



From the President

by Gail Sjo

Now that Town Meeting has authorized the Board of Selectmen to lease the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center to the Winchester Historical Society, it is time to recognize the many unpaid volunteers who made this possible:

Susan Keats, who listed the house on the National Register

Sam Seidman for his years of championing the idea of a home for the Society at the Sanborn

Jim Hartford for putting into words the concept of "stewardship"

Ellen Knight for her research and writing skills

Jim Donovan, creator of the numerous and necessary PowerPoint presentations along with assists from John Minniti

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The Sanborn Project Gets Underway

by Dinah Voorhies

On Monday, November 28, about 20 members of the Historical Society met to discuss and plan the next steps in the evolution of the Sanborn House into the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center. After welcoming words from President Gail Sjo, Vice President Carol Keller reviewed the critical lease requirements and the projected timelines for fund-raising and restoration as laid out in the feasibility study done by Red Hawk Studios. Following a general discussion of various aspects of the project, the attendees broke up into workgroups.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to breakout sessions in which the members of the individual workgroups made a preliminary attempt to identify and prioritize their responsibilities. These groups remain open for volunteers - please contact Gail (sjogail@aol.com or 781-729-6560) if you are interested in joining any of them. The current list follows, with the present number of participants shown in parentheses:

- Fundraising (7)
- Finance (3)
- Legal (3)
- Internet Presence (2)

- Publicity (3)
- Building & Grounds (4)
- Artifacts & Collections (3)
- Grant Writing (2)
- Neighborhood Liaison (0)
- Board of Selectmen/School Committee Liaison (0)

The Society anticipates that the workgroups will report to a Steering Committee, the size and membership of which is still under consideration.

For anyone interested in actively participating in bringing the plans for Sanborn House to fruition, now is the time to raise a hand!

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October 6th Program

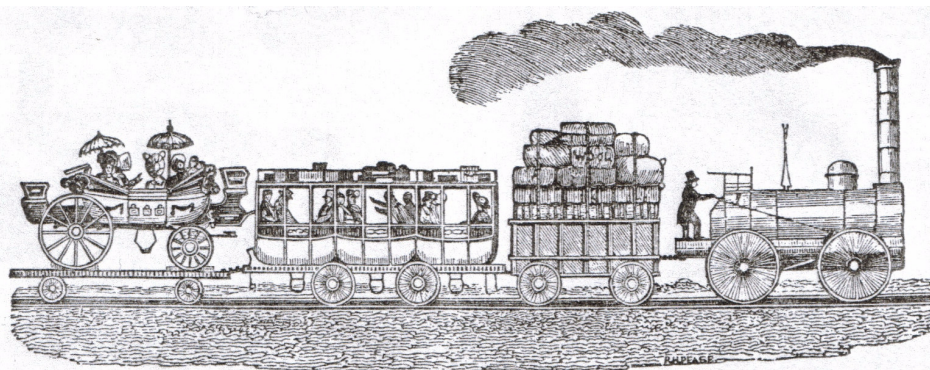
Railroad Lecture Tracks Changes and Progress

by Dinah Voorhies

Amid a "storm of fiery sparks" in a group of cars "like shabby omnibuses," Charles Dickens experienced an 1842 journey from Boston to Lowell on the train that passed through Winchester.

On Tuesday evening, October 6th, Bill O'Connor – historian, history teacher, and lecturer – did full justice to the subject of Win-

chester and its railroad, treating a full room at Town Hall to an evening of history, slides, and anecdotes.



His talk – "Winchester's Growth: The Impact of the Railroad, 1820 to 1890" – conveyed the story of the early Boston & Lowell's (later the Boston & Maine's) development. Chartered in 1830, opening for passenger service in 1835 and for freight ten years later, the railroad attracted the eagerness of Yankee investors to take up this new technology at a time when the China trade and other merchant ventures by ship were declining. Winchester's stop, established in 1837 as "Woburn Gates," gives the town a very early place in American railroad history.

Bill opened his remarks with a reminder to all that while we seem far removed in time from the historical events of this period, we are closer than we realize to the 19th and early 20th century changes brought by the railroad. A person who was young in the 1840s to 1860s or who knew the 1880s and 1890s might be no further away than our own grandparents' parents – only one person's telling away from the actual eye-witness of those days.

Thus the changes he cited that came about from the arrival and presence of the railroad are well within community memory. Reduced freight rates and the arrival of year-round transportation brought industry to Winchester, a change from its rural and mainly agricultural beginnings. With it came an expanded work force. Town population doubled between 1850 and 1870 and then almost tripled from 1870 to 1890. And fuel for still further growth came from the supporting industries and services now needed by the manufacturers and their workers.

Somewhat ironically, Winchester's proximity to Boston via rail ended up aiding another major change that actually reversed the industrial trend. Bill encapsulated this with the fact that while in 1835 the railroad went *through* Winchester, by the later 19th century the president of the Boston and Maine lived *in* Winchester. As influential local citizens, many with business connections to Boston, chose Winchester as a desir-

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Ed Delaney and Nancy Schrock, presenters of the plan to Town Meeting and all-around dedicated workers
Linda Pederson and Jamie Devol, who helped write the grant application for the Massachusetts Historical Commission

Members of the two Town-appointed Sanborn Reuse Committees including Peter Kuttner, developer of the first interior design schemes
Chuck Nurnburger for supporting our efforts as a member of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Tom Howley and Attorney Stefan Nagel for writing, negotiating and rewriting the lease

Sarah Swiger, who gained buy-in of the School Committee
John Clemson, liaison to the Historical Commission and author of letters and articles in support of our efforts

Maureen Meister for sharing her experience with other historic properties and for her unfailing encouragement
Bob Colt whose experience with state and local government and other historical society houses proved invaluable

Ron Castignetti, Sanborn neighborhood representative and town meeting presenter
Laurie Minniti, our intrepid cheerleader with great ideas

David Stirling, Nancy O'Herron, Eva Arnott, Margie Lamar, Paula Swartz, Jean Twitchell, Marilyn Preston, Judy Thyson and Beverly Treen, who provided excellent guidance and expertise

Dinah Voorhies, researcher and exhibit genius
Two late great ladies and supporters extraordinaire, Martha Speers and Sandy Rodgers

And finally to my six-year partner on this project, Carol Keller, who was willing to do anything and everything to achieve this goal.

From the Archives

by **Randy Bairnsfather and
Diane Donovan**

Scanning Project:

A grant of \$596 from the Winchester Cultural Council has allowed the Archival Center to purchase the Multi Media/Imaging module for its Past Perfect database. Diane Donovan is in the process of scanning and indexing photographs of houses, many dating from the turn of the century. The scanned photos are available to researchers on the Archival Center's computer.

Maps:

Past Perfect has also been used to record information on the Archival Center's map holdings. Historical Society member Randy Bairnsfather input information about each map that volunteer Alice Fitzgerald had noted on catalog sheets. Past Perfect now holds data on size, scale, condition, personal names, names of buildings and other features on over one hundred of the Center's maps. Researchers can identify the maps they want to look at by searching the database using key words, place names, dates, etc., thereby reducing wear and tear on the maps themselves.

Recent Donations:**Locke Photographs**

Stanley Locke of Arlington has donated a collection of family photographs to the Historical Society. Stanley is the son of Willard and Gladys (Locke) Locke and grandson of George and Elizabeth Locke. (Gladys Locke, Willard's wife, was the daughter of Oscar Locke of Brooklyn, NY, and Grace Trofitter of Newtonville.) Willard grew up on the Locke Farm on Ridge Street along with his five brothers and one sister. Several of the siblings farmed the property over the years, but Willard eschewed farming to become a banker at Boston Safe Deposit and Trust.

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able place to live, the visual presence of industry began to diminish, particularly in the town center. Efforts to beautify Winchester and enhance its cultural and educational offerings started seriously in the 1880s and still continue.

The talk ended with a question period. After a discussion of the size of 1830s passenger cars, long-time resident Larry Smith recalled the 1950s when the question of elevating the railroad

was locally *the* hot issue of the day. He raised a chuckle when he recounted how one person revealed that the idea had been suggested before – in 1835! Progress sometimes takes a while.

Once extremely central to Winchester life, railroad issues now usually take a back seat to those related to the automobile. Thus, on hearing this example of municipal delay, the topic on our minds these days is ... finally, Washington Street is finished?



Winchester Historical Commission

Historical Commission Applauds the Society's Lease of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center

by **John Clemson**

The Winchester Historical Commission, a town-appointed, seven member board, is charged with the broad mandate to "preserve, protect and develop the historical and archeological assets of the town" (Mass. General Laws, ch. 40, s. 8d). Thus, the Commission was delighted, about four years ago, to learn that the Winchester Historical Society desired to house itself in the Sanborn House, one of Winchester's rarest and best-preserved but most at-risk historic resources.

The Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center, at the corner of Cambridge and High streets, is an unusual example of Beaux-Arts design in the Boston suburbs. The name of the style refers to the French national academy of fine arts, where many of America's most prestigious architects such as Richard M. Hunt and H. H. Richardson studied before M.I.T. established the country's first academic architectural school in 1868. The style's characteristics include symmetrical formalism combined with exuberant classical decoration. These attributes are present in both the exterior and interior of the Sanborn House, which features formal symmetry and monumental columns with a rich plethora of classically derived finishes and decorations.

The Historical Commission is pleased that the Society's goal of

assuming stewardship of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center has been approved by all the concerned parties, including Town Meeting, and will be realized with the signing of a 50-year lease in early 2006. Previous passage by Town Meeting of the Society's request for a Preservation Restriction on the property will ensure that restoration and renovation will be of the highest quality. The Preservation Restriction, which requires all work to meet the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation," will prevent any unintended destruction of misunderstood significant building fabric as well as act as a positive, systematic guide for appropriate restoration. With the Preservation Restriction in place, the Society was able to apply for, and receive, a generous planning grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

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The Winchester Historical Commission believes that having the Sanborn House under the management of the Historical Society will ensure that it remains accessible and open to the public. In addition to providing space for the town's Archival Center, the house will provide meeting spaces for other town and volunteer organizations. It will also be a perfect setting for the Society's public events and its collection of historic artifacts. The Society's stewardship of the house will allow the public to experience both its spectacular exterior and interior spaces.

In supporting the Historical Society's request for stewardship of the Sanborn House, the Historical Commission was following abundant precedents. All over Massachusetts and New England, and indeed the entire country, historical societies take on the responsibility for saving, restoring and maintaining historic buildings that might otherwise have no use and making them thrive as public institutions. The Winchester Historical Commission is confident that the Historical Society's stewardship of the Sanborn House represents the Town's best hope for preserving this significant and rare resource.



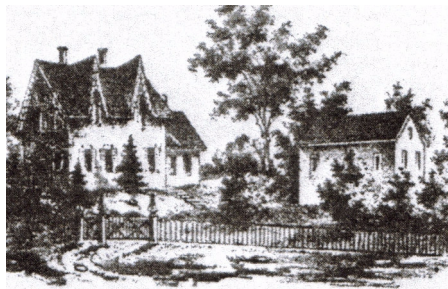
October 27th Program

The Architecture of Winchester Houses

by Dinah Voorhies

On October 27th, John McConnell presented for the Historical Society a lecture entitled "The Architecture of Winchester Houses." His audience was treated to about 2400 years of architectural history – in an hour and a half! Because the styles of Winchester houses stem largely from that period of copious historical borrowings – the 19th century, "when everything happened of any interest," according to McConnell – an extensive survey was what it took to provide a full context. And in the hands of McConnell, a speaker of wit and charm, we had a delightful time while whizzing through the centuries.

The accompanying slides began with Renaissance examples. This period revived the use of classical forms, preserved through the "Dark Ages" in the writings of Vitruvius. McConnell showed the famous drawing of the human body as a source of geometry, one of the key new tenets of this influential period.



Examples of the Baroque followed, showing the increasing

plasticity of architecture as Rococo embellishments were added to classical forms. As the "Age of Enlightenment" progressed, rationalism took the fore over fancy, and a French abbe led the return to the basic elements of architecture. We saw the cover of his treatise, illustrated with a "building" where live tree trunks form columns – surely the architectural version of that period's concept of the "noble savage."

As science and the value placed on human observation developed, so also came the arrival of archaeology – a new and fertile source for design revivals. The uncovering of Pompeii and ongoing unearthing in Italy continued to fuel interest in an in-

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This fascinating collection follows Willard and Gladys through the years. It includes pictures from their school days, wedding day, and social occasions, as well as pictures of them at the farm, of Willard in uniform, and in a formal portrait for the bank. This is a wonderful addition to the collection of an important Winchester family.

Symmes Park Tower

Along Hillcrest Parkway, nestled among the trees of the Fells, sits an old water tower, remembered mostly as a source of great controversy during the 1930s.

Thanks to a recent gift of the Erving N. Fox papers and photographs from Robert Schulz of Arizona, we now know the reason for the wrangle. The town first erected the tower in the middle of a residential area east of Symmes Corner toward Medford, known as Symmes Park. The residents were surprised, then outraged, when the tower appeared and mounted a petition to remove it. The Town reported there were no funds to move it, so the dispute moved to Town Meeting, which finally, after several years, voted to move it.

The collection includes the names of the people who signed the petition, cue cards for a town meeting presentation, background information on the history of the tower, and photographs.

The Archival Center is located in Town Hall.
Hours of operation are:

- 1st Tuesday of month: 7:00 - 9:00 P.M.
- 2nd Thursday of month: 1:00 - 3:00 P.M.
- 3rd Thursday of month: 3:00 - 5:00 P.M.

All visitors must be supervised by one of the part-time volunteers who staff the Center. Patrons who cannot visit the Archival Center during its open hours may request individual appointments (tel: 781-721-7146; e-mail: archives@ci.winchester.ma.us), which are set by individual volunteers at their discretion.

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creasingly studious rendition of classical styles, and a new fascination with the exotic (not unlike the Baroque mania for things Chinese) resulted from Napoleon's time in Egypt. Shortly after this came the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

By this time, in the first quarter of the 19th century, the early round of Winchester building in the Federal style, largely influenced by classical models, was beginning. The town was developed enough by the 1840s and 1850s to markedly reveal the next trend in architecture – Romanticism and the early stages of the Gothic Revival. Winchester's assortment of cottages with pointed gables and decoratively carved barge boards are fortunate survivors of this era of Davis and Downing.

Landscape design had a key moment at this time too, McConnell reminded us, as landscape painting gave rise to the notion of gardens as "paintings you can walk through." While the picturesque landscape of Winchester center, with its Arcadian blending of trees, water, and greensward, was largely developed later, the concepts that informed it had their start in this period.

New ease of production and what McConnell calls "20 years of cynicism" after the Civil War gave rise to a French-influenced materialistic style of architecture, the "2nd Empire" style, demonstrated in Winchester largely by the arrival of the Mansard roof.

Examples of the other marvelously eclectic styles of the 19th century followed: the early "stick style" showing "Swiss" influence with jerkin gables, its later cousin

the "shingle style," and the amalgam of Colonial, Dutch, and Jacobean influence that became "Queen Anne." Also the Ruskinian gothic style, most often executed in brick and exemplified locally by the house at the entrance to Rangeley. Winchester houses of the 1880s and 1890s provide a particularly rich textbook of these later 19th century styles.

The evening concluded with some examples of the growing interest in full historic re-creation, shown by samples of English half-timbered buildings elsewhere in the U.S. The early 20th century, with dominance of the Colonial Revival, Tudor, and Mission/Bungalow styles, was left for a future session. After time for questions, we sallied forth, brim full of knowledge and with new eyes for the historic clues and context of our Winchester houses.

Sanborn Fun Fact #3

As one would expect from a major American brand, Chase and Sanborn took full advantage of the new advertising medium of the 20th century – radio. Their Sunday evening "Chase and Sanborn Program," with vaudevillian and Ziegfeld Follies star Eddie Cantor, was a top-rated show in the early 1930s. (Cantor's subsequent career lasted through the 1960s, during which time he discovered stars such as Dinah Shore and Eddie Fisher, and founded the March of Dimes.)

This was followed by the "Chase and Sanborn Hour," beginning in 1937 with ventriloquist Edgar Bergen and his irrepressible puppet Charlie McCarthy. Also joining the show were host Don Ameche, vocalists Nelson Eddy and Dorothy Lamour, plus W.C. Fields and Mae West. The power of this line-up again gave Chase and Sanborn the lead rating for Sunday night at 8:00 PM.

So what was their time-slot competitor in 1938 – the Mercury Group's "Mercury Theatre On the Air" – to do to capture audience share against this behemoth?

For their Halloween broadcast of October 30 that year, Mercury Theatre's leader Orsen Welles, with the help of writer Howard Koch, decided to adapt H.G. Wells's "War of the Worlds". And the rest, as they say, is history!

The Mercury Theatre show began with a weather report and then supposedly "live" music from the Hotel Park Plaza in New York. (Actually, the entire broadcast was done from the studio.) There was an interruption with news from a Chicago observatory spotting an explosion on Mars. A second cut-in provided an interview with Professor Pierson at the Princeton Observatory, where a shock "of almost earthquake intensity" had been felt.

The further report of a Martian craft being sighted at Grovers Mill near Trenton, their "heat ray" weapon, the address by the "Secretary of the Interior" (intentionally chosen to sound like FDR) and the news of the evacuation of New York City all fell on the ears of startled listeners. Many had tuned in around 8:12 when the musical section of the Chase and Sanborn Hour started. These dial-flippers had missed the introduction which named the literary source of the story and were fooled by the seeming "reality radio." Some reacted too soon to hear further interjections during the show stating that it was fiction rather than fact, and the famous panic ensued.

Orsen Welles managed to make the phrase "War of the Worlds" linger in memory long after most have forgotten the Chase and Sanborn Hour. [DV]

Notices and Upcoming Events

Meetings - Third Tuesday of the month (January 17 / February 21 / March 21, 2006): Board Meeting, 7:30 P.M.; for location, contact Gail Sjo (tel.: 781-729-6560; e-mail: sjogail@aol.com).

Programs - January 8, 2006, 3:00 - 5:00 P.M.: "Celebrate-the-New-Year" Party; at the Lexington Historical Society's restored Depot Building, Depot Square, Lexington (members and their guests, only).

February: No program scheduled.

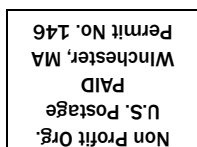
March 2006, 7:30 P.M.: "In Their Own Words. Part 4:" Dorothy and Richard Santos, actors and Winchester citizens, present oral history recollections. (Location and date to be announced; watch for the meeting notice.)

Help Wanted - The Winchester Historical Society needs volunteers for the on-going oral history project, *In Our Own Words*. For more information, please contact one of the oral history coordinators: Marilyn Preston (tel: 781-729-2039) or Randy Bairnsfather (tel: 781-729-8539; email: rmbairns@att.net).

The *Black Horse Bulletin* needs volunteers to write articles about Winchester's history. If you would like to see your bylined article in print, please contact John Minniti (e-mail: jminniti@comcast.net), Charles Harris (e-mail: charleyharris@yahoo.com), or Cynthia Latta (e-mail: cynthia@chickadee.us).

Workgroups are being formed for the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center project (see "The Sanborn Project Gets Underway" on page 1); if you are interested, please contact please contact Gail Sjo (tel.: 781-729-6560; e-mail: sjogail@aol.com).

Plan Ahead - May 2006: Annual House Tour (Watch for the meeting notice).



WINCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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