In February 2021, the DRHS decided to bring the museum out of our historic houses and into the hands of the people, with the help of a wide swathe of businesses and organizations in Duxbury. Each partner location has a history panel located at their site with a small die of Duxbury history and images of items in our permanent collection.

The panels are customized to the location, either by topic or physical location. For example, at Brothers Marketplace you can read all about the Ford Store – the first department store in Duxbury, also opened by a set of brothers; at the Beehive Beauty salon on St. George Street you can discover how tortoiseshell combs revolutionized fashion in the early 19th century; and at the CVS in Kingston, you can see some amazing photographs and learn about the first Black-owned campground in Duxbury/Kingston that was right down the road from where the CVS is now, Camp Twin Oaks.

We currently have 16 panels up around town and are thrilled to announce that more You Are Here panels will be arriving this summer! Starting in June, you can learn the story behind the Myles Standish Monument at Duxbury Pizza – just down the road from the monument itself, or while you’re at The Oysterman, you can read about the original Duxbury Railroad line. Stopping in at 93 Tremont Street Medical Offices? See photographs of some items from our collection originally owned by Dr. James Wilde, one of Duxbury’s town physicians during the mid-1800s, and plenty more!

You Are Here, the title of our first ever community-wide exhibit, is a play on itself. In some cases, it means that you are literally (t)here, standing in a physical location, the title of our first ever community-wide exhibit, is a play on itself. You Are Here, reading this, living in this unprecedented time, are an important part of Duxbury’s history and images of items in our permanent collection.

In another way, the You Are Here exhibition. Check out the You Are Here panels at these locations* or all on our website at duxburyhistory.org.

* Some locations may have limited accessibility. Please inquire with the location for specifics before visiting.

Happy spring to all of our DRHS Friends! At a new season begins, the DRHS is rolling out the carpet, renewed with energy and anticipation for the days ahead. While we continue to be cautious, optimism is creeping in and we cannot wait to see you again at one of the exciting programs and events in this newsletter.

Spring is sprouting across the DRHS properties and seasonal cleanup is underway. We appreciate our audiences, and being a responsible, inclusive neighbor in this community. These values are not new; they are part of the work that we’ve been doing for years. But it is as important as ever to re-affirm and to deploy these values through the broad spectrum of DRHS activity. Our updated Strategic Plan will be released publicly this summer.

My warmest wishes to you all. See you soon at the DRHS!

Erin McGough
Executive Director

The DRHS is honored to announce that it has acquired the rights to publish Ezra and the Mouse: The Search for Lafayette by Duxbury author Victoria J. Coe, creator of the popular Fenney and Hattie series.

The family-friendly historical adventure is set in Duxbury in 1822 and inspired by actual events. The book features 12-year-old Ezra Weston IV (son of “King Caesar”) and his best friend and cousin Elizabeth Bradford (daughter of the Bradford House) among many other real-life Duxbury residents.

The double-story weave together Ezra’s perspective as the son of a New England shipping magnate family as he pursues smugglers, along with that of a mouse desperate to reunite with his family and find the 500-pound cheese called “Lafayette.”

Marietta Zacker at Gallt & Zacker Literary represented the family and found the 500-pound cheese called “Lafayette.”
Phebe Aderton
The Other Mrs. Weston in the King Caesar House
By Carolyn Ravenscroft, Architect & Historian

W
hen Jerusha (Bradford) Weston and her husband, Ezra Weston Jr., built their Federal-style mansion in 1809, it was likely Jerusha who made many of the decorative choices that we still marvel at inside the King Caesar House today. Because she was the first woman to preside over the home, we often overlook her daughter-in-law, Phebe (Aderton) Weston. Although Phebe’s tenure in the house was short, there is much to be said about her impact on the Weston family.

Phebe Aderton (1805–1869) was born in Freewater, ME to Samuel and Phebe (Dunham) Aderton. When she was five months old, her father died at sea. This tragedy was compounded when, while still a child, Phebe lost her mother as well. She married her husband, David Weston, in Boston when she was 21-years-old. David was a cousin of the Duxbury Powder Point Westons, so it is possible Phebe was introduced to a young man named Alden Bradford Weston when she and David were courting.

Phebe and David Weston moved to St. Louis, MO where David established himself as a kummer merchant. After twelve years in the west, David died. The following year, widowed Phebe married John R. Hammond. Hammond was also a New England transplant in St. Louis and a kummer merchant. At the time of his wedding to Phebe, he was a widower with a ten-year-old son, Alex. Phebe’s life changed dramatically with this marriage. She was now not only a step-mother but also the mistress to an enslaved family: Philip and Joanna Montgomery and their daughter, Laura, also called Lawrence (a family name of Hammond’s first wife).

Illness forced John R. Hammond to move to St. Louis from his home in Henry County, IL, where he hoped to regain his health. In 1856, as his condition worsened, he wrote his will, in which he emancipated Philip and Joanna Montgomery. It is important to note that Hammond had taken the Montgomerys with him to Illinois, a free state, but he still considered them his legal property. This belief was reinforced by the infamous Dred Scott case decided by the US Supreme Court just months before Hammond died, in 1857. Hammond did not free the Montgomery’s daughter, still an unnamed child, instead he bequeathed them to his wife, Phebe. How Phebe felt about this, we do not know, but within three years, Laura was living with her parents in Michigan. Perhaps Phebe emancipated Laura, or she escaped and went north. In 1860, the twice-widowed Phebe was residing in St. Louis with the married Alden Bradford Weston, the second son of Jerusha and Ezra Weston of Duxbury. At the time he was the sole owner of the King Caesar House. How did this marriage come to pass? Why did Alden, a 55-year-old confirmed bachelor, retired merchant, and wealthiest man in Duxbury travel to Missouri to wed a woman who had lived in the west for three decades? While we do not know the hows or whys of this match, one thing is certain: Alden Bradford Weston brought a former slave owner to Duxbury and into the bosom of his extended family, which included some of the town’s leading abolitionists.

It wasn’t long before Alden and his older broth- er, Gershom Bradford Weston, had a falling out over money. For years Alden had propped up his brother’s lavish spending with loans, including a mortgage of Gershom’s estate on St. George Street. Of the strained relationship, cousin Sarah Alden (Bradford) Ripley wrote in 1862, “While I was in Duxbury I took tea with Gershom and dined with [Alden]. It is not too bad that Gershom and [Alden] have not inter-coursed! Blessed be nothing if money separates those whom God has joined together.” Alden eventually called in his brother’s mortgage and bankrupted him. Gershom was forced to vacate his mansion which Alden then sold to George and George Wright. The house is known to subsequent generations in Duxbury as the Wright Estate. Gershom Bradford Weston died impoverished in 1869. Did Phebe play a role in the cooling of brotherly affection? There are so few mentions of her in the correspondence of the time, we can’t know for sure.

Phebe died of cancer after living in the King Caesar House for nine short years. She left not an indelible, physical mark. There are no architec-tural or decorative changes that we can point to and say, “Phebe Aderton Weston influenced that.” However, as the only other Mrs. Weston to reside there, her story belongs in the narrative.

Newspapers of the Annual Report.
Lifeline
Kenneth J. Beesey and Sara Beeby Michas
Trian Purtain
Linn Spalding
Supporting
Michael Buznek and Jane Bradley
Douglas and Linda Von Idstrand
Contributing
John and Sally Burke
Cynthia Cordich
Joy Bannon
Richard Neistle and Beth Robinson
David and Sukie Amory
Elika Dadustan
Bruce and Elizabeth Lee
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Hall
John M. Emler
Peter and Suzanne Concoran
Family
Barbara Learsey
Martha Loring
Bill and Megan Lyons
Cristin Mitchell
Kathleen Oll
Thomas and Denise Keating
Emily Davis
Mike and Meredith Sicil
Margaret Brook
Elizabeth Barre
David and Terri Withington
Morgan Nickerson
Fallon Shields
Christopher and Jessi Jettcrank
Lorraine Gates
Eugene Kennedy
Individual
Michelle Coughlin
Scott MacLeod
Dave Massingham
Chris Eratt
Tara Young
Jennifer White
Susan Olibren
Senior Couple
Mark Schlesinger
Mr. and Mrs. John R. McKinney
Tim Moore
Norman Bennett and Jeanne Penneve
Senior
Lauris Schwartz
Diane Bertram
Harry Glass
Heather Knipp
Anne Smeler

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Many of the most iconic outdoor spaces in Duxbury are maintained by the DHRHS, we encourage you to get outside and explore!