Arthur Cady, A Duxbury Artist

By Melanie Correia, Museum Collections Manager

Arthur Cady (b. 1920, Brooklyn, NY) had a long and exciting artistic career. He attended the Art Students League in NYC, served in WWII, worked in New York City advertising firms, wrote a book The Art Bug: Book (What Artists Do and How They Do It), and wrote/directed/produced a film for the Archdiocese of New York.

Arthur and his wife Phyllis came to live in Duxbury on Washington St. in 1969. Their tenure in Duxbury was short-lived, only three years. However, Duxbury’s beauty and history left an impression on Cady, who painted a Clark’s Island picnic gathering in 1970. This was the first year after the DRHS acquired the Cedarfield property from Sarah Wingate Taylor. This painting is not typical of his other paintings. Perhaps this one is more influenced by the Pop Art culture that was growing in New York, or experimentation with abstraction that he most admired in other artists like Kazinsky. The collage style painting and layering of different perspectives, people, historic sites, and nature is an intriguing and modern interpretation on the Clark’s Island Picnic. This watercolor painting introduces a new type of style into our permanent collection.

Some in Duxbury may remember the Arthur Cady Gallery that Cady operated for a few years in the early 70’s. In addition to selling his own paintings, Cady also worked with local store owners to produce other types of work. This year, the DRHS also acquired a small notecard illustrated by Cady and originally sold by the Standish Gift & Card shop entitled “Snow at Snug Harbor.”


“Absolutely loved this book! On its face it is a story of a boy and two mice. However, once you dig in, it’s a rich tale of family, of handicaps, but mostly of redemption. I highly recommend this book!”

~ Terry Shay, Founder of International Dot Day

Ezra and the Mouse: The Search for Lafayette
by Victoria J. Coe

Set in Duxbury in 1822, Ezra and the Mouse: The Search for Lafayette is a fast-paced historical adventure that will have readers rooting for two unlikely heroes – Ezra Weston IV, the 12 year old grandson of shipping magnate King Caesar, and a mouse named Bertie that he and his cousin Elizabeth Bradford rescue (or “capture” as the mice believe) at the shipyard.

Told in dual points of view, inspired by actual events, and written by Duxbury native and popular children’s author Victoria J. Coe (Fenway and Hattie), readers of all ages will delight in seeing Duxbury’s shipbuilding past come to life while discovering a surprising, yet little known episode about the Marquis de Lafayette.

All proceeds of the sale of this book will go to support the mission of the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society. Pre-orders accepted now; the book will be available in October 1, 2021. Make your pre-order now. The first 1,000 pre-ordered copies will be personally signed by the author! Visit duxburyhistory.org to learn more.

REDEDICATION OF THE REYNOLDS-MAXWELL GARDEN

In July, the DRHS rededicated the garden at the Blue Fish River Bridge, naming it the Reynolds-Maxwell Garden. The rededication marks the generous bequest of Mary Reynolds and partnership with the Duxbury Garden Club, which has cared for the garden since 1943.

Thank you to our partners in the 2021 Rededication of the Reynolds-Maxwell Garden:


Donors & In-Kind Contributions: Duxbury Garden Club; Woody & Sam Lawson; Susie and Nick Bates, Mary and Merle Ott; and Ashley and Morgan Mohrman. O’Connor Landscape, Peter Buttkus/Town of Duxbury; The Ellison Center; and, Mrs. Mary Reynolds, whose generous bequest to the DRHS made the construction work possible.

UPCOMING IN 2022

Wool Hand Spinning Workshop
120 King Caesar Road
March 15
Nathaniel Winsor, Jr. House
Wool Hand Spinning Workshop
March 20
Nathaniel Winsor, Jr. House

ARCHIVIST MEETING

Tuesday, 2/1
Annual Meeting
Please save the date for our evening meeting. We look forward to reviewing 2021, holding board elections, and presenting our Volunteer DRHS Archivist and Historian Carolyn Ravenscroft, will also discuss women’s work in the home, and how it trialized. Collections items will also be presented. This is a ticketed event. Please reserve online.

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Elizabeth Bradford rescue (or “capture” as the mice believe) at the shipyard.

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Duxbury's Cotton & Woolen Mills

By Carolyn Ravenscroft, Archivist & Historian

When we think of Duxbury's early 1800s history, we think of the great shipbuilding industry. Duxbury built almost 1,000 vessels, and the associated economic activity was responsible for the many Federal-era houses that still grace our streets today. It is easy to see why shipbuilding and Duxbury are so synonymous. While shipbuilding was the most visible of the town's enterprises, employing over 500 people per year in multiple trades, it was not the only one. The country's burgeoning textile industry was a major player during the same period, and some in Duxbury were eager to turn their attention away from the sea and to the loom.

Cotton and woolen mills began popping up in many New England towns during the first decades of the nineteenth century. The War of 1812, and the Embargo Act that preceded it, curtailed the importation of English goods into America, including cloth. Building factories to produce cotton and woolen yarns and fabric was a good investment. Ezra "King Caesar" Weston, for example, was part owner of three mills, in Duxbury, Kingston and Marshfield.

The first of Duxbury's factories was built in 1813 on the mill pond off Trenton Street. The Duxbury Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Company was owned by eleven investors, many of whom were shipbuilders. These men included Ezra Weston Sr. and Jr., Samuel A. Frazee, George Loring and Reuben Drew among others. The factory produced both wool and cotton yarn on mechanized spinning machines fueled by waterpower. The factory also produced textiles, a cloth made up of a wool warp and cotton woof. This fabric had a sheen, much like silk, and was inexpensive to produce. The weaving of the cloth was done on hand looms. The factory may have, for a short time, also produced sail cloth. A board-hung house for workers (126 Tremen Street) was also part of the mill complex. In 18444, the sons of Ezra Weston Jr. purchased the mill building and turned production to rickets and nails. It was later owned by the Fords of the Ford Store. The mill burned in 1900.

The second factory, owned by the Duxbury River Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Co. opened two years later, in 1815, and was located on Cranberry Factory Pond on Chandler Street. This mill also had multiple local investors. Isaiah Alden and Dura Wigram among them were two who took active roles in managing the business. The factory building was three stories high with two spanning frames, each with 96 spindles. Other machinery needed in the production process included "breakers," "finishers" and a "cotton picker." The South River mill also had a two-story boarding house for employees. In 1826 the original investors sold the mill, but it continued to produce rickets into the 1840s under various owners. The factory building eventually became a barn and silt mill, and finally, a barn. It burned around 1905.

A few interesting facts about the mills.
Both required whale oil to operate. Whale oil was used for household lamps, but it was also the grease that lubricated machine gears before petroleum. Much of the wool for the mill was sourced locally, but the cotton came from the Southern states. Thirty-three thousand pounds of cotton was imported to Duxbury in one year. Although they were never large employers, they did have "mill girls" working the spinning machines. In 1837, 20 women worked in the two mills, at least some living in the adjacent boarding houses. Despite the mechanization, there were still women who hand spun yarn in their homes. Patrick Alden, for example, used her spinning to barter for goods in Sylwana Sampson's South Duxbury throughout the 1820s.

Long after the mills halted operations, they remain an important resource to the town. Duxbury's history panels around town?

For more information on the textile industry in Duxbury, please visit our website online: https://duxburyhistory.org/events