

# WINCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## BLACK HORSE BULLETIN

Volume 34, Number 1

January - March 2009

### HAPPY 100! by Nancy Schrock

2008 was a banner year for the Historical Society and especially for the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center, which celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> year with a gala birthday party on November 2nd. The date was marked by multiple honors. Selectman Roger Berman presented the Town Proclamation; Tom Howley read the Proclamation from the Massachusetts State Senate and the House of Representatives, which were followed by talks by Society President Bob Colt, and Town Manager Mel Kleckner.

Kim Khazei, Channel 7 Anchor, spoke as a Winchester resident and mother about how much a community place like the Sanborn House can contribute to a town. Edward Downes and Bonnie Leonard then shared their reminiscences of life in the mid-1920's to the mid-1940's in the "Sanborn Downes House," which recalled the Sanborn House as a home filled with family and children.

The *Boston Globe* highlighted the event by providing an interview with Edward Downes and Rose Downes Arnold for the November 9<sup>th</sup> Northwest edition which appears on page 5.



Left to Right, Selectman Tom Howley, Channel 7 Anchor Kim Khazei, Society President Bob Colt, Town Manager Mel Kleckner at the 100th Birthday Celebration of the Sanborn House. (c) Mark Flannery.com

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#### 2008-2009

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*The Black Horse Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Winchester Historical Society. Subscription is free with membership.

**From the President**  
*by Bob Colt*

2008 was a most eventful year for the Winchester Historical Society and the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center. We celebrated a year that was both the 75th Anniversary of the Historical Society and the 100th Birthday of the Sanborn House. The dedicated Board of Directors has given so much of its time and resources, and along with our loyal and involved membership, has made the many events and accomplishments possible.

The Sanborn House's new roof with its distinctive gutters was recently installed. It will protect the interior of the House for many years to come. The money for this crucial project was raised by the Society and represents a major step in the preservation of the Sanborn House, which since 1981 has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Board of Directors and its most active committees continue to meet and plan the next steps in renovations and improvements plus ways to raise the necessary resources to accomplish this mission.

The 100th Birthday Celebration of the Sanborn House was a festive and exciting event on November 2nd. An overflowing crowd enjoyed fine food, interesting tours of the house and lively speeches by Channel 7 Anchor Kim Khazei, Town Manager Mel Kleckner, Selectmen Roger Berman and Tom Howley and longtime Sanborn House resident Edward Downes and his niece Bonnie Leonard. The Board of Selectmen and the Massachusetts House of Representatives and State Senate provided beautiful proclamations commending the Winchester Historical Society and the Sanborn House.

The 75th Anniversary of the Society brought special programs including the 1933 film programs, The Golden Days of Radio, the Vote No On Movies and the Speakeasy Party that all brought the highlights of a different era to the Sanborn House. The June Town Day Trolley Tours and lively booth were greatly expanded with a new tradition, the Strawberry Festival and Classical Car Show at the Sanborn House. Strawberry shortcake, house tours and a bevy of vintage cars and enthralled visitors made for a wonderful event. We look forward to presenting this event again on June 6, 2009.

Encourage your friends to join the Winchester Historical Society, volunteer some of your time, support our Annual Appeal and let us know how you can be involved in developing the Sanborn House into a true historical and cultural center for the Town of Winchester. Plan your next family or organization event at the Sanborn House by calling 781-721-0135. We need you more than ever and we thank you for your encouragement and support.

**Society Appears on WinCAM's  
WINNING CASH Telethon**  
*by Donna Patalano*

The Winchester Historical Society took part in the first annual CASH Telethon on WinCAM, Winchester's local cable access channel in December. The telethon, sponsored by WinCam and the Winchester Rotary Club, invited non-profit groups in Winchester to appear on air and use their segment to help the Winchester community learn more about the Society.

Co-hosts Sydelle Pittas and Caren Connelly interviewed representatives from many of the community's non-profit organizations as well as some members from Winchester's business community. During the program, Caren Connelly interviewed Donna Patalano, chair of the Society's Development Committee. She asked about the Society's efforts to restore the Sanborn House as well as about this year's Society programs.

Members of the viewing public who called in during the telethon had the opportunity to pledge money towards a family membership to the Winchester Historical Society. In addition to all the benefits family members receive, the callers received a copy of the Society's publication "A Children's History of Winchester".

CASH was broadcast live from the WinCAM studio, located behind Winchester High School on Dec. 10, and will continue to be re-broadcast from time to time. The broadcast was also part of WinCAM Week, an annual celebration of local access television in Winchester. WinCAM hopes to make CASH an annual event and, if so, the Society is looking forward to participating in such a worthwhile program.

## Tales from the Sanborn

by Nancy Kilker

As restoration continues on the Sanborn House, new discoveries are made that are fun to share. This discovery was made when Christopher Potts, president of Duffy Floors in Medford, was evaluating the condition of the floors on the second floor. He told us:

*The floor in the small office (formerly sewing room) is made of pine, but not ordinary pine. Based on the length and uniformity of the planks, it was originally milled from trees that were over 100 years old at the time, possibly a mill set up on the premises to cut the wood for the floors. All the boards in the room are one length - the length of the room – and milled from the center of the trees. This wood is no longer available, except from reclamation or salvage of trees that have been buried in water for a long time (over 100 years) and preserved by cold water. This wood is very difficult to find and very expensive to replace. Fortunately the floor is in great condition.*

Mr. Potts was thrilled to see this floor since it is not often that such work can be found any longer and added that this floor is much more valuable than any on the first floor. He also enjoyed being in the Sanborn House again as his mother, Shirley Potts worked for the School Department when it was located in the Sanborn House.

### Visit the Sanborn House!

The Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center now has “open hours” every Wednesday 10:00 AM-1:00 PM. If you would like a tour, please drop in. Sue Clark, the Events and Facilities Manager will greet you. To visit at another time, call 781-721-0135 for an appointment.



## Sanborn House Raises the Roof!

by Donna Patalano

The Historical Society’s restoration work is continuing! In November, the Winchester Historical Society took a major step towards the restoration of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center. Under the direction of the Historical Society, A & M Roofing began to repair and replace the roof of the Sanborn House, the beautiful beaux-arts style home located at 15 High Street on the campus of the Ambrose Elementary School. The photograph above shows the House with the balustrades removed as the roof replacement gets underway.

Today the roof restoration is complete with the exception of some down spout work that will be completed as the weather permits. The home is once again watertight in time for the winter season.

Since 2006, the Winchester Historical Society has served as steward to the Sanborn House. The roof repair, which the Society has financed with a combination of private donations and grants, is just one more step in the on-going restoration effort. The Historical Society is supervising the work to transform the house and grounds into a vibrant community center that celebrates “heritage, art, culture, and beauty.”



## Mission of the Historical Society

At its January meeting, the Board of Directors approved the following mission statement, which reflects its new responsibilities for the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center:

*The mission of the Winchester Historical Society is to promote an awareness of Winchester’s rich history and share it with the community. The Society achieves its mission by collecting and preserving historic records and artifacts related to Winchester; by its educational programs, exhibitions, and publications; and through its stewardship of the Sanborn Historical and Cultural Center, which serves as the home for the Society and is open to the community for exhibits, meetings, and events.*

## Naming the *Black Horse Bulletin*

by Ellen Knight

The first issue of the *Black Horse Bulletin* appeared in December 1974 and bore the image – as it has ever since – of a black horse. The name was taken from the Black Horse Tavern, once the community's most prominent building.



Masthead of the first issue of the *Black Horse Bulletin*

From the 1740s (or earlier) through the mid-1800s, the Black Horse Tavern operated as a hostelry on Main Street not far from the juncture with Washington Street. It was a favorite stopping place for travelers, including stagecoach passengers. In the 1790s, it was on the routes from Boston to Portsmouth, N.H., and Portland, Maine. During the eighteenth century, this area of Winchester was frequently called Black Horse Village.

According to Nathaniel Richardson, who wrote a history of the tavern in 1892, the house was built while William Richardson owned the estate from 1724 to 1728 and was known to be kept as a tavern in the 1740s.

Before the first church was built in 1840, the tavern served as meeting place for the South Woburn community. For example, South Woburn's first singing-school was taught in the winter of 1838-1839 in the hall of the Black Horse Tavern. The headquarters for the first Winchester band, formed about 1850, was also the tavern. The building lasted until 1892 when the last owner, Preston Pond, led an unsuccessful drive to raise funds to save it and had it pulled down. The street name Black Horse Terrace serves as a reminder of its location.

The 1973 Historical Commission's report states that the commission adopted the logo of the Black Horse, choosing a horse that is "moving and active." That report states the image was "taken from an 18th century New England weather vane." The first issue of the *Black Horse Bulletin* stated that its black horse, "newly designed by Don Brown, has become the insignia of Winchester's History. Look for the Black Horse to show up all around town." Since the town celebrated the nation's bicentennial the next year, it did show up around town. Still running and active, it continues to head our newsletter.

A complete run of the publications can be found in the Archival Center in Town Hall. The Society is in the process of making a second set for reference in the Sanborn House.

## In Memory of Paul Berberian

by Susan Keats

Paul Berberian was a good friend of the Winchester Historical Society. He began his career with his own business in Arlington, before becoming an antiques appraiser, which complemented his wife's work as an interior designer. Over the years, they became a team of experts and many homes in Winchester are graced with their ideas and objects.

His interests included the theater and model railroads. He began his theater work with the Arlington Friends of the Drama, then joined the Parish Players in Winchester, before moving to the Unitarian Players. He was also active in the Arlington Rotary during his years of owning his business in that town.

The Society would like to thank the many donors to the Society in memory of Paul:

Gladys Ayvazian  
 Charlotte Bashian  
 Helene Cabour  
 Judith and Henry Curtis  
 Susan Kemper Coyne  
 Haig and Rosalie Demarjian  
 Robert Gallant  
 Helen Hagopian  
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 Lane and Anne McGovern  
 Mary Norsigian  
 Dorothy Piranian  
 Nancy Schrock  
 Janet and Dick Spencer  
 John and Alice Stoeckle  
 Betty Stokes  
 John and Pat Waite  
 Linda Way

Mark your calendar for a  
lively (and true) look  
at colonial times.  
March 10, 2009  
7:30 p.m.  
at the Sanborn House

Diane Rappaport, author of the award-winning book, *Naked Quakers and Other Forgotten Americans*, will bring to life the feisty, unruly and surprisingly irreverent life of colonial time in true court cases from New England.

“Call it Court TV meets the History Channel. Via a collection of true vignettes, Rapaport reveals that our Puritan forebears were not all stiff hats and stern faces. Colonial misbehavior was rampant. Pigs were purloined, wives were led astray, too many drams of rum were drunk, and even church pews were fought over in unseemly ways,” says Denise Davis of the *Boston Globe*.

“Inside Diane Rapaport’s ‘true crimes and controversies from the courts of colonial New England’ are stories that will remind you that our forebears could be just as unusual and nutty as our contemporaries,” adds Melanie Lauwers, Books Editor, *Cape Cod Times*.

MAY 16th  
10 AM - 4 PM



SANBORN HOUSE  
AND GROUNDS  
CLEAN-UP DAY

## Globe Northwest People

You can go home again.  
by Cindy Cantrell  
November 9, 2008

Amid those gathered last Sunday to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Sanborn House in Winchester, two guests had especially intimate knowledge of the grand estate. **J. Edward Downes Jr.**, 94, of Weston, and his “baby sister,” 93-year-old **Rose Downes Arnold** of Arlington, had lived there.

The Downes family moved from Boston to the Sanborn house in the summer of 1925. After more than two decades, the family sold the 19-room home on nearly 10 acres to a religious order whose nuns built Marycliff Academy on the property. The Sanborn House was later occupied by the town’s Recreation Department before coming under the stewardship two years ago of the Winchester Historical Society, which also celebrated its 75th anniversary last Sunday.

According to president Bob Colt, the Winchester Historical Society has embarked on a fund-raising campaign to restore and renovate the exterior and interior of the home, which is now used as a community center. The estimated cost is \$3 million, with an additional \$1.28 million for furnishing and decor restoration.

While disappointed that the second floor had been turned into dormitory rooms for the nuns, Downes said the home still brings back many fond memories. On a typical day, he said, he and his four siblings would gather in the oak room to wait for their father’s return from work at Downes Lumber in Boston. Formal dinner was served promptly at 6 p.m. by servants in the dining room, which still features the same gilded ceiling. Although the library was lined with leather-bound books, the family preferred retiring to the music room, where the children and their father sang along to Civil War and World War I songs that their mother would play on the piano.

“I’m so impressed with the Historical Society, but there’s an awful lot of [restoration] work to be done,” said Downes, who worked in his family lumber business after serving overseas during World War II. “The house is a jewel. No one will build one like it again.”

*Cindy Cantrell is a Boston Globe columnist.*



Honored guests Rose Downes Arnold and Edward Downes Jr. with Edward’s son at the 100th Birthday Celebration of the Sanborn House. (c) Mark Flannery.com

## Winchester's Art, Past and Present by Nancy Schrock

Thanks to a grant from the Winchester Cultural Council, the Historical Society has been able to add exhibitions to its activities at the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center. The grant allowed the Society to install the Akawara™ hanging system to the walls of the Music Room, Oak Room, and Library. This system of horizontal supports and flexible hanging wires makes it possible to hang artwork without damaging historical interiors.

For its first exhibit, the Society brought some of the artwork in its collection out of storage and hung Winchester related art for guests to see. Included for example was a portrait by Winchester artist Eva Cowdry, a lithograph of Colonel Winchester, and a watercolor of the town center in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Cultural Council grant also funded a talk by historian Ellen Knight on early artists of Winchester, which was held on October 28. She shared her recent research on the links between local artists, art organizations, and the town as a community that fostered creativity. Dr. Knight is the author of *Artists of Winchester* (available at Book Ends or by using the mail-in form on the Society's website). The talk also marked the debut of the Society's new LCD projector system, laptop, and large screen, purchased with funds from a grant from Winchester Rotary.

Also on display was a new donation to the Society's art collection. In honor of the Society's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, Nancy and Richard Schrock donated "Apples and Corn," a chromolithograph from a painting by Winchester artist Annie Nowell. Ms. Nowell was well known for her watercolors of still life, which were reproduced by Louis Prang of Boston and sold for interior decoration. It is currently hung in the Sanborn House over the dining room mantel.

The celebration of art continues in the new year with an exhibit of recent paintings by Winchester landscape artist John McConnell. The show was on display during the holiday party and will continue through the end of February. There was a reception at the Sanborn House on February 12<sup>th</sup> and the House is open to the public on Wednesdays, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. A portion of the sales will be donated to the Sanborn House restoration.

Winchester's future artists were also found at the Sanborn House this fall when Dave Ardito taught classes for art students preparing their portfolios. The Sanborn House offers an ideal location for many art activities.



Members Carolyn and David Dettinger view the Annie Nowell lithograph at the Holiday Party.

## Festive Party Kicks Off 2009 by Bob Colt

The Winchester Historical Society hosted the Annual Holiday Party on January 4, 2009 with great food provided by the Board of Directors, holiday spirit provided by the membership and the historical and cultural ambiance provided by the Sanborn House. Musical entertainment was provided by members of the Winchester-based Alcyon Chamber Ensemble (below), whose artistic director is Winchester Historical Society member, Shannon Snapp.

Food and arrangements were provided by Sue Clark, Event Coordinator and Facility Manager and Board of Directors members, Laurie Minniti, Doug Marmon, Nancy Schrock, Nancy O'Herron, Susan Keats, Nancy Kilker, Candy Van Aken, Carol Keller, Drew Bottaro and Bob Colt.

Everyone in the Winchester Historical Society looked back at a great 2008 when the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center launched its first full year of community use.



Members of the Alcyon Chamber Ensemble appear at the Holiday Party. John McConnell's art hangs in the background.

## Still Time to Support the Annual Appeal!

The Society would like to thank all of the members and supporters of the Historical Society and the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center for their generous support of the 2008 Annual Appeal. It is not too late—you can still join with your friends and neighbors in making a donation— please send a check written to the Winchester Historical Society mailed to PO Box 127, Winchester. Donors through year-end 2008 were:

A. J. Martini, Inc.  
 Randy and Bob Bairnsfather  
 Roger and Anne Berman  
 Bud and Barbara Bing  
 Joan F. Bird  
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 O'Leary Brothers General Contractors  
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 Selina Woods



Members of the Society's Board gathered at the Sanborn House for the First Annual, Annual Appeal Stuff-A-Thon. The event kicked off the Society's 2008 Annual Appeal. Board members signed letters and sent out the mailing to more than 800 people. Shown (left to right around table): Linda Whitehead, Candace VanAken, David Stirling, Nancy O'Herron, Bob Colt, Laurie Minniti, Doug Marmon, and Nancy Schrock.

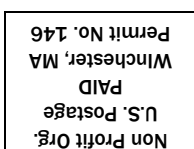
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## Notices and Upcoming Events

- Meetings** Board Meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month (January 20, February 17, March 17) at 7:30 PM in the Music Room of the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center
- Programs** February 12, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 PM: Reception for artist, John McConnell, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center. Mr. McConnell's art is on display thru February, 2009.
- March 10, 2009, 7:30 PM: "True Crimes and Controversies," by author Diane Rapaport, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center
- March 21, 2009, 5:00-8:00 PM: Pot Luck Dinner, Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center, members and guests only
- May, 2009: Annual Meeting of the Winchester Historical Society
- May 16, 2009, 10:00 AM- 4:00 PM: Spring Clean-up, Sanborn House and Grounds
- June 6, 2009, Town Day: Society Trolley Tours, booth, and 2nd annual Strawberry Festival and Classic Car show at the Sanborn House
- Help Wanted** The Society has many volunteer opportunities. Some tasks can be done at home, others in the Sanborn House. You can help with our programs, collections, or the Sanborn House. For more information, contact Nancy Schrock (781-721-1229; email: ncschrock@comcast.net) or Carol Keller (781-721-4643; email: kellerck@aol.com)



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