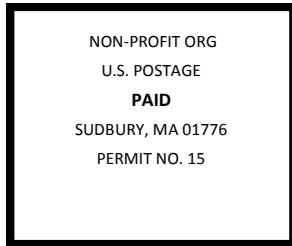


Sudbury Historical Society, Inc.  
322 Concord Rd.  
Sudbury, MA 01776

Address correction requested.



# The Sudbury Chronicle



Sudbury Historical Society, Inc.

Fall 2015



Cattails by Robert Diefenbacher for the 375 Photo Contest

## What Makes Sudbury Sudbury? Wetlands along the river.



Herbert Atkinson

### The Atkinsons

Researched By Caitlin Roberts

Herb Atkinson is a historic icon of Sudbury who, with the help of his wife Esther, played a large role in making Sudbury into the town it is today. Herb first put Sudbury on the map when he began making soil test kits at his home and then expanded and created Sudbury Laboratories. Since the Atkinsons had no children they donated their wealth and land to the town of Sudbury by creating the Sudbury foundation which is still thriving to this day.

**Born in the West:** Herb was born in Seattle in 1894 and his wife Esther in Spokane in 1887. Herb attended college at the University of Washington and there he met Esther. While at school, according to John Tafts' book, Herb's first job was a municipal

position at a licensing office in Seattle. While he was working there he studied subjects he found interesting all the way from agriculture to accounting, with a goal of a career in insurance.

They then moved to Denver Colorado. At this time Herb became interested in the Sundstrand Adding Machine and began working there. Also while in Denver, Herb became friends with a sheep farmer and became interested in owning his own farm and raising sheep.

**Came to Sudbury:** When brought to Boston for work, Herb and Esther lived in the North Shore briefly until they found the town of Sudbury. In 1928 they bought the large old Perry homestead which is known today



Esther Atkinson

as the Babe Ruth House, located at 558 Dutton Road. It is a 19th century colonial style home and at that time had 100 plus acres. Herb and Esther fixed up

the farm, started to raise sheep, and did some general farming while Herb continued his work with his company.

**Soil Test Kits:** Herb wanted to start planting beans. A neighboring farmer named Harvey Fairbank, told him the land there was not good for growing beans and that he would need to get his soil tested. Herb then turned to



Their Home in Sudbury

chemist friend Carl Draves who explained that due to a common local condition, the soil is acidic and each field would need to be tested. Herb decided to experiment with soil test kits and began making them at his home and barn. He developed the kits based on formulas created by agronomists at the University of Massachusetts. The kits identify deficiencies in the soil - like lime, nitrogen, phosphorous and potash - and tell the tester how to blend the correct balance of fertilizer to increase growing.

**Community interest:** While all this was happening, Herb and Esther still found time to go to church and be involved in the community; they went to all three of the churches in Sudbury but joined the Unitarian Church.

**Business grew:** At first it was just the two of them making kits, Esther was Herb's assistant while Herb was in charge of building the kits. .

When Herb's soil kits tests became popular he expanded and created

*continued on Page 3*

Sudbury Historical Society, Inc., 322 Concord Rd., Sudbury Massachusetts 01776

978-443-3747

info@sudbury01776.org

www.sudbury01776.org

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**Officers and Trustees***Keeping the Spirit  
of Sudbury's Past Alive***Stewart Hoover**  
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**Lee Swanson****President's Letter****Sudbury History Center  
Closer to Realty**

Thanks to State Senator Mike Barrett, we have been awarded \$290,000 in this year's state budget for the restoration and rehabilitation of the Loring Parsonage in Sudbury's Town Center. Although Governor Baker initially vetoed this provision in the budget Senator Mike Barrett, Senator Jamie Eldridge and Representative Carmine Gentile worked together to override the governor's veto and these funds are now secured.

The Loring Parsonage is a historic treasure and in 2014 the society conducted a feasibility study for rehabbing the Parsonage as a History Center and Museum. The resulting recommendation was that this 300 year building be restored and opened to the public to be regularly enjoyed. The estimated cost of rehab and restoration was about one million dollars.

Unlike most historic towns, Sudbury has no History Center and Museum telling the town's important role in the history of America, starting with the earliest settling of New England, the King Philip War, the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and the industrialization of America. The Sudbury Historical Society has collected and accessioned thousands of objects, documents, maps and photos attesting to our past, but these wonderful items are not accessible to the public to view, research, and truly enjoy. There is already about \$250,000 from bequests and private donations held in Town funds for a museum and now with the help from our legislators the goal is within striking distance. The work of our two state senators and representative will make a significant contribution to the vitality and spirit of Sudbury. Over the next year the Historical Society, Inc., along with the Historical Commission and other town boards, will be working on this project so that Sudbury can finally have a place where our history and heritage can be displayed, further researched, and made accessible to all who live in and visit this truly special community.

Stewart Hoover

**2015**

**Friday, September 11 – T-wisted Frozen Yogurt Fundraiser**, 410 Boston Post Road, 3:00–9:00 pm. 15% of sales will go to support the SHS. Join us at dusk by the outdoor movie screen to watch clips of Sudbury's own Rex Trailer on his TV show, Boomtown.

**Saturday, September 12 – Olde Time Community Fair** in the Town Center, 10:00 am–4:00 pm. FREE. The SHS will host "Pies at the Parsonage" (a pie eating contest) and display our replica Native American wetu with a demonstration of the Three Sisters. Be sure to get your picture taken in the stocks by the Town Hall.

**Saturday, September 26 – Colonial Faire** sponsored by the Sudbury Companies of Militia & Minute and the Sudbury Ancient Fyfe and Drum Companie, Longfellow's Wayside Inn, SHS Booth from 10:00 am–4:00 pm. Admission \$2.

**Saturday, October 3 – Walking Tour of Wadsworth Cemetery**, 74 Concord Road, 10:00 am. FREE for SHS Members, \$5 for non-members. Tour guides Elin Neiterman and Sally Hild will point out memorial art and architecture, burial sites of Sudbury's notable citizens, and explain burial customs and how this quiet sanctuary evolved and is maintained. Parking at the cemetery.

**Saturday, October 17 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual SHS Tag Sale Fundraiser**, Sudbury Town Hall Lawn, 9:00 am–3:00 pm. Donations of sale items welcome now through the sale date. Call Stewart Hoover at 978/443-9023 or Ursula Lyons at 978/443-9638 for arrangements.

**Sunday, November 1 – Early Maps of Sudbury: Who Made them and Why**, Lecture and Exhibition at the Town Hall, 2:00 pm. Speaker Jan Hardenbergh will discuss his newly published book, *Historical Maps of Sudbury, Massachusetts*. Maps will be on display from the collection of Robert Maier.

**Friday, November 6 – Musicians of the Old Post Road Concert "Earthly Baroque,"** First Parish Sudbury, 327 Concord Road, 7:30 pm. Contact MOPR at [www.oldpostroad.org](http://www.oldpostroad.org) for tickets.

**Saturdays, December 5 & 12; Sundays, December 6 & 13**, 10:00 am–4:00 pm and **Wednesday, December 9**, 6:00–9:00 pm. – **"Hosmer Goes Hollywood" Open House**, 299 Old Sudbury Road. Visit the Hosmer House. The SHS will be decorating the front bedroom with a favorite children's movie theme. Come and see our "story!"

**Sunday, December 20 – Christmas Caroling on the steps of Town Hall followed by a Party with Santa and Mrs. Claus**, 3:00–5:00 pm. The U.S. Marines will collect new, unwrapped gifts for Toys for Tots.

**2016**

**Wednesday, January 13 – Benefit Night at Bertucci's Restaurant**, Wayland Town Center Plaza, 14 Elissa Avenue, 11:00 am–9:00 pm. Dine in, carry out, or delivery. Bertucci's will donate 15% of the receipts to the SHS. Bring your family and friends!

**Sunday, February 7 – A Little Bit of Sweden, A History of Svensk Kaffestuga**, Illustrated talk at the Town Hall, 2:00 pm. Speaker Elin Neiterman, with Lisa Forsberg, granddaughter of the restaurant's owners, will discuss the history of the restaurant that stood at 394 Boston Post Road. Special assorted Swedish refreshments will be served after the program. Come and share your recollections.

**Sunday, March 6 – The League of Women Voters: Helping to Shape Sudbury's History for 60 Years**, Illustrated talk at the Town Hall, 2:00 pm. In honor of Women's History Month LWV Board member and former President Sue Abrams will talk about the history and founding of the League in 1957 and the various League-sponsored studies that have impacted Sudbury's civic life ever since.

**Wednesday, April 6 – Ezekiel How: Innkeeper, Soldier, Citizen**. At the Wayside Inn, Time TBD. Join the SHS at Longfellow's Wayside Inn as Reenactor Dr. Tony Howes details Ezekiel How's involvement in Sudbury life before, during and after the Revolution. In honor of the Inn's 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, partake in a special prix fixe dinner and enjoy our program.

**Tuesday, April 19 – Red Cross Blood Drive** at the Town Hall. Times TBD. Be a part of an old Sudbury tradition.

**Founders Circle Members Event**. Date and Location to be Announced.

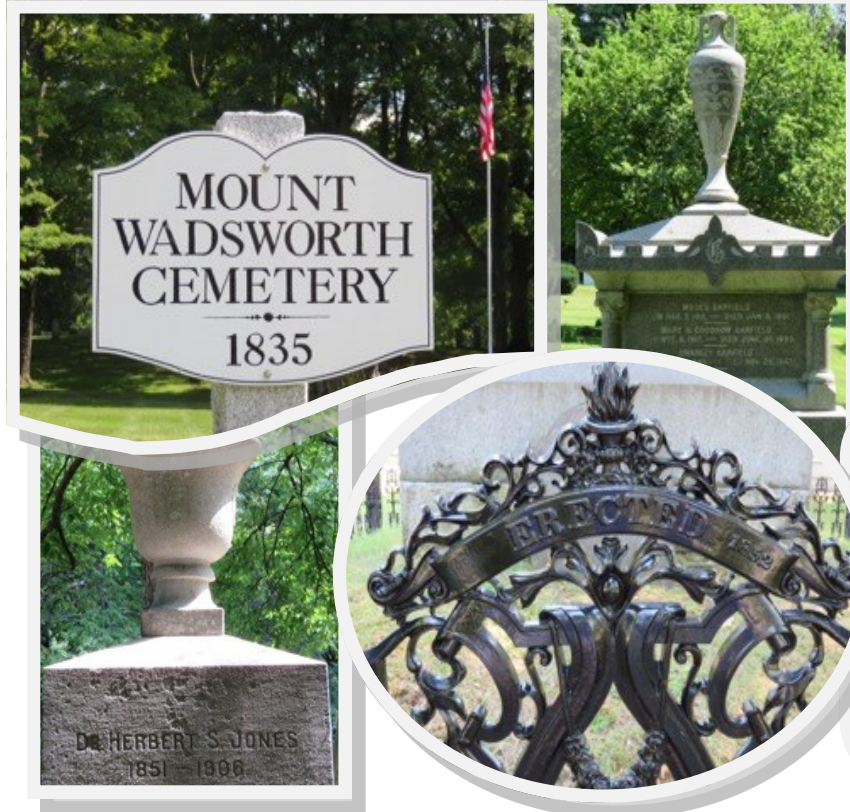
**Saturday, May 21 – Home & Hearth Tour Fundraiser** – Details to follow.

**Sunday, June 5 – History of Wolbach Farm** in collaboration with the Sudbury Valley Trustees at Wolbach Farm, 18 Wolbach Road, 2:00 pm. Photographer Alice Wellington will discuss the history of the Wolbach Farm and family and how SVT evolved. SVT will lead a walking tour following the lecture.





### Save the date: Walking Tour October 3



Enjoy hearing how the Wadsworth cemetery evolved. Learn about the notable Sudbury people buried there, and about burial customs and the art and artistry of monuments, memorials, grave stones and cemetery architecture.

#### SHS Seeks Homes in King Philip Area for House Tour

Due to the positive response toward our first Home & Hearth Tour held last May, the SHS is planning another tour featuring the King Philip neighborhood. We are seeking homeowners to open their homes and gardens on Saturday, May 21, 2016. As this is a chance to spotlight the neighborhood's history and evolution, we are interested in homes of all styles and periods. If you have done some creative restoration and renovation, attendees may get inspiration for their own properties after visiting.

A program book will include a map of the participating properties along with a photo and brief write-up about the history of the homes and any interesting stories you have about living there.

This event is our spring fundraiser. Tickets will be sold to gauge attendance and the SHS can provide volunteers to assist with visitors. Last year approximately 130 attendees participated in the tour.

**To participate** If you live in the King Philip neighborhood and would be willing to show your home, please contact Sally Hild at or 978-443-3747 or [director@sudbury01776.org](mailto:director@sudbury01776.org).

Thank you for your consideration.

#### Thank You and Welcome

The SHS would like to extend a heart-felt thank you to Daphna Cox who is moving on from the Board of Trustees. For the last few years Daphna assisted with collections accessioning and our educational programs and she helped facilitate lay-out and editing of recent issues of our *Sudbury Chronicle* newsletter. We will miss her ability to wordsmith and her keen eye for detail as well as her positive approach to all things SHS. Many thanks, Daphna.

We are pleased to welcome Katina Fontes as a new Trustee. An anthropologist and educator by trade, Katina has spent her volunteer time for the last year working on accessioning projects and organizing our institutional filing system which was in desperate need of an overhaul. Katina has also agreed to serve on the Development Committee and we look forward to implementing her new ideas.

Our Finance Committee has also increased its number with new SHS member Debra Zurka agreeing to serve. Debra works in the banking industry and has also served on the Town's Finance Committee, so her skills are both welcome and essential as we head into new territories with fundraising in the coming years.

Welcome and Thank you Katina and Debra.



Page 1 continued—Atkinson



A Sudbury Soil Test Kit

Sudbury Laboratories in 1934. There he employed a few people to work with him.

Sudbury Laboratory grew and prospered as the years went on selling millions and millions of kits around the world. The kits sold very well because they gave people the ability to test their own soil without having to hire someone to do it. People appreciated this convenience.

Herb had many interests through his life, including boating. The soil testing kits were doing so well Herb decided to move into the marine field and make numerous products to be distributed all over the world.

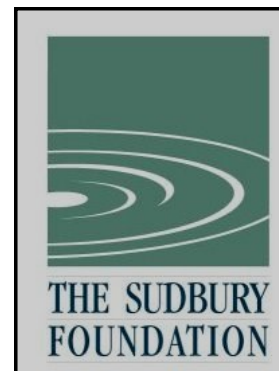
One new product was "Skeeter Skats" which was praised by a Sudbury resident who was at war. Lefty Mullins wrote from Africa that the product made by Herb Atkinson's Sudbury Laboratory worked well on local mosquitoes.

**Legacy:** While his business became a success, Herb and Esther's interest in helping people grew. In 1952, they established the Sudbury Foundation. Since the laboratory was prospering, the Atkinsons shared their wealth with others, both directly and through their Foundation.

At the age of 72, on Oct4, 1966 Herb Atkinson passed away of prostate cancer. Seven years later, Esther died from arteriosclerotic heart disease on September 4, 1973 at the age of 86.

As stated in the *Sudbury Foundation* book, Herb was known as a tall, well-built man who was charming, soft-spoken, modest, and a good friend while Esther was known as a petite, charming, beautiful woman who always wore a bonnet in church. They are both buried in Sudbury behind the Unitarian Meeting House in the New Town Cemetery by a rock from their farm. Having had no children or close relatives, they left their entire estate to the Sudbury Foundation to carry on their charitable work.

The Foundation now awards grants and scholarships in excess of 1.2 million dollars annually. The Atkinson's would be proud of how successful their foundation has been in helping Sudbury and its people. The Foundation's first gift of



land to the Conservation Commission was the 11.9 acre wetland strip adjacent to Hop Brook. Their house and barn were then

sold for \$183,000 with 2.08 acres of land on March 9, 1984. Sale of the rest of the Atkinson land gave the Sudbury Foundation well over 10 million dollars. As the years go on the Sudbury Foundation continues to donate to the town of Sudbury. One of the most well-known contributions to the town was the Atkinson pool.

**Atkinson Pool:** According to the Sudbury Town Reports of 1987 and 1988, the town broke ground to begin building the pool in 1987 and it was then officially opened on January 26 of 1988. It is still an important place in Sudbury which provides people with not only a place to swim year round but also facilities for athletes.

**References:** The Sudbury Historical Society reference library contains books with this information. Also various versions of Herb's soil testing kits are in the Society's collections. One was sent here from Belford New Jersey where it was found in the wreckage from Hurricane Katrina. The kit was sent here by its discoverer Bryan Afier. It arrived slightly rusty with a few broken bottles but the SHS cleaned it up

**Sources:**

*Sudbury 1980-1989 100 years in the life of a Town*, Written by Curtis F Garfield

*Herbert J. Atkinson 1894-1966*, Written by John E. Taft

*The Sudbury Foundation Gift of Herbert and Esther Atkinson*, Written by John E. Taft

*Those Amazing Sudbury Soil Test Kits*, by Special to the *Town Crier*, [wicked-local.com](http://wicked-local.com)

*Soil Testing in Massachusetts Farm Bulletin Issue 43: February 24-March 9, 1978*

[Sudburyfoundation.org](http://Sudburyfoundation.org) -*About the Atkinson's*,





### Membership Form

Please complete your form and mail with a check made payable to the Sudbury Historical Society, 322 Concord Road, Sudbury, MA 01776. Be sure to list your name as you would like it to appear in our records.

Name(s):

Address:

Town, State, Zip:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Check membership category:

\$15 Student (age 21 and under.)

\$30 Individual

\$50 Family

Founders Circle:

\$100 Peter Noyes Supporter

\$150 John Nixon Champion

\$250 John Goodnow Sponsor

\$500 Josiah Haynes Patron

\$1,000 Israel Loring Benefactor

I am interested in volunteer opportunities.

I would prefer not to join at this time, but here is my contribution for \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help preserve Sudbury history.

### From the Director



The lazy days of summer have come to an end. These past months were indeed enjoyable, but I can assure you that they were anything but lazy at the SHS. Our volunteers have been working diligently. The Collections Committee has rearranged our work spaces, making them more functional for researchers, archiving and accessioning. (We're ready to welcome new volunteers.) Our entire accounting system has been updated with new software - not an easy task over countless hours. The History Center and Museum project

has gained new momentum through our legislators' tireless actions and with guidance from town staff.

The Sudbury History Collaborative has met twice now to share ideas and information, and the SHS has a seat on the Town Hall Blue Ribbon Committee to determine the best use for our Town Hall. It has been a pleasure to see everyone hard at work, together getting us closer to our goals.

Be sure to note our 2015-2016 events calendar planned by our Program Committee. Included are traditional programs such as the Carol Sing and Sunday afternoon lectures in the Town Hall. Several talks touch upon 20<sup>th</sup>-century subjects such as the Svensk Kaffestuga Restaurant, the history of the League of Women Voters and history of Wolbach Farm and SVT. New programs at new venues are also planned. In October we will lead a walking tour of beautiful Wadsworth Cemetery. In April there will be a dinner and talk at Longfellow's Wayside Inn. And, given the positive response we had last May, we will hold another House Tour. What we can be most pleased about with this array is how much the SHS is working in concert with other institutions to produce something special. Sudbury has a lot to offer.

We hope you will see something of interest. We encourage you to tell your friends about the SHS, to invite them to our programs, and to possibly join our membership. To achieve what we dream will take community support. We appreciate yours and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Sally Purrington Hild

### Community Partners

**Israel Loring Benefactors**  
Boston Design Guide  
Cavicchio Greenhouses Inc.  
The Coulter/Weeks Charitable Foundation  
Merrill Lynch, The Keeney Group  
The Sudbury Foundation

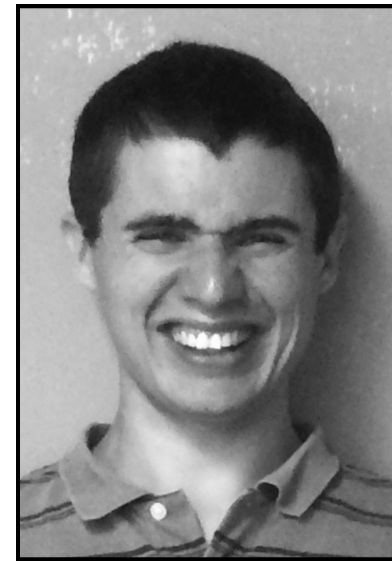
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Sudbury Cultural Council  
Tails by the Wayside  
Walker Development

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Stoner Insurance Agency  
Sudbury Extended Day, Inc  
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Ti-SALES Inc.  
Village Forward  
Wayside Inn Corporation

**Friends of the SHS**  
J.P. Bartlett Co.  
CJ's Gourmet Pizza and Grill  
Sudbury Pizza Place  
Sudbury Villagers  
Trader Joe's  
T-Wisted Frozen Yogurt



### Volunteer Spotlight : Peter Ademo

Peter Ademo is a volunteer who comes to SHS through the Crossroads School in Natick. The school works with 85 different school districts to help special needs students. The school's vision is to "To ensure every student leaves Crossroads more skillful, confident, productive, and independent." It helps its students transition to adulthood with skills to be productive members of society. Work is a big part of that. The students learn job skills by working at various locations. Prior to SHS Peter worked at a local farm.

Crossroads contacted SHS several months ago to see if an opportunity for work was available. There is always work at SHS and we happily agreed to his coming. With a job coach, he works for an hour on Mondays to help

maintain our space. He sweeps, vacuums, dusts, and moves boxes. He also helps with odd jobs as they come up. In the future we will try different jobs to broaden his capabilities. It has been a great match and we are happy with his work.

### Sudbury On the Web

On the web are many ways to keep updated on what is happening at the Sudbury Historical Society: You can "Like" The Sudbury Historical Society on Facebook. "Like" our posts and share them with your friends. We post our upcoming events, historical news stories, and share photos of our collection not on display at the Society.

While you're on Facebook, check out a fun site, "If You Grew Up in Sudbury" to hear stories of growing up in our wonderful town.

Follow us on Twitter at Sudbury Hist Society @Sudbury\_History

Visit our website at sudbury01776.org. We have new visitors to our site every week. We even have visitors from overseas from as diverse locations as Tunisia and Iraq

E-Mail us at info@sudbury017756.org





## Welcome New Members!

(since January 2015)

Susan Berry  
 Frank Burk  
 Heather Clement, Tails by the Wayside  
 Alexa and Peter Crowe  
 Laura and Neal Dowling  
 David Elliott, Village Forward  
 Margaret Fotakis  
 Joyce and Pierre Fricke  
 Amber and Josh Hillman  
 Susan and Robert Iuliano  
 Todd Jewett  
 Lindsay Nicholson  
 Alison Phillips  
 Herbert Rosen  
 Janice Rudolf and John Emery  
 Debra Zurka

*Fifes continued from previous page*

We played for the Queen of England in 1975. There was a parade and ceremony in Government Center. We were in the parade and for the ceremony were assigned a place right beside a passageway that had been roped off for her to use in leaving. We put the kids up front at the rope. At that time there was a lot of unrest in Ireland. On the other side of the passageway there were Irish dissidents holding placards and waving them. When the Queen came by she turned to face our children and shake their hands – thereby turning her back on the Irish dissidents.



### Volunteer Spotlight: Caitlin Roberts

I have been volunteering at the Sudbury Historical Society since July as a summer intern.

As a history major and resident of Sudbury the SHS was what I was looking for this summer to get more experience in the historical field. I also wanted to learn more about my town's history.

I worked on two projects -- The main project was a research paper on Herb and Esther Atkinson of Sudbury using items found in the SHS collection (*see page 1 for the story*). The second project was a new reference brochure for researchers.

Without being a volunteer at the SHS I never would have known the amount

about Sudbury's history as I do now.

Having graduated from Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School in 2013 I am currently a student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, anticipating graduation in 2017. I would like a future career in the history field in either a historical society or a museum with the ability to educate others.

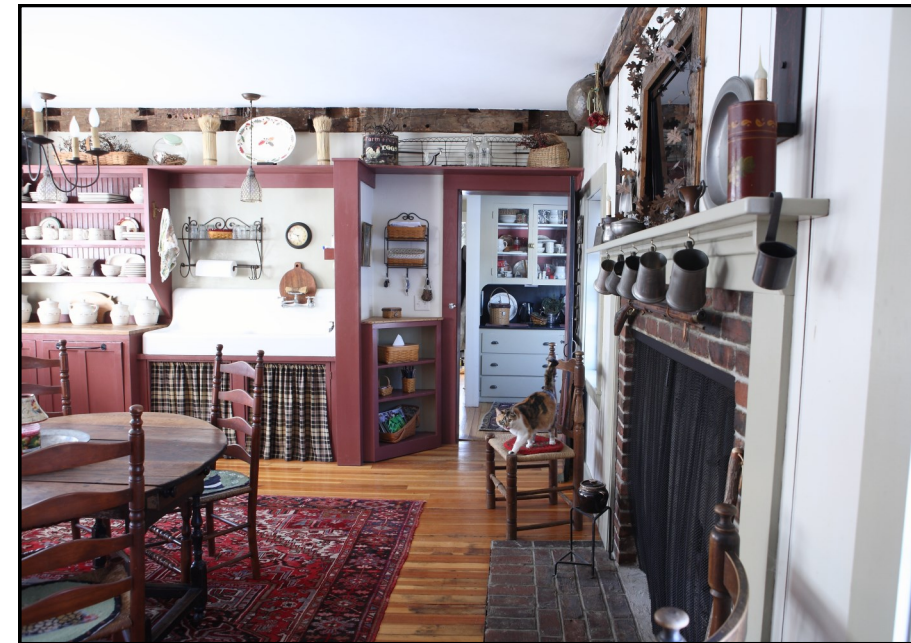
I have a passion for American history. However, at school I study a wide range of history from western thought to the history of nature and conservation. I also love to volunteer and help people, which is why I joined a sorority at my college.

I found it surprising how much information is located within the SHS's collections and how much you can learn in such a short time.



A recent photograph Facebook posting of an object from our collection had people guessing. Do you know what it is?

It's a rare stamp moistener!



Georgia the cat makes herself home in the kitchen

Photo credit: Photos by Page

### Tails by the Wayside

By Heather Clement

Back in 1999 when my house was on the market, I was driving by the Adam Howe Jr. House and farm here in Sudbury and just had to look into it. I grew up in Townsend Harbor, MA in a c.1704 antique colonial. We had lots of land and animals. At the time of my drive-by sighting we were living in Wellesley with no land and not in a very exciting home. SOLD !!!

For the past 16 years in Sudbury we have raised two children and lots of pets including, goats, chickens, alpacas, bunnies, dogs and cats. Our farm at 882 Boston Post Road lends itself nicely to both. Most of the members of my book group have pets. I started taking care of their pets when needed and it turned into a business for pet care and boarding in 2004. Since I am located next to the historic Wayside Inn, I named the business "Tails by the Wayside" borrowing from Longfellow's Tales of a Wayside Inn.

My husband grew up in Seattle but was lured by the charms of Boston and its historic surrounds. Thankfully he's very handy! Maintaining the integrity of our home has been forefront and will always be ongoing.

We recently joined the SOHOE (Sudbury Old Home Owners and Enthusiasts) where we meet once a month at someone's home or at the Wayside Inn. We share information and give referrals for skilled craftsmen who can help us maintain our homes. All are welcome and you don't have to own an old house to be part of this fun informative group.

Kudos to The Sudbury Historical Society. All involved are doing a great job and we are happy to be a part of this much needed organization.

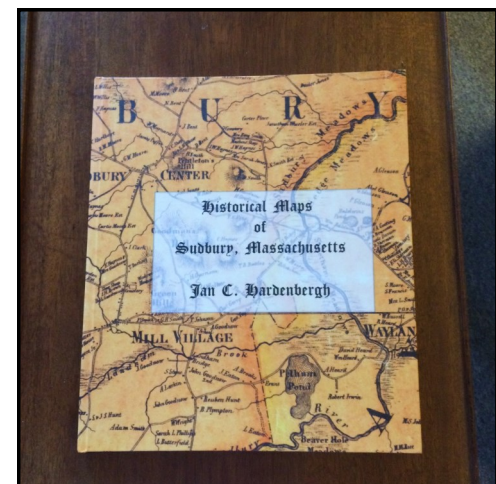
### New Book

A book *Historical Maps of Sudbury, Massachusetts* has been self-published by Jan Hardenbergh.

It is on display in upper town hall at the offices of the Historical Society.

The book is large and in full color, with glossy paper and contains 35 maps for years ranging from before settlement to 2014. There are Sudbury street maps, open space maps, a watershed map, and maps of beyond Sudbury that illustrate map making technique, and other things. Many maps have commentary or explanation on facing pages.

Some of the maps have been pictured in *The History of Sudbury, Massachusetts* by A. S. Hudson and in *Sudbury a Pictorial History* by Laura Scott, but in Jan's book the maps are much larger and colored the same as the original. The second printing of Jan's book is sold out, but interested people may peruse the display copy at the Historical Society and request information relating to a November printing.







## Friendly's Closed But not Forgotten

It was quite a surprise to Sudbury when the Friendly's Restaurant on Route 20 closed in July. Sally Hild learned of the closure on Facebook late at night the day it closed after just having had lunch there with her family earlier that day. First thing the next morning she stopped into the store where workers were dismantling the restaurant and she asked if the SHS could have some wall posters for the collection. There were two historic views of Sudbury in particular and one advertisement from the 1950s. One poster, a baseball team from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, had been enlarged from an SHS photo. Friendly's was happy to give two posters to the SHS as a remembrance of the Sudbury Friendly's location. The third, however, and rightly so, was going home with an employee who had served at the Sudbury site for thirty years.

## Attention Shoppers!

The SHS would like to thank all of our members and friends who shopped at Whole Foods Market in June during our 5% shopping day. At no cost to the customer the store gave 5% of the day's sales. Your purchases have benefited the SHS greatly. We are pleased to report that due to your efforts, and the generosity of Whole Foods Market, the SHS raised \$3,170. Many thanks. It was good to see you at the store.

Please mark your calendars for another benefit at T-wisted Frozen Yogurt in Sudbury to be held Friday, September 11 from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m. Mention the SHS and 15% of all sales will go to the SHS. Join us - History is cool when you're eating Frozen Yogurt!

## Tag Sale

The Historical Society TAG SALE will be on Saturday, October 17 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. On the front lawn of the Town Hall. Offered for sale will be treasures and items contributed by SHS members and friends. Items are now being accepted.

**Got stuff?** The SHS is looking for donations of items to sell such as home furnishings, housewares, books, or holiday items – we cannot accept clothes, text books, or electronics, however.

If you would like to contribute, please call the event coordinators at 978-443-9023 or 978-505-0426 to arrange for pick-up. Items may also be dropped off at the SHS in October.



## Fifes – a Labor of Love and Perseverance

By Russell Kirby

*August 6, 2015 phone conversation with Russell Kirby with Peggy Fredrickson. The conversation was prompted by a donation to the Society of fifes that had been made by him*

Yes, I made fifes in Sudbury. I made 23 fifes from wood salvaged from the Wayside Inn building after the fire. The complete set is in a box and has never been sold. One is on display in the Tap Room at the Wayside Inn.

I made hundreds of other fifes too from salvaged wood – some from wood from the Constitution.

It started in about 1970 when I was a hobby woodworker and in the Ancient Fife and Drum Company. The fife master thought we should graduate from plastic to wood fifes. The salvaged wood from the Inn was available, but it was fragile, ridden with bugs, and would be very hard to work with. We thought it would be very expensive to hire a fife maker to use that fragile wood to make us all fifes.

I researched to find how to make a fife, but there wasn't much information available. So I borrowed a fife made by A Mr. Cloose who had made many fifes for the military. They were recognized to be of good quality. I researched, measured, made lots of tests and experiments then made fixtures for producing the fifes. I made 23 from the Inn wood. Six were from chestnut. There is no tell-ing how old that chestnut was It could go back to the first Innkeeper.

Making the metal ferrules at each end took skill and equipment. Bill Volheim was part owner of a company that made pewter figurines. A jeweler, Dick Fozen

made two ferrules of sterling silver. They were used to make a mold to cast duplicates in pewter. Another member of the Fife and Drum Corps was an artist, Leslie Longworth. He made a medallion showing the Wayside Inn Sign with the Horse. That medallion was put on each fife.

Making the fifes was a labor of love – I've never enjoyed any project so much before or since.

The two silver ferrules were put on one fife which is mounted over the fireplace in the tap room at the Inn.

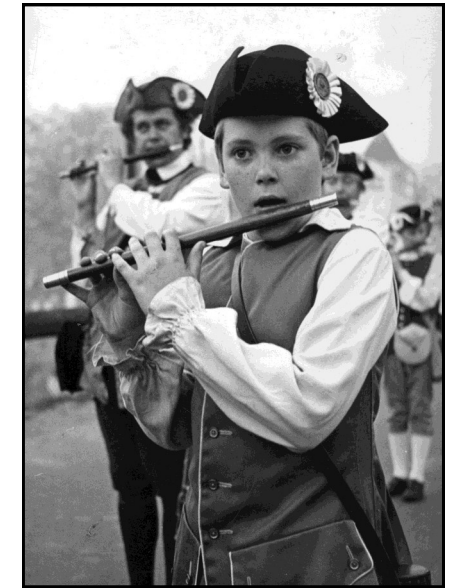


*Russell Kirby's mark near the ferrule of a fife from the Macinnis collection.*

It wasn't all fun – late one night my last cut released thousands of carpenter ants into the house. My wife came running with insecticide and we had quite a scramble to get rid of those ants.

The old wood was so fragile it didn't seem safe to play, but I rubbed it with boiled linseed oil – hundreds of coats. It firmed up and played very well.

In 1971 we made our first appearance with them. It was at the Deep River Muster in Connecticut. After the performance a man came running off the field. He loved the sound of the fifes



*Photo from the Sudbury Historical Society Collections*

and wanted to know where we got them. He encouraged us to have a muster at the Inn. That was in July 1971. We had our first muster that September. He came up and helped get us organized, some of the best groups from Connecticut came up and that got our Annual Musters off to a roaring start.

P.S.

We appeared in Symphony Hall on Colonial Night at the Pops.

The Minute Man Council suggested a Combined Corps of a man from each of the companies. We didn't think that would work so well since sometimes the same piece is played differently by a different group. We thought it would be better if one Corps was selected and they practiced to make a good performance. No other group wanted to do it so Sudbury stepped up. Minutemen bought out the floor and came in costume. Frank Kopious the Innkeeper was there with Arthur Fiedler. Everything connected with those fifes has been fun.

*Continued on next page*