



The Newsletter of
**THE DUXBURY RURAL
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

DRHS works to preserve and promote the rural and historic character of Duxbury. The Society was founded in 1883 with the mission to improve and ornament the streets of Town. The first project undertaken was the purchase of 27 street lamps set out along Washington Street.

Special Events Will Mark Bicentennial of Gershom Bradford House

The year was 1807. Captain Gershom Bradford of Duxbury was aboard the Brig Mercury, bound for Malaga, Spain. Finding a moment to put pen to paper, he scrawled out a rough floor plan of a house he envisioned on land he had inherited from his



father. The farm bordered Tremont Street, just across from his father's old homestead. Later, arriving back in Boston, Capt. Bradford gave the plans to his friend,

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Plans on Track for DRHS Archaeological Dig

As reported in our last newsletter, the Society will embark on an exciting new project in October of 2008—the archaeological testing of the Second Meeting House site on Chestnut Street.

Recently joining this effort is the First Parish Church's 375th Anniversary Committee. The members of the Duxbury First Parish have a vested interest in the project as it pertains to the history of their congregation. The Church will underwrite ground penetration radar mapping, the first phase of the project, which could locate remnants of the second church's foundation (and possibly other artifacts) before

any digging is even commenced. The Society is most grateful to the First Parish Church for their generous support of the project.

The dig will be overseen by certified archaeologist Craig Chartier. Mr. Chartier's main goals are to identify any evidence of a structure ever being present on the site and to date the period(s) of occupation.

The conventional wisdom regarding the site's history is that the First Meeting House (which was built around 1637 and stood within the present bounds of the Chestnut Street cemetery) was replaced by a Second Meeting House just to the

east of the cemetery around 1706. This building was the center of Duxbury affairs, both religious and secular, for nearly 80 years until it was, in turn, replaced by a Third Meeting House built in 1785 on Tremont Street. The Second Meeting House was then taken down around 1785. The DRHS has owned the site since 1937.

The site could hold a tremendous amount of historical information and, possibly, artifacts as well. If traces of the Second Meeting House can be located, the discovery could add much to our understanding of early 18th century public buildings.

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This summer has been an exciting one for the Drew Archival Library. At the beginning of June, our new cataloging software, PastPerfect, was installed on computers at both the Drew Archives and the main office at the Nathaniel Winsor, Jr. House.

The installation of this software is particularly exciting because all of the collections owned by the Historical Society will be catalogued using the same software, which enables uniformity and consistency in our record-keeping. The software has both an archival and photographic module, which allows for information that is unique to a particular medium to be captured. We also now have capability of uploading an image (whether or not the described item is a photograph) which appears alongside the catalog record and gives users a visual representation of the described items. We certainly have been busy with our new, large-format scanner, enabling us to use this function. Our cataloging work continues, and we are proud to report that three photographic collections and two archival collections have been catalogued. Each item has been



The second Letter Reading in August

assigned individual identification numbers and all have been entered into the PastPerfect catalog.

A new photographic exhibit, entitled “Parker B. Chandler’s Scrapbook,” went up in the beginning of the summer and featured photographs and ephemera from the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) Collection. The images used were those of pages in the scrapbook that Parker Chandler, who was President of the GAR Memorial Hall Association, had put together to record the activities of the GAR and its auxiliary organizations in Duxbury. Because the exhibit featured actual pages of the scrapbook, those who came to view the exhibit had the unique experience of reading Mr. Chandler’s handwritten comments and captions. Our next photographic exhibit, entitled, “Duxbury Goes Back to School,” will open at the beginning of September.

The new exhibit will feature photographs of Duxbury schools and classrooms as well as group portraits of students from years gone by.

This summer has also been a wonderful beginning for our Letter Reading program. On June 19, our first Letter

Reading was held at the Drew Archives. Entitled “Wherever My Body Is, My Heart Is Always With You,” the program featured letters between Duxbury mariners and their wives. Selected letters, which spanned the years 1800-1845, came from the Bradford, Dawes, Delano, Grafton and Waterman Family Collections, and were read aloud by a group of volunteers. Our second Letter Reading, entitled “An Evening with the Bradfords,” was held on August 14 and featured letters from our largest collection, the Bradford Family Collection. These letter readings are a unique way to interact with the materials in our collection and are certainly a way to hear history come to life. If you haven’t had the chance to come for one of these programs, watch the *Clipper* for upcoming

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Edward Gray House, c. 1662

Editor's note:

The DRHS issues "dateboards" to an average of five houses per year.

The purpose of a dateboard is to authenticate, using specific research standards, the construction date of a home and to place any historical information

available about that home on file in our archives. Over the

course of decades, the DRHS has dateboarded roughly 240 historic houses in Duxbury. Each one of these houses has their own interesting history.

However, every now and then, a truly unique house stands out among others. The following article is excerpted from researcher Robert Dente's report on the Edward Gray House. The building is among the very oldest that the Society has dateboarded and has a remarkable story.

Excerpts from "The Long Gray Line: The Edward Gray House, built c. 1662" by Robert Dente

The subject house is located on Duck Hill Road. The proud owners of this home are Francois and Anne Poulet. It is a classic example of a period two-storey, straight-front colonial. The two front parlors are magnificent rooms, very large and exhibit early paneling that only a man



The Edward Gray House, c. 1662

of some means could afford. By the time Edward Gray had his house built, he had become a man of significant wealth and prominence in the Colony. The subject house was, for generations, referred to as the oldest house in Kingston and specifically as the "old mansion house" built by Edward Gray in the 1600's.

The house was originally located facing south at the corner of Smith's Lane and the southwest side of Crescent Street in Kingston. When the house was built, this section of Kingston, commonly called Rocky Nook, was part of North Plymouth. At that time, Crescent Street was a small section of what was known as the "Old Road" or King's Highway and Smith's Lane was a "path into the woods."

The house was purchased by Gertrude R. and her husband Albert S. Geiger, dismantled and moved to Duxbury in 1927. In her own right,

Gertrude purchased land in Duxbury on Duck Hill Road for placing the house. The lot selected was a small hill and the house was erected at the peak. At the time, the site offered a fairly decent ocean view.

It is believed that Edward Gray, son of John Gray of

Stapleford, England, arrived in Plymouth around 1643, about 20 years old at the time. Family legend says that he came here with his brother Thomas and that they were smuggled aboard the ship in which they came by relatives who were scheming to acquire the property that Edward and Thomas were due to inherit in England.

Edward lost no time in becoming a merchant and the wealthiest man in Plymouth Colony. When he died in June 1681, he left an estate worth 1,250 pounds sterling, the largest estate at that time in Plymouth Colony. His holdings included 9/13 of the Land Company, which eventually formed Tiverton and Little Compton, Rhode Island. His gravestone is the oldest marker on Burial Hill in Plymouth.

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From the Godey Room *By Madelon S. Ali, Chairman, Historic Clothing Committee*

Donations of historic clothing continue to come to the Society. From the early days in 1916 when we received the first clothing and accessory contributions to the present,

families have found treasures in their attics and barns; beautiful fashions that add to the wealth of our collection, which has clothing and accessory items from the mid-18th century to the 1970's. We happily accept donations, and each item is evaluated on its individual qualities and our need for the type of artifact.

It has become apparent for several years as more donations have come in, that the historic clothing collection required more space for storage as well as workspace to repair, clean and prepare the pieces for storage. Our education about how to accomplish restoration and cleaning work has increasingly come to us through our contacts with experts in the historic clothing field and written and electronic sources that address this subject. The experts have been from Colonial Williamsburg and other museums, and are usually members of the Costume Society of America. We have attended and sponsored seminars and other educational opportunities in order to develop the skills needed to accomplish our work.

The Historic Clothing Committee has benefited from the support of the Society and the Board of

Trustees, who, like us, believe that keeping this evidence of the most intimate nature from the past informs us about that time as no other artifact can do. In June, 2008 Director Patrick Browne asked that a report of the state of the historic clothing collection be presented to the board. The report was met with enthusiasm from the members present, and their support is very gratifying.

The space problem continued to concern us until Patrick thought that a formerly unused space in the Nathaniel Winsor, Jr. House might work as additional storage for the historic clothing collection. A renovation project of this area has provided a well-lit and clean environment for additional storage and preservation work. We named this place "The Annex."

We will continue to use the Godey Room, named after prints donated to us of fashions from the *Godey's Ladies Book*, a popular magazine for ladies in the 19th century that showed fashions of the day in beautiful watercolor illustrations. This room and the room where racks hold dresses and hats will remain as storage for our collection.

If you have questions about how to make clothing donations please call the DRHS office at (781) 934-6106 and ask for Madelon Ali, Chairman of the Historic Clothing Committee. ❁



The Historic Clothing committee dressed mannequins in the King Caesar House this summer with turn-of-the-century dresses representing the "good old Summertime."

Meet Brenda Nudd



This summer, the DRHS hired Brenda Nudd as our Head of Docents for the King Caesar House.

Her responsibilities are varied, but most involve making sure the King Caesar House is staffed with docents and keeping track of ticket and book sales.

Brenda moved to Duxbury over 45 years ago when she married her husband, Loring “Chuck” Nudd. While raising two children, she was a book-keeper for three McDonald’s restaurants and was also the owner of a sawmill that made lobster pot stock for fishermen. She considers her family the most important thing in her life and loves spending time

with her grandchildren. Three live next door and three in Plymouth, and she feels lucky that they live so close. In her spare time, she loves to do Sudoku puzzles and read. Brenda is probably most famous for being the “grandmother” of Draco the Dragon, the town mascot that her son, Chuckie Nudd, built a few years ago.

We feel fortunate the Brenda has joined our team and hope that she will be with us for many years to come. 🌸

Mark Your Calendars for “King Caesar’s Autumnfest”

The third annual “King Caesar’s Autumnfest” is scheduled for Sunday, October 19 from 12-4 p.m. The “Fest” will be an afternoon of activities at the King Caesar House and grounds geared towards families. It will include crafts, musical performances, games, competitions, food and more.

Activities will include the ever-popular pumpkin hunt, face painting and art table. Reenactors, depicting military and civilian ways of life, will be on hand for demonstrations (some of which children are invited to get involved in). And, once again, the Clydesdales from Hobby Knoll Farm will be on hand to take visitors for wagon rides around Powder Point and the miniature horses from Cottage Farm will be ready for rides around Bumpus Park.

We are pleased to add the musical entertainment of the Gloucester Hornpipe and Clog Society to our list of entertainers this year. Authentic instruments and material, period clothing, and songwriting from primary research make the GH&CS a standout for historic entertainment and costumed events at museums and historic sites.

The King Caesar House will be open for tours. Plenty of hot dogs, cotton candy, popcorn and other treats will be available.



Due to the large number of families expected, parking for the event will be at the Duxbury High School. Attendees will then be brought to the King Caesar House by trolley. Admission will be \$5 for adults, \$3 for children (6-12), under 6 free (maximum of \$20 per family). 🌸

Notes from the Drew Archives continued from page 2

announcements about the next letter reading, which will be held at the Drew Archives this October.

The Drew Archives has also been the fortunate recipient of a few new archival collections this summer. The Percy Walker Collection, comprised mainly of Mr. Walker's business papers as a realtor in Duxbury, came to us at the end of May. This collection will be very useful for those looking for information about the real estate market and

growth of Duxbury in the 20th century. In June, the Duxbury Yacht Club Collection arrived. This collection contains the records of the Yacht Club, including Annual Reports, Histories, Membership Logs, and even a Treasurer's Book from 1876! We are grateful for these new collections and thank our generous donors.

The Drew Archival Library is in the Wright Building, 147 St. George Street, open weekdays, 9 a.m. -1 p.m. Volunteers and visitors are always welcome! 🌸

Bradford House continued from page 1

a master carpenter named Benjamin Bird who lived in Dorchester. By 1808, Bird had built a modest but elegant house for Captain Bradford, virtually along the same lines that Bradford had scrawled out while on board ship.

This year marks the bicentennial for the Captain Gershom Bradford House, donated to the Society in 1968 by Gershom and Edward Bradford, descendants of the Captain. We have often referred to it as our "time capsule house," as it was given completely furnished with objects belonging to the Bradford family. It is rare for a historic house and its furnishings to be so carefully preserved. The Captain and his family would still feel right at home were they to see it today.

We intend to celebrate the anniversary by reviving a popular event—the Sea Captain's Chowder Supper. The celebration will take place on the back lawn of the Capt. Bradford House at 931 Tremont Street on October 5 from 5 to 7 p.m. Delicious chowder

and hors d'oeuvres will be served along with complimentary beverages. The house, which has seen a great deal of interior and exterior work this year, will be open for tours. Tickets for the event will be \$20 and will soon go on sale at our headquarters in the Nathaniel Winsor, Jr. House at 479 Washington Street. We hope you will join us for the much-awaited revival of this event and raise a glass to Captain Bradford and his historic home.

In addition, to shed some further light on the history of the Bradford family, there will be a lecture on November 13, 7 p.m. at the Drew Archives in the Wright Building entitled, "Charlotte Bradford." The lecture will be given by Carolyn Ravenscroft, currently pursuing an

MLS degree at Simmons College, who wrote her Master's Thesis on Charlotte Bradford. Carolyn also devotes a great deal of volunteer hours at the Drew Archives cataloging the Bradford Papers and other collections. Her lecture will focus on Charlotte Bradford, one of the Captain's daughters, who was a nurse both for the United States Army and for the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War.

Please put these two special events on your calendar and learn more about our special gem on Tremont Street and its history. 🌸



The interior of the Capt. Gershom Bradford House.

Archeological Dig continued from page 1

And, with nearly 80 years of coming and going, there is considerable potential for the discovery of artifacts.

The project will not be a full excavation but a “testing procedure” consisting of two, long and narrow trenches dug across the property in an attempt to locate the Second Meeting House foundation. Several small pits will also be dug near Chestnut Street, a road in use for more than 370 years, in an attempt to locate artifacts.

The Society is eagerly seeking volunteers for the project. Many have already signed up. Participation does not

require any prior experience. However, the Society does ask that volunteer participants attend a brief training session on Saturday, September 27 at 1 p.m. at the Drew Archival Library in the Wright Building.

The digging will take place over the course of two weeks from October 6 to 18. Volunteers may participate at any level they prefer—one hour or several afternoons!

Anyone interested in volunteering is encouraged to contact the Society at 781-934-6106. 🌸

Gray House continued from page 3

Although there were certainly older interments, whatever earlier stones might have existed have long since disappeared.

His first wife was Mary Winslow. They were married January 1, 1651. They had six children. Their last child was their only son, John, who would inherit the house. Mary died in 1663 and Edward married his second wife, Dorothy Lettice, in 1667 and by her had at least 4, and possibly as many as 8, more children.

The house remained in the Gray family from 1662 until 1874, a span of 212 years! There are very few dwellings that date from such an early period and much fewer that descended in the same family for over two centuries. Tradition in Kingston has always been that this house belonged to Edward Gray of the 17th century and title research clearly shows a straight lineage for this house from Edward Gray to the current owners. With that said, we

must establish the most logical date for the house.

To establish a time frame, we know the house was built after 1643 (around the time Edward arrived in Plymouth) and before 1681 (when Edward died). Edward got married in 1651. It is doubtful he built this house at that time. The house displays evidence that it was constructed by a person of some wealth. Edward had not yet had time to acquire the means necessary to build a house of this quality by 1651. As further facts prove, Edward and Mary owned another, more modest home prior to 1662.

Two key facts appear in the Old Colony Records regarding Edward Gray and the construction of his second house. First, on June 3, 1662, “Edward Gray got a double share of land to be layed forth together...and...Edward Gray can put his house any place he likes within said tract.” Second, on June 10, 1662, “[The] Treasurer appointed by the Court to take order and agree

with workmen to repair the house bought by [Plymouth Colony] of Edward Gray.” Conclusions can then be made that prior to 1662 Edward had owned another house, that he had been given 60 acres of land and that, as soon as he and his abutters agreed to common bounds, he could put his house anyplace on his new land that he chose.

His wife Mary died in 1663. One might hope that when Edward commenced building his house in 1662 that Mary was able to enjoy her new house for however short a period of time. The first part of the house was probably a half or three-quarter colonial. With his second wife, Dorothy, Edward had eight more children. It seems quite easy to conclude that the original house was enlarged during his second marriage, sometime between 1665 and 1681 when he died.

The house then fell to his first and eldest son, John, and the “Long Gray Line” continued until 1874! 🌸

Autumn Events

September 20

South Shore History Symposium, "Latter Day Pilgrims: Immigrant Stories of the South Shore." Church of the Pilgrimage, Plymouth, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. \$15. Keynote Speaker: Stephen Puleo on "The Boston Italians."

September 27

Archeological Dig, Volunteer Orientation, Drew Archival Library, Wright Building, 147 St. George St, 1 p.m. No charge.

October 5

Sea Captain's Chowder Supper, Gershom Bradford House, 931 Tremont St, 5-7 p.m. \$20/person.

October 6-18

Archaeological Dig, Society's Second Meeting House Lot, Chestnut St. Participants asked to attend training session on September 27.

October 19

King Caesar's Autumnfest, King Caesar House, 120 King Caesar Rd, 12-4 p.m. \$5 adults, \$3 children, maximum \$20 per family.

October 25

Special Lecture, "Ghost Stories," 120 King Caesar Road. 4 p.m. \$5 adults, children free.

November 5

Letter Reading at the Drew Archives, Civil War Letters, 7 p.m., Wright Building, no charge.

November 18

Sarah Wingate Taylor Lecture, Carolyn Ravenscroft on Charlotte Bradford, Civil War Nurse, Drew Archival Library, Wright Building, 7 p.m., no charge.

December 12

Christmas at King Caesar House, Members Cocktail Party, 6-8 p.m.

December 13-14

Christmas at the King Caesar House Tours and Holiday Boutique, Saturday 12-6 p.m., Sunday 12-4 p.m. Adults \$10, Students/Seniors \$5, children under 6 free.



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Library

Drew Archival Library, 147 St. George St., Duxbury
Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and by appointment

Museums

King Caesar House, 120 King Caesar Road, Duxbury
Open June-Labor Day, Wed-Sun 1-4 p.m.

Capt. Gershom Bradford House
931 Tremont Street, Duxbury
Open June-Labor Day, Sun 1-4 p.m.

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