



# Black Horse Bulletin

Newsletter of the Winchester Historical Society / Vol 40, Number I / September 2014 - June 2015

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## 2014-15 Lecture Series Draws Large Crowds

A number of the Winchester Historical Society's 2014-15 program offerings drew overflow crowds to the Sanborn House Historical and Cultural Center and beyond this past season.

### Development of Winchester Town Center

Despite the February cold, the Sanborn House meeting room was filled for a presentation on "The Making & Remaking of Winchester Center" by local historian Ellen Knight, timed to precede Town Meeting consideration of zoning changes for the downtown. Using many wonderful old maps and photographs, Knight showed that the first cluster of business buildings was actually at Black Horse Village, but following the advent of the railroad in 1835, businessmen Samuel Steele Richardson and Benjamin F. Thompson saw the advantages of locating shoe and currier shops near the old Converse Mill Pond, close to the railroad, and spurred the growth of the Center.

When Winchester was incorporated in 1850, the Center had some of the same elements it has today – major roads passing through to neighboring towns, public transportation to the city, businesses, residences, and a house of worship which doubled as a meeting place. Soon it acquired municipal and public buildings, schools, and town departments. Photographs documented surviving wooden buildings, the trend to building in brick and stone for permanence, significant structures that have contributed to the character of the Center, changing tastes and variety in architecture, and the impact of the railroad overpass.

She concluded by noting that in 1986, Winchester Center was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. That listing recognized that the  
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Filmmaker Bob Nesson relating F. L. Olmsted's work to Winchester.

### "Muddy River" Sees Olmsted Legacy in Winchester

On March 22, Bob Nesson, a highly respected documentary filmmaker, presented "Olmsted's Vision of the Muddy River and How It Relates to Winchester." The presentation was created in collaboration with the Historical Society and the Winchester Garden Club. For the past twenty years, Mr. Nesson has been working on "The Muddy River Chronicles" based on a lifelong connection to the Muddy River in an effort to build awareness of this section of Boston's famed Emerald Necklace. He has closely followed its evolution from a river that had become a polluted dump-ground to more recent community efforts to restore it to an environment that reflects the vision of Frederick Law Olmsted, the noted 19th century landscape architect.

But how, you might ask, does Olmsted's vision relate to Winchester? Winchester once had its own version of a muddy river. The town was blessed with beautiful  
*(continued, Page 2)*



## Town Center (continued)

Center contains buildings significant to the history of American architecture and to the development of the town. Winchester Center has some key structures which have defined its character for a long time, and it has room for new structures to enhance that character and support the social as well as business life of the downtown. *Ellen Knight*



Main and Mt. Vernon Streets, c. 1950.

James Connelly, photo

## Muddy River (continued)

natural features such as ponds, the Aberjona River, the Mystic Lakes, and the Middlesex Fells Reservation. But by 1910 these features were spoiled by industrial waste, sewage, and rubbish. Another noted landscape architect, Herbert Kellaway, inspired by Olmsted envisioned a similar approach to connect existing open spaces and waterways in Winchester. In Kellaway's report to the town in 1909, he bluntly informed that the existing conditions of pollution and waste were horrible. In Kellaway's words, "it stinks". He proposed an emerald necklace-like vision for Winchester which the town benefits from today. The most recognizable example of his vision is the civic center with the Mill Pond island, the stepped dam, and the shrubs and trees on its banks, now sadly neglected and overgrown.

*Charlene Band*

## Planning a Function or Celebration?

*Sanborn House is the perfect place to host your intimate and elegant special event or affair!*

*We are now booking. Contact us to begin planning an occasion everyone will remember!*



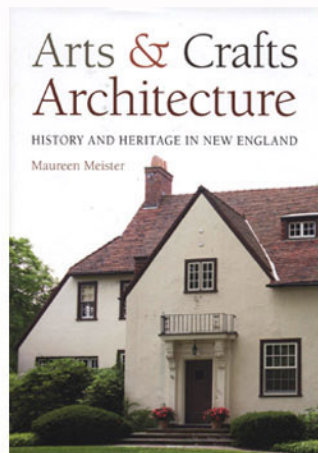
*manager@WinchesterHistoricalSociety.org*

## Maureen Meister Lectures on New England Arts & Crafts Architecture

### *Winchester seen as a Microcosm of the Movement*

At the Society's annual meeting in November, Winchester resident Maureen Meister presented a slide lecture on her most recent book, "Arts and Crafts Architecture: History and Heritage in New England." An art and architectural historian, Ms. Meister holds a Ph.D. from Brown University, has taught for many years at Tufts University, and is editor of the series on Winchester architects that is published by the Historical Society.

In her talk, Ms. Meister discussed Winchester buildings, including the Epiphany church, designed by Warren, Smith, and Biscoe, begun in 1904. The firm's senior partner, Herbert Langford Warren, was a founder of Boston's Society of Arts and Crafts, organized in 1897, and he served as its president from 1903 until his death in 1917. The Epiphany Church is Gothic Revival in style and responds directly to developments in the English Arts and Crafts movement. It also reflects the desire among Arts and Crafts leaders to support craftsmen who would enhance the region's buildings. At the Epiphany, tile was supplied by Henry Chapman Mercer, a carved stone altar was produced by Hugh Cairns, the pulpit came from Irving and Casson, and a stained glass window was provided by Harry Goodhue.



Maureen Meister's new book is available at Book Ends.

Another leader and later president of the Society of Arts and Crafts was R. Clipston Sturgis, architect of the McCall School, 1931-32. Custom ornament on this Colonial Revival building includes the escutcheon over the entrance, featuring a turkey and woodsmen with 17th-century Van Dyke beards.

Although the architects were conservative in the styles that they favored, they were interested in working with modern construction materials. The Chadwick house, designed by Warren and Smith and located at 24 Everett Avenue, 1909, is built of concrete.

Ms. Meister observed that Arts and Crafts ideas were shared by many other architects in Boston at this time. One of them was George F. Newton, who designed the Gothic Revival Unitarian Church in 1899 and the First Baptist Church, 1928-29.

*Maureen Meister*



# How Sanborn Found Happiness *(continued)*



The Sanborns' 30-foot sloop *Meemer*.

Back in Winchester, the Central Street house continued to be the Sanborns' home for another year. Upon leaving their Falmouth home at the end of their second summer there, early in September 1907 the Sanborns took up residence in what the paper called their "handsome, costly residence." Unfortunately, that winter was not entirely happy as Mrs. Sanborn suffered an illness which required hospitalization in the Somerville Hospital. Recovered, she was able to resume receiving friends in her new home in 1908 and for many more years afterward before Mr. Sanborn's happy spending came to an end.

## Winchester Cultural Council Awards WHS Grant for Display



The Winchester Cultural Council awarded the Winchester Historical Society a matching grant of \$416 for portable display panels that are part of the Society's program, "Exhibiting Winchester's Art and History."

The first exhibit in this series featured the photographs of Winchester Center in 1948-52 by James Connelly, former owner of Winchester Camera and a long-time resident. His daughter, Joan Slavin, donated a collection of black-and-white negatives to the Town Archives. These were digitized, thanks to a grant from the Arthur Griffin Foundation and are available on-line. The photographs were displayed in conjunction with the Society's February talk by Ellen Knight on *Making and Remaking Winchester Center* and again in April for the League of Women Voters program *Hot Topic: The Future of Winchester Town Center*.



Movable display panels provided by a Cultural Council grant.

The Winchester Cultural Council consists of nine members appointed by the Board of Selectmen for 3-year terms. They establish guidelines for the local use of Arts Lottery funds, reviews applications, and awards funds. The Historical Society is proud to be one of twelve organizations to receive a grant in the 2014 cycle.

*Nancy Schrock*

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*John McConnell, Editor*



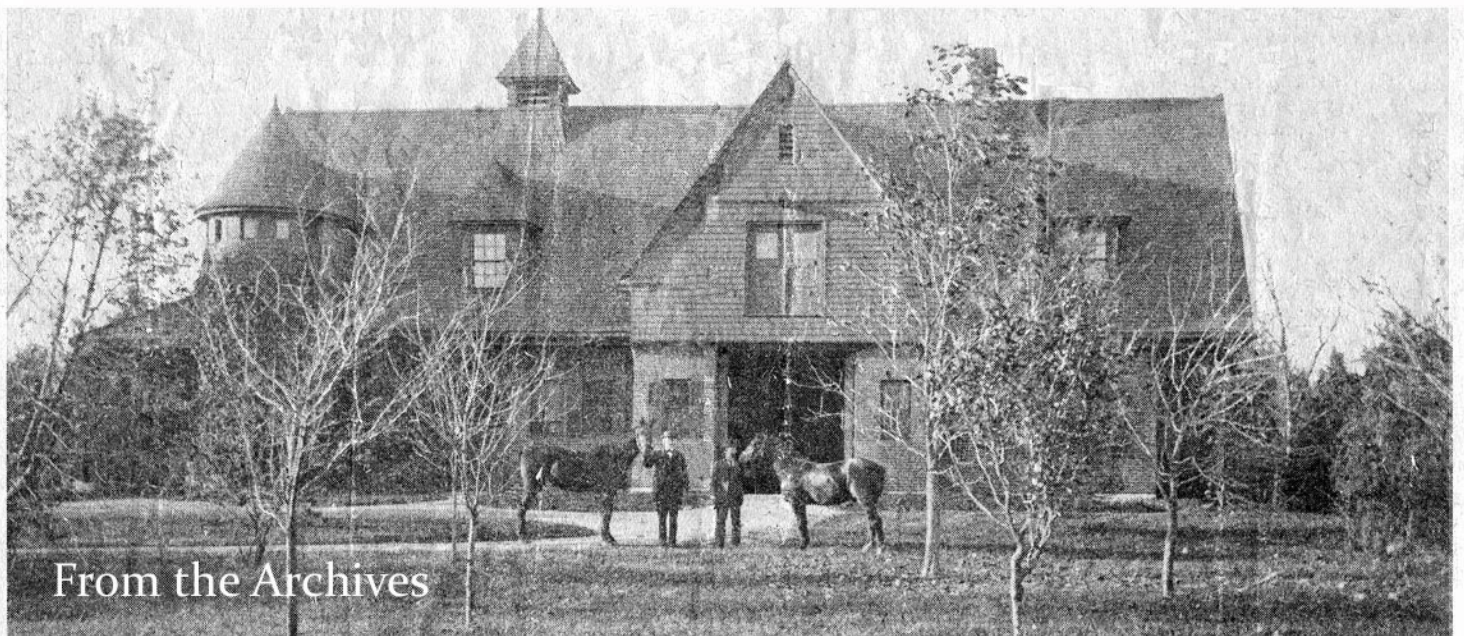
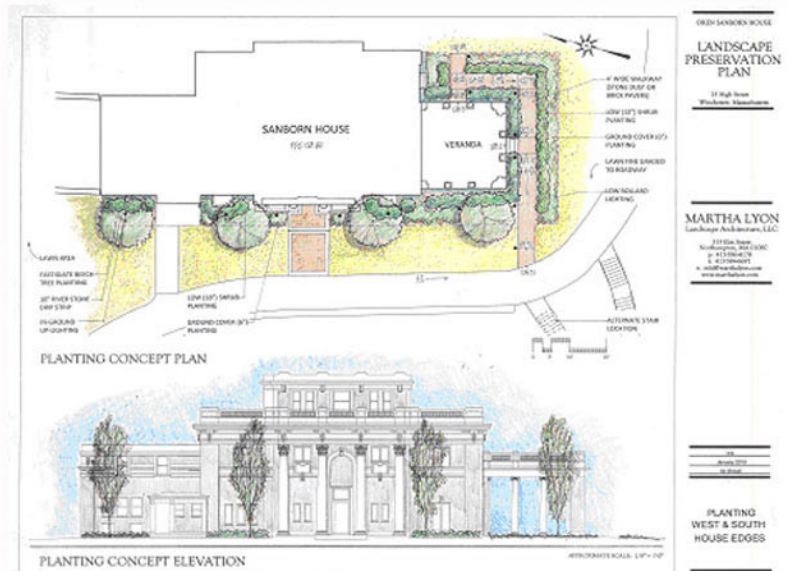
# Griffin Foundation Grant Makes Exterior Lighting Possible

The Arthur Griffin Foundation has awarded the Winchester Historical Society a Community Beautification Grant of \$12,000 to provide exterior lighting for the Sanborn House. The project will fund LED uplights to illuminate the exterior of the west side of the building (main entrance). These lights will draw attention to the beautiful features of the architecture detailing, provide additional light for visitor safety, and increase security.

The Committee noted the Society's use of state-of-the-art LED lights, which are efficient, long-lasting, and use less energy. They must be integrated with the complex wiring of the hundred-year-old building. Winchester High School senior Julia Harrop will be documenting the project as part of her photography internship with Griffin Foundation. Look for the results on our website.

The lighting plan is based on the work of Martha Lyon, Landscape Architect, who serves as project consultant. Ms. Lyon has worked with the Historical Society since 2005 to develop an historically appropriate plan for the Sanborn House grounds.

The grant is part of the Griffin Foundation's program to enhance the beauty of Winchester's public places through matching grants. The lighting is part of landscape upgrades that have included new trees, plantings, and a brick pathway to the verandah. Soon to come is a new handicapped parking space and continued clean-up of undergrowth by the Town.



The yard between the 83 Church Street Condominiums (the old Wyman School) and the houses on Wildwood Terrace looked like this in 1890. This Shingle-Style stable was built by Charles W. Shattuck, seen here (l.) with his stableman John Cullen, and designed by architect Robert Coit.

*Photo a gift from Elizabeth Jenkins*



# Sanborn House News

## Building Projects in the Works

*by Susan Turpin*

Several projects are being undertaken this year in the ongoing renovation of Sanborn House, under the auspices of the Historical Society. Some of these are undertaken by decision of the Board of Directors; others are forced upon us by Mother Nature.

In the former category is the now-complete painting of the trim in the house's Foyer, Stairhall and Music Room. The woodwork now gleams crisply with fresh paint.



The lunettes over the Music Room French doors are freshly painted.

Also completed are upgrades to the electrical system in the Oak Room (a grounded outlet for the display case), Foyer and Music Room (3 new higher-voltage receptacles for entertainment equipment.)

The double front door has always been difficult to both lock and operate. A millwork specialist has been consulted and we are receiving proposals to reinstall the doors, thresholds, and their complicated automatic hardware.

Finally, we have been meeting with a contractor who specializes in historic restoration to evaluate the condition of the columns, corner supports and curbing of the Verandah, which has significant deterioration. The contractor has bored tiny holes into these and used a micro camera to discover and document the construction and the damage.

## Upgrading the Grounds

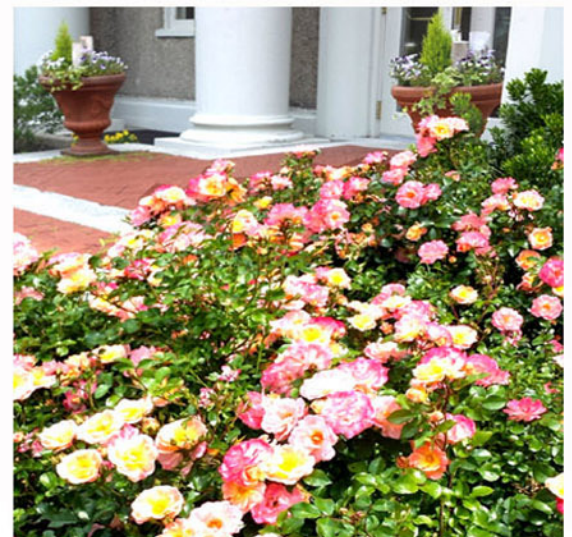
*by Kristen Ward*

Both during and in the aftermath of our severe winter, I have been implementing a number of maintenance and improvement programs for the Sanborn House grounds. In late February, we hired a crew to shovel dangerous amounts of snow from our roofs, after some leaking.

A landscape maintenance contractor, Clipco, has been engaged to cut the lawn every other week. They will also be weeding and adding mulch to our planting beds, as well as replacing the lawns in the front of the building.

I have been maintaining 4 ornamental urns with rotating seasonal floral displays --- two at the front door and two on the portico.

The next projects will involve working with the Town to prune or remove some of the trees on the grounds, creating a handicapped parking space along the driveway, repositioning our freestanding bulletin board, and landscaping both.





# Photographs In and Around Sanborn House

## The Winter of Our Discontent



The Historical Society spent a considerable sum having Sanborn House's flat roofs shoveled out from under close to four feet of heavy snow. The house sustained damage from ice dam leaks and water infiltration.



The house was dressed in greens and finery for the Christmas holidays by Board member and floral designer Kristen Ward.



The return of fine weather this spring brought Ambrose School students to the Sanborn House grounds for outdoor lessons. Here they are preparing for a nature scavenger hunt.



With a fine flair for landscape design, WHS board member Kristen Ward helped the house into early spring with her entryway urns.



Not all of the Sanborn House population were dismayed by the brutal winter snows.



House Manager Maureen Willis managed to keep clearing access "tunnels" to our doors.





The Winchester Historical Society  
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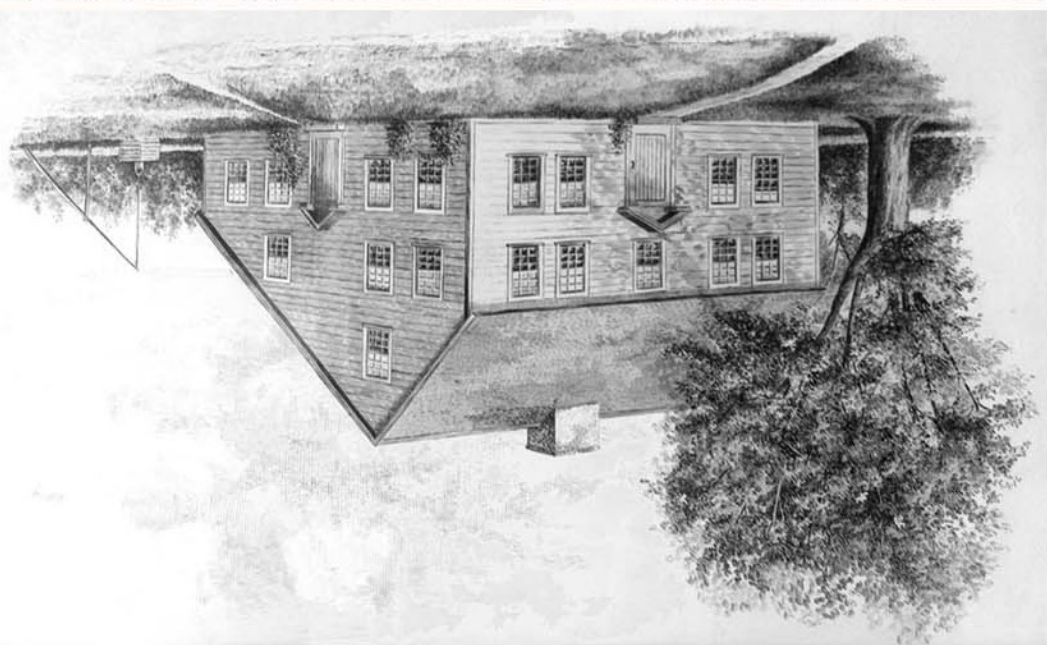
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The Winchester Historical Society is incorporated as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit corporation. Contributions are tax deductible. Thank you!

8.

The mission of the Winchester Historical Society is to promote and 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 House Historical and Cultural Center, which serves as the home of the Society and is open to the community for exhibits, meetings and events.

A drawing made in 1890 by Allan E Boone, based upon a sketch made in 1832 by Harrison Parker, Esq



## The First House

The first house built in what is now Winchester was erected beside our Mill Pond in 1640, by Edward Converse (1587-1663). An early Puritan settler, he also built the first mill in town, adjacent to this house, which lasted for around 200 years. A much-deteriorated historical marker now stands on the spot, beside the horseshoe falls, on Main Street.



# How Sanborn Found Happiness While the Sanborn House was Built

by Ellen Knight

After the Sanborns lost their fortune and their home and Mr. Sanborn was asked where the money went, he replied simply, "It just went on a man's happiness." Some of his extravagant living has already been documented in our bulletin (issues 36:2 and 38:1). In this issue we take a look at his lifestyle during the two years the Sanborn House was under construction.

In Nov. 1905, the Sanborns sold their home at 12 Sheffield Road and moved into temporary quarters at 11 Central St. There Mrs. Sanborn hosted socials, such as fundraising whist parties. One special event noted in the newspaper in Jan. 1906, was an "at home" in honor of her niece, Adeline Parker (Mrs. Clarence H.) Lewis of Glen Road. "Mrs. Sanborn wore a dress of white Irish point lace, with violets, and received with Mrs. Lewis, who was gowned in Nile green silk with lace and wore roses. An orchestra was in attendance during the afternoon."

Even though he was anticipating moving into a new home on the hill, Mr. Sanborn invested in fixing up the Central Street house. It was reported in March that "Mr. Oren C. Sanborn who recently opened up his attractive new residence on Central Street, went into town the other day and picked out some works of art in the line of gas lamps and fixtures. Mr. Sanborn buys nothing but the best and his conversion to gas as an illuminant, as well as a fuel, is taken by many of his friends to also show that he knows how to use his money."

Planning for the new house, however, he arranged with the Edison company for electric lighting which a Star reporter said would provide "an abundance of light" in the new home. After moving up to High Street, he increased his contract with Edison by 30 additional electric lights.

It was doubtless a happy day in May 1906 when he broke ground for the High Street home. That summer the foundations were laid and the framing begun, but the Sanborns were not there to watch, for Sanborn had purchased a summer home at Falmouth. After extensive alterations were made, the family summered there. Possibly they motored down to Falmouth in the new automobile Sanborn ordered from the Apperson Company that February.

Not content with just a new motor, also in 1906 the happy opportunity arose to purchase a renowned sailing yacht, Meemer, a 30-foot sloop designed by C. C. Hanley for Roland Crosby Nickerson and built in 1898. Nickerson won many a race with her. After he died in 1906, Sanborn bought her and joined the Corinthian Yacht Club in Gloucester and the Woods Hole Yacht Club (serving on its regatta committee in 1907). He sailed her for a few years, selling her after commissioning the Helen E. (featured in the 38:1 issue) in 1911.

(continued on next page)

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