

# Charlton Historical Society Newsletter

Spring, 2003

Volume 28, Number 1

News for Historical Society Members

## Dodge Chapel and the Helping Hand Society

- William O. Hultgren

In early 1901, a group of people in the Dodge Village section of Charlton met in the home of Frank Pike who were interested in organizing a church upon non-denominational principles.

Dodge, formerly known as Millward, a name given it because of the many early mill sites on the Little River, was given its new name in 1897 by mill owner Forbes Dodge, a leading manufacturer in the village. On February 28, 1901, William Cummings, Adelbert Horne, Mary Cummings, Feldalia Pike, and Francis Horne, held the first organizational meeting of the Church of Christ in Charlton.

These members had been meeting informally for some time in various homes in Dodge and one can only surmise why they decided to organize a church in the village. The subscribers all lived within a half-mile of each other but several miles from the nearest church. In those times when travel to church entailed an hour's trip in horse and wagon, it would only seem natural that this busy mill village should have its own church.

The only requirement for membership was "any member of the spiritually organized body known as the Church of Christ in Charlton who has attained the age of twenty-one years may become a member of this corporation by signing his or her name to these by-laws".

Though the church said it was nondenominational the records show it was affiliated with the Church of Christ in Worcester. The dedication Nov. 13, 1901 was led by Dr. J.M. Van Horn, pastor of the Worcester church.

Four members were added in 1903, W.R. Dunklee, Edward Cudworth, and Mr. and Mrs. George Barrows.

It appears that early on there was disagreement among the founders and Adelbert Horne and his wife, Frances. At an August 1901 meeting it was voted to replace Mr. Horne as moderator and Mrs. Horne as clerk since "the Hornes went out from us some time in April last,



**Dodge Chapel as seen in a Marvin Richmond photograph taken around 1903**

saying they would have nothing more to do with us as a church" They later rejoined. William H. Cummings was appointed moderator and treasurer, Ada Pike, as organist.

Obviously, problems continued for in November of 1904 Mr. Cummings resigned from his positions, asking that a public audit be done showing that he had performed his duties correctly. It showed a balance of \$8.11 in the treasury.

Dissatisfaction continued and at the April 4, 1905 meeting it was voted to dismiss the members with letters of recommendation to various churches. Whether the building was used for services thereafter cannot be ascertained since any records of that period are missing.

In a booklet "Dodge Chapel, Charlton, Mass." from the 1960's, believed to be authored by former Charlton Historical Society president, Carroll Pellissier, he writes, "about 1919, the chapel was taken over by the Helping Hand Society". In an earlier attempt to write a short history of the society, Mrs. Henrietta Tucker writes, "In the early 1900's, a small group of ladies from the villages of Dodge and Northside formed a small organization which was known as the "Helping Hand" and it really meant just what it was called "to assist and help out". The Helping Hand still assists families at funerals and weddings by house sitting and preparation of food. They send greeting cards to those in need and shut-ins and provide gifts of money to individuals and groups deemed needy and even supporting the churches in town. The

society gave a donation of \$100 to help rebuild the Federated Church after fire destroyed its sanctuary in 1939.

People in the neighborhood state that afternoon services and a Sunday School was long maintained here under the auspices of the Worcester First Christian Church. The quasi-religious status of the early Helping Hand is shown in society minutes by the opening with a hymn and closing with recitation of the Lord's Prayer. In 1936, a Christian Endeavor Society was formed and met at the chapel. Early meetings of the Charlton Baptist church were also held here until the buildings were too small for services. Helping Hand continues its community service now into its second century.

## **Property Committee Report**

- Don Weinhardt

This is a summary of artifact and archival items donated to the Charlton Historical Society since September 2002:

Claudia Lacerte, Oakham, an earthenware sauce boat with green transfer decoration of a castle scene, an earthenware plate with scalloped edge and brown transfer decoration; Bernard R. and Roberta Buff, East Nassau, N.Y., A small white ceramic bowl with chestnut decoration, on the inside of the bowl is "Charlton/Hall" surrounded by a wreath. The bowl was manufactured by the Onondaga Pottery Co., Syracuse, N.Y., circa 1912. This "Hall" stood on the northeast corner of Stafford Street at Brookfield Road and was destroyed by fire in 1927. Carol Weinhardt, Charlton, an earthenware plate with blue transfer decoration and a small earthenware octagonal platter with blue transfer decoration of a castle and lake scene.

Patricia Ram, Cherry Valley, four pieces of redware, produced by L. Breninger, Robesonia, PA; Shirley Baer, Norwell, MA, book "An Illustrated Glossary of Decorated Antiques", by MaryJane Clark, also five copies of back issues of the semi-annual journal "The Decorator" published by The Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc., New York, N.Y. (Note - the donor is the editor of this journal); Jon Norrman, Charlton, three paper plug caps used for sealing milk bottles from the Dresser Hill Farms; Heritage String Band Productions, a compact disk titled "Strike the tents", a musical tour of Civil War Songs with narrative.

Robert P. Beaudette, Charlton, a redware pitcher, 6¼" tall with Albany slip and a stoneware jar with handles and Albany slip, both will be used in the Tavern barroom; Alice Stone, Charlton, a child's straw hat, Victorian time period, the hat was owned and worn by Alice's father Everette Phillips.

Thank you all for helping to preserve Charlton's past.

Also, be aware that the CHS historical library and archive collection is presently being organized in new dedicated space in the west wing of the building. Hopefully in about one year, we will be able to open the collection for use by people researching local history and genealogy. To that end, if you have any locally historically significant material, that you would like to donate, please contact me at 508 248-1632.

## **Membership Update:**

- Glenn Ellis

We have updated our mailing labels to include your membership status. If your address label contains the following message, "Membership Status: 2002 Dues are due" Please complete the coupon in this newsletter and return it to us with your payment. As you know, your dues are used to continue the preservation of Charlton's history. At \$5 for an individual membership and \$10 for a family it is one of the best deals in town! Please tell your friends and neighbors about us. We are always working to expand our membership and word of mouth is one of the best ways. If you know someone who is new to town, let them know of the benefits of being a member of the society!

The society is solely funded through private and corporate contributions as well as local grants. We do not receive any funding through local taxes. All contributions are tax deductible. We keep our membership dues low in order to include all that are interested. We rely on the generosity of those that can afford more to help us by including a tax-deductible contribution with their membership application. We would like to thank all of you who have contributed in the past and those of you who are considering it now!

Our 2003 season starts in June after the annual meeting. Paid membership renewals are due in May of each year.

Reminder: If your mailing address changes, please let us know. If your newsletter is returned and we do not have your correct address you will be dropped from the mailing list. If you have any questions concerning your membership status, please contact Glenn Ellis at 508 248-7913.

## **The Decorating Committee**

- Joyce Stewart

Spring has sprung and it is time to begin this year's work at the tavern. The Decorating Committee started to research the past paint

choices in the Black Mantel room, Southeast Bed Chamber and the Receiving Room. By sanding various areas of woodwork we have uncovered many layers of paint colors. With the increased sunlight we will be able to match the colors found with the historic color charts. Blue, grey, green and putty colors were found among the layers. We will continue to refine the process to date the color combos. Decorating and interpreting these rooms will add to the ongoing stories found in the tavern.

After considering many artists for the replication of the lion fireboard, we have chosen Inez Gornall from Uxbridge, Mass. We visited her at her studio and were overwhelmed by the variety and quality of her work. She has a serious library of resources on decorative arts and a workshop of over 50 examples of different mediums of her talents. Each piece represented the highest level of workmanship. We are very pleased to have Inez accept our project. Mass. Cultural Council in Charlton has extended this grant after we met with them to update the progress of our search for the best artist for this project.

The Decorator's editor Shirley Baer contacted us with the news that the Rider Tavern will be featured in the Spring 2003 addition of the Journal of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc. An eight page layout of photographs and text shares the treasures of the tavern with the reader. Copies of the journal will be added to our library.

We are interested in recording the artwork created in Charlton. If anyone has original artwork (stenciling, samplers, pictures, paintings, etc.) from the 1800's that can be attributed to originating in Charlton we would appreciate a call to Don W. at 508-248-1632 for further research.

## **Proposed By-Law changes to be discussed at the Annual Meeting**

- Glenn Ellis

The Board of Directors has voted to bring a proposed amendment to our by-laws to the annual meeting to be voted on by the general membership. The proposed change would extend the term limit of the President of the Board of Directors from 2 years to 4 years. It would effect the language in the third sentence of the paragraph under the heading PRESIDENT as follows: "The President shall not serve more than *four* consecutive terms in this office, but may be reelected after a lapse of one year or more." The President, all other officers and at-large members of the Board will still be required to be elected by the general membership each year at the Annual Meeting.

## **Calendar of Events:**

### **May 3, 2003 Saturday from 9:00 to 2:00 Yard Sale Fundraiser at the Tavern**

We will be selling many items that have been donated to be sold. They will include tools, antique bottles, household goods, collectables and many other serendipitous items. Stop by and search for treasures!

### **June 2, 2003 Monday at 7:00 Charlton Historical Society's Annual Meeting to be held at the Tavern**

This is our annual business meeting. All annual reports will be presented and next years Board of Directors will be elected. Mr. Edward Hood, a Curator from Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge will present a talk on "The Enduring People". This discussion of the local Nipmuc Indians should prove to be both enlightening and entertaining.

### **June 22, 2003 Sunday at 12:30 Tea and Tales at the Tavern**

For a donation of \$12 you can enjoy a relaxing Spring Tea and learn about the life of Martha Lincoln. For reservations call Don at 508 248-1632.

### **October 19, 2003 Saturday Charlton History Day at the Tavern and Northside Village.**

Mark your calendars now for this annual event. Charlton History Day is the society's biggest event of the year and a chance for you to see all that is new at the old Tavern. Watch our local papers for more information as we get closer to the date.

## **Volunteers Wanted:**

- Glenn Ellis

We need your help! If you are interested in volunteering at an event or being a member of the Board of Directors please let us know. We are also looking for help with the following projects: general maintenance and upkeep of the tavern, gardening and lawn care, and organization of the library and archival collection.

Working with the Historical Society to preserve the history of Charlton is a great way to meet new people and give something back to your community. You can include your phone number and area of interest with your membership renewal coupon and we will get in touch. Or call Don Weinhardt at 508 248-1632 or Glenn Ellis at 508 248-7913, we will be glad to talk to you!

**Charlton Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 252**  
**Charlton, MA. 01507**

*Address Correction Requested*

U.S.POSTAGE  
Charlton, MA

## ***Charlton Historical Society Newsletter***

**Membership Form**, Please complete the coupon and mail it with your check to the address provided

**Charlton Historical Society**  
**P.O Box 252**  
**Charlton, Massachusetts 01507**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership     **Individual \$5.00**     **Family \$10.00**     **Life \$50.00**  
 **2002 Renewal**     **2003 Renewal**     **New Member**

I do not care to join the CHS at this time. However, I would like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer at an event or be a member f the Board of Directors. Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_