
Charlton Historical Society Newsletter

Spring, 2006

Volume 31, Number 1

News for Charlton Historical Society Members

The Walking Stick

By Cindy Cooper

It started with a walking stick. A simple branch with one spur, capped with a bronze head inscribed, "A. Stone, Charlton, Mass." The walking stick was a donation to the Charlton Historical Society. It had come by way of a resident who had purchased it in either Pennsylvania or Ohio. The walking stick style and engraved script indicate it may have been made in the early to mid-1800s.



Research on the name in town during that time points to Amasa, Andros, Ann Maris, or Azubah Stone. The two women (Ann Maris and Azubah) were not likely to have an engraved walking stick.

There were two named Amasa, father and son. Dad was a farmer who lived in Charlton all his life. The 1822 town assessors' records show he owned 135 acres and in the 1840s he was taxed on about \$3000 in assets, the highest amount in the district. He married Esther Boyden on April 5, 1802. They had ten children: Mariann, Ann Maris, Lovine, Azubah, Joseph, Daniel, Liberty, Esther, Amasa, and Andros. School Money Books, part of the Town of Charlton Assessor's records, show he was paid for "providing schooling" in District 12 at least four terms between 1823 and 1832. Even with all those responsibilities, he served as a town assessor for two years, an overseer of the poor for three years, and a selectman one year. In 1837 and 1838 he was one of the town's two state representatives to the Massachusetts legislature.

The book, Cleveland, Past and Present, provides sketches of Cleveland's prominent citizens. Included are biographies of both Amasa and Andros Stone. It was published in 1869, while

they were both still alive and active in that community. It provides a wealth of information that is used as a resource for this text.

Amasa the son was born in Charlton on April 27, 1818. At age 17 he became an apprentice carpenter under his older brother. He helped build a church in the Podunk section of East Brookfield (the church is no longer there), and two churches in Warren. He bought the New England rights for the truss bridge developed by his brother-in-law, William Howe (who was married to Azubah). The investment started him in a very profitable enterprise, which included being the Superintendent of the New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield Railroad. He married Julia A. Gleason on January 22, 1842. They lived in Springfield until 1850, when they moved to Ohio with their two children, Adelbert and Clara. Another daughter, Flora, was born in Ohio. While in Ohio, Amasa became president of various railroads, sometimes superintending two at once. He was the epitome of multi-tasking: he held the position of director of more than one Ohio bank, and president of manufacturing companies, while still involved in the railroad industry, and maintaining partial rights to the Howe truss bridge. The 1880 US census lists him in Cleveland Ohio, age 62. In his household were his wife Julia, age 61, "keeping house," daughter Flora, "at home," and three servants. Amasa became a very prominent citizen in Ohio, including earning the title of Cleveland's first millionaire. After Amasa's son died in a swimming accident, he donated money (\$500,000!) in his son's memory to start Adelbert College at Western Reserve College (later Case Western Reserve University). Other Ohio establishments he helped to create were the Home for Friendless Strangers, for refugees of the civil war, and a house operated by the Cleveland City Hospital Society, used to care for the medical needs of the poor. His two daughters continued the legacy of generosity, donating to the hospital and supporting the college long after he died.

Andros Stone left home at 16 to pursue a carpenter's career. He worked for his brother, and then his brother-in-law (William Howe), when he decided to instead further his education. He

supplemented his income by teaching while attending an academy. He worked his way up in the bridge-building industry. Andros was a partner with another brother-in-law, Lucius Boomer. Together they built Howe truss bridges for 24 different railroads in three states in the 1850s. Like his brother Amasa, he was heavily involved in many manufacturing companies at one time. He owned interest in companies in Ohio and Illinois, including coalmines, steel and iron manufacturing, and the American Sheet and Boiler Plate Company.

That one artifact, a simple walking stick, has not conclusively led to the original owner. Instead, it opened the door to a personal aspect of Charlton's rich history, a history with strong connections to the building of industry in the United States.

By-Law Change Recommendation

Notice: The CHS annual meeting will be held on June 5, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the Rider Tavern. The agenda includes a vote on changing a portion of the bylaws. Currently, Section III includes, "Meetings or functions of the society shall be held by notification to the members, at least once each month from September to June, excluding January and February." The Board of Directors recommends deleting this sentence.

Gardening Committee Report

By Ruth Schwendeman

Spring *must* be coming soon: the Tavern's 200+ daffodils have decided to bravely show their first new leaves.

This spring will be a busy one, as the committee has two major tasks ahead of it in the Widow's Third dooryard garden. We'll be repainting the picket fence (modeled after a similar fence at Old Sturbridge Village), and replacing the wooden edgings of the flowerbeds with more permanent, softly-aged brick. This will be recycling at it's height, as most of the the bricks come from what we've uncovered here at the Tavern over the years. Don Weinhardt will act as master bricklayer, with the rest of us pitching in to help. The paint is a gracious donation from Sherwin Williams Company in Sturbridge.

If you are interested in assisting with either of these garden projects, or just helping in general, contact Ruth Schwendeman at 508-885-6255.

Many Hands Make Light Work

Two workshops using early American craft techniques will be presented this summer.

During the early 1800s, many buildings were treated with different types of painted effects intended to simulate wood, marble and stucco. In this way, pine could be disguised as a more expensive material. Marylou Davis will lead a one-day grain-painting workshop on June 24th. She is a conservator specializing in testing, analysis, and documentation of original historical finishes. She has an extensive background of teaching and speaking at paint decoration symposiums, including the National Center for Technology and Preservation Training, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, and Winterthur's Connoisseurship Seminar. At the end of the day, the participants will have completed a grain-painting project.

Linda Oakley will lead the half-day hand-sewing workshop on July 15th. Ms. Oakley is a Sewing Teacher who makes reproduction clothing and bonnets from the 17th through 19th centuries, and has presented sewing demonstrations for several historical societies throughout Massachusetts. She will demonstrate the sewing techniques commonly used in the 1800s. Participants will then apply the technique to create a sewing case called a "housewife." A "housewife" is a sewing kit primarily designed to hold needles and thread, with additional pockets to hold scissors, thimble and other sewing supplies. The pockets are stitched in a manner that will hold everything inside to avoid losing the contents when the housewife is rolled up. Each housewife is different, reflecting the individual woman's personality.

After both the workshops have been completed, on an August date to be determined, participants will be invited to return to the Rider Tavern, to use the techniques learned to create a group display piece for the Rider Tavern.

Pre-registration is required for both workshops because class sizes are limited. Due to the expected volume of interest, participants will be selected based on the order paid registrations are received. To register, call 508-248-3202 and leave a message.

A Charlton Sampler

Join us at the Rider Tavern for our annual tea on Sunday May 21, 2006 at 12:00 noon. Sample the historic flavors of Charlton. Taste the special blend of Rider Tavern Tea accompanied by corn chowder, rosemary bread with herb butter, and fudge brownie with mint whipped cream. Following the Tea, Aimee Newell, Curator of Textiles and Fine Arts at Old Sturbridge Village, will present an illustrated lecture, titled "Guide me in truth: Needlework Samplers in Charlton and New England." Using slides of samplers in the collection of Old Sturbridge Village, she will provide an overview of New England samplers from the late 1700s and early 1800s and then trace the history of several samplers that were made right here in Charlton.

Reservations are required. The last day to reserve your seat is May 12th. The cost of the Tea and program is \$12 when paid in advance, \$14 when paid at the door. For reservations, call Ruth at 508-885-6255. Your support goes to the continued restoration of the Rider Tavern.

Property Committee Report

By Don Weinhardt, Chairman and Archivist

This is a summary of just some of the artifact and archival items donated to the Charlton Historical Society since our last newsletter in the Fall 2005.

Lois Fay, Charlton - Candle holder, tin, electrified, made by Irvin's Country Tinware; **Claudia Lacerte**, Oakham - Document box, wood, grain painted by artist Petra Haas of Oley, PA; **Cathy L. Weinhardt-Peterson**, Northborough - Book, "As Ancient Is this Hostelry - The Story of the Wayside Inn", by Curtis F. Garfield and Alison R. Ridley; **Robert Beaudette**, Charlton - Two very early wood and graphite pencils, two clay pipe bowls, a ceramic tea cup for a doll, pot metal statue of a dog sitting.

Michael Faubert, Charlton - Walking stick, wood with decorative brass head inscribed: *A. Stone / Charlton / Mass.*, the tip is missing. The donor, was given this item by a friend, who purchased it in either Pennsylvania or Ohio. Amasa Stone was born in Charlton in 1818 but spent most of his adult life in the Midwest. His residence was

in Cleveland, Ohio and that is where he died; **John C. and Laola S. Miller**, Blacksburg, VA - Year books, twelve different, for the period of 1970-1978, they are from Charlton High School, Shepherd Hill Regional High School and Bay Path Vocational Technical School, also a selection of Town reports and tax maps.

R. Reed Grimwade, Charlton City - Blanket, wool, tan in color, 60" by 72", it was woven by the Charlton Woolen Mills in the early 1980's; **Rosemary Wright**, Charlton - Photos, three, copies, the subject is the Prindle Place at 71 Prindle Hill Road taken about 1900, also one showing the Weld & Prindle, Grain, Meal, Feed etc. business located in Southbridge; **Donald Beal**, Holland - Photos, color, nine in all, taken at Rider Tavern, of the festivities of History Day, Oct. 16, 2005, also a CD containing the same photos; **Town of Charlton 250th Anniversary Committee**, Charlton - DVD, titled "Celebrate Charlton 250 years of history", "T" shirt, dark blue, with logo CELEBRATE / 1755-2005 / CHARLTON, Flag, made by Quality Flags, two sided, white background with blue lettering, CELEBRATE / CHARLTON / Established 1755, Photo, color, group photo of community residents, take at the Morton Monument, on the Common, in front of the Town Municipal Office Building in May 2005.

Ruth Schwendeman, Charlton - Books, "The American Builder's Companion", by Asher Benjamin, this is a Dover 1969 reprint of the 1827 sixth edition, also "The Architect, or Practical House Carpenter", by Asher Benjamin, this is a Dover 1988 reprint of the 1830 edition; **Kevinetta O'Brien**, Charlton - Plate, commemorative, white ceramic, subject is the Bi-centennial, around the rim "United States of America 1776 - 1976 Charlton, Massachusetts" the illustration in the center is Dexter Memorial Hall; **William O. Hultgren**, Charlton - Book, "Old Glass European and American", by N. Hudson Moore, published by Frederick A. Stokes, New York, copyrighted 1924; **S. Lawrence Whipple**, Lexington - A very thick file containing newspapers and clippings dealing with the disastrous flood of Aug. 19, 1955.

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

Special thanks, to Frank Morrill, for his matting and framing work on some of our special archival items.

Decorating Committee Report

By Joyce Stewart

Celebrating our town's 250th Anniversary last year marked many goals for the tavern. A new sign for the tavern that was designed, constructed, painted and completed by local artist Heidi Howard awaits its galley posts. Ruth Schwendeman's research and pictures from her slide show on local taverns guided us on the decision to have this galley type of sign posts constructed for our "new tavern sign." A coordinated effort to install and erect the sign and posts relied on the talents of volunteers. Helping with the funding of the sign project is the Charlton Cultural Council through the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which funds projects through grant applications. They awarded the 2004-2005 grant for the Charlton Historical Society to commission artist Heidi Howard to create the tavern sign and an informational sign. Many thanks to all involved in the efforts to advertise ye old tavern.

Inside the tavern, the work continued with the completion of the decorative painting in the Southeast Bedchamber. The crew (Claudia LaCerte, Ruth Schwendeman and I) are pleased that our persistent efforts were finalized in time for History Day. This labor of love combined stencil and free hand painting techniques to accomplish a rich look of wallpaper. It commemorates the original found in the McIntire home on Bond Road, Charlton, MA. Our thanks to Don Weinhardt for his consistent measuring twice and providing extra green paint for any mistakes.

The Widow's Third Shoppe is completed with its painted gray woodwork, peachy-pink walls and darker gray floor. Harry Howard applied a delicate period frieze swirl running along the ceiling with stencil and paint. The Shoppe is awaiting visitors with the temptations of the collections of C.H.S. publications, various note cards, postcards and serendipitous items.

On History Day (October 16, 2005) we displayed some of the items from our own archives as well as borrowed items. A special Display Committee, chaired by Don Weinhardt, was formed to work together on displays for this day. An appropriate space was necessary to dedicate to these displays. Cindy Cooper, Don and Carol Weinhardt have taken their can do attitude and applied it to the former Doctor's Office and transformed it into the Gallery. This newly painted

space provided a bright location for visitors to view the select displays.

The Rider Tavern hosted a luncheon and business meeting for the local chapter of the Historical Society of Early American Decorators on Friday, September 9, 2005. Cindy Cheever's menu featured fresh produce from her garden combined with herbs, corn chowder, and pumpkin squares to top it off. With members serving and providing tours to the interested group the day was a success for both the Historical Society and the Tavern. Thanks to all that attended and to those that have helped over the years. We heard many thanks and appreciation for the work that the C.H.S. has done to preserve this historical building.

Tavern Improvements

By Cindy Cooper

The cold weather usually essentially shuts down CHS activities, because there is no central heat. However, this winter has been an exception.

The most observable change is the gallows-style support posts seen from the road. A contractor was hired to install them. However, the project would not have been possible without help from many volunteers who not only dug the deep holes, but also assisted with raising the heavy beams into place. Soon, the posts will hold the new tavern sign, painted by Heidi Howard of Connecticut. Funding for the sign came from a grant received from the Charlton Cultural Council and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Meanwhile, inside the Tavern, a fireplace reproduction has been completed. Many hours of volunteer time and labor, in conjunction with consultants, has helped to make the project a success. A grant from Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc., combined with a match from local donors and volunteer labor, provided the resources for the project.

Due to the complexity of the task, three consultants collaborated to help solve the mystery of the exact location and style of the fireplace. They concluded that no remnants of the original fireplace remain, but all indications point to a fireplace similar in construction and back-to-back with the fireplace in the adjoining dining room.

The reproduction fireplace and hearth, complete with a cooking crane, was built using bricks taken from an early 1800s building, and a cut granite block found at the Tavern property.

Yard Sale

The annual yard sale means Spring is on the way. Save plenty of time on Saturday, May 6th starting at 8:30 a.m. to visit the Rider Tavern to check out the assortment of tools, bottles, collectibles, vintage decorations, household goods, books, furniture, and many other items waiting for you.

If you have items to donate, bring them between 10 a.m. and noon any Saturday in April.

Calendar of Events

Spring Yard Sale Sat. May 6, Rider Tavern, 8:30 am. Donations are welcome.

Annual Tea, A Charlton Sampler, Sun. May 21, Rider Tavern, 12 noon. Includes program "Guide me in truth: Needlework Samplers in Charlton and New England" presented by Aimee Newell.

Annual Meeting Mon. June 5, Rider Tavern, 7:00 p.m. – Included are the annual meeting and vote on a recommended change to the by-laws. Program to be announced.

Grain Painting Workshop June 24, with a follow-up event in August. Led by Marylou Davis. Pre-registration is required.

Hand Sewing Techniques July 15, with a follow-up event in August. Led by Linda Oakley. Pre-registration is required.

Old Home Day Mon. Sept.4, Grange Hall at 9:00am. Display and Sales.

Charlton History Day Sun. September 24 at 12 noon, Rider Tavern, Militia Lot, No. 2 Schoolhouse.

Over \$2000 Raised Through Annual Appeal

By Aimee E. Newell

A round of applause for everyone who generously contributed to our 2005 annual appeal. The Charlton Historical Society members listed below contributed a total of more than \$2000, offering support for our 2005 activities.

The money raised through the annual appeal will be used to continue restoration work on the historic Rider Tavern. These funds will help us to complete the exterior painting job that was

started in 2005 and will also help us defray expenses for our slate of 2006 programs including the popular Spring Tea, a series of craft workshops, and History Day.

It's not too late to join the members below; tax-deductible contributions can be sent to the Charlton Historical Society at P.O. Box 252, Charlton, MA 01507.

Please join us in thanking all who contributed. We truly could not preserve and celebrate Charlton's history without you:

Shirley S. Baer
Robert Berlyn
Bill and Janet Blasius
Michelle Bohacs
Glenna Brownell
Jim Collins
Bryce G. Concklin
Peter and Cindy Cooper
Jack and Mary Cronin
Judith A. Crowley
Ruth Duhamel
Glenn and Patricia Ellis
Joseph M. and Lois S. Fay
Mrs. Robertine Fountain
Brian and Sandy Graeff
R. Reed Grimwade
Janice B. Habicht
Warren and Priscilla Harthan
Ronald and Sheila Hokanson
Harry Howard
Greg and Linda Hunter
Esther A. Krueger
David G. Kmetz
Bruce H. Lamprey
William and Barbara Meservey
John C. Miller
James Moran
Frank J. Morrill
Aimee E. Newell
Kevinetta O'Brien
Mary Whitehead Santos
Erik and Ruth Schwendeman
Judith Sessler
John Stevens
Fred and Joyce Stewart
Frank V. Toscano
Laura Truscott
Donald and Carol Weinhardt
Leonard H. White

THANK YOU

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

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Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Type of Membership:

___ **Individual \$5.00**

___ **Family \$10.00**

___ **Life \$50.00**

___ **Renewal**

___ **New Member**

I would like to volunteer at an event or be a member of the board of directors. Phone _____

___ **Enclosed is a donation of \$** _____

Comments: _____