585, or Amy Dugas, 508-867-5428.

September
2015



Quaboag Historical Society

Quaboag Historical Society Newsletter

President's Message

Greetings to everyone! I hope you all had a fun and relaxing summer....I definitely had fun but not to sure about the relaxing part. Although I can't say I'm looking forward to winter by any stretch, I am looking forward to a slower paced fall now that my family is back in school and travelling is behind me. Time to focus on my fall garden, house, the museum and of course the Society.

The Board has been busy planning a couple events for the fall, one of which is the historical bus tour through the Plantation towns. We have had a great response to the event and actually filled up quickly so we are planning to host another tour in the spring to accommodate those on our wait list. We are also in the process of organizing a speaker at the Brookfield Congregational Church in November (see inside for details) which should be very interesting.

The museum has been open all summer but due to the lack of docents, I was forced to limit the museum hours to the first Saturday of the month from 11-2 (instead of every Saturday which we have done on the past.) I have been happy to see, however, that we have been getting more visitors with the limited schedule than we did before and hope to see that continue. The museum will be open until White Xmas then we will close for the winter although I am trying to organize a couple of events called "Music at the Museum" where some area musicians come and play acoustic songs, historical or otherwise, at the museum to generate more interest in our facility. I will keep you posted on that.

Well, that's all from me. As usual, we are always trying to figure out ways to increase our membership and utilize the Society's resources to their fullest. The Board is always open to suggestions and assistance. Thanks for being part of the Quaboag Historical Society and have a great fall.

Amy Dugas, QHS President

All about the Quaboag Historical Society - we're 120 years old!

By Ruth M. Lyon

The Quaboag Historical Society was begun in 1895, by a group of residents of the original Quaboag area who saw the need for preservation of its history and artifacts. Some of the original towns - North and West Brookfield, Brookfield, Warren and New Braintree (East Brookfield had not yet separated from Brookfield) - had historical societies and even museums. Still, residents of each town met, discussed, and agreed to form a society representational of the history of the "Old Quaboag District". The artifacts and papers of that brand new Quaboag Historical Society found a home in the upper room of the West Brookfield library, so voted by town meeting action on April 1, 1895.

The group followed local historical tradition over the next three decades; regular meetings held, programs planned and presented with featured speakers and activities. By 1930, though, interest had waned; the materials and artifacts from our historic early times were relegated to a corner of the room, and little or no action by the society took place for years. That changed when, in anticipation of the Quaboag Plantation's 300th celebration in 1960, Dr. Louis E. Roy became chairman of the organization and named a committee to identify and label the contents of that pile in the corner, with an eye to reopening the museum in the library. (continued pg.2)

All about the Quaboag Historical Society (continued)

Mover and shaker that he was, his mission was accomplished: the museum opened on February 1, 1961. Miss Anna O'Day, committee chairman, announced that in the future the museum would be open to the public on the first Wednesday of the month, from two to five.

During the ensuing years, the museum languished at times, with spurts of activity and then of disinterest. However, the venerable institution eventually found its own home in West Brookfield's old train station, and strong leadership. The Society board meets monthly, publishes a newsletter, and works to maintain interest in the society and the museum. Additionally, it promotes an interest in Quaboag Plantation's beginning and continuing existence. The museum is open monthly (first Saturday) and always by appointment. Reference materials are available, artifacts are on display, and attendance and participation are welcomed.



A Quaboag Historical Society first - a bus tour of Quaboag Plantation towns

Sign up now for the Spring tour

By Ruth M. Lyon

You know all about the six towns comprising the original Quaboag Plantation - or do you? How 'bout a guided, narrated tour, with stops along the way? Free and open to the public.

When we recently posed this question to area readers of local newspapers, response was immediate and overwhelming. This tour, limited to the bus' capacity of 45, was filled within hours.

But take heart, there will be another in the spring. The date is not yet established, but we'll keep you posted. QHS board member Ed Londergan, who's worked with president Amy Dugas in planning this first-ever event, said he's spoken with numbers of enthusiastic people, and though the September 12 tour is filled to overflowing, he's looking forward to seeing them at the museum at noon for light refreshments and signing them up for the springtime event.

The bus will leave the Quaboag Historical Society Museum, at the end of Central Street, West Brookfield, at 12:30 p.m. The tour, lasting about four hours, will include stops at sites in each of the plantation towns - Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, Warren and New Braintree. Historians from each town will enlighten and entertain with insights on the significance of each location to our collective history.

Bus tour (continued)

"We're hoping this bus trip will interest new residents, who often know that we who live here are surrounded by a remarkable history, but never have found the time to explore what those places and names were inspired by," says Londergan. "But many long-time residents have responded as well. What a great day this promises to be."

The local author, who has found inspiration in the Indian attack on Foster Hill in 1675, lived on Snow Road, West Brookfield as a young man, left, and returned to the area a few years ago. The final book of the trilogy, now underway will, he says, complete the 350 year history of the Parker family. "I've never ceased to be inspired by the history found everywhere here; these were people like us, ordinary people, who did extraordinary things when the need was there," he remarks.

Although there will be photo ops and brief explorative stops in each town, the narrative on historic sites along the way will continue throughout the trip, and no, there will not be a test at the end.

The society plans to make the tour an annual, event, Londergan says.

Dugas adds her voice: "The board's mission is to maintain interest and participation in the society and its activities. We welcome new members and visitors. We're looking forward to an increasingly active year, with a new web site, fresh programs, and more public input. We welcome inquiries and attendance."

Nick Chandler to speak on Hardwick-manufactured guns November 5

Historian, author, collector

By Ruth M. Lyon



The Quaboag Historical Society will present Nick Chandler, speaking on the subject of early percussion firearms on Thursday, November 5, 6:30 p.m. at Fellowship Hall of the Brookfield Congregational Church, 8 Central Street. The public is invited; there is no charge. Chandler, a graduate of Norwich University, spent twenty years with the United States Army, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. Following his retirement, he worked in the area of computer training and simulation for several major companies.

In 2010, he published Early New England Underhammer Firearms, the culmination, he says, of fifty years of research and collecting.

Born in Phillipston, he began collecting historic firearms at age ten. "I bought my first underhammer pistol at age 14, and never looked back," he recalls. He has written extensively on early percussion firearms and has been published in *Man at Arms*; *The Gun Report*; and the *Canadian Journal of Arms Collectors*.

His PowerPoint presentation in November will focus on gun makers of the 1820s and '30s in the areas around Hardwick, Sturbridge and Southbridge.

His presentation, he says, will take into consideration the flavor of local history; the Adin Ruggles connection in New Braintree and Hardwick; also, genealogy, women's rights, "and, of course, guns". He will bring guns and other artifacts for examination and questions.

Nick and his wife Betsey live in Tewksbury, where he continues to pursue his historic writing and research.

White Christmas December 5

Plans are underway for West Brookfield's White Christmas celebration. The QHS museum will be open 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There will be an Elf on the Shelf, and simple games and refreshments for children. More information will be provided at a later date.