

The Gem of Norfolk County

FOXBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

September 2010

42nd Year Issue #1

PRESIDENT:
Bob Hicks
84 Mill Street
Foxborough, MA 02035
TELEPHONE
(508) 543-5436
E-MAIL
bob.hicks@me.com

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Sept 28 at 7:30 PM
at the Boyden Library
Fuller Room corner of
Bird and Baker Street
in Foxborough Center

“America’s first newspaper and the role of Colonial publishers in the American Revolution” by Jack Authelet

FROM PROGRAM CHAIRMAN, PATRICK LYONS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OPENS UP ITS 2010/2011 SEASON WITH TOWN HISTORIAN JACK AUTHELET

Imagine the surprise of proper Bostonians when they awoke the morning of September 25, 1690 to find a newspaper being distributed throughout the city.

“Publick Occurrences both Forreign and Domestick” was its name, and its stated purpose was that the “Country shall be furnished once a month (or if any Glut of Occurrences happen, oftener,) with an account of such considerable things as have arrived unto our Notice.”

It was the first newspaper to be published in the Colonies. Its publisher, Benjamin Harris, had great plans for his newspaper but four days later found it the subject of an order of suppression issued by the Royal Governor and Council of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. All copies of his newspaper were recalled for having been published “without the least privity or countenance of authority.”

He did have the distinction, however, of publishing a most unusual item which read: “The Christianized Indians in some parts of Plimoth have newly appointed a day of Thanksgiving to God for his Mercy in supplying their extream and pinching Necessities under their late want of Corn & for His giving them now a prospect of a very Comfortable Harvest. Their example may be worth Mentioning.” Indeed, it certainly was.

It would be the very press that the Royal Governor attempted to suppress that would play a major role in fanning the flames



“Publick Occurrences both Forreign and Domestick” made its debut in Boston on September 25, 1690. It was the first newspaper to be published in the Colonies and also the first to be suppressed by order of the Royal Governor. The Order of Suppression was issued four days following the publication of America’s first newspaper which had been published “without the least privity or countenance of authority.”

of freedom among the early patriots, encouraging them to take up arms in order to implement the Revolution that had already been won in their hearts and minds. A new nation – a great nation – would be born.

Town Historian Jack Authelet will present an illustrated program on America’s First Newspaper to open the Foxborough Historical Society’s season. During his presentation, Authelet will also comment upon the need for Constitutional protection of the press; also the Paradox of the Press manifested in the ongoing love-hate relationship between the public and the press now in its 320th year.

Reservoir Maintenance Work Begins

Thanks to a Town appropriation, work will begin shortly on the Reservoir on Powder House Hill to repair the deteriorating roof, windows, trim and railings.



The building, which perhaps intrigues more people than any other except Memorial Hall, is more an interesting collage of history than an historic structure by itself. The name says it all: It is the remains of a water reservoir

which was built on the site of the original powder house on a raised section of property behind the present Town Hall. However, because of its unique appearance many still assume it is the “powder house”!

In reality it was built in 1858 along with an adjacent windmill to act as a water supply and storage reservoir for the Union Straw Works located where the current

U.S Post Office now sits on Wall Street. After fire destroyed the Straw Works in 1900, it was briefly taken over by an earlier Historical Society who added the top row of windows and doors in a plan to make it a museum. When that failed due to moisture and other reasons, it went to private ownership and then back to the Town. It remains a fascinating piece of our history and folklore.

Town Website - Society Information

In a recent update to the Historical Commission's page on the Town website we were able to add links to the Society's Evelyn Thomas Scholarship brochure, a membership application and a copy of a current newsletter. Check it out at:

http://www.foxboroughma.gov/Pages/FoxboroughMA_HistoricalComm/index

Memorial Hall is open every Wednesday evening, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. til noon



Foxborough Historical Society Organization

President: Robert Hicks 543-5436
Clerk: Mary Anne Baker 543-8945
Newsletter/Membership: Paul Godin 543-7945

Vice President: Charles Clifford 543-8403
Treasurer: Ralph Guimond 543-8270
Programs: Patrick Lyons 543-3728

Directors: Jean Prendergast; Mary Anne Baker; Charles Kastrenos; Honora McLaughlin and Janet Roxborough

MAIL TO:
Addressee Name
4321 First Street
Anytown, State 54321

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