

# *THE DURHAM HISTORIC ASSOCIATION NEWLETTER #236*

## *2014 - 2015*

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*Explore four centuries of Durham's history through our programs, museum, library, and newsletter by becoming a member of the Durham Historic Association. The museum is located on the second floor of the handsome, historic brick building at the crossroads of Main Street and Newmarket Road. The watercolor above by Charles J. Manuel depicts the Durham Town Hall in 1959.*

The Durham Historic Association  
15 Newmarket Rd Durham NH 03824

<http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/community/come-visit-us-our-air-conditioned-museum>  
Nancy Sandberg, President (603) 868-2350

# *THE HISTORY OF THE OLD DURHAM TOWN HALL AND OUR MUSEUM*

The old Town Hall is an outstanding architectural example of a free-standing, brick, commercial structure of the federal period, found only in the Piscataqua region, characterized by its three story height, curved corner bay and fine masonry.

It was built in 1825 as a store and warehouse by local merchant and shipbuilder Joseph Coe. This brick building, along with a large brick hotel and livery stable across the road (destroyed by fire in 1896) reflected Durham's prosperity in the federal era as a trading center and connecting link between waterborne and overland traffic from Portsmouth to Concord and from Portland to Boston. From the 1840s until recent times this building served as the center of town government. Following the ratification of the United States Constitution, time elapsed before the concept of the separation of church and state was put into practice in towns across the nation. In 1852 Langley & Butler, Durham contractors, were hired to remove the third floor and lengthen the windows to create a hall, the gathering place for residents to conduct Town Meeting. Before this time, and while under British rule, Town Meeting was held in the Meeting House. Durham's first Meeting House, with its parsonage, was on the south shore of the Oyster River by the fording place across from Bunker Creek. Two later Meeting Houses, with the minister's house nearby, stood on the site of the Sullivan Monument near the Mill Pond Falls. The Meeting House was used regularly for religious services but also for all meetings, discussion and voting by residents on town business. The purchase of a building for town government purposes was a necessary step in the separation of church and state. The old Town Hall was the first secular building in Durham utilized for town government under the U.S. Constitution.

In 1959 the Durham Selectman voted to allow the Durham Historic Association to use the second floor of the old brick Town Hall as a meeting place and museum dedicated to preserving books, documents and artifacts reflecting Durham's history.



The Durham Town Hall was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1936 and was included in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Durham Historic District in 1980.

*Merchant and Shipbuilder Joseph Coe, b. June 1<sup>st</sup> 1782 – d. April 22, 1852*

# DHA PROGRAM CALENDAR 2014 - 2015



## A TOUR OF THE HISTORIC MEADER-EMERSON FARM

184 Piscataqua Road

The Fall program is a rare opportunity to visit one of Durham's oldest farms. We have scheduled it for a Sunday afternoon so that participants may view the cape-styled farmhouse on the hilltop overlooking Little Bay and the surrounding fields sloping down to the shore with cellar hole and graveyard. Diane Newick and Janet Mackie will talk about the history of this family farm.



October 19, 2014 - Sunday 2 p.m.



## A CASE OF CURIOSITIES: FOUR ODDITIES FROM THE COLLECTION

Durham Public Library

This program will feature unusual items from the DHA Museum including a mystery item that will challenge the audience. Several DHA members will reveal the history and uses of the items.



January 27, 2015 - Tuesday 7 p.m. (Snow Date – January 29)



## A MOST AMAZING ENGINEERING FEAT: THE FIRST PISCATAQUA RIVER BRIDGE

Durham Public Library

Dr. Helen Frink will give an illustrated talk about the architect and builders of the Piscataqua River Bridge, described in a 1794 newspaper article as “the largest and most elegant bridge in North America..., one of the greatest pieces of mechanical genius done in America”.

April 21, 2015– Tuesday 7 p.m.



## THE DURHAM HISTORIC ASSOCIATION JUNE PICNIC

Thompson Inn at Highland Farm  
90 Bennett Road Durham NH

The annual June Picnic will be held at the recently restored Thompson Inn at Highland Farm and hosted by Stephen and Lori Lamb. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the 1960's “Highland House” was a popular summer resort.



June 14, 2015– Sunday 5 p.m.

# WELCOME TO THE DURHAM HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

*As President of the Durham Historic Association I would like to invite you to join a diverse group of history-loving members. The Durham Historic Association celebrates the history of the Town of Durham, NH by preserving documents, books, photographs, and artifacts in our museum that tell the story of important events, persons, and places.*

*Founded in 1851 the Association was the first historical society chartered in New Hampshire and organized “for the purpose of preserving the remembrance of events connected with the history of the Town of Durham, or of individuals who may have resided there...”*

*The Association meets four times a year, often at the new Durham Public Library on Madbury Rd., or in our museum, and when appropriate at an historic house, farm or site. These meetings are all open to the public. Recent programs include: Dick O’Kane, The WWII Submarine Commander; The Fortieth Anniversary of the Defeat of Onassis’s Plan for the World’s Largest Oil Refinery, and a June Picnic at the historic Wormwood-Dame Farm.*

*We publish an annual Newsletter to inform the membership of upcoming programs, work in progress in the museum, additions to the collections, and research revelations, often utilizing historic photos from our large collection.*

*The Association has published and offers for sale the following local histories: **Landmarks in Ancient Dover** by Mary P. Thompson 1892, **History of the Town of Durham New Hampshire** by Stackpole, Thompson and Meserve 1913 , **Durham, New Hampshire: A History 1900-1985**, an invaluable recent local history, and **A Walking Tour**, a full color brochure through Durham’s Historic District.*

*The DHA is committed to increasing the knowledge of Durham’s historic structures throughout the town and in the Historic District.*

*I look forward to having you join our efforts to make history come alive!*

*Nancy Sandberg*

## ***DHA EXECUTIVE BOARD - OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS***

<b><i>Officers</i></b>			<b><i>Directors</i></b>	
<b>President</b>	Nancy Sandberg	Term 2013 - 2015	Doug Karo	Term 2014 - 2016
<b>Vice President</b>	Janet Mackie	Term 2013 - 2015	Dick Lord	Term 2013 - 2015
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Mary Margaret Jaques	Term 2013 - 2015	Susan Reid MacLennan	Term 2014 - 2016
<b>Corresponding Secretary</b>	Julian Smith	Term 2014 - 2016	Dave Strong	Term 2013 - 2015
<b>Treasurer</b>	Marjorie Smith	Term 2014 - 2016	Doug Wheeler	Term 2014 - 2016



# THE OWNERS of the WORMWOOD-DAME FARM c.1720 to PRESENT



1<sup>st</sup> – William Wormwood (born c.1685 in Maine) and his wife Martha Reynolds were baptized at Oyster River in 1721 – his sister Hopedill Wormwood had married Eli Demeritt c.1697. William & Martha had 6 children; their 3 daughters married Joseph Doe, John Doe and Benjamin York. Son Jacob died a young man, William married Susanna Dearing and moved to Raymond, and Joseph remained on the farm.

2<sup>nd</sup> – Joseph Wormwood (b.1708) married Deliverance Pomeroy. He participated in several of the winter campaigns to track Indians with others from Oyster River. Joseph & Deliverance had a son named Joseph.

3<sup>rd</sup> – Joseph Wormwood (1730-1807) married Elizabeth. Their daughter Anna married Reuben Davis and lived in Nottingham. Their son Valentine married Polly Drew and moved to Wolfeboro. Their son Joseph lived on the farm.

4<sup>th</sup> – Joseph Wormwood (1768-1849) married Polly Durgin daughter of Lt James Durgin & Mary Drew. Polly died giving birth to their only child Anna. Two years later Joseph married Elizabeth Pinder Burnham. She was the widow of John A Burnham. Three years later, at age 42, Joseph placed this ad in the NH Gazette:

*A valuable farm in Durham situated within two miles of the Landing, and within a half mile of Piscataqua River, containing 220 acres of excellent Land, a good two story House, a Barn 70 feet in length and out house on the same, a well of water within two rods of the House, and has a proportional quantity of mowing, tillage and pasturing, with an orchard sufficient to make 40 barrels of cyder yearly, with a large quantity of timber and valuable rocks suitable for market—Said farm to be sold together or in Lots, as may best accommodate the purchasers—  
Any person wishing to view the premises may apply to the subscriber living thereon.  
Joseph Wormwood, Durham October 22, 1810.*

Over the next two years he sold portions of his homestead farm:

- 11 acres, 123 rods in Colley's Marsh to Robert Mathes
- 15 acres at the west end of 'my ox pasture' to Jedediah Ingalls
- 5 acres of saltmarsh and thatchbed at Stevensons Creek, that my father purchased of Stephen Jenkins in 1770, the other part I purchased of James Dearing in 1787, to Daniel Mathes

Joseph also sold for \$50 – his “pew # 46 on the lower floor of the Meeting House, adjoining the men's singing seats and the pew formerly owned by Ebenezer Thompson Esq, late of Durham, being the northeast corner floor pew” to Valentine Smith.

## *THE OWNERS of the WORMWOOD-DAME FARM c.1720 to PRESENT cont.*

5<sup>th</sup> - In 1814 the remainder of the farm was sold to Timothy Pinkham (b.1792), the youngest son of Thomas Pinkham & Sarah Ballard. Thomas Pinkham had died in 1811 while visiting his other children who had moved to Peeling (now Woodstock, NH). Timothy had married Sally Garland the same year; after two years he sold the farm and later lived in Newmarket.

6<sup>th</sup> - In 1816 the farm was sold to Comfort Laskey (b.1776), widow of Jonathan Laskey of Lee, NH. She lived on the farm with her 4 minor children and hired farm labor. She later moved to Milton and lived with her son Peletiah Jones Laskey.

7<sup>th</sup> - In 1821 the farm was sold to Asa Dame (1789-1861) son of Joseph Dame & Abigail Leathers. Asa had been a soldier in the War of 1812; he was captured and survived Dartmoor Prison. At the time he purchased the farm he was living in Boston. Twenty years after purchasing the farm Asa married Lucia Gilman Bickford (1812-1902) daughter of Robert Bickford & Hannah Dame. They had two sons:

- Asa G Bickford (1844-1874) who married Martha Sinclair (1843-1868) daughter of Michael Sinclair & Abigail.
- Their only child George O Dame died in 1864, age 6 months.

8<sup>th</sup> - John Bickford Gilman Dame (1848-1923) married twice:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Arvilla D Tufts (1854-1881), daughter of Samuel Tufts & Laurietta Davis. Their daughter Villa died young.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Clara Etta Kent (1867-1955), daughter of Eben Kent & Anna Nute. Their daughter Bertha Annie Dame (1885-1926) married in 1906 Harrie Rand, son of Stephen Rand & Sarah Emerson. Harrie and Bertha lived in the house now part of the Town Hall and had one son, Weldon Harrie Rand (1917-2011).

In 1906 John B.G. Dame and his wife Clara adopted Clara's niece, Susan Annie Walker. Susan's mother, Susan Nute Kent Walker, had died shortly after her birth. Susan's father was Lewis Alcott Walker who later married his wife's niece Marion Florence Kent, daughter of John Kent and Lizzie Simpson. Marion was the aunt of Roy Kent of Newmarket.

9<sup>th</sup> – Susan Annie Walker (1906-1981) married Lewis Minichiello (1904-1981) of Portsmouth. The Minichiellos lived on the farm after retiring to Durham. The Minichiello children divided and sold the farm in 1997. The Nature Conservancy bought the 95 acres west of Crommett Creek, now traversed by part of the Sweet Trail between Dame Road and Longmarsh Road. The remaining 45 acres with the homestead were sold to

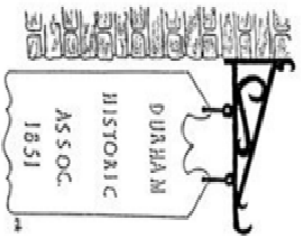
10<sup>th</sup> – Barry and Sky Ryan in 1997, our gracious hosts for the 2014 Durham Historic Association Annual Picnic!

*Research by Janet Mackie*

# DURHAM HISTORIC ASSOCIATION – MEMBERSHIP INFO



<b>MEMBER INFORMATION</b>		<b>DATE:</b>
NAME:		
EMAIL ADDRESS:		
<i>With rising postage costs we would prefer to communicate with you electronically</i>		
STREET:		
CITY/STATE/ZIP:		
TELEPHONE (optional):		
NEW MEMBER (Y/N):		RENEWAL (Y/N):
<b>ANNUAL DUES</b>	<b>AMOUNT ENCLOSED</b>	
INDIVIDUAL - \$25	DUES: \$ _____	
FAMILY - \$40	ADDITIONAL DONATION (TAX DEDUCTIBLE): \$ _____	
LIFE MEMBERS - n/a	TOTAL: \$ _____	
<i>note: membership runs from April 1st to March 31st of each year</i>		
PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: <b>DURHAM HISTORIC ASSOCIATION</b>		
MAIL TO: <b>DURHAM HISTORIC ASSOCIATION c/o DURHAM TOWN OFFICES, 15 NEWMARKET ROAD, DURHAM, NH 03824</b>		
<i>Please return this form with your payment</i>		



**DURHAM HISTORIC ASSOCIATION  
C/O DURHAM TOWN OFFICES  
15 NEWMARKET ROAD  
DURHAM, NH 03824**