



The LAMPLIGHTER

Spring 2011

The Duxbury Rural & Historical 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.



The Newsletter of
The Duxbury Rural & Historical Society



*Letter
from the
Director*
Patrick Browne

Very often, with the arrival of more pleasant weather, the return of many of our volunteers from warmer climes and the busy commencement of numerous projects, April feels like the beginning of the year here at the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society. Planning has been going on behind the scenes over the course of the winter and now we are ready to launch some exciting programs and events for the year ahead.

I am particularly excited about our "Duxbury in the Civil War" project which is getting underway in April in observation of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and in commemoration of Duxbury's involvement in "The War of 1861" (as it is referred to on Duxbury's Civil War monument).

Alison Arnold, our Assistant Director, has been compiling voluminous data on the boys from Duxbury who served in the Civil War. Archivist Carolyn Ravenscroft has been gathering primary source material relating to the experiences of Duxburyites during the war, both at the front and at home. All this information will serve as fodder for what promises to be a wonderful blog on Duxbury in the Civil War. Our annual exhibit at the King Caesar

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Duxbury in the Civil War

In April 2011, the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society launched a four year program recognizing the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

Over 200 men from Duxbury fought in the Civil War. The Society will examine how the war affected not only these men at the front, but the people back home. The focal point of the project is a blog updated weekly with articles examining the lives of Duxbury people involved in the war, artifacts in our collection pertaining to the war, and general Civil War history. The blog can be found at: duxburyinthecivilwar.wordpress.com.

Through the blog, we will share actual letters and journals from the men and women on the front line. We will follow the Duxbury boys into battle and explore what life was like on campaign. We will also have lectures, special events and exhibits all revolving around the theme of Duxbury and the Civil War.



Sgt. James K. Burgess of Duxbury,
23rd Mass, Co. E

We are always looking for additional material pertaining to Duxbury and the Civil War. If anyone has any artifacts or letters/journals of people from Duxbury during the Civil War and would like to share them, please call the office at 781-934-6106 or e-mail aarnold@duxburyhistory.org.

Big Changes for the King Caesar Summer Lecture Series

Last summer, due to the brutal heat, we held some of the King Caesar Lectures at the Drew Archives. We had such great feedback about the comfort and convenience of the Archives that we have decided to permanently move the King Caesar Lecture series to the Drew Archival Library at the Wright Building. Mark your calendars and join us in air conditioned comfort for a series of lectures

on a wide range of topics. The summer season kicks off on July 7 with author Kate Clifford Larsen who will discuss her book: *Assassin's Accomplice: Mary Surratt and the Plot to Kill Abraham Lincoln*. Watch the e-bulletins, Facebook and mailings for further information.

From the Godey Room: Not-so Common Cotton

Madelon Ali,
Chairman,
Historic Clothing Committee

One of the challenges that the Historic Clothing Committee repeatedly faces is how to handle items in the collection that are torn, stained or in serious need of cleaning. Our first philosophy, when it comes to these fragile historic artifacts, is to follow the medical model of, "first do no harm." There are certain processes that may be applied to restore or stabilize garments, but a judicious evaluation has to be done first. Professional restoration is very expensive and budgetary concerns limit us. However, a few things can be done in-house by our volunteers who have experience in sewing repairs and wet cleaning.

Ten years ago I volunteered to manage the historic clothing collection of the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society. As a novice in the subject of historic clothing management, I knew that I needed help from professionals for me to fulfill the obligations of my new job. Before I did anything I made contact with two experts

at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation: Linda Baumgarten, Curator of Costume and Textiles, and Loreen Finklestein, Clothing and Textile Conservator. They were very generous with their time and offered tutelage several times in their facility at Colonial Williamsburg. I began to learn how to manage a historic clothing collection, and how to wet clean certain items of historic clothing in the prescribed methods used by clothing conservators, even if we do so in a much smaller scale. Cotton is responsive to wet cleaning, whereas silk, wool or linen may not be. We use a museum-quality vacuum to clean those.

I was eager to try the methods I had learned, and chose for my first attempt at wet-cleaning a white cotton apron that had an exact duplicate in the collection, reasoning that if I made a mistake, there was another such item to have for the record. This plan could allow me to exhibit a before and after demonstration of how the process worked (or did not).

I was amazed and thrilled to have very good results with this first project. The filthy item that had, over its long life, been stored in non-museum quality storage and possibly even used as a child's costume toy, came

back to its original state of white and the fabric appeared more vibrant and alive, where it had been limp and beige-yellow. Having the other copy of the apron allowed me to compare the two pieces and show that the work I had done was a success, and did not harm the historic item.

Since then, I have wet-cleaned approximately 10 items in the collection with favorable results. I wanted to apply this process to an 1828-30 once-white cotton muslin dress. We had used this piece in our very first exhibit at the King Caesar House in 2003. Even though it was limp and yellowy-beige, we have remained in love with this sweet long dress with a slightly raised waist band (by the 1830's the empire style high waist of the 1810-1820 period began to lower toward the natural waistline) and have exhibited it a few times since then. Lace, embroidery and tucks (sometimes called growth tucks) are in three rows at the hemline and the short puffed sleeves are edged in lace.

Cotton before the Industrial Revolution was an expensive textile, not produced in quantity in America, and often fine muslins were imported from India. After the invention of the Cotton Gin and power looms in America in the early to mid-19th

century, cotton became cheaper to grow and weave.

Our 1830 cotton dress was valued by its owner because of its probable high cost and because of its comparative rarity. It may have been worn by a wealthy owner and was cared for very well, ensuring its excellent



The c.1830 cotton dress is shown at right

The Historic Clothing Committee's display case at the Duxbury Free Library





Notes from the Drew Archives

Carolyn Ravenscroft,
Archivist

As usual, there has been a lot of activity at the Drew Archives. In January I said good-bye to Casey Reinhart, Allie Martin and Hannah Leddie, our first three interns from Duxbury High School, but welcomed interns Dylan Kornberg and Chris Sullivan. So far this semester Dylan has cataloged the French Atlantic Cable Collection, written a blog post for www.drewarchives.org, and transcribed the Civil War letters of Duxbury resident John Southworth. Chris has been diligently working on the large Boylston Collection and is finalizing its Finding Aid. Also interning at the Archives this semester is Rachel Taylor. Rachel is a graduate student in Simmons College's Library Science program. She is doing a fantastic job cataloging the Captain James Baker Collection. Starting in April I will be mentoring three Duxbury High School Seniors as they begin their Senior Project at the Archives tentatively titled "Duxbury Through Film." It is wonderful to have so much young, enthusiastic talent working with and learning from primary sources.

In our ongoing effort to promote the Archives through social media, I have begun uploading our photographic collections to Flickr.com. Flickr is a website that allows people from around the world to interact

with photographs. They can view, tag (label) and comment on them. It will be fascinating to learn what others know about the people and places in our many images. The images will not, however, be free to download. Any requests for images will still come to the Archives. This will allow us to maintain control over our holdings.

As always, I would like thank our many donors. It is through their generosity that the Drew Archival Library is able to continue its mission of preserving the wonderful history of Duxbury. Over the past few months we have received a number of gifts to add to our collections. Anne K. Noyes donated a notebook of photographs and letters relating to the WWI experience of her father, Edwin Noyes; Penny Kriegle donated 42 books

relating to the history of textile and their care; Mr. and Mrs. John Nash donated a five volume set of the Commonwealth History of Massachusetts; John Arapoff donated photographs and ephemera relating to the poet Sarah Wingate Taylor; and Clarence Walker donated a framed photograph of Bay Farm (c. 1900). In addition, we purchased a carte de visite photograph of Frank Marshall Graves (c. 1870); a postcard of Hill Crest, South Duxbury (c. 1910); a letter from Daniel Winsor to Thatcher Magoun (1836); and a letter written by Erastus Sampson (1834).

If you have not stopped by the Archives, consider this your invitation. We are open Monday – Friday, 9am – 1pm but those hours can be extended to accommodate your schedule. See you soon!



condition today. There are three brown spots on the sleeves, possibly from a non-acid-free storage container that off-gassed lignen or other chemicals; or perhaps there was a spill. These spots did not come out during my initial wet cleaning process; harsher methods like rubbing the textile or soaking longer in a stronger solution of Sodium Laurate (the prescribed cleaning agent) could put it

at risk for damage. However, overall the cleaning has whitened the textile and shows the beautiful details of the lace.

It is rewarding to be able to restore and conserve the lovely historic clothing in the collection. We are indebted to those professionals at Colonial Williamsburg, Kent State University Museum, and other institutions, electronic and print sources

that provide education for us. We will continue to exhibit at King Caesar House during the summer tours, and at Christmas, and the Duxbury Library 2nd Floor case in a rotating exhibit all year round. Please read notices from the library as to our periodic gallery talks and lectures; feel free to attend. I welcome questions and thoughts about our work. Contact me at 781-934-6106.

A Humble but Meaningful Artifact

Patrick Browne



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The process of cataloging our artifact and archival collections seems to be a perpetual one as volunteers and staff work to sort through a tremendous backlog of items collected by the Society over the course of 100 years. Every now and then, some unappreciated little gem surfaces to surprise us. An example of this took place recently when an intern from the Pilgrim Society came to view our collection of artifacts from the Myles Standish cellar hole.

Duxbury residents of the 19th century seemed to view Myles Standish as the greatest among the founders of our town. Extensive efforts were made to locate his home site, his gravesite, and, finally, the colossal Myles Standish Monument on Captain's Hill was erected in his honor. Much of this enthusiasm was driven by the publication of the enormously popular *The Courtship of Myles Standish* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1858, a highly romanticized tale based on the Pilgrim settlers.

Well before the book was published, in 1829, Rev. Benjamin Kent of Duxbury led a project to open the ground covering

the Myles Standish home site. This ranks among the first archaeological efforts in our nation's history. The Society owns a few artifacts from this historic dig. The site was then more thoroughly excavated by civil engineer James Hall, a descendant of Myles Standish, in 1856. Because Hall employed techniques more careful and thorough than those of Kent, his dig has often been referred to as the first professional archaeological dig in the United States. Such efforts would not become commonplace until the 1930s. We have a number of artifacts from this second dig, most of them iron tools.

As we laid out this collection for inspection this winter, we discovered one item stored with these artifacts which apparently did not come from either dig. It was a small stone with a yellowed tag bearing 19th century writing, "This stone taken from the cellar hole of Myles Standish," then, on the same tag but in a different hand, "This writing by H.W. Longfellow."

By the time he wrote *The Courtship of Myles Standish*, Longfellow was already a celebrity. In 1846, the Boston Transcript declared him the most widely read poet in the nation. He was a descendant of John and Priscilla Alden and had a keen interest in the Pilgrim story. He corresponded with Duxbury residents and probably visited here. We have, in our archival collection, a letter from Longfellow to Lyman Drew of South Duxbury, thanking Drew for sending him a relic from the Standish homesite. "It is a curious relic of the Past; and I like to think that the hand of the brave, old Puritan Captain has often held it and plied it in the cornfield," Longfellow wrote.

When Longfellow published *Courtship*, John Alden, Priscilla Mullins and Myles Standish suddenly became household names, and the Pilgrim story, already gaining in popularity, was then firmly established as part of our national identity.

So, when we consider this humble little rock, we have what was probably once part of the foundation of Myles Standish's first house built c. 1627 on Standish Shore in Duxbury. Based on the inscription, one might speculate a little further that the stone was in Longfellow's possession for some time. Perhaps he even pulled it from the cellar hole himself. Did it serve as a bit of inspiration when he was writing his famous book? We can't know for certain. But evidently the little souvenir was, at some point in time, significant to the author who made Myles Standish legendary.



Illustration from *The Courtship of Myles Standish*, Longfellow's romanticized tale in which John Alden competes with Myles Standish for Priscilla Mullins's hand in marriage.

Letter from the Director

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House, now being planned by Curator Patricia Gilrein, will revolve around the same theme. And watch for news about a community event in the works for this fall commemorating the mustering in of the 18th Massachusetts, Company E which consisted mostly of Duxbury men.

Another exciting initiative, among the many great things happening at the Drew Archival Library, is the gradual uploading of the Society's photograph

collection to Flickr.com. You can read more about this in Carolyn's article. Seeing a collection of old photographs is precisely what got me hooked on history a long time ago, and I feel there is really no way to get a more vivid sense of Duxbury's history than to see what it looked like 50, 100 or even 150 years ago. Keep an eye on the site as new collections of photographs go online . . . and, by the way, if you wish to help with scanning please contact Carolyn.

We look forward to an official visit from the Costume Society of America in June, an accomplishment of which Mattie Ali and the Historic Clothing Committee should be very proud. The CSA is holding their annual meeting in Boston this year and the DRHS has been selected for a site

visit. This is certainly a testament to the professionalism and hard work of Mattie's committee.

We have recently begun to coordinate with Town Manager Richard MacDonald with regard to planning for Duxbury 375th anniversary which will take place in 2012. The Society will certainly play an active role in helping to plan and implement anniversary projects and we are very excited to coordinate with the Town of Duxbury on this momentous observance.

Then, of course, there is the usual bustle of planning buildings projects, artifact conservation, lectures and educational programs. Yes, spring, our busiest time at the Society, is back. And it feels as though we just put away the Christmas lights!

The Dower of Olive Wadsworth

Carolyn Ravenscroft

On a spring day in 1822 young Olive Wadsworth married her distant cousin, Ahira Wadsworth, in Bristol, RI. Both the bride and groom hailed from Duxbury so it is a bit of a mystery as to why they chose to marry out of state but perhaps Ahira, a merchant, had reason to be in that port. Olive was 20 years younger than her new husband and must have felt a bit daunted at the prospect of entering his house, already the home of his children by his first wife, Deborah Sprague, who had died nine years earlier.

The house to which she entered was a lovely two story Colonial located on Washington Street. It was large and elegant with eight rooms and intricately carved woodwork. The house was used for both living quarters and as a store. Life must have been fine for Olive until five years into her marriage when Ahira went bankrupt. The Wadsworth's property was seized and sold off. The house was sold to Capt. Martin Waterman and much of the adjoining land bought by Benjamin Holmes.

When Ahira died in 1867 Olive sued both the Watermans and the Holmes for her dower rights - something she claimed she did not relinquish to creditors in 1827. An agreement

was drawn up between Rufus, son of Benjamin Holmes, and the widowed Olive regarding the land:

The following are the bounds of the Dower of Olive Wadsworth in all the real estate of Rufus Holmes of Duxbury, as agreed upon by the parties Sept. 17th 1867.

To wit. Begin at the NW corner of Andrew Stetson's garden in George Partridge's line; thence, in said line, N 75 1/2 W about forty rods to the corner, then S 12 W, as the fence now runs, Eleven rods & five links to a post & stake, then S 75 1/2 E to a stake by the said Stetson's garden fence, then by said fence N 12 E eleven rods & five links to the first bound. And said Holmes is to have a right to enter upon said Dower land to remove, for his own use, all the growing crops, now thereon, and shall furnish a convenient way to said Dower land, to said Olive, if he objects to her passing over his rye now growing on the same.

Ten years later, in 1877, Olive sold off the rights to her small holding to Rufus Holmes for the sum of \$25.

Martin Waterman's widow's agreement was much more severe. According to former

Duxbury Town Historian, Dorothy Wentworth, "Lydia Waterman, widow of Martin, had to share her home of 40 years with Olive Wadsworth, widow of Ahira." The house was literally split in two by an imaginary line running down the center of the house. It is uncertain whether Olive ever took up residence - one hopes not!

Olive lived a long, and we hope somewhat happy life. She and Ahira had six children: Harriet, Henry, Horace, Helen, Hamilton and Harrison. She clearly liked the letter "H" (Ahira's six children by his first wife have no such naming scheme). Three of her children, unfortunately, died young. In her widowed years she lived with her son, Hamilton, who was a shoemaker. Her exact death date is uncertain, but she was still "keeping house" at the age of 83 in the 1880 US Census.

The above transcribed Dower description and the real estate deeds of the Holmes family were donated last year to the Drew Archival Library by Arthur Beane.

[Note: This article first appeared on Carolyn's blog, drewarchives.org. For more articles of this sort, check the blog!]

A Note from the Curator



Patricia Gilrein

It's hard to believe that summer is just around the corner, bringing with it exciting events and exhibits at the DRHS. Before I get into the summer season, however, I need to rewind back to wintry days, namely Christmas at the King Caesar House. This was my first Christmas with the Society, and I was so impressed by the volunteer decorators who transformed the house in a few short days into an amazingly festive experience. All of the decorators were enthusiastic and talented and made each room incredibly unique. Thank you to the Historic Clothing Committee, the Textiles Committee, Berry Brook School, The Duxbury Garden Club, Tamara Ciocci, John Young, Joy Sawyer, Judy O'Brien, Deb Dunphy, and Sandy Sweetser. It was great working with all of you, and getting into the Christmas spirit!

Christmas at the King Caesar House also serves as an opportunity to inform members about items in our collection that have seen better days. Our adoption program has helped us restore many important "orphans" to their former glory, which will help to preserve them for posterity for many years (and visitors) to come. We are extremely grateful to Richard and Nancy Heath, Gerald and Penny Kriegel, and the Aequa Foundation for making this year's program such a success. The Kriegels adopted The Star of Bethlehem quilt—a beautiful 19th century piece that will undergo conservation to have tears, holes and deterioration repaired—as well as a sampler wrought by Maria Bradford, which will be stabilized and reframed. The Heaths adopted two paintings, one by former resident of the King Caesar House, Elizabeth Weber-Fulop, and a Dr. Frank Howard painting of the Gurnet. These paintings will be restored

and re-framed. They also adopted a small doll's vanity table and a number of items from the Wright Archives. The Aequa Foundation adopted a brown silk 1850's dress which will have tears and deterioration repaired and an understructure made to support it while on exhibition. They also provided funds for museum quality mannequins so that we may more adequately display our extensive historic clothing collection.

Now onto spring! 2011 marks the sesquicentennial of the Civil War. The Society will be presenting several programs over the course of the year with a Civil War theme. Our annual summer exhibit, opening June 24, will focus on Duxbury's involvement in the war. The exhibit will explore the experiences of the citizens that enlisted, those that supported the war effort, and life on the home front. If you missed "Women's Work"—a quilt exhibit curated by the textile committee—it will be on display again this summer. The King Caesar House will open for the season on July 1, shortly after the exhibition openings. Drop by this summer for the exhibits, a tour, and for smaller shows throughout the house with themes aligned with the sesquicentennial.

Another exhibit opening this spring will revisit the King Caesar House "mini-dig." This will feature a sampling of small artifacts uncovered during the Society's dig at the King Caesar House in 2009 as well as some uncovered by a team of students led by John Coakley who coordinated a dig at King Caesar as his Eagle Scout project in 2010. With help from interns Angelina Decristofaro and James Bright, we sorted and cleaned excavated artifacts unearthed by volunteers in 2009. Although the volume of artifacts was not especially large, the information we

gleaned is significant. Be sure to visit the Drew Archives beginning in May to view some of the more interesting finds.

Our partnership with the Duxbury Free Library continues with a bridal gown exhibit just in time for wedding season. The exhibits will be changing frequently throughout the spring and summer, and will feature a variety of 19th and 20th century gowns. Visit the second floor next time you're there, and learn about wedding fashion throughout history.

The Society received some amazing new acquisitions this winter. Mr. And Mrs. Malcolm McNaught donated a yellow oak sea chest circa 1820, filled with 13 well preserved sea charts from all over the world, all dating to the mid 19th century. Mary Janvrin donated a collection of historic clothing, textiles, toys, domestic-wares, photographs, and fine art to the Society. We are grateful to have received such a vast and varied collection with such a strong Duxbury connection. Pauline Litchfield left the Society a fine M.W. Atkins steeple mantle clock, circa 1840. We also received textiles and historic clothing donations from Carol Loring and Myrna Walsh.



"Our Star of Bethlehem Quilt was adopted by Jerry and Penny Kriegel."

Volunteers Wanted!

You probably live in Duxbury - at least in part - because you value and are interested in our community's lively history.

Volunteering with the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society provides a variety of opportunities to work together with others who want to preserve our heritage. There are few things more enjoyable than exercising your talents! If you have some time to share, we can promise you great opportunities to practice your skills and learn new ones in the company of wonderful people.

Opportunities abound at the Society's many venues and through our numerous programs. We invite you to jump in! Here are some projects in the works for the coming months:

Help plan and produce special events:

Every year DRHS hosts special events like Christmas at the King Caesar House, Holly Days, Clark's Island picnic, exhibit openings and lectures. Interesting projects await creative organizers.

Become an Educational Volunteer:

With part of the Society's mission to "provide educational programs for the community," the Educational Volunteers participate in many projects, including the Second Grade tour, the 5th Grade Tours, Time Travelers Club, King Caesar Summer Lecture Series and the Sarah Wingate Taylor Lecture Series.

Help catalog the DRHS collection:

This is a fun and virtually never-ending project. Volunteer projects available in Drew

Archival Library include digital reproduction (scanning and photography), transcription, research, and cataloging. Training is provided. Contact Carolyn Ravenscroft for more information.

Join the DRHS Oral History Committee:

We're begun collecting oral histories with 21st Century tools. Help videotape and edit interviews with Duxbury. Contact Carolyn Ravenscroft for more information.

Transcribe Ships journals:

Go back in time and transcribe actual ship logs and journals from Duxbury Sea Captains. Contact Carolyn Ravenscroft for more information.

Become a Museum Docent:

Welcome visitors to either one of our museum houses, the Bradford House or the King Caesar House. Help introduce the public to these historic treasures. Both houses provide an exceptionally pleasant setting for both docents and visitors. You will be trained with regard to the history of the families, the houses and Duxbury in general. Typically, volunteers work a three-hour shift in July and August.

Join the DRHS Garden Committee:

Help maintain the beautiful gardens at all three of our properties with the emphasis on the grounds/gardens of the Nathaniel Winsor, Jr. House.

If you are interested in any of these activities please call Alison at the office at 781-934-6106 or email her at: aarnold@duxburyhistory.org.

Spring/Summer Events

May 9-11 and 16-17

Fifth Grade Tours of the King Caesar House

May 31 and June 1-2

Second Grade Bus Tours of Duxbury

June 24

Exhibit Preview Reception for Members, "Duxbury in the Civil War," 120 King Caesar Road, 6-8 p.m., no charge.

July 1

King Caesar House opens for the season

July 3

Bradford House opens for the season

July 7

King Caesar Summer Lecture Series, Kate Clifford Larson, author of *The Assassin's Accomplice: Mary Surratt and the Plot to Kill Abraham Lincoln* Drew Archives in the Wright Building, refreshments at 10, lecture at 10:30, \$5.

July 21

King Caesar Summer Lecture Series, Katherine Howe, author of *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane*, Drew Archives in the Wright Building, refreshments at 10, lecture at 10:30, \$5.

July 31

Clark's Island Picnic, 11-2, no charge.

August 4

King Caesar Summer Lecture Series, Anita Silvey, author of *I'll Pass for Your Comrade: Women Soldiers in the Civil War*, Drew Archives in the Wright Building, refreshments at 10, lecture at 10:30, \$5.

August 18

John Horrigan on "The Portland Gale," Drew Archives in the Wright Building, refreshments at 10, lecture at 10:30, \$5.

August 27

Croquet Party, King Caesar House, details coming soon! Save the date for this special event.



DRHS volunteers help with many projects including children's programs

New Members

The Duxbury Rural & Historical Society is pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined the Society. We thank you for your support and your dedication to preserving Duxbury's heritage!

Kathy Dunn

Jim and Heidi Elliman

Theodore and Donna Flynn

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hamilton

Jane Bumpus Nielsen

Chelsie and Sandy Olney

Tom Scanlon

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Staley

E. Scott and Kathryn Trefry

Matthew Vigneau

Kathleen Waldeck

*"The Lamplighter" is published quarterly by
The Duxbury Rural & Historical Society.*

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Library

Drew Archival Library

147 St. George Street, Duxbury

Monday - Friday, 9 am - 1 pm and by appointment

Museums

King Caesar House

120 King Caesar Road, Duxbury

Open July - Labor Day,

Wednesday - Sunday, 1 pm - 4 pm.

Captain Gershom Bradford House

931 Tremont Street, Duxbury

Open July - Labor Day, Sunday, 1 pm - 4 pm.

The LAMPLIGHTER Spring 2011



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**The
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