



Historical Happenings

the newsletter of the
Medway Historical Society

Experience the History of Medway, Massachusetts

Volume 2015, Issue 2

Medway Historical Society

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Audrey Ritter

Iyawata Schneider

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President's Note

Dear Historical Society Members and friends,

Spring is a time for renewal. Over the years, interest in the Medway Historical Society has grown and waned. But due to the remarkable dedication of some very dedicated people it has sustained itself for 113 years! The Society went dormant for many years and was revived in 1956—see the news article below.

Your membership dues covers the cost of sending quarterly newsletters. It is through fundraising and donations that we are able to purchase archival supplies and maintain operating expenses.

For example, a bequest from the Nancy Judson Estate back in 2013 made it possible for the Society to qualify for a capital improvement grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The grant required that we raise or have matching funds. Having been awarded the grant will allow for much needed repairs to the modest museum building.

So your support and interest in the Society is vital, be it membership dues, donations, bequests or active support. And it is very much appreciated. In keeping with the spirit of renewal please look for the membership renewal form inside and remember to renew your membership!

*The Medway Historical Society annual business meeting will be held at the Medway Public Library on **Tuesday, May 26th at 7:30 p.m.** Elections for open positions on the board will be held. All members are invited to attend.*

Sheila Dubrawski

THE MILFORD (MASS.) DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 13, 1956

MEDWAY

CHARLES J. HIGGINS — Prospect St. — KEystone 3-8915

Medway Historical Society To Become Active; Slate Elected

MEDWAY—The first meeting in many years of the Medway Historical society was held this week with Herbert N. Hixon officiating.

During the business meeting the

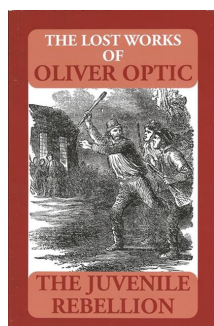
following new officers were elected: President, Francis D. Donovan; vice president, James G. Anderson; secretary, Mrs. John M. Wood Jr.; and curator, Dr. Edward Chapin.

1956—Notice of the Medway Historical Society's Revival

Plans were discussed to place the society on an active basis, and the first general meeting will be held in January or February. Anyone who is interested in joining the society may contact either Mrs. Wood or Mr. Donovan.

THE LOST WORKS OF OLIVER OPTIC

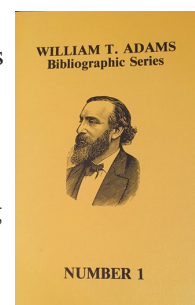
(William T. Adams) by Peter Walther



Peter C. Walther, Medway Historical Society member, is considered to be the top researcher and self described advocate on the Oliver Optic series. In the “Lost Works of Oliver Optic—The Juvenile Rebellion” Walther features a collection of dialogues that Adams wrote for his magazine “School and Schoolmate.” In the Introduction Walther explains, “Dialogues were once popular occasions for public assemblies and school graduations. In these Civil War dialogues Adams delineates his characters with cutting humor rather than acid pen.”

William Taylor Adams (1822– 1897) was born in Medway to Captain Laban Adams and Catherine Johnson Adams. Adams became a teacher in Dorchester, Massachusetts in 1843. He resigned from his position as master of the school in 1846 in order to assist his father and brother in the management of their new hotel in Boston—the Adams House hotel. In 1848 he returned to teaching at the Boylston School in Boston and in 1860 he was promoted to the position of master of the Boylston School. When the Bowditch School was founded Adams transferred to that school as its master, a position he held until he resigned from teaching in 1865. This experience naturally brought him closely into contact with boys, and he learned much of what interested them, which had a good deal to do with his eventual success as an author. Extensive travel abroad and a deep knowledge of boats, farming, and practical mechanics were other factors that gave his works reality.

Adams served as a member of the School Board in Dorchester, MA and later of the City of Boston. He also served as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1869 to 1870. Adams first began to write at the age of 28, and his first book, *Hatchie, the Guardian Slave* (1853), was published under the pseudonym of Warren T. Ashton. In 1855 Adams produced his first real hit, the initial volume in the Boat Club series. Adams wrote over 100 books, most of them for a boy audience. Among his best-known works were the two "Blue & Gray" series, which were set during the Civil War. "Like many children's authors of his day, he was additionally an editor, and many of his works first appeared in *Oliver Optic's Magazine*. Adams' writing was criticized by Louisa May Alcott among others. Alcott used her story *Eight Cousins* to deplore Adams' use of slang, his cast of bootblacks and newsboys, and his stories of police courts and saloons. Adams responded in kind, pointing out Alcott's own use of slang and improbable plot twists. (Source: Wikipedia)



To purchase a book please email info@medwayhistoricalsociety.org. And, enjoy reading a sampling from the book in this newsletter.



CURATORS CORNER

The Historical Society Museum is currently featuring “Curiosities” - a display by Audrey Ritter. On the matter of “Curio” cabinets, Audrey explains, “In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cabinets with niches, small drawers & shelves holding scientific curiosities, rocks, shells & fossils were very popular. Families collected odd items & in some cases tried to discover what they were. For many, such a hobby gave the impression to others that they were serious, thinking people at a time when few went to college.” And, thanks to MHS Director Mark Dobday, geologist by day, many of the items on display that have been added to the museum collection over its 113-year history have been accurately identified.

Work continues on the cataloguing with the help of Eileen Yates. Much of the focus has been on the extensive collection of clothing. Audrey Ritter is sewing labels into the items with help from Terry Armstrong. Joe Diczek has been photographing items like crazy and has also been organizing the upstairs into some orderly manner which will ultimately allow us to inventory and store like items and then share them with you in meaningful displays.

THEN AND NOW THE MEDWAY MILL



This little mill (below) was built by Cephus Thayer in 1838. Thayer dammed Chicken Brook for power, which made a pond across the street called Thayer's Pond. A current picture shows the enlarged mill which was built in the early 1900's. According to Fran Donovan's, Old Medway Locations(1996) Chicken Brook got its name through an accident of Old Joe Barber who dropped a sack of chickens in the brook near 19 Winthrop Street.



Carol Lebeaux

Saturday, June 13th—Oakland Park/ Senior Center

To accommodate as many people as possible appointments are needed and limited.

Membership Renewals

Medway Historical Society Annual Membership Enrollment Form (all memberships end annually on May 31st)

Name(s): _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Email: _____

Annual Membership:

☐ New Member

☐ Membership Renewal

☐ Senior/Student \$10.00

☐ Couple \$20.00

☐ Business \$50.00

☐ Individual \$15.00

☐ Family \$25.00

☐ Lifetime \$200.00

☐ Please accept my additional tax-deductible 501(c)(3) Contribution. I am enclosing \$ _____

\$ _____ Total Fee Enclosed

☐ I will volunteer to help the Society by:

☐ Serve on the Program Committee

☐ Serve on the Membership Committee

☐ Help staff the booth at Pride Day

☐ Help with Fundraising

☐ Help curate and catalog the collection

Reminder: The Medway Historical Society does not receive any monies from the Town of Medway. The Historical Society is a non-profit organization that relies solely on membership dues and donations for all its operations.

Make Checks Payable to:
Medway Historical Society
223 Main Street, Medway, MA 02053

Just a reminder

2015 membership renewals are due in June. If you have not yet renewed your membership, please fill out the form to the left and with your dues check, mail it to us at the Society. In addition to membership, all gifts are appreciated.

THANK YOU!

Upcoming Events

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ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

- **Tuesday, May 26th 7:30 p.m.**
Board Elections - Medway Public Library

MEDWAY PRIDE DAY

- **Saturday, May 16th**
Medway Middle School

MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE - 223 Main St.

- **Sunday, May 17 from 1-3**

CAROL LEBEAUX -SILHOUETTE ARTIST

- **SATURDAY, JUNE 13TH**
Oakland Park/Senior Center
Appointments are limited. Please call
508-254-3995 or email
sdubrawski@aol.com for more
information.

Did you know the Medway Historical Society
is a 501C (3) Non-profit Organization?

Your donations are tax deductible.

Please consider making a gift
to the Society.

Annual Membership runs from June 1—May 31

Check out our many publications available
for purchase at
www.medwayhistoricalsociety.org

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK!

Contact Us:

EMAIL: info@medwayhistoricalsociety.org

PHONE: 508-533-7222

Medway Historical Society

223 Main Street

Medway, MA 02053

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Visit our website:

www.medwayhistoricalsociety.org