



The Needham Historical Society

The Gazette

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**The Needham
Historical Society**
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781-455-8860
www.needhamhistory.org



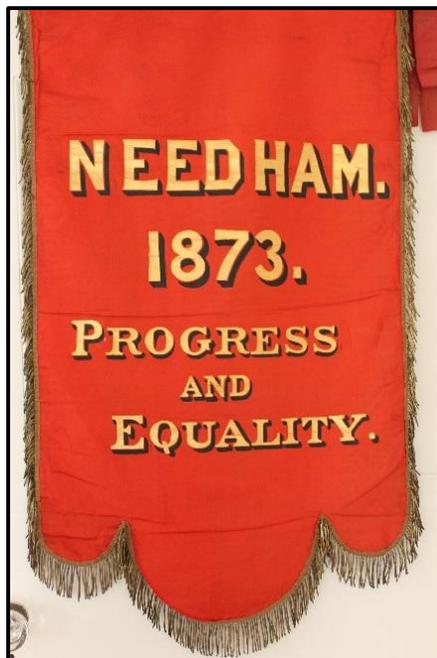
Hours

Tuesday – Thursday,
9:00 am – 3:00 pm
or by Appointment

Archives, Appointments,
Events & Rentals
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Or see our Website

The Silent Sentinels

One hundred years ago – in April 1917 – the United States was just entering a war that it had hoped to avoid. When the European nations fell into war in 1914, President Wilson had tried to remain neutral. Much of the country's population was of either German or English descent, so sympathies were split. And anyway, no one was too enthusiastic about taking sides in a war between two outmoded imperial powers. Nevertheless, heavy news coverage of German atrocities, unrestricted submarine raids on US shipping, and an attempt by the Germans to bring Mexico into the war finally made US involvement inevitable.



But while the men went off to war in Europe, American women were gearing up for a war of their own. Beginning in January 1917, members of the National Women's Party began a protest in front of the White House to gather support for women's suffrage. Known as the Silent Sentinels, they stood silently but resolutely at their post, every day for more than two years until the vote was achieved.

The Sentinels' protest represented a more active and militant phase in the fight for women's votes, but the struggle actually began much earlier. The first women's rights convention met in Seneca Falls, NY in 1848. Of the sixteen 'Sentiments' declared by the Convention, the first four advocated the right of women to vote. Similar conventions quickly followed, the first one in Massachusetts meeting in Worcester in 1850.

Women entered the political sphere in earnest during the years of the Civil War, especially in the causes of Abolition and Temperance. These movements were often organized through the churches, and because they encompassed the 'feminine virtues' of compassion, religion, and moderation they were considered a fit concern for women. However, the skills learned in these efforts were useful a few decades later as women took up the more contentious banners of suffrage and prohibition.

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This debate over women's right to vote reached into Needham as well, with groups in town aligned on both sides of the issue. In 1873, the Needham Woman Suffrage Club was formed, meeting at the home of Eliza LaCroix on May Street, and by the end of the year had 50 members. A year later, more than two hundred people gathered for a program in favor of suffrage. In November 1915 there was a referendum on the state ballot to give women the vote. Two rallies were held in Needham on two nights in October – one for and one against.

The 1915 referendum failed statewide by a wide margin, and in Needham by 595–389. Women did not finally gain the vote until 1920. However, the widespread belief that the liquor industry was largely responsible for advocating the referendum's defeat sharply increased women's demands for Prohibition, which they saw successfully enacted in the same year they gained the vote.

*The Needham Woman Suffrage Club Banner is just one of the objects on display in our current exhibit, **The History of Needham in 100 Objects**. Please visit us and see the other 99!*

What's Up With Us?

A New Look for The Gazette

We are trying a few new things this year – among them, a new look for *The Gazette*. This gives us more opportunities to add event photos and news. We will still have a story about Needham History, and all the updates. We are adding Membership and Collections news as well, and whatever else we can fit into these pages!

But we can go no farther without sending our abundant and heartfelt thanks to retired **Ye Olde Editor, Bob Hall**. Bob has been rusticated in Northfield, MA for the past few years. Happily, we get to see him when he visits Needham, but we will miss his good stories and tall tales.

Welcome New Members!

As you all know, we are just entering our new membership year. We have shifted the dates from January-December to July-June. Thank you to everyone who has renewed their memberships. If you have not yet done so, *please hurry!* – the new year has begun and programs will be starting soon!

Welcome to our newest Members ~

Robert and Lorene Fernandez
Rivka Nir
Monique Goodwin-Trach and Eric Trach
Peter Benfield
Pedro Garrido
Sam and Elizabeth Hart
Suzanne and Andrew Baker
John and Amanda Doran
Jill and Michael Goldberg
Rachel Cohen and Michael O'Brien

Cruise the Charles 2017 a success!

Thank you to our members and friends who came cruising with us back on July 27th. Over 20 people joined in the fun as we learned about the River Charles and the many architectural changes the riverfront has seen. We got an up close and personal look at the Zakim Bridge, the many wharfs of Boston Harbor, and even saw Old Ironsides just recently returned to the harbor waters. A cheer erupted when Needham was referenced by our Boston By Foot guide as he described the 'Back Bay Fill.' Thank you again to Charles River Boat Company for hosting our annual summer event.



Sailing past the USS Constitution, Bunker Hill and the Charlestown Navy Yard.

Needham's Walk thru History, October 8

History is all around us! From the Odd Fellows Hall to Blacksmith Pond and Moseley's Mill, Needham is rich in history. Save the date for our annual History Walk Sunday, October 8, 2017 from 11-3. Walk, bike or drive to over 55 sites and take in some of the town's fascinating stories, from its earliest years in the 1700s until modern times. Guides will be available at the 'hub' locations to share stories and answer questions.

Interested in sponsoring the History Walk?

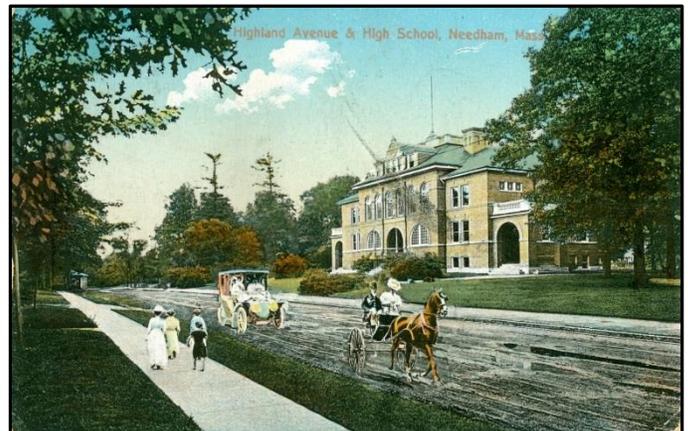
Site sponsorship information is available by calling Suzanne at 781 455 8860.

Collections Spotlight: the Postcards

First of all, a shout-out to our cataloguing staff who are working so hard to bring our data into the modern world – **Susan Jarvis**, our cataloguer, ably assisted by volunteer **Fran Gratz**. And needless to say, none of us would be able to find information on any of it if it were not for the many years of effort put into the Archives by **Polly Attridge**.

Most recently, Fran has entered an inventory of our rather nice historic Needham postcard collection (1905-c.1970). Postcards were inexpensive – only a penny to mail – and quick to send. Since the mail was delivered several times a day (fancy that!) and few people had phones, a postcard was an attractive and efficient way to send a quick message.

The collection includes familiar Needham scenes, with horses and buggies, or antique cars from the last century. There are familiar landmarks – the High School, railroad stations, High Rock, Rosemary Lake, Echo Bridge – as well as photo of sports teams, local businesses, and special events (like the Bicentennial and the Ice Storm of 1921). The town has lost many original homes, including its oldest to development, but the postcards preserve and memorialize some of these homes.



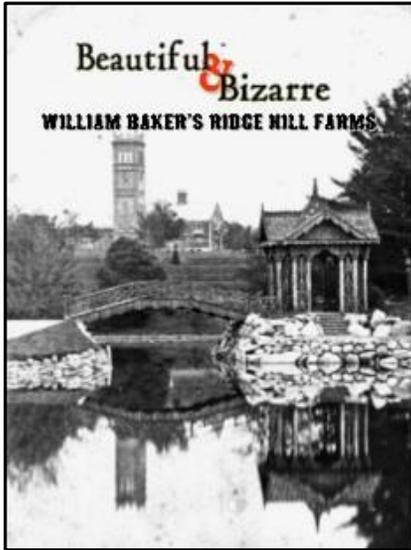
1912 Postcard of the Emery Grover Building (the old High School). The car and buggy were added by the printer and were not in the original photo.

Coming Soon!

The 2017-2018 Program Calendar is on its way, and it is filled with amazing events!

Unique Needham Gifts for the Holidays

Something different – Something special – Something for everyone on your list!*



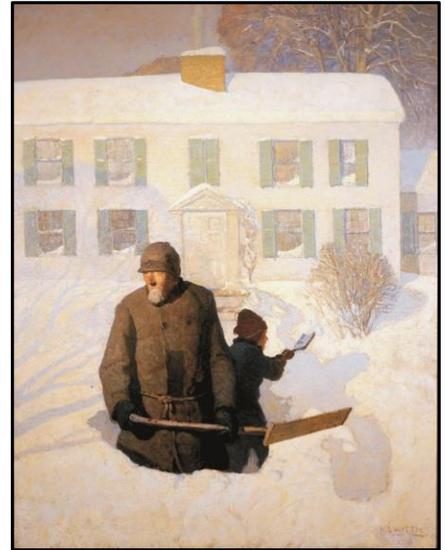
DVDs

Beautiful & Bizarre (the Baker Estate)
Big Little Town (History of Needham)
Return to Norumbega



Ornaments

Town Hall – The Blue Tree – Pansies
Memorial Park – The Historical Society
Needham High School – Town Seal



Notes & Cards

NC Wyeth Holiday Cards
Fuller Bird Note Cards
Wyeth Pansy Cards

Purchase at the Historical Society, or online at www.needhamhistory.org/shop

*Yes, it's early – but it will be here sooner than you think!

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