



**From the President**

*by Gail Sjo*

This November, the Society will send out its first annual appeal letter. It is an exciting moment because it is a sign of the Society's growth and commitment to the community, seen most recently in our gift to the town of \$15,000 in matching funds for the Mass. Preservation Projects Fund Grant. This grant is funding the current feasibility study for the Sanborn House, which we hope will become a historical and cultural center. Sarah Brophy, the consultant on non-profit organizations for the feasibility study, recommended the Society join most other non-profits in soliciting additions to its general fund annually.

As an educational organization established to foster an interest in the history of Winchester, the Historical Society promotes scholarship, provides educational pro-

(continued on page 2, President)

**Sanborn House – Its Place in Winchester's History**

*by Ellen Knight*

In 1981, the Sanborn House became the third Winchester building to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was nominated as a locally rare example of its architectural style, one which retains an integrity of structure, workmanship, and design.

It is also a historical artifact, documenting not only architectural style, but also the social structure of the era when Winchester was transforming itself into a picturesque bedroom community.

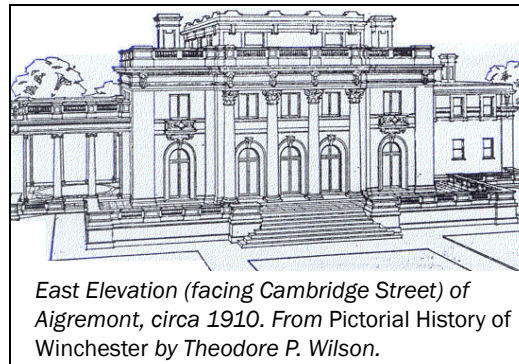
The house was built, at a reported cost of a quarter million dollars, for Oren C. Sanborn, son of the co-founder of the Chase and Sanborn Company. In 1904, Sanborn bought two previously undeveloped adjacent lots totaling about nine and a half acres and

engaged Clinton M. Hill and Thomas M. James to design the house. The Sanborn family named their home Aigremont and took up residence in 1907.

Sanborn sold the property in 1920. After passing briefly

through a few hands, in 1925 it became the home of the family of J. Edward Downes, founder of the Downes Lumber Company in Boston. During the Downeses' 20

(continued on page 2, Sanborn History)



East Elevation (facing Cambridge Street) of Aigremont, circa 1910. From Pictorial History of Winchester by Theodore P. Wilson.

**Inside this Issue ...**

From the President: Society First .....	1
Sanborn House	
Its Place in Winchester's History .....	1
Its Place in Winchester's Future .....	2
Welcome .....	3
From the Archives: Back to Our Roots .....	3
Something for Everyone.....	4
Notices and Upcoming Events .....	6

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**Officers and Directors 2005 - 2006**

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(continued from page 1, Sanborn History)

years at Aigremont, the house remained essentially unaltered.

In December, 1945, the Downses sold their property to Marycliff Academy for a Catholic girls school, (later to become Ambrose School). The Sanborn House was used as a dormitory for about 20 nuns. In 1969, a special Town Meeting authorized the town to purchase the entire property for educational purposes. The Sanborn House has since been used for school administration offices, rented for offices, and, most recently, was the home of the Recreation Department. It is now vacant, awaiting the next chapter in its history.

**Style** - Designed in a Mannerist interpretation of the Beaux Arts style, the house has a central block which rises two stories to a smaller third-story tier, with a one-story verandah to the south and a two-story service wing to the north. Noteworthy features include the columns on east and west facades that support the verandah roof, arched windows, balustrades, dentiled entablature, keystones, and the string course below the second-story windows.

**Interior** - The interior of the house is marked by rich materials

and surviving original ornamentation. The main hall is dominated by a grand staircase with a stained glass window at an intermediate landing. The ceiling is enriched with plaster moldings in the form of laurel garlands. The floor is ornamented with inlaid dark wood strips.

The first floor includes an oak-paneled den (where a dumbwaiter formerly connected to a wine cellar below), a library with mahogany panels and bookcases and a green marble fireplace, a music room ornamented with moldings of classical pattern, and a dining room with another handsome fireplace, mahogany paneling, and an ornate coffered, barrel-vaulted ceiling.

**Structure** - The house reflects the social structure of its era. The home was well suited to entertaining, but also provided privacy. The family and their guests had separate entrances, and the children had their own staircase. More revealing of social status, the servants had a separate wing, including a laundry room in the basement, kitchen and pantry on the first floor, and bedrooms on the second floor located around their own staircase and corridor.

(continued from page 1, President)

grams for people of all ages, and collects and preserves photographs, documents, and artifacts that tell the story of our town. In keeping with our goals, from September 2004 to June 2005 we put on nine well-attended programs, published two issues of *Architects of Winchester*, produced *A Children's History of Winchester*, which was distributed to all third graders in town, staffed the Town Archives, conducted oral history interviews, provided historical information to individuals researching their families and houses, and staffed twelve trolley tours on Town Day as well as our booth.

Another exciting development has been our participation in the Collaborative for Documenting Winchester's History. Working with the Town Archives, Town Clerk, and Library, we have purchased software to catalog and to make our collections accessible to the public, and to hire a consultant to assess the long-term needs for our archival collections. Grants from EnKa, the Winchester Cultural Council, and the Massachusetts Historic Records Advisory Board, as well as the National Endowment for the Humanities helped to finance these efforts.

All the projects were made possible by hundreds of hours of time donated by our wonderful volunteers. But it also required money. While your dues cover the basic costs of our programs, the grants have required matching funds, which have come from our reserves. Later this year the Society will therefore be asking you to consider a donation to the Society for our general fund. Gifts of time and skills are also always welcome.

If you have any questions or would like to talk more about this fundraising plan, please give me a call (781-729-6560).



### Focus Groups Speak Out

## Sanborn House - Its Place in Winchester's Future

by Dinah Voorhies

Winchester residents brought the vision for the "reborn" Sanborn House closer to reality in June at a series of five community focus groups and by responding to a questionnaire posted on the town web site.

The group discussions were led by Sarah Brophy of bMuse (www.bmuse.net), one of the team gathered by Red Hawk Studio of Concord, MA as part of the feasibility study for the future of the house. A total of 48 people attended the sessions. The preliminary report from the meet-

ings covered a wide range of topics:

**Activities / Events / Exhibits** - Many of the types of activities and events suggested in the April-June 2005 *Black Horse Bulletin* were raised as possibilities. Using

(continued on page 3, Sanborn Future)

**Welcome**

by Paula Swartz

We welcome the following members who have joined the Winchester Historical Society recently:

- Betty and Ken McVicar
- Dinah Voorhies
- Mary and Sean Quilan

For information about membership in the Society, contact Paula Swartz (tel: 781-721-2138; e-mail: pkc.swartz@comcast.net) for a membership application.

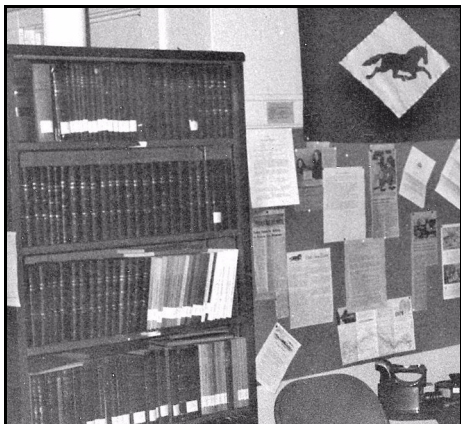


**From the Archives: Back to Our Roots**

by Nancy Schrock

As the consultants move toward their final recommendations, it appears that the basement of the Sanborn House, with its ground level entrance, may be the best site for a meeting room and for processing and storage space for our artifact and document collections. Interestingly, this was the Archival Center's first home in 1975.

The Society's own records contain pictures of the original reading room, workroom, and entrance.



Original Archival Center reading room. Courtesy of the Winchester Archival Center.

A report prepared by Ed Galvin, the town's first professional archivist, tells us more about the Sanborn House when it was occupied by the Marycliff Academy. He wrote, "The rooms that were given to the Historical Society had been

(continued on page 4, Archives)

(continued from page 2, Sanborn Future)

the space for exhibitions and activities while restoration was still a "work in progress" was discussed, as part of the "growing gradually" approach that many favored. Also mentioned was the value of outreach via exhibits in other parts of town that would bring attention to the Sanborn House. [See "Notices and Upcoming Events" for information about the Society's upcoming exhibit on the Sanborn House at the Winchester Library in October and November.]

**Funding** - Rental of space in the house for extra income, fund-raising events, and capital and endowment funding were all discussed. Examples of several other historic sites' budgets were provided. One with possible similarities of site usage was the Whistler House in Lowell, home of the Lowell Art Association, which runs on an annual budget of approximately \$250,000 and has no permanent endowment at present.

**Location and Logistics** - Grounds, parking, and school and neighborhood impact and interaction all received considerable attention. People discussed the value of waiting to assess the situation further once the rebuilt Ambrose

School has been active for a while and its usage patterns are more apparent.

**Organizational Structure** - With the Historical Society as lease-holders, staffing might include property and grounds managers, a facilities/events manager, an archivist, and various volunteers. There is the possibility of a mix of Historical Society and town hires. An advisory committee composed of neighbors, town board members, Historical Society members, and several at-large members who are not in the above categories, was recommended.

The meeting organizers anticipate at least one more public meeting, and Sarah encourages citizens to complete surveys (see "Sanborn House feasibility Study" in the News/Upcoming Events section at [www.winchester.us](http://www.winchester.us)). She will also conduct some individual interviews to round out the public research component.

Coming forth from the meeting were: (1) the impression that Winchester is very much in favor of this type of history- and community-based use for the house; and (2) the sense that people are inclined to be realistic about such a large undertaking and willing to take it "slow and steady," providing for sustainable growth over time.

**Sanborn Fun Fact #1**

In December, 1935, a picture of Rena [Lorena] Sanborn appeared in the *Winchester Star*. The "former prominent resident of this town" (she had moved to Boston ten years earlier) was named president of a new group, the Massachusetts Council for Legalizing Lotteries.

"Millions of dollars are changing hands and will continue to do so. We should face facts." said Mrs. Sanborn in the article. The group aimed to take the gambling instincts that supported number pools, beano, and other games of chance and channel them toward constructive causes with honestly-administered state lotteries. She could now walk into any convenience store and smile. [DV]



## Something for Everyone

by Gail Sjo

Baseball, architectural styles, Mystic Lakes, Ben Franklin, Winchester trees, clocks, oral history, quilts, Paul Revere's mother-in-law, trolley tours of Winchester, Frederick Law Olmsted, antique clothing, Wildwood Cemetery – these are some of the programs we have offered over the past few years in our attempt to present something for everyone.

Our programming goal is ambitious: to schedule a variety of events in the hope that at least one slide presentation, dramatic re-creation, tour, field trip, potluck or party will entice you to attend. And we are doing well – attendance is high, and every event brings out new faces, as well as different segments of our membership. In fact, since we open many of our programs to the general public, new members join after attending a program.

For the remainder of 2005 we have scheduled three programs: how the arrival of the train impacted Winchester growth, the architecture of Winchester houses, and dramatic readings of oral histories taken from Winchester residents. Each of these is being presented by well known and highly regarded Winchester residents (see "Notices and Upcoming Events").

Next year will bring our New Year's Party, spring pot luck dinner, biennial house tour, and a

few other programs, including a field trip or two. We invite you to help us plan these events. We need ideas for party and dinner locations, speakers/presenters, houses for our tour, and historically interesting sites for day trips.

So don't hesitate to contact us with ideas, your house, or even to volunteer to be in the spotlight. Several presentations have been a result of folks volunteering to share their passions and expertise, while the house tour can happen only if people volunteer to open their homes. If you are more of a logistics person, we have plenty of opportunities for you also. Carol Keller is our point person for programming and can be reached at 781-721-4643 or [Kellerck@aol.com](mailto:Kellerck@aol.com). For reference, our web site, [www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org) provides a summary of all the events from 2001 to the present. We look forward to seeing each of you sometime soon!

### Sanborn Fun Fact #2

In 1905, when 42 auto owners were listed in the *Winchester Blue Book* and most of the cars were 4 to 8 horsepower, Oren Sanborn was one of two men in town driving a 24-horsepower Peerless.

In January of 1906 – the same year that he purchased land for the Sanborn House – *The Winchester Star*, in its "Newsy Paragraphs" society column, noted, "Mr. Oren C. Sanborn is contemplating purchasing a new automobile this season. He has been looking over several makes of foreign cars and the Haynes Apperson model, but has not yet placed an order."



His future garage at the new house would hold four cars and have a turntable so that drivers did not have to back out.

Also on the 1905 list, a family member of Winchester inventor Louis Goddu – inventor of the staple – drove his "own make," and Ella T. Wallis (there were two women named on the list) drove an "electric vehicle." Forward-thinking Ella! [DV]

(continued from page 3, Archives)

the laundry when the home was a convent. The rooms boasted many shelves and cabinets, electric heat, two full casement windows, a lavatory, and a private entrance." As now, Society members gave of their time to create the new home. Volunteers painted, wallpapered and made general repairs to the new quarters. They also met at the public library to pack books, documents, clothing photographs and artifacts for the move.

Society President Fran Ver Planck led an aggressive publicity campaign. The *Black Horse Bulletin* made its first appearance at this time with the first issue "outlining the problems and plans for the Archival Center and requesting support for Article 10 on the warrant. The newsletter was sent to every member, the selectmen, every town organization, each historical society in the state, and all town meeting members." Radio interviews and news announcements appeared on WHSR-FM. The campaign was a success. The Town passed the warrant by a vote of 96 to 73 and agreed to fund a part-time archivist, a position first held by Ed Galvin. The Archival Center officially opened on January 7, 1975, and by March 5 ninety-nine people had signed the guest book.

Let's hope that our current efforts win similar support from our community and its leaders so that the Society's collections along with archival collections can once again be used together to study our town's history.

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

**Winchester Historical Society Publications**

Please use this order form to purchase copies of Society publications. For descriptions and non-member pricing, see the Society web site ([www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.winchesterhistoricalsociety.org)). Send the completed form, together with a check for the total amount, to the Winchester Historical Society, PO Box 127, Winchester, MA 01890-0127, Attention: Book Sales Department.

	Title	Member Price	No. of Copies	Cost
BOOKS	<i>A Children's History of Winchester, Massachusetts</i> by Mildred Allison; updated by Ellen Knight	\$9.95	_____	\$ _____
	<i>Winchester, Massachusetts, The Architectural Heritage of a Victorian Town</i>	\$12.00	_____	\$ _____
	<i>Artists of Winchester, 1850-1950</i> by Ellen Knight	\$6.00	_____	\$ _____
PAMPHLETS	<i>Winchester High School, Winchester Junior High School, McCall Junior High School, Lincoln Elementary School, a Centennial History, 1904-2004</i> by Ellen Knight	Free	_____	
	<i>The Architects of Winchester, Massachusetts</i> (edited by Maureen Meister):			
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Herbert Dudley Hale, French Method, Health Laws, and Progressive Views on Education Contribute to a New Winchester High School</i> by James Owens Ross	Free	_____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Alexander Esty, A Romanesque Church Design: Image and Meaning</i> by Nina Harkrader	Free	_____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Theodore Voelckers, A Picturesque Public Hall for a New Town</i> by Roger G. Reed	Free	_____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Herbert J. Kellaway, Linking Water, Parks and Parkways in the Olmsted Tradition</i> by Julie Khuen	Free	_____	
	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Hill &amp; James, Beaux Arts Splendor in a Suburban Setting</i> by Roger G. Reed	Free	_____	
MAPS / NOTEPADS	<i>1854 Map of Winchester (27" x 20")</i>	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____
	<i>1875 Map of Winchester (17" x 11")</i>	\$2.00	_____	\$ _____
	<i>1886 Map of Winchester (28 ½" x 22")</i>	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____
	<i>1898 Map of Winchester (29" x 19")</i>	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____
	<i>1941 Ernest Dudley Chase Pictorial Map of Winchester</i>	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____
	Notepads - small (4 ½" x 5 ¼") (multiple designs): specify design (see web site): _____	\$2.50 per pad	_____	\$ _____
Notepads - large (5" x 7") (multiple designs) specify design (see web site): _____	\$3.25 per pad	_____	\$ _____	
Shipping and Handling:				\$3.00
TOTAL:				\$ _____

Notices and Upcoming Events

Meetings - Third Tuesday of the month (October 18 / November 15 / December - no meeting): Board Meeting, 7:30 P.M. in the Mystic Valley Room, Winchester Town Hall.

Programs - October 6, 2005, 7:30 P.M.: "Winchester's Growth: The Impact of the Railroad (1820-1890)," William O'Connor, retired history teacher, in the Winchester Room, Winchester Town Hall.

October 27, 2005, 7:30 P.M.: "The Architecture of Winchester Houses," John McConnell, Professor of American Architectural History, Boston College, and practicing architect, in the Winchester Room, Winchester Town Hall.

November 16, 2005, 7:30 P.M.: "In Their Own Words, Part 4," Dorothy and Richard Santos, actors, present oral history recollections from Winchester citizens. (Watch for location notice.)

Plan Ahead - 1st week of January, 2006: "Celebrate the New Year Party." (Watch for the location notice.)

Help Wanted - The Society needs a volunteer to co-chair the Membership Committee; this position requires that the person be able to assist with the computerized membership database.

Items and Memories Sought for Sanborn House Exhibit

The Historical Society seeks Sanborn House memorabilia for a fall exhibit at the Winchester Public Library. Society member Dinah Voorhies is organizing the October-November display.

Items related to the house and grounds, as well as the various owners, are welcome. Do not be put off by the time; Dinah has promised to integrate new items into the exhibit as they come to light.

If you have any relevant items or memories, please leave Dinah a voicemail message at 781-526-8058. If you ever crawled through a window when the house was empty, or gate-crashed one of the famous fund-raising horse shows, now is the time to 'fess up!



Sanborn House - Its Place! Its Future!

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