



# WINCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## BLACK HORSE BULLETIN

Volume 33, Number 1

January - March 2008

### From the President

by Gail Sjo

The year 2008 will be a festive one for the Historical Society and its members. In the spring, the Winchester Historical Society will commemorate 75 years of continuous operation and we will celebrate with our first major fundraiser, an event with a 1933 speakeasy theme. Coincidentally, the Sanborn House turns 100 in 2008. Although the exact day the Sanborns moved in is unknown, we will honor it in the fall with another celebration.

In addition to celebrating and keeping up a full calendar of educational programs and events, 2008 will be the year we roll out the welcome mat, encouraging all Winchester residents and organizations to come and see how the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center can play a part in their plans. With the elegant first-

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Happy Anniversary!

### The Society Turns 75

by Ellen Knight

On April 24, 1933, the Winchester Historical Society was organized. In a way, it was a continuation of the Winchester Historical & Genealogical Society that existed from 1884 to 1898. However, it was also a brand new organization, with a new name, new constitution, new officers, 75 new charter members, and a new life which has survived for almost 75 years.



The old library art gallery, where the Society held its first public meetings.

When the earlier historical society expired, it gave the care of its collection to the Trustees of the Public Library. In 1931, when

the new library building was built, the trustees reported that on the second floor, "a large room [has been] set apart for the collections of the one-time Winchester Historical Society ... which might perhaps now be induced to come to life again and use the quarters provided for it."

It did indeed come to life, with the help of both the trustees and the Fortnightly Committee for the Preservation of Antiques. On the occasion, there were several speakers. At that time, only two

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Co-Managing Editors: Carol Keller, Cecily Parkhurst; Editor: Cynthia Latta

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Winchester Historical Society  
PO Box 127 ☐ Winchester, Massachusetts 01890-0127  
781.721.0135

www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org ☐ www.sanbornhouse.us

#### Officers and Directors 2007 - 2008

President	Gail Sjo
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#### Directors (through May 2009)

Bob Colt	Patrick Hall
Nancy Kilker	Cynthia Latta
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#### Directors (through May 2010)

Susan Keats	Laurie Minniti
Nancy O'Herron	Robert Stone

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members of the old society were still living, and a letter from one, Lewis Parkhurst, was read. Librarian Cora Quimby read some of the old records. Trustee Edgar Rich talked about early local history. Jesse Wilson, President of the Fortnightly, talked about projects her group had sponsored. Helen Twombly spoke about her research and the need of preserving photographs and historical data for posterity. The idea of writing a town history was raised, a suggestion realized three years later with Henry Chapman's *History of Winchester*.

After the constitution was adopted and officers elected, the Society was up and running. It used the library room for the collection and the library's art gallery for lectures and historical expositions. Over the years, the Society and the collection have moved from place to place, but both have survived and grown.

In April 2008, the Society turns 75. Like all anniversaries, it is a time to look back with pride on our accomplishments and look forward to the future and to what more can be done. It is a time to celebrate.



#### November Program

### Following in the Footsteps of Edwin Ginn...

by Thomas Michalak

On November 13<sup>th</sup> Society members and friends met at the Winchester Room in Town Hall to hear Robert Rotberg speak on the life and contributions of Edwin Ginn, publisher, philanthropist, advocate for world peace, and a leading citizen of Winchester from 1880 to his death in 1914. Professor Rotberg is the Director of the Program on Intrastate Conflict and Conflict Resolution at Harvard University and President of the World Peace Foundation.

In 1867 Ginn founded Ginn and Company, a Boston textbook publisher. (Readers may recall using one or more of Ginn's books.) By recruiting experts to write textbooks in their fields and encouraging system-wide adoption of particular titles, Ginn quickly became a leader in educational publishing. He moved to Winchester in 1880 and shortly after arriving recruited Lewis Parkhurst, principal of Winchester High School, to join him in developing new techniques for the production and marketing of his books. In 1896, Ginn and Parkhurst developed the most modern manufacturing facility for the production of books in America at the location of the Atheneum Building in Cambridge.



*Professor Rotberg responding to questions from the audience. Photo courtesy of Edward Davis.*

Professor Rotberg discussed his research on Ginn's early life and his many civic contributions to Winchester. Ginn worked with Forrest C. Manchester to turn the waning industrial eyesores of the town into parks, deeded 10 acres to the Town for Ginn Field, worked

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(continued from page 1, President)

floor rooms painted and in good repair plus a catering kitchen, the opportunities for a variety of meeting formats, cultural events, exhibits, and family/organizational celebrations are abundant. We want to include as many Winchester organizations as possible so if you know of any interested groups or individuals who have not been in the house during the last year, please contact us. Once folks get inside, they are amazed that Winchester has such attractive space available to the community.

Another goal for 2008 is to make the necessary repairs to the roof so that the rooms on the second and third floors can be cleaned, painted, and prepared for use. This will allow us to increase the office and conference space available on the second floor. Board member and architect David Stirling, chair of the Building Committee, is working closely with contractors and roofers to come up with an effective solution.

Also on our list of priorities for 2008 is fundraising. Thus far Town funds and donations, coupled with generous amounts of volunteer hours, have moved this project further than anyone could have imagined. Going forward, significant amounts of money will be required for restoration and renovations. These include restoring the integrity and beauty of the exterior, installing new mechanical systems, converting the basement into archival space for the Town and Society, and landscaping the grounds for community enjoyment. We already have an active Fundraising Committee and will be selecting a consultant to help us develop a fundraising strategy to raise the money needed to renovate and maintain the Sanborn Center. If you would like to join us, please contact me via e-mail ([president@winchesterhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:president@winchesterhistoricalsociety.org)) or by calling 781-721-0135. We would be happy to have your help!

**From the Archives***by Randy Bairnsfather*

When Lawrence Bacon's widow, Barbara, moved from the house on Grove Street where she had lived for her entire married life, she brought to the Archival Center some interesting items relating to the Bacon family. In 1842, Lawrence's ancestor, Robert Bacon, had purchased land along the Aberjona River and established a felt mill which at one time turned out 85,000 hat bodies a year. His home was on what is now Mystic Valley Parkway in an area that, because his children had houses nearby, became known as Baconville.

Among the items donated to the Society is a tattered, undated catalog with the title *Charles N. Bacon Manufacturer of Felts, Felt Polishing Wheels*. (Charles was Robert's son.) In addition to hat bodies, the company offered felt for shoe soles, lambs wool for quilts, cloaks, and comforters, and cotton wadding for furriers. Over the years, the company adapted to changing fashion and technology. Recent catalogs of the Bacon Felt Company, now located in Taunton and owned by the Teibow Company of Japan, feature such items as nibs for felt markers and felt components for business machines.

The company purchased more than just raw materials for hats and cloaks. Invoices dated 1913 from Alameda Company show the sale to Mr. Charles N. Bacon of bottles of rye, rum and Holland gin for \$1.00 each and bottles of port and sherry for \$0.50 each.

The collection includes a cash-book showing disbursements from 1892 to 1897 to local companies and individuals. A rather fragile book has accounts dating from the 1860s.

There are two photographs of Bacon houses – one at 22 Grove Street that was later razed and an-

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with David N. Skillings to preserve Rangeley, and encouraged many of his business colleagues to move to Winchester.

Later in life Ginn became an advocate for world peace and alternatives to armed conflict for resolving disputes among nations. In 1910, Ginn created the World Peace Foundation and endowed its work upon his death. Professor Rotberg's book, *A Leadership for Peace: How Edwin Ginn Tried to*

*Change the World*, discusses Ginn's early life, his Winchester period, and his extensive peace efforts.

At the conclusion of his talk, there were many lively and interesting questions from the audience and the meeting concluded with Professor Rotberg signing copies of his book. For those who missed the event, Professor Rotberg's book is available at Book-Ends and in the Winchester Public Library.



eBay and the Society

**Winchester Horse Show Tray***by Ellen Knight*

The Society has been able to add to its collection an item related to the Sanborn family, a hammered-aluminum tray from the Winchester Horse Show of 1936.

The horse shows began in 1921 as a benefit for Winchester Hospital. Lorena (Mrs. Oren) Sanborn headed the committee that organized the shows, assisted by her daughter Helen and a committee of women dedicated to helping the hospital. In the beginning, the Sanborns hosted the shows at their home, Aigremont. Rena Sanborn continued to chair the horse show committee even after it and she left the town.

The first show was held on June 15, 1921. There were several categories, including saddle horses, hunters, jumpers, ponies, high jump, and pony jump. Participants, both adults and children, came from Winchester and the surrounding area. In 1922, it was reported that the show drew over 1,500 people from Greater Boston. There were 27 classes represented in which 225 horses took part. In 1923, an estimated 4,000 attended. In addition to the attraction of the horse show itself, a military band furnished music throughout the event and refreshments were sold.

Beginning in 1925, due to the Sanborns' leaving Aigremont, the horse shows were moved to Goode's Riding School Grounds in West Medford for several years. In 1936, the show returned to Winchester in a new setting at the Winchester Country Club where grounds were specially constructed (as described in our January - March 2007 issue). Rena Sanborn continued to chair the organizing committee, still assisted by her daughter.

In 1937, the show attracted a record entry list, reportedly more widespread than before, as well as a large crowd of spectators. However, after that year, the newspaper no longer carried notices about the horse shows, leading to the conclusion they were discontinued, though it is unknown why.

The tray which the Society was able to purchase is engraved with the words "Winchester Horse Show 1936." It bears the imprint of the Wendell August Forge, which was established in 1923 and became a leader in the orna-

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mental, hand-forged aluminum industry which found a large market during the years of the Great Depression.



The tray is engraved with the words "Winchester Horse Show 1936."

Enjoy shopping on eBay? Want to help preserve Winchester's history? You can do both at one time and help out the Society.

The horse show tray was purchased through an auction on eBay. Many items of interest to Winchester history – and thus of interest to the Society or the Win-

chester Archival Center – go up for auction or sale on eBay.

However, both the Society and Archives have limited budgets for the collections. In fact, we were outbid on another item we were interested in. The Society would welcome help acquiring other items for its collections.

If you would like to help, please contact Ellen Knight at [eeeknight@juno.com](mailto:eeeknight@juno.com). Confused about what would go to the Archives and what to the Society? She will know. Wondering if something is appropriate or might already be in the collections? In consultation with the collections' curators, she will advise you. Not sure you will see the right auctions? She can assemble an e-mail list of people to contact with a wish list and can also notify you if someone is known to be bidding for us and should not be bid against.



Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center

## Sanborn House Ready For Community Use

by Carol Keller

The Winchester Historical Society has announced that the elegant first floor of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center is open for community use thanks to the many efforts of the Town, Society members, and the community. This is an important step for the Historical Society, which signed a long term lease with the Town in 2006 committing the Society to restore the historic Sanborn House for the benefit of the community.

Located one mile from Winchester center and situated on a hillside in the midst of over four-acres of lawn, the House is adjacent to the new Ambrose School at 15 High Street. The property takes its name from Oren Sanborn, its first owner and son of James Sanborn, the co-founder of Chase and Sanborn Company. Designed in the beaux-arts style and completed in 1908, it represents an era when some of Winchester's grandest homes were built along the Mystic Lakes and on Myopia Hill. Sanborn House

has been on the National Register of Historic Structures since 1981.



Historic photo of the Sanborn House. Photo courtesy of the Winchester Archival Center.

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other at 31 Grove Street that still stands. We are pleased to add these photos and documents to our collection.

Another recent donation was Winton Club Cabaret programs from 1925 to 1980, given by Berta Swanson, historian for the Winton Club. This is the Society's first collection of Winton Club memorabilia, and supplements those from other local organizations. Some of the program ads make amusing reading. From the 1933 program:

**Bring this advertisement to RANDALL'S CANDY STORE and we will allow you 25¢ on the purchase of a pound of Randall's quality chocolates. Try our Special Luncheons and Sunday Night Suppers. We serve home cooked food. Telephone 0515.**

Randall's was a favorite local establishment and you can still find people who have fond memories of the restaurant.

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@winchester.us](mailto:archives@winchester.us)), which are set by individual volunteers at their discretion.



## Corporate Sponsors

Book Ends

Children's Own School

Hall & Sullivan, Attorneys at Law

Mary McKenna and Associates, Inc.

(continued from page 4, Sanborn House)

Today the peeling exterior paint belies all the work that has been done during the intervening year. Freshly painted walls, an elegant stained-glass window, ornate ceilings and French doors on three sides are some of the special characteristics of the house. The three large first-floor rooms linked together by French doors and a smaller Arts-and-Craft-inspired study offer space for meetings, functions and cultural events. A large kitchen is equipped for catering. The House is not yet handicapped accessible or air-conditioned.

Early experience has demonstrated the ability of the house to accommodate a wide range of activities. The Winchester College Club rented the Music Room for its last afternoon tea. Winchester Neighbors Club held a *Tuscan Evening* fundraiser for the house, uti-

lizing the entire first floor and making a generous donation to the Society. The Winchester Artists' Network held its annual meeting at the Sanborn as did the Winchester Cultural Council. A private birthday party celebrated a "special" decade event and an art class has used the second floor for weekly studio sessions. The Historical Society has held multiple events that highlighted the beauty and history of the house, and holds regular meetings there. It looks forward to using the property to expand its offerings of strong educational programs while also for the first time offering the use of a "historic home" to the community.

To reserve the Sanborn House for a community or business group, or for a personal event, or to learn more or to request a tour, call (781) 721-0135 or visit [www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org).



Author! Author!

## Society Honors Ellen Spencer and Maureen Meister

by Thomas Michalak

Society members gathered on Sunday October 14<sup>th</sup> at the First Congregational Church in honor of the eighth publication in the series *The Architects of Winchester, Massachusetts*.

Maureen Meister, editor of the series, provided background on the historical publications of the Society and introduced Ellen Spencer, author of *Robert Coit. Houses and Public Buildings in an Age of Suburban Growth*.

Ellen spoke of her

research on Coit and his architectural contributions to Winchester, including the design of the lovely Clara H. Palmer Room in which the meeting was held. Members had many questions on the extent of Coit's work in town and his influence on other architects of the period.

President Gail Sjo thanked Ellen for continuing the high academic standards of the Society's contributions to the history of architecture and thanked Maureen for her editorial work on the series.



Ellen Spencer was the guest speaker and honored guest at the reception. Photo courtesy of David Feigenbaum.



Financial Update

## Message from the Treasurer

by Nancy Schrock

As the Winchester Historical Society expands its traditional programs and adds the operations of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center, it has been necessary to develop policies and practices to ensure the secure management of its finances. As treasurer, I will provide periodic updates for the members.

Since my report at the May 2007 annual meeting, we have taken the following steps to improve fiscal management and oversight:

The accounting firm of Stone & Company LLC was selected to conduct a review of the finances for fiscal year 2006. This has been completed and IRS Form 990 has been filed with the government. It will be available on the web through Guide Star ([www.guide-star.org](http://www.guide-star.org)). I am pleased to report that the Society ended FY2006 with assets of \$166,139, of which

\$128,202 is restricted for Sanborn House operations and restoration.

As part of its reorganization, the Board created a Finance Committee, which includes the Treasurer, a member of the Board, and a Society member not on the Board. It currently includes Nancy Schrock, Cynthia Latta, and Drew Bottaro. This group will review the budget, investments, and the business plan.

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The Society takes seriously its responsibility for stewarding donations for the Sanborn House operations and restoration. Our new accounting and fundraising software ensures that all donations directed to particular activities or projects are tracked as restricted funds and used solely for their intended purposes.

With the financial infrastructure firmly in place, the Society is expanding its efforts to raise the addi-

tional money required to undertake the Sanborn House restoration. The annual appeal has gone out and I urge you to consider a donation to the Society.

As treasurer, I welcome your financial questions at [treasurer@winchesterhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:treasurer@winchesterhistoricalsociety.org) or at Society events. Starting in 2008, we will publish our annual financial statement in the Black Horse Bulletin. As always, I thank you for your financial support, which makes possible all that we do for Winchester.



Events Coordinator

## Meet Sue Clark

by Carol Keller

Many of you may have seen Sue Clark at the Sanborn House, usually behind the scenes making sure our Sanborn events run smoothly. The Society Board is pleased that Sue has agreed to be our Sanborn House Events Coordinator. She will be working with groups and individuals who wish to rent the house for their meetings and functions. Sue brings years of restaurant and catering management experience to this task.

Sue has an interesting view of the revitalized Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center:

“Five years ago I was new in town and signed my daughter up for a play group held at the Winchester Recreation Department. Knowing nothing about the location I made my way up the hill to the Sanborn house. I really didn’t think much about the house as I busily approached the industrial door. When I opened it wide, much to my surprise I stepped into a grand old house. I immediately thought that the house would make a beautiful setting for weddings and other special occasions. The scene at the Sanborn House was perplexing however. The elegant rooms with their sparkling chandeliers and original mahogany wood paneling were hosting toddlers and their parents to crafts, dancing, and music making. The gorgeous oak room was an office and upstairs off limits. I remember peeking into the huge empty kitchen. I fell in love with the built-in bookcases, marble fireplaces, and the bathroom that had stairs. I wanted to explore and see what else the house had to reveal.

“You can see why I was happy when the Society presented me with a wonderful opportunity – would I like to help revive the house and get it ready to rent out for public and private events. Plans were prepared by several volunteers which included contracts and house rules and regulations that would both protect and maintain all of the newly renovated areas on the first

floor. And with the help of volunteer painters and handymen as well as hired help, the house is now available for rental for events, meetings and dinners. We have welcomed several community groups already and on the horizon we have events booked through the end of 2007 with others reserving dates for 2008. Now, as the Events Coordinator I find that all of the character and beauty of the Sanborn house that intrigued me five years ago continues to captivate me. I look forward to experiencing the ongoing revitalization of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.”

Sue also continues to volunteer additional time to the Fundraising Group and the Building committee.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Annual Holiday Party

On Sunday, January 6, society members will gather at the Armenian Cultural Foundation for the annual holiday celebration. There will be a new twist this year – musical entertainment provided by jazz pianist Harvey Diamond in the main room overlooking the Mystic Lakes. In keeping with the program theme for our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, Mr. Diamond will feature tunes from the 1930s. Festivities will go from 3 to 5 p.m. and include a brief talk by Curator Ara Ghazarians on the work of the Foundation and tour of the library with its collection of oriental rugs, Tiffany lamps, and rare books.

## Sanborn House Restoration Update

by David Stirling

*The Building Committee is one of the new standing committees formed as part of the Society's restructuring to address the needs of both the Society and the 100 year old Sanborn House. From time to time updates from each of these committees will be offered. The Building Committee, chaired by architect David Stirling, is charged with the overseeing the planning, restoration and renovation of the Sanborn House building and grounds.*

The committee is considering various approaches to building renovation starting with Red Hawk Studio's feasibility study for the Sanborn House (October 20, 2005.) An initial debate considered the funds currently available to the Society for construction and the numerous possible uses for the money. It was agreed that a top priority was to restore the integrity of the building envelope including roofing, stucco, windows and trim.

A report by roofing consultant Gale Associates of Weymouth for the Town of Winchester (February 15, 2007) detailed the roof deterioration and resultant water intrusion. Infiltration at the decorative roof balustrade has resulted in significant damage to the second and third floor ceilings. Restoration of the existing balustrade or replication is indicated, with an estimated cost of at least \$60,000. Complete roof replacement adds another \$152,000.

Additional ideas on building uses have emerged since the Red Hawk study was completed; their possible impact on the building uses and design is being

defined and will lead to a revised schematic architectural scheme. The committee therefore decided to explore the option of a temporary fix for the roof leaks.

Committee member Paul Martini offered the assistance of the chief estimator from A. J. Martini, Inc. to help the committee arrive at projected expenses. Meetings with a roofing company (A & M Roofing & Sheet Metal Company, Inc.) are in progress to assess options and prepare a roof repair proposal. In order to repair the roof the wood balustrade will need to be removed and stored for future rehabilitation or replication. Removal of this structure intact is a carpentry project. Four Winchester general contractors have been contacted and have provided an estimate of cost.

It is clear that much remains to be done and contributions from many sources will be needed, to move ahead with a definitive architectural plan and a cost estimate for the restoration of the Sanborn House and Cultural Center.

### 2008 Winter and Spring Programs

The Society will celebrate its 75th anniversary with programs focusing on life in Winchester in 1933. We want to take a look at the "here and now" for the people who formed the Society, with particular emphasis on the entertainment of the time. Program plans include old films – for children as well as adults – an old-time radio show, a dramatization of the long-running debate on whether Winchester should license a movie house, photos of the period and much more. Interested in helping? Contact Tom Michalak (e-mail: [cruikshank1@comcast.net](mailto:cruikshank1@comcast.net)).

**Happy 2008**  
**from the**  
**Winchester Historical Society**

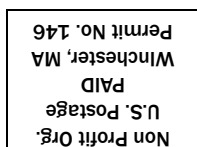
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## Notices and Upcoming Events

- Meetings** Board Meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month (January 15, 2008, February 19, 2008, March 18, 2008), 7:30 P.M., in the Music Room, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center.
- Programs** January 6, 2008, 3:00-5:00 P.M.: "Celebrate the New Year" Party at the Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street, Arlington, Massachusetts (members and their guests only). The Armenian Cultural Foundation is across from the Winchester Country Club on Cambridge Street. RSVP to 781-729-9052 or [cruikshank1@comcast.net](mailto:cruikshank1@comcast.net) by January 3, 2008.
- February: TBD; location and date to be announced (watch for the meeting notice).
- March: TBD; location and date to be announced (watch for the meeting notice).
- Plan ahead** May, 2008: Annual Meeting; location and date to be announced (watch for the meeting notice).
- Help Wanted** The Winchester Historical Society has many volunteer opportunities. For more information, see the Society Web site ([www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org)) or call the Winchester Historical Society (tel: 781-721-0135). Current opportunities include:
- Managing Editor, *Black Horse Bulletin*
  - Publisher, *Black Horse Bulletin*
  - Volunteers for the Education and Programs Committee
- The Archival Center needs a volunteer to transcribe handwritten inventories of some of its collections into MS Word. One such collection is the Vinson-Owen collection; it has been inventoried, but needs a finding aid in MS Word format. These projects can be done at home. We also seek a volunteer who is familiar with scanning to scan 35mm slides; the Archival Center has an Epson scanner for this purpose.



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 PO Box 127  
 Winchester, Massachusetts 01890-0127

