

# The Medway Historical Society

Est. 1902

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM YOUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN MEDWAY, MASSACHUSETTS

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

May 2026

Dear friends,

We're in! We are so very happy to announce that the Medway Historical Society has entered into a "license" agreement with the Town of Medway to create a "**Town Museum**" at the historic **Jacob Ide House, 158 Main St.** This has been a long time in the works and we are thankful to all those who braved the hurdles to create this public space that is up to code and is the perfect backdrop for some interesting and educational exhibits about Medway's past. This is truly a dream come true! You wonder, "who actually dreams about creating a local museum?" Well, I can tell you the dedicated Society Board does because we have been constrained for years in our current space and unable to share the items, images and stories that created our town's story which is such an important mission for the Society and the people of Medway. The Ide House will also provide meeting and program space so desperately needed. We will be sending meeting notices to our members. Please join us the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month 6:30pm! We want to hear from you. If you had the opportunity to visit one of our "Open House's" you know why we have missed having them. No one left disappointed!

This is an important and pivotal chapter in the direction of the Society and given our popularity on social media we think it will become the centerpiece of our Town. Thank YOU for partnering with us on this journey to help share Medway history within our community and preserve Medway history for future generations. We are working diligently to celebrate a "Grand Re-opening."

Regards and thank you again,  
Sheila Dubrawski

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Oct. GRAVEYARD STORIES**

**Nov. VETERANS DAY EXHIBIT**

**Dec. HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR** – We are booking homes for our 2026 Holiday House Tour, Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>. If interested in featuring your home on our tour, email us!

**OPEN HOUSE DATES Look for the "OPEN" flag**

Town Museum, historic Jacob Ide House, 158 Main St.

Check our NEW website and FB page for hours

[www.medwayhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.medwayhistoricalsociety.org)

View hundreds of Medway images of times gone by on our FaceBook page -Medway Historical Society.

## HISTORICAL COMMISSION

### Town of Medway

Have you noticed some of our historic signs around town? Commission members Annmarie Fontecchio and Isabel Nulter have created the content and design for historic signs that are already installed by our fantastic DPW team led by Director Peter Pelletier. These are located at the Ide House, 158 Main St; Old West Medway Train Depot, 315 Village Street; Garnsey Homesite, 302 Village Street; the Medway Public Library on High Street. Signs are ready to be installed at the Thayer Homestead and at the Village Church. These historic signs are another opportunity to share Medway's rich history throughout our community.

The Commission is focused on other projects including the digitizing of our Town records and the restoration of the Jacob Ide and Milton Sanford portraits. A committee is being formed to study the creation of a Local Historic District. Local historic districts help protect the historic character of old homes and aim to enhance the appeal of the entire community.

The Medway Historical Commission is looking for new members. This is not an overwhelming commitment and requires only a love for local history. The Commission meets monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7pm. Email [bsaintandre@medwayma.gov](mailto:bsaintandre@medwayma.gov) if interested.

## MEDWAY "FIRSTS"

### RECORDED IN THE 1700'S

- 1713 First a town
- 1714 First church gathered
- 1717 First School in town
- 1721 First tea in town
- 1726 First representative to the General Court, Jonathan Adams
- 1736 First Justice of the Peace in town
- 1737 First school house built
- 1740 First Town Treasurer, Edward Clark
- 1749 First meeting house in the New Grant  
(Medway as we know it today. Corner of Main and Evergreen Sts..)
- 1751 First town meeting in the West Precinct
- 1762 First cabinet shop
- 1765 First census in town
- 1770 First auditing of town accounts
- 1770 First use of coffee
- 1781 First time dollars and cents used in records
- 1785 First use of middle initials in town records
- 1794 First year swine not allowed to go at large
- 1795 First guide boards set up (signage for travelers)

## MEDWAY and the AMERICAN REVOLUTION

*There is more about Medway military history in Jameson's, History of Medway to 1885 and the "Military History of Medway." This is an excerpt from "The New Grant: A History of Medway" prepared by Fran Donovan for the Medway Bicentennial Commission in 1976. This 180 pg book is available for purchase for \$24 tx incl.*

In 1764, the Great and General Court arranged to have a census taken in 1765, to enumerate all of the residents of Massachusetts. We can sense now that the action was undertaken to determine the numbers available for military service, for "anxiety and alarm" were becoming increasingly felt well before the Revolution came. The first census taken in Massachusetts gave the following figures for Medway in 1765: Houses 123, Families 138, Males over 18 Years 215, Males under 18 Years 165, Females over 18 Years 178, Females under 18 Years 178, Negroes 17, Total Population 785.

*(Note: Negroes was the term used at the time of this writing and is not preferred by the Society. Medway at the time was comprised of the East Precinct or Old Grant and West Precinct or New Grant, now the combined area of Medway and Millis.)*

Elisha Adams was Medway's Representative to the General Court in 1765, and after some deliberation, the townspeople, deeming the acts of the British Government oppressive, drew up some instructions for Mr. Adams.

They prefaced their guidelines by noting that the stamp act was "an alarming thing as it effected their estates and liberties." They were "filled with great concern," at this "burden, grievous, distressing and insupportable."

Our Medway people had already borne the expense of the French and Indian Wars, and they had little more than their land to provide their living. "The stamp act," they wrote to Mr. Adams, "will sink us into final ruin."

"We think it is our indispensable duty in justice to ourselves and posterity, as it is our undoubted privilege in the most open and unreserved, but decent and respectful terms to declare our greatest dissatisfaction with this law and we think it incumbent upon you to by no means to join in any public measure for countenancing and assistance in the execution of the same..."

In these words, the inhabitants here expressed that which was expressed throughout the colonies, and in passing several votes subsequently, took their stand without reservation to resist the actions of his Majesty's government.

In the annual town meeting in March, 1770, the town voted to forego the purchase of tea, and in addition, agreed to participate in an embargo of all British goods coming to America.

Feelings ran high, and by the time of the Suffolk Resolves, the town had already purchased and stored powder, bullets, and flints. Two iron cannons were also added to the armament, but were later commandeered by the troops at the defense of Boston.



"30 Mi From Boston 1767"

Stone marker guidepost that sat at 266 Main St at the Bellingham town line

The townspeople of Medway were certainly tired of war and military service by 1775. There had been upwards of ten "impreses" and turns of service involving Medway men, including the terribly difficult expedition to Crown Point in 1754 and 1756, and the expedition under Lord London in 1759.

Every able-bodied man served, including Sambo Freeman, a freed negro slave, resident in town. The weariness of bearing arms was put aside, however, when the alarm of April 19, 1775 aroused the patriots of Medway. Captain Joshua Partridge's "First Military Company" of thirty-seven men, and Lieutenant Moses Adams's "West Medway Company" of thirty-six men marched forthwith to Roxbury, where they joined Colonel John Smith's West Suffolk Regiment.

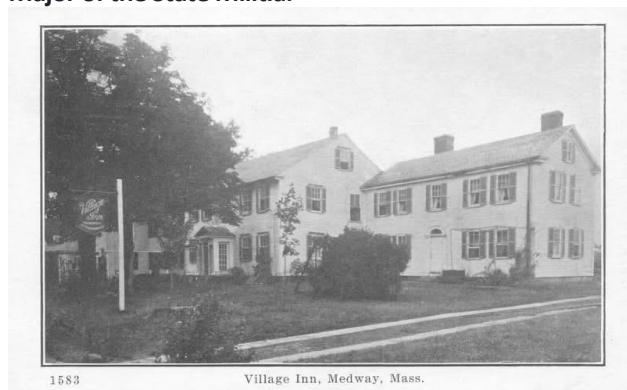
The "West Medway Company" was made up of volunteers from the New Grant, and the April 19<sup>th</sup> departure of soldiers from our town was only the first of many during the Revolution. Our men served with distinction in the several expeditions and battles of that war at Bunker Hill, Fort Ticonderoga, Warwick, Providence, and as far away as New Jersey. Again, in this war, our negro inhabitants of those early times marched with their fellow townsmen-among them Ishmael Coffee and his son Thomas, and Prince Brewster. Although the capture of Cornwallis and his army at Yorktown in 1781 virtually ended the War of the Revolution, true peace did not come to the colonies, and to Medway until 1783, eight long years after the Lexington alarm. It was time for Medway to look toward development and building, and further firming a town that had been, tried and not found wanting.

## Major Luther Metcalf House The Village Inn

(194 Village Street aka Middle Post Road)

Major Luther Metcalf was born in Sept of 1756 in South Franklin. His father was a physician and a farmer but Luther learned the trade of cabinet-maker from Elisha Richardson of North Franklin. In 1773, he crossed the River and settled in Medway Village, married Mercy Whiting, daughter of Nathaniel Whiting Jr. (the owner of the mill prior to Sanford Mill being built), and established his business of cabinet making. They were later the parents to a daughter Clara and one son Luther Jr. In addition to cabinet making Maj. Metcalf was also a farmer and one of the original proprietors of the "Old White Mill" cotton manufactory.

**In his early life, in 1775 at the age of nineteen, he listened to the call of his country and became a soldier of the Revolution. Metcalf continued in the service at different periods for nearly three years. He was commissioned as a Major of the State Militia.**



Maj. Metcalf had built a small homestead on the site of 194 Village St but it was moved in 1792 to 119R Village St and is no longer standing. In its place he built the present building as a dwelling and a cabinet shop. After Major Metcalf died in 1838, at the age of 81, his son Luther Metcalf Jr. lived in the house.

Luther Jr. was a large owner in the Medway Cotton Manufacturing Company, which was the first incorporated company for the manufacture of cotton goods in Massachusetts. He also held several prominent positions in the town, such as clerk, treasurer and school committee member. He was the town representative in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Luther Jr. was one of the first to advocate for a railroad from Boston to Blackstone resulting in the New York and New England Railroad. He was the first President of the Charles River Railroad in 1854. He also was involved in the formation of the Village Church in 1838. Luther Metcalf Jr. lived to be more than 90 years old and his cause of death in 1879 was from a fall caused by a misstep.

In 1898, the Metcalf family sold the Major Luther Metcalf House to be used as a boardinghouse for mill workers, the Village Inn.



Luther Metcalf cabinet pieces are very respected to this day. He made "grandfather" clocks with intricate detail and craftsmanship. The Medway Historical Society is very fortunate to own this hutch that was made by Luther Metcalf. The inscription on the back reads,

*" Made by Luther Metcalf, for Joanna Sanford for her wedding: Luther Metcalf, master cabinet maker, to whom Cephas Thayer was apprentice. Teste Bert Hixon, 1948."*

Joanna Sanford was the daughter of Philo Sanford and Lydia Whiting and the 2<sup>nd</sup> wife of Joel Partridge. In 1836 they built their house on 13 acres overlooking "Medway pond." Their only surviving child Lydia Sanford Partridge married Addison Thayer. That home is now our treasured Thayer Homestead overlooking Choate Park.

This Metcalf cabinet was donated to the Society by Ellen B. Cutler, April 2024. It will be on display at the Town Museum, the historic Jacob Ide House. Check our FB page for hours.

### WHAT HAPPENS TODAY IS HISTORY TOMORROW!

*PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A MEMBER OR MAKING A DONATION. THE MEDWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS A 501c3 NON-PROFIT ALL VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION. MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS SUPPORT OUR OPERATING EXPENSES, INCLUDING UTILITIES AND INSURANCE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.*

Visit our website: [MedwayHistoricalSociety.org](http://MedwayHistoricalSociety.org)

### THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS AND CAR SHOW SPONSORS

Deborah Black Hansen - Imperial Auto - Middlesex Savings Bank - Sullivan Tire - Leland Roofing and Siding  
Medway Oil and Propane - Sullivan Tire - Paul Harkey Real Estate - Charles River Bank - DF Murphy Insurance  
All Washed Up Car Wash - Master's Touch - John's Towing and Recovery - IUOE Loca 4  
End Zone Sports Pub - Fasolino Landscape and Design - Rocky's Ace Hardware - Liscombe & Parrella, PC  
Treat Cupcake Bar - Laina Kaplan, Realtor - Village Street Automotive

### Thank you to our Gift Card Donors!

Starbucks, Jersey Mike's, Liquor World, Shaw's Medway, TLC Cleaners, Zelda's Minerals, Muffin House Café, Medway Jewelers

## Medway Historical Society

223 Main Street  
Medway, MA 02053

### Contact Us:

[info@medwayhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@medwayhistoricalsociety.org)

Visit our website

**MedwayHistoricalSociety.org**

508-533-7222

**Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Millis, MA**

### Officers

Sheila Dubrawski, President  
Cher Hamilton, Vice resident  
Kathy Waldron, Treasurer  
Julia Sloan, Secretary  
Chuck Waldron, Curator

### Board of Directors

Annmarie Fontecchio  
Stephen Malloy  
Maryjane White  
Laina Kaplan

### Honorary Director

Norman Schneider  
Cathie Perkins

### In Memoriam

Grace Hoag  
Priscilla Howker  
Audrey Ritter  
Iyawata Schneider

## THANK YOU for your support. We couldn't do it without YOU!

### LIFETIME MEMBERS

Paul and Rebecca Atwood	Joe and Missy Diczek	Martha Howker Judson	Richard and Reva Parrella
Donald and Katherine Bergman	Christine and John Early	Joyce Forbes Kamsler	Robert L. Partridge Jr.
Gary and Eileen Berset	Pam and Tom Ellis	Maj. Richard Keogh	Cathie Perkins
Carolyn Chassigne	Ellen Briggs Galleger	Stephen P. Malloy	Norman Schneider
Dennis and Mary Crowley	Lynn and Deborah Black Hansen	Jim McCarthy	Regina Hogan Schwarzenberg
Martha DeWolf	Paul and Beatrice Harcovitz	Donna Black Minch	Caroline and John Solari
James M. Dillon	Christine Henault	Jeffrey Mushnick	Deborah and Wayne Tanner
Sheila and Ed Dubrawski	Tom and Ginny Jackson	Jeffrey Nutting	Charles and Kathy Waldron
Richard and Linda D'Innocenzo		Robert and Diane Parrella	

### 2025 Members and Donors

Susan and Todd Alessandri	Maureen Giles Family	Barbara and Steve Maffeo	Carol Pratt
Alicia and Stephen Barrasso	James and Judy Gilliatt Gohs	Maryanne Malloy	Donna Puleo
Theresa Malloy Berry	Cher and Evie Hamilton	Jane and Ken Masterson	John and Janice Raftery
Richard Briggs	Paul Harkey	Karen Mazzarelli	Leslie V. Richards
Brian Campbell	Catherine Harty	Shirley McDaniel	Pam and Bob Saleski
Anne and Marilyn Carlson	Robert Heterich	Sean McGann	John Sarnosky
Thomas & Virginia Carson	Michelle and Gary Hinson	Donna Black Minch	Ed and Arlene Briggs Siderski
Carol Chassigne	Susan Hjulstrom	James and Lori Murphy	Marie Dubrawski Silva
Norm and Miriam Chesmore	Judith A. Dill Johnson	John Murphy	Sheila Souza
Kathleen Choate	Joyce Forbes Kamsler Maryalice and Ted Kenney	Jeffrey Mushnick	Mary Staples
Gary and Nancy DeVita	Nicole Kittredge	Sally and Peter Nolan	Ute K. Taylor
Christopher DeSenso	Bernadette Kobierecki	Jeffrey Nutting	Peter Walther
James M. Dillon	Ruth and Ronald Lincoln	Sandra Packard	Ellen Wettengel
Arlene Doherty	Jim and Chris Lorenzen	Christopher Park	Stephen Williams
Sheila and Ed Dubrawski	Meredith Luzietti	Greg and Wendy Peverill-Conti	Patrica Wong
Deborah Eastman		Roger and Jennifer Powell	Elena Zoubareva
Annmarie Fontecchio			