Amos Kimball, Founding Father Of Fitchburg and Cavendish Vermont

Amos Kimball was born at Bradford, Mass. 13 Oct., 1717. He married 29 May, 1744 Dorothy Hazeltine (b. 29 Jan., 1718/19, daughter of Nathaniel Hazeltine). Amos served as deacon of his church in Lunenburg. He owned land in Winchendon, and a vast tract of land in Cavendish, Vermont. He was one of the original proprietors of Cavendish and should be considered the “Father of the Cavendish Proprietors” for it was Amos Kimball who sought and obtained the charter for the Town of Cavendish from Benning Wentworth, the governor of New Hampshire. Although Amos never settled in the town, he was a formidable promoter of its early settlement. He conducted most of his business concerning Cavendish from his home in Lunenburg. Amos and Dorothy removed from Bradford to Lunenburg, Mass. in 1746/7 and settled in that part which became Fitchburg. He served on the school committee and served as selectman in 1751-52, 1756, and 1758-9. He and his cousin Ephraim built the first dam across the Nashua River near the present stone mill in Fitchburg. They had a saw and grist mill there as well. He was very active in procuring the incorporation of the town of Fitchburg from Lunenburg, and was very active and prominent in the affairs of Fitchburg until his death. There is no doubt he had every intention of re-locating in Cavendish, but the land controversy with the New Hampshire Grants persuaded him to give up the intention and leave it to pioneers younger than he. Amos Kimball’s faithful stewardship to protect the New Hampshire Cavendish charter was part of his life’s work. He was very active in his land dealings and land speculation in Cavendish up to his death. The following deed tells us how he bought out Ephraim Whitney’s Right of over 300 acres of land in the town for a mere 30 shillings, viz:

“To all people to whom these presents shall come, Greetings: Know ye that I, Ephraim Whitney of Fitchburg, in the County of Worcester, and Province of the Massachusetts Bay, Gent, in consideration of the sum of thirty shillings lawful money to me paid by Amos Kimball of Fitchburg, aforesaid, Gent, the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge; have and do hereby grant, sell and convey to him, said Amos Kimball, his heirs and assigns, one Right or Full Share of Land in the Township of Cavendish, in the County of Albany, and Province of New York, being the same Right or Share which I hold by virtue of my being a Grantee in the Original Grant of said Township, made by the Governor and Council of the Province of New Hampshire.

To have and hold the said Right or Share with the appurtenances to him the said Amos Kimball, his heirs and assigns forever, without ever being molested or disturbed by me or any from by or under me, in Witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 11 March, 1766. Ephraim Whitney. Witnessed by: David Goodridge, John Grout and Richard Taylor – –

* Received for recording at Cavendish, 27 May, 1793 (brought to town by Amos Kimball Jr.) and recorded by Samuel White, Register.
Susan Navarre Joins Society as Executive Director

On Monday, June 3rd, Susan Navarre took over responsibilities as the Executive Director for the Society. Susan was one of three candidates interviewed for the executive director's position. She has a B.A. in the History of Art from Bryn Mawr and has taken coursework toward a Master's degree in Art History from Boston University. From 2002 to 2011, Susan served as the Executive Director of Brookline Arts Center. In 2011, she became the Communications Director of the Board of Directors for the Brookline Chamber of Commerce. Susan has extensive fund-raising and grant-writing experience along with her management experience.

Prior to her interview, Susan came to Fitchburg to look at the city and get a sense of the community. She had wonderful conversations with a number of people who enjoy living in the city and was attracted to the positive energy generated by the cultural organizations in the city. Susan and her husband Tim currently own a home in Dorchester but are looking at property in the Fitchburg area. They love the architecture of the city and Susan finds buildings like the Phoenix and the Grove Street Historical Society buildings to be fascinating examples of H.M. Francis's work. She was pleased that the renovation of the Phoenix has kept so many of the original architectural features. She also is delighted to know how so many people care about preserving the history of Fitchburg.

On Susan's first day, three sisters who once lived in Fitchburg but currently live in Arkansas and Tennessee were here visiting. They took hundreds of photos, bought postcards, books and other memorabilia and reinforced the notion that Fitchburg is a place that people remember fondly. A mother and daughter also stopped in to do some research on a relative who once lived in Fitchburg. During the first week Susan met a number of the Society's volunteers and committee members working on projects. She is looking forward to meeting even more this summer, so please drop by to meet her when you are in the neighborhood!
As President Theodore Roosevelt prepared for his tour of New England, he was given the perfect fuel for his campaign against corporate trusts. On August 21, 1902, the day before he set out for his tour, George Baer, spokesman for Philadelphia & Reading Railroad, a part of the coal-railroad trust, stated: “The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for… by the Christian men to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given control of the property interests in this country, and upon the successful management of which so much depends.”

The arrogance of the statement, amidst a major coal strike in Pennsylvania, eroded public perception of trusts and created the perfect environment for Roosevelt to speak out against them. While the time was right to make his case to the public, the backlash to Baer’s blunder proved a hurdle to Roosevelt as well. During his first stop, in Providence, Rhode Island, he delivered an impassioned speech that stressed government control of trusts, but undermined his passion through contradictions and qualifications. While positive headlines preserved his momentum, it was a dubious beginning for his campaign. Fortunately for Roosevelt, the tour gave him plenty of time to recover.

After Providence, the President and his entourage rode north to Maine and made its way down, town by town, through New Hampshire and Vermont before settling in Massachusetts for the last leg of the tour. The second-to-last stop brought Roosevelt to Fitchburg, where he became the first President to visit the city.

On the morning of September 2, 1902, Fitchburg stood in anticipation for the President’s arrival. The week prior to the visit saw exhaustive preparation, as business owners and city officials saw to the decoration of Main Street and the construction of the platform where the speech would be delivered.

As the Presidential Special pulled into Fitchburg’s rail station, Roosevelt and his entourage were greeted by a 21-gun salute, and escorted to their parade carriages by veterans of the 53rd regiment, who had served during the Spanish-American War. Seated in the first of eleven carriages, the President rode with Mayor Charles A. Babbit and former mayor Arthur H. Lowe, as well as Secret Service Agent William Craig.

Thousands of people from Fitchburg and elsewhere crowded the sidewalks and alleys of Main Street to catch a glimpse of the President and his carriage train. As his carriage passed the First Baptist Church, he was showered with flowers from the bell tower, arranged by the local school children. He responded to the surprise with praise for the children, before moving on to the Upper Common where the Presidential platform awaited him.

Once situated on the platform, where specially invited guests sat, Roosevelt dived into his speech, in which he praised Fitchburg for its service in the Civil War, and even used that history to relate his stance against the corporate figures he opposed. “You of the great war recall the time that Sumter was fired upon… You didn’t win by any patent device. You won by the leadership of Grant, Sherman, Thomas and Sheridan, and above all by the soldiership of the men who carried the sabers and muskets… You were not helped by the men who stayed at home and said if things were managed right you would be in Richmond in a fortnight. You were in the forefront and did the fighting and finally got there.”

When he finished his speech, an hour later, he implored his audience to hold their applause and think on what he had said. The next day, Roosevelt set out for Pittsfield. He insisted on going by carriage as a change of pace from the train. The desire for a leisurely final visit ended in tragedy when an electric trolley crashed into the President’s carriage. Agent Craig was killed in the collision, but the President and the others passengers escaped with varying degrees of injury. Roosevelt incurred a bruise to the face and an injury to his shin that would be operated on later that month. While the New England tour was a political success, the accident made the triumph melancholy.

Theodore Roosevelt’s visit marked the first time a President of the United States ever made an appearance in Fitchburg. Along with several photographs of the parade, the Fitchburg Historical society possesses the chair that President Roosevelt sat in while he was on the speech platform.

By Nathan Burns

THANKS TO ALL THE PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED TIME AND EFFORT TO THIS NEWSLETTER:
KATRINA BROWN; NATHAN BURNS; CAVENDISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY; CINDY JONES;
DR. ROBERT J. O’HARA; SUSAN NAVARRE; LINDA WELSH AND SHIRLEY WAGNER!
On Thursday, April 4th, Barbara Edsall gave a PowerPoint lecture that elucidated the history of the photographers that have made Fitchburg their home. She explained that the first photographers were often itinerant like the portrait painters who preceded them had been. They stayed for a short time and moved around the country to keep their business going. Photography was not an easy way to make a living and Barbara gave a number of examples of photographers who gave up their art for other occupations. One made a living by being a barber and a dentist in addition to being a photographer.

Unlike today, when photographs often record the life history of an individual, some early photographs were taken to record the last moments of an individual's life so their loved ones would have a keepsake by which to remember them. In newspaper ads, photographers indicated their willingness to come to the homes with individuals who were sick or had recently passed away to photograph them. Barbara pointed out that Fitchburg was unusual because it had two women working as photographers in the mid-nineteenth century, Dolly (Gibson) Burr and Miss Rickard. Dolly was born in Fitchburg and advertised in the Fitchburg Weekly Sentinel in 1847-48. She died an early death from tuberculosis in 1857. Miss Rickard is a greater mystery since all the evidence that she existed are ads which appeared in the Fitchburg Weekly Sentinel 1851-1852. Where she came from or where she went after leaving Fitchburg is unknown. Both women advertised that they would photograph loved ones in people’s homes or in their studios.

As photographers moved out, often new photographers moved in to replace them, sometimes taking the same studio space. The Octagon House, built by the dentist Joseph Palmer, had photographic studios at the top of the home which were rented out to photographers. One of the photographers talked about in greater depth was Joseph Carr (JC) Moulton who was a photographer in Fitchburg for 60 years. The Historical Society has his registers which are the records of the individuals who sat for him at his studio. A recent donation from Teresa Morgan included senior class photographs that Moulton did for the class of 1893. We also have daguerreotypes done by Moulton and one of his cameras. Moulton had studios at three Main Street studios over the years. The last of these was at 368 Main Street.

In January, Katrina Brown, a senior Communications Media major from Fitchburg State University, joined us as a full time intern for the spring semester. Her first task was to help us incorporate the new logo designed by Anne Giancola into our stationery, our note cards, our envelopes and our business cards. Working with Diane Maguy from Blanchard and Brown, Katrina developed the designs that give us a new look.

On February 13th, we had our Valentine’s Day tea which was organized as an event by Katrina. She set up the Valentine’s card exhibit, created the flyers and got them posted and wrote the personal announcement to put this on the community board of the Sentinel and FATV. She helped to organize the refreshments and then worked on the cleanup as well. She also did the flyers and the ads for Cindy Jones’s and Barbara Edsall’s presentations.

Katrina also worked with the Gift Shop Committee, taking photos of the many items we have for sale so these can be better advertised online and putting up new signs to show some of the price changes we have made in the last year.

Nathan Burns, a senior English major, also did an internship with us this spring. He was part time and joined us each afternoon. Nate wrote the story in this newsletter about Teddy Roosevelt’s visit to Fitchburg in 1902. His research included reading the Sentinels before and after Roosevelt’s visit, reading a major biography of Teddy and combing through the files for photos related to the visit.

Nate also has put together a resource list for the Society on the mayors of the city over the years with their dates of service and a couple of lines about them.

Both Katrina and Nathan worked with the Publications Committee which was putting together materials for a book to be entitled Legendary Locals. They helped with the editing every week and each of them wrote text for some local legends. After completing their internships and graduating from Fitchburg State in early May, Katrina and Nate continued to work with the Society, keeping us open while Shirley took a vacation in May and working with us to complete Legendary Locals for submission July 2nd.

It was a pleasure to have interns working with us this semester! Thanks, Katrina! Thanks, Nathan! We appreciate all you did!
Each day as we do research at the Historical Society, we discover things that are part of our treasure trove that others have seen before us. We never know what these might be. Recently, we were setting up some exhibits with Civil War artifacts, and here are some items we re-discovered. There are the letters written by Clara Barton to the Ladies Soldiers Aid Society during the Civil War. Her penmanship is exquisite. There is the very tiny basket that a Fitchburg Civil War soldier carved from a peach pit while he was a prisoner of war. There are poems by Fitchburg poets like Caroline Atherton Mason whose words were sometimes made into hymns. Many people are aware that Caroline Atherton Mason’s poem “Do They Miss Me at Home?” was turned into a hymn during the Civil War. It is still sung today: Wil D’Arcengelo and the Tribe have sung it (available to see and hear on You Tube). Caroline was born in Marblehead and moved to Fitchburg with her mother, after the death of her father, to live with a sister. Soon she and Charles Mason married and became involved with causes of the time: the anti-slavery movement, women’s rights and the prevention of cruelty to animals. Caroline continued to write poetry for Fitchburg occasions and funerals. They were printed often in the Sentinel and were also printed in the Atlantic Monthly and Harpers’ Weekly. Below is her most famous poem:

Do They Miss Me at Home?
Do they miss me at home, do they miss me?
’Twould be an assurance most dear,
To know that this moment some loved one
Were saying, “I wish he were here;”
To feel that the group at the fireside
Were thinking of me as I roam,
Oh yes, ’twould be joy beyond measure,
To know that they missed me at home
To know that they missed me at home.
When twilight approaches, the season
That ever is sacred to song;
Does someone repeat my name over,
And sigh that I tarry so long?
And is there a chord in the music,
That’s missed when my voice is away,
And a chord in each heart that awaketh
Regret at my wearysome stay?
Regret at my wearysome stay?

Do they set me a chair near the table
When evening’s home pleasures are nigh,
When the candles are lit in the parlor,
And the stars in the calm azure sky?
And when the “good nights” are repeated,
And all lay them down to their sleep,
Do they think of the absent, a nd waft me
A whispered “good night” while they sleep?
A whispered “good night” while they sleep?

Do they miss me at home -- do they miss me,
At morning, at noon, or at night?
And lingers one gloomy shade round them
That only my presence can light? Are joys less invitingly welcome,

And pleasures less hale than before,
Because one is missed from the circle,
Because I am with them no more?
Because I am with them no more?

Caroline was prone to depression, or melancholia as it was called at the time. She suffered from the ailment until she was sent to the mental hospital in Worcester, where she died in 1890. On her gravestone is inscribed, “I have done at length with dreaming.” She is buried at Laurel Hill Cemetery.

When we at the Society were preparing for a presentation at Christ Church on the 1860’s, the first book of Sentinels that we opened for research had a poem written by Mason. It commemorated the death of Nelson Norcross, the toddler-aged son of Susan Augusta and Amasa Norcross, who died in 1863 of scarlet fever. Caroline and Susan must have been close friends, as you will see in the poem called “The Empty Crib.”

The Empty Crib
N.H.N. Died May 21st, 1863

Take the little crib away!
—I will stand here by the door;
Breathe it gently, I implore!
Gently, gently, as they bore
Nelson from my sight that day,
From my sight forevermore.

What a dreary, empty space
For the sun to look upon
When the shadows are withdrawn
And to-morrow’s light shall dawn!

Can I look it in the face,
Thinking of this dear one gone?-
Thinking of the patient lips,
Of the sweet eyes, softly meek,
Of the little voice, so weak
Trying words of love to speak
Till at length death’s dark eclipse
Shrouded lip and brow and cheek!

Oh, my darling, was it best?
“Twas a soft and easy bed;
Should you leave it, and instead
Lay your little, sunny head
Down upon the earth’s dark breast,
Cold and motionless and dead?

God forgive me; I am weak.
Doubtless, doubtless it was right;
God knows best, and in His sight
No bough’d reed is broken quite.

Continued on page 6
Another poem we found was written by Frank Hildreth, a Civil War volunteer who was the first soldier from Fitchburg to die in the Civil War. Frank Hildreth was a twenty-year old harness maker who enlisted in the 15th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in July of 1861. Frank had been in the group of Fitchburg Fusiliers who had left the town on June 28, 1861, on the train for Worcester where they met up with the rest of the 15th. Prior to leaving, free vaccinations and dinner had been given to the men, and a local band played “Auld Lang Syne” as the train pulled out. Frank was one of thirty-three men in the group who did not return.

He was sent to Poolesville, Maryland, a spot near the Potomac and Harpers’ Ferry, where he contracted “a disease of liver trouble.” While lingering before his death, he wrote the following poem without a title (spelling as Hildreth wrote the words):

Then upon your war-seamed faces
and within each dim old eye,
Let no tears dim recollections
Of his deeds, in days gone by:
On Death’s picket stands the Sergeant
Checking each name on his roll,
Soon we all shall join our comrades
In blue camp-grounds of the soul.

Hildreth used military imagery to create a picture of Death as a military creature on picket duty, taking roll for the camp. The Sergeant taking roll is asked by those recently deceased if there is room for them. They are told that they are welcome and all wounds and illnesses will be gone once soldiers are mustered into heaven. His thoughts and words must have been a comfort, perhaps giving him peace as he passed away. Since he and the other three men who died so quickly were first casualties, they were buried at the Poolesville Methodist Cemetery, and “the gravestones, arbor vitae and rose bushes showed how affectionately they were remembered by their comrades.”

As you can see, a few hours of research at the society will no doubt lead to wonderful discoveries from our treasure trove. The only drawback is that these discoveries may keep us from accomplishing the goals of the day, but there is always another day for research at the Fitchburg Historical Society!

Written by Cindy Jones and Shirley Wagner
Fitchburg Women in the Civil War with Cindy Jones

In the Phoenix Building’s George and Alice Wallace Exhibit Hall, several guests enjoyed a cozy and informal PowerPoint presentation accompanied by insightful discussion led by Cindy. She shed light on what it was like to be involved in Civil War efforts as a woman in Fitchburg during the time the Call was made for assistance by President Lincoln and Dorothea Dix. The presentation included original images of involved Fitchburg women and interesting facts about nurses and women of that day.

Cindy spoke at both 5pm and 7pm, drawing two separate groups to the event. Refreshments of lemonade, green tea, and green grapes were available along with sweet treats such as green St. Patrick’s Day cupcakes. Members and guests enjoyed snacking and good conversation in the minutes following each presentation. Visitors of the event also got to see the Society's Civil War exhibits set up for the presentation. Two exhibit cases showcased socks sewn by the Ladies Aid Society as well as letters from Clara Barton to the Ladies Aid Society requesting goods needed by the soldiers of the time, and other pieces from our Civil War collection.

The society will be hosting more presentations like this in the near future; be sure to check our website as well as the Fitchburg Sentinel's community board for postings on future events.

Written by Katrina Brown

Valentine’s Day Tea at the Phoenix

On Wednesday, February 13th, the Society hosted a tea to celebrate Valentine’s Day and its history. The tea began at 3:00 p.m. and over 20 guests came to the Phoenix to enjoy tea, snacks, exhibits, and a presentation. The Society’s acting director, Shirley Wagner, gave a presentation on the history of Valentine’s Day, emphasizing the role of Esther Howland, a Worcester woman credited with pioneering Valentine’s Day cards. An exhibit of Valentines, arranged by Society Intern Katrina Brown, was on display in the Wallace exhibit hall. The exhibit included cards from the 1900s, stand-up cards from the 60’s, heart shaped valentines with golden borders, and delicate love letters complete with original postage, all arranged together and accented with white doilies and red heart ribbons. Also on display that day was the scrapbook valentines collection put together by Alice B. Cushman and Hazel Page and donated to the Society.

Guests sat at two long tea tables passing the scrapbook to one another while sharing discussion about the scrapbook's contents. Highlights of the scrapbook include an original Prang Valentine, some cards from Esther Howland's early work, and original German valentines dated back to the late 1800's. Every visitor left that day with their own printed handout of scanned original valentines as well as news articles and historical Valentine advertisements. It was a pleasure to see a variety of new faces at this event; multiple generations were able to enjoy tea and history together, something the Historical Society was very happy to sponsor. We hope you will join us for future holiday programming at the Phoenix.

Written by Katrina Brown
The Fitchburg Historical Society will be selling a new book on Fitchburg history in 2014 which is the 250th anniversary of the establishment of Fitchburg as a town. Entitled Legendary Locals of Fitchburg, the book will highlight individuals and groups who have contributed to Fitchburg daily life, culture and history. A one hundred and twenty-eight page book with photographs and text, the book will be published by Arcadia Publishing and is $23.32. We are offering you the opportunity to purchase the book in advance of its publication. This will allow us to order sufficient copies, meeting the needs of everyone. The book may be picked up at the Society when published or mailed to your home for an additional charge of five dollars. Please complete the form below to preorder:

**Legenda Local of Fitchburg Preorder Form**

Name: ___________________________  Please indicate below the number of books you are preordering:

Address: ___________________________

City, State, Zip: ___________________________

Phone: ___________________________  Fax: ___________________________

Email: ___________________________

☐ Make checks payable to the FITCHBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY or

☐ Charge my credit card account - ☐ Mastercard  ☐ Visa

Expiration Date: ___________________________

Card #: ___________________________  Authorization Signature: ___________________________

☐ Please add me to your mailing list

☐ Please let me know when the book is available

☐ Please send me the book at the address above for an additional fee of $5.00 for shipping and handling

*Members receive a 10 percent discount*

☐ I am a current member

☐ Please sign me up as a member for an additional 30 dollars

*The Fitchburg Historical Society thanks you for your support of us and our newest book!*