

# South Danvers Wizard.

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## NEWSLETTER

### PEABODY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM – February 2009

#### President's Message

As you may have heard we are expecting. It's true! The Society will soon be the proud parents of a new addition to our family of fine period homes and its name has already been picked out; it will be the Sutton - Pierson House. It's rather a large bundle of joy weighing in as it does at approximately ninety tons and 480 inches long. The house is being donated to the Society by the developer of the property on which it currently stands.

Without tongue in cheek, we can tell you that the house was built in 1847 on Aborn Street by General William Sutton for his daughter Elizabeth and her husband Edward Pierson. It was built in the classic Gothic cottage style with its steep gables, florid fenestration or 'gingerbread house' elements along the verge boards with its center or main gable including a classic lancet window a type you'll recognize it as soon you see it. The attic ceiling is done in the barrel arch style culminating in a view through that striking window that immediately gives one the impression of being inside the nave of a miniature gothic church. The roof of the rear addition is supported by three simple columns on each side, while the old chimney is topped with four original terra-cotta chimney pots.

Now every proud parent feels the excitement that the latest addition to the family brings, but we are of course equally proud of all of our eight buildings. Our organization now has a collection of buildings that exhibit the following significant architectural styles: *First Period*, the Felton Houses; *Federal*, the Foster House; *Gothic Revival*; the Sutton - Pierson House; *Italianate*, the Osborne-Salata House, and the Victorian Cottage exemplified in the Orchard House. These buildings, along with the modified Eastern Stick style design of the Torrent #3 firehouse as well as our beautiful classic New England Smith Barn, allow us to offer to our members and the general public fine examples of some of the more important architectural styles used in home construction in the early years of the nation.

The Sutton - Pierson house will be moved to vacant lot adjacent to the Osborne - Salata House on Washington Street and serve as the new home of our soon to be expanded library. The Ruth Hill Library currently houses our collection of thousands documents, photographs, and books relating to the history of Peabody. The additional rooms will allow us to expand public access to this, the most sought after element of our collections. The exact delivery date is yet to be determined, but we are hoping that the really, really big stork arrives with its package by mid March. See you then.

Regards,

*Bill*

William Power, President



Sutton-Pierson House circa 1847

### **Executive Committee**

President, William Power  
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### **Staff**

Heather Leavell, Staff Curator  
Anna Castleman, Asst. Staff Curator  
Tammy Messina, Function Manager  
Jeri Terenzoni, Bookkeeper

dedication by our current Curator Bonnie DeLorenzo and before her by Rosa Drysdale. Come learn about what we have. Members free; non-members \$3. Questions, call 978-531-0805.

## **“All for Freedom: Memories of the Revolution”**

**April 5, 2009 (Sunday) 2:00 pm**  
**Fire Museum, Felton Street**  
**Peabody, MA**

A presentation by Historic Interpreter and Storyteller Merrill Kohlhofer. Learn about the struggles, doubts, sacrifices and everyday courage of Americans in the Revolution as they are brought back to life. Carefully based on research into primary source documents, these are stories of ordinary people of Massachusetts who committed themselves to the cause of freedom. Many are almost forgotten, lost in archives, old manuscripts and newspapers. Merrill Kohlhofer brings them to vivid life. Members free; non-members \$3. Questions, call 978-531-0805.

## **Calendar of Events**

### **“100 Years of Vintage Clothing”**

**March 8, 2009 (Sunday) 2:00 pm**  
**Fire Museum, Felton Street**  
**Peabody, MA**

A lecture “100 Years of Vintage Clothing”, a presentation spotlighting our costume collection, will be presented by Costume Curator Bonnie DeLorenzo and Historian Barbara Doucette. The Society is fortunate to have an extensive and meticulously catalogued collection of vintage clothing of all types from wedding gowns to children’s clothing worn by previous generations of Peabody people. Cataloguing and care of our collections have been done with extraordinary

## **Coming in April**

To commemorate Patriot’s Day and the sacrifices made by our local Minutemen, we will have our annual ceremony and wreath-laying at the Lexington Monument on Washington Street. Details are being handled by our Librarian Dan Doucette and our Historian Barbara Doucette. An Open House and refreshments will follow at the Gideon Foster House located across the street from the Monument. Further details are still being worked out and will be forthcoming.

## Curator's Corner

### Society Awarded \$6000 Preservation Assistance Grant from the NEH

Heather Leavell, Staff Curator

*T*he National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded the Society a \$6000 Preservation Assistance Grant to support the conservation assessment and re-housing of its important collections of samplers, quilts and wedding gowns. Camille Breeze, a textile conservator with expertise in storage design, will provide detailed condition reports for these textiles, as well as recommendations and priorities for future conservation treatments. She will also work with Society staff on a plan to upgrade the storage area, and NEH funds will be used to purchase new shelving and storage materials for these collections.

*A*n essential component of the project is the development of a team of volunteers, board members, and an intern who will work with Breeze and Society staff to re-house these collections. The team will be instructed on the proper procedures for handling and storing textiles and how to enter catalog records for these items in the Society's collections database. The NEH grant will support the immediate preservation needs of the samplers, quilts and wedding gowns, while providing a model for the future assessment and re-housing of the entire costumes and textiles collection.

*T*he samplers, quilts and wedding gowns are among the most historically significant artifacts in the Society's collections. Twenty-five of the samplers date from 1776 to 1835, and were produced by young women from some of Peabody's earliest and most influential families, such as the Osbornes, Proctors and Fosters. A highlight of the quilt collection is a remarkable 114" x 114" signature quilt that belonged to Mary Jane Osborne, whose home, the Osborne-Salata house, is now owned by the Society. This huge quilt features 100 squares with signatures of 39 friends and family members, and it provides unique insight into the close knit social and familial circles in Peabody in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Society is also fortunate to own three wedding gowns that were worn by three generations of

Felton brides in 1851, 1881, and 1904. The Feltons, who were among the first settlers in the Brooksby area of Salem (now Peabody), occupied the Nathaniel Felton Junior and Senior houses for over 250 years.

*B*ecause of their inherent historic value, the samplers, quilts and wedding gowns are instrumental in the development of the Society's exhibitions and educational programs. By conducting a conservation assessment and upgrading the storage area, the Society is ensuring the long-term preservation of, and public access to, these irreplaceable textiles.

### Gideon Foster House gets a new look

*L*ate this fall the Gideon Foster House received a much needed coat of paint. We've received many compliments as to the new color, blue with a tinge of grey with touches of white trim. Some of the black shutters had deteriorated and will be replaced when the weather improves.

### What are they doing ?

Managing the snow before snowplows was done by packing it down using giant rollers. Springtime melting made for pretty bumpy rides. This photo was recently donated to us by Ray Wallman, Peabody's favorite photographer.

### Happy Birthday Abe !! 1809-2009

*T*his February 12 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Abraham Lincoln. John Wells gives the following account of some goings on in Peabody during Lincoln's Presidential campaign of 1860 in his book "The Peabody Story" (pages 300-310) :

"The Presidential campaign of 1860 in Peabody was very colorful. This was one of the most crucial elections in the history of the United States; it was only a few months after that election that the Civil War broke out.

Streets, its course traced by the flight of Roman candles, the glow of fires and glimpses of the torches.

“Franklin and Chestnut streets were also ablaze with light. When the long parade filled Main Street in a double line, as the column countermarched, the view from the Salem boundary line was most magnificent. Holten and Washington Streets had decorations, illuminations, and fires. It seemed as if the whole population had united behind the demonstration which brought credit to the town as well as the political party that originated it..

“Following the parade some 1200 of the Wide Awakes attended a banquet in Mr. Upton’s new glue factory on Washington Street. As the procession marched in to the sound of music, the large building swayed back and forth. Once the music stopped, the swaying ceased and all breathed more freely.”

“After the Wide Awake’s parade, the local Minute Men had their own led by Captain Robert S. Daniels, Jr. They also supported Lincoln, and were led by the Salem Brass Band playing the music of the Union.

“..... In the election that followed, the town cast 592 votes for Abraham Lincoln, 81 for Stephen Douglas the Northern Democrat, 142 for Bell and 21 for Breckinridge, the Southern Democrat.

“Lincoln assumed the Presidency during a most difficult time when problems with the Union were beginning to heat up. The old-time spirit of patriotism flamed again with ardent enthusiasm in Peabody at the fall of Fort Sumter to the Confederates. Forty-two citizens of the town volunteered on the first call for men by President Lincoln on April 18, 1861. In coming days more

recruiting efforts took place. Peabody took on a 4<sup>th</sup> of July appearance. Flags met the eye at every turn. Fire houses had bunting flying and the stars and stripes floated from the top of the Lexington Monument. Francis Dane flew his mammoth flag from his factory at the corner of Lowell and Foster Streets. Another large flag was suspended across Foster Street.” (Several years ago, our volunteers discovered a huge flag in an upstairs chest in the Foster House. Perhaps we have just discovered the history of this flag.)

**Become A Volunteer Tour Guide !**

**Are you passionate about history?**

“Near the close of the campaign the supporters of Abraham Lincoln in Peabody, known as the Wide-Awakes, put on a large and colorful demonstration. A torch light parade made up of the various Essex County Republican organizations was assembled on the evening of November 2 in Peabody Square. Between 1500 and 1600 participated in the parade in which eighteen clubs were represented:

“Chief Marshall was General William Sutton of Peabody and his aides

South Danvers (Peabody) Wide Awakes - 202 men  
Lowell Glee Club in a large wagon drawn by four horses  
Danvers Wide Awakes – 70 men  
Salem Brass Band and Salem Lincoln Guard – 142 men  
Lowell Wide Awakes – 180 men  
Beverly Wide Awakes – 130 men  
Topsfield Wide Awakes – 56 men  
Malden Lincoln Light Guard – 51 men  
West Lynn Lincoln Cadets – 55 men  
Salem Wide Awakes – 148 men  
East Saugus Wide Awakes – 60 men  
Lynn Giant Killers – 36 men  
Ipswich Wide Awakes – 50 men  
South Danvers (Peabody) Rail Splitters – 54 boys  
Salem Juvenile Rail Splitters – 48 boys

“.....The whole of Peabody, according to the local WIZARD, was one glow of light from illuminated windows, Chinese lanterns, bonfires, Bengolia lights, rockets, Roman candles and other fireworks. Added to that was the brilliancy shed over by some 1600 lanterns and torches to get some idea of the general effect of the great display.

“The central point of the attraction was Peabody Square, where the effect at time of the arrival of the various delegations was most spectacular, according to the press. The whole square was glowing with light as if from burning buildings. All around, from basement to attic, houses and stores presented shining fronts of intense light. Gas jets threw out their flames from the fronts of the Republican headquarters and from Symonds Hotel (now 12 Peabody Square). The hotel cast a bright red light which shed its brilliance and color over the scene.”

Led by Chief Marshall General William Sutton the parade wound its way through Central, Elm and Wallis

**Share your enthusiasm and knowledge with  
Peabody Historical Society visitors!**

*T*he Society is seeking volunteer guides to lead seasonal tours of the Nathaniel Felton Senior House. Trustee Margaret Abbott has been working on organizing this program. Becoming a guide is a fun way to learn new skills while making an important contribution to the life of the Society. Tours are offered on one Saturday every month from June through September and occasionally by appointment. All volunteers will receive thorough training. Don't miss this great opportunity to learn about the house and some of the artifacts that are displayed. Your time commitment will be minimal. For more information, please contact Heather Leavell at 978-977-0514 or phscurator@comcast.net.

**Applications available  
for the George & Rachel Shaw  
Scholarship**

*T*he Society will be administering the George & Rachel Shaw Scholarships for the 14<sup>th</sup> year. These are two awards each for \$1000 funded by Sylvia Marble in honor of Sylvia's parents.

*T*o be eligible a student must be (1) a resident of Peabody, (2) currently enrolled in their sophomore year in college or beyond, and (3) a full-time college student carrying at least twelve credits per semester. The deadline for return of applications is April 10, 2009. All applications are submitted to the committee anonymously. Applications are available through the mail, on our website [www.peabodyhistorical.org](http://www.peabodyhistorical.org) or by stopping by the office at 35 Washington Street, Peabody. Further information call 978-531-0805.

**Annual Appeal Report**

*A* **thank you** to all who contributed to this year's Annual Appeal despite the current economic downturn.. We appreciate each donation which will help the Society continue its work to preserve the history of our City.

**Wizard copies at PIL.....**

*A*rchivist at the Peabody Institute Library Nancy Bartholomey recently requested copies of our old newsletters. We were happy to provide her with some copies going back to the early 1990s. They will be scanned in and serve as an historical record of what's been going on with the Society in recent years.

**Our new website !**

*O*ur website has recently been completely redesigned with more photos and information on our activities and what we offer. This is particularly helpful to people interested in renting our properties for weddings and functions. They can now find us quickly and easily on the Internet. In fact we recently received an inquiry for a wedding reception at our Smith Barn with the comment that the future bride was "captivated by the photos" on the site. Our Staff Curator Heather Leavell is continuing to add and update information about our programs and other activities. Our website is still the same <http://www.peabodyhistorical.org>. So check it out. We are sure you will like the new and improved format complete with lots of photos.

*O*ur Deepest Sympathy to the family of the late Richard Batchelder, of California. a long-time member and generous supporter of the Society.

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Ruth Hill dollhouse displayed at the Holiday Open House

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**Welcome New Members !**

Rowena Davidson of Peabody  
Celeste D. Devaney of Peabody

1958 Wedding dress from Patti Sears

### **Military**

Infantryman shovel WWII, framed image Grenier AFB, Manchester, NH Intelligence Office (unknown donors);

Wedding reception at the Smith Barn - 2008

## **Some of our recent Accessions**

### **Library**

Photos PHS Class of 1913 from Mrs. Sylvia Marble; Postcard collection from Anne Quinn

Archival materials related to City of Peabody events, sports, etc. from Mayor Bonfanti

Slides, Northshore Mall before reconstruction 1980, Programs International Festival 1993, Photos & negatives misc. of Peabody including snow plow photo circa 1900, Food Shop Bakery where Walgreen's is today, Peabody Square 1970s, and other misc. items from Ray Wallman

Collection, posters, awards, etc. from Father Toste; Map of Peabody 1872, antique meat grinder, mixing bowls from Russ Bowden

Four portraits of McCarthy family members, two photos, one Catholic bible circa 1888 from John & Virginia McCarthy

Peabody water bill "Prospect St. family" October 1, 1893, photos Peabody Grange & other Grange related items, 5 year pin J.B. Thomas Hospital (Anna Murphy) from Pauline M. Brennan

Program, Peabody Opera House 1907 Fireman's Ball purchased Ebay

The South Danvers Observer Fall 1868 (unknown donor)

Photo Hellenic Credit Union/Main Street 2008 from Nicholas Decoulos

Photo Lynn Street opposite county c. 1930 from Pat & John Brophy

### **Costume Collection**

## **About Colonial Quilts**

by Nannette Richford  
(reprinted from Internet)

*M*uch of what you may have come to believe about Colonial Quilts simply isn't true. The image of Colonial women nestled peacefully before the fire stitching elaborately beautiful quilts from fabric scraps has been fabricated by well-meaning individuals due to the few surviving quilts from Colonial times.

*I*t is a common misconception that Colonial women spent long hours before the fire lovingly joining scraps of cloth left over from other sewing projects. This belief arises in part from the mistaken notion that surviving quilts from the Colonial times are actually representative of common household quilts designed to bring warmth and comfort to the family. They aren't. The quilts that have survived for generations are much more likely to be the handiwork of the wealthy who could afford to hire others to complete household chores, and to purchase expensive imported fabrics, while using leisure time to work on needle work and quilting.

*W*omen in Colonial days faced many hardships and their lives were far from idyllic. These amazing women did all the spinning, weaving, cooking, cleaning and caring for their large families. Basic household chores occupied the majority of their time. Little time was available at the end of the day for creative pursuits like quilting. Even if there were time at the end of the day, there was little artificial lighting and it is doubtful the light from the fire or candlelight would produce the quality of light needed to piece together tiny sections of a quilt. Women cut and sewed clothing to optimize the use of the fabric and fabric scraps from clothing were minimal. Printed fabric was not commonly available until much later due to the expense of imported fabric. Surviving quilts are likely to be quilts that were sewn for special occasions or used on display by wealthy families and not a

representation of the actual quilts used on beds during Colonial times.

Colonial women did make quilts to serve as bed covers, just not the exquisite beauties we associate with Colonial times. Most often these quilts were pieced together in whole sheets of fabric. The front and back were likely plain with a filling of heavier coarse material inside to provide warmth. When time allowed, women often cut flower shapes from small sections of imported print fabric and applied these

designs to the cover by turning under a small 1/8 to 1/4 inch seam and stitching in place. These quilts were functional quilts designed to provide warmth and comfort during the cold winter months.

As printed fabric became more readily available, those who could afford it created borders from decorative prints. These multiple row borders surrounded a central image, often a star motif, hourglass block, or the saw tooth block. Occasionally, entire quilts were designed from squares of fabric pieced together usually to create a star pattern. As clothing wore out, tiny scraps of fabric were saved and used in quilting projects. These were probably the beginnings of "crazy quilts" in America because tiny scraps could be joined in a random pattern to create a cover for the quilt. Crazy quilts reached their peak in the 1880s.

What was once work that required painstaking stitching to create a warm, protective covering for the bed, quilts gradually evolved to an art form, creating beautifully decorative bed covers designed more to show off the artistry of the quilter than for actual warmth. Many modern star motifs, saw tooth blocks, applique designs and multiple borders on quilts were inspired by the work of Colonial women and survive as a testament to their hard work and creativity.

*Ann Zaorski Birkner, Editor*