

# Narragansett Historical Society

## On the Common in Templeton MA

Excerpts from the *Diary of*  
*Christopher Columbus Baldwin 1829-1835*

# MAY 2017



### **Christopher Columbus Baldwin**

was born in 1800 in Baldwinville, son of Capt. Eden Baldwin and grandson of Jonathan Baldwin, one of the first settlers of Templeton. Baldwinville was named after the family in recognition of Eden and Jonathan's business enterprise and public spirit. Educated at Harvard, Christopher practiced law in Worcester, Barre and Sutton, before serving as librarian of

the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, from 1827 until his untimely death in 1835. He was killed when the stage coach in which he was traveling overturned in Ohio.

1835, April 6.

The town is now more full of excitement than has been known since 1812. There is a strong disposition to bring temperance into politics. The late attempt to instruct the select men has awaked many fears that the leaders of the temperance reform design to make it a political subject. Several who were members of the Society for promoting Temperance have directed their names to be withdrawn. Wherever two men are seen together, the subject of conversation is temperance. In many instances they have become so furious as to almost come to blows. I perceive that whoever speaks upon the subject manifests his passions at once. In this respect the friends of temperance are as *intemperate* as their opponents. Every body (sic) is getting mad, and what is cause of especial madness with me is that I am already as mad as the *maddest*.

## Grange Hall Windows

Since our grant approval voted on back in 2014, we have been working on the proper windows to install. They needed to meet the State Secretary of the Interior's requirements.

Thursday night, Bill Harris attended the CPC meeting to request using the new historically correct Marvin Windows for the Grange hall. The committee reviewed the information presented and unanimously voted to approve the project giving us the green light to finally get this project going again. Thanks to the dedicated volunteers who stuck it out to see this project get off the ground.

Bill will now write up the new proposal and submit it for payment.

This is a good thing!



The Templeton Grange held its first meeting on March 16, 1885, with 35 members. The Grange was a social group that discussed current events, farm problems, and other relevant issues. They purchased grain, coal, flour, and other goods by the carload to get a better price and divided it amongst the members. The members purchased this building in 1897 to serve as their meeting hall. Membership dissolved in the late 1900s. The building was donated to the Narragansett Historical Society. The wooden water tower in the rear was the first tank used by the Templeton Inn.



# Calendar 2017

**May 24th Annual meeting at the building 7pm with elections**

**June 17th Hubbardston 250th Parade 9:30am**

**June 24th Temperance Tea in the Garden**

**June 28th Membership meeting 7pm**

**July 4th reading of the Declaration of Ind. At the First Church**

**July 8th Tea in the garden \*\*Mac & Cheese on the common with the Templeton Elders**

**Aug 5th "Go fly a kite"**

**Aug 12th High Tea in the garden 2:30 - 4**

**Aug 19 & 20 Craft Fair, building open from 10-5 each day**

**Aug 23rd Membership meeting 7pm**

## Gift DONATIONS

The Society is proposing anyone interested in donating items to the Society in the future consider having it in Archival Condition. This will better preserve the item for future years

## DONATIONS ACCEPTED

**YES!** I would like to make a donation to the  
**Narragansett Historical Society**

I/We have enclosed a check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

*Thank You*

Narragansett Historical Society and send to  
NHS, PO Box 354, Templeton, MA 01468.

Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Although the business flourished and the owners acquired sizable land holdings, thus enabling them to supply lumber to their expanding furniture business, circumstances were not always kind. In August 1890 the factory caught fire and even though it was situated near the mill and a pond, it burned to the ground. With limited insurance the business was essentially doomed. This meant the loss of jobs for a large population of farmers turned skilled wood workers. In appreciation of the employment the Bourn Hadley business offered, the townspeople purchased another piece of land, this time on the railroad tracks and gave it to the company. Another, larger building was quickly erected and Bourn Hadley & Co were back in operation in November of the same year. However, in September of 1903 fire, the anathema of all woodworking businesses, struck anew. This time ignited by a spark from the coal fired train engines. It took a lawsuit to bring the RR Company to account, but the courts decided in favor of the company so once again Bourn Hadley & Co. was back in business. During the ensuing years they became known for their Ash and Pine furniture with a quality bedroom furniture line that was hand decorated.

Always looking for a broader market, just as the furniture companies today vie for new and fresh looks to sell, the Company introduced a whole new line. They furnished the layout and construction of counters, mail windows and pigeonhole walls for U S Post offices. It is interesting to see custom blueprints developed for each building they supplied. The advertising literature at this point was quite sophisticated indicating a high level of success and access to a much expanded market.

The family continued to operate the Company until it was sold in 1929 to Conant and Ball of Gardner, a very large furniture manufacturing company in this neighboring town. With other furniture companies opening, Gardner eventually became known as the Furniture Capital of New England. The Bourn Hadley plant, today a modest, physical facility by current standards, continues to support the wood industry with an active kitchen cabinet business.

This bit of history was compiled to bring together the facts surrounding the Bourn Hadley Company, the part the Hadleys played in its success and how the town's extensive woodlands supported the rise of the furniture industry in central Massachusetts.

A small wood business is still active in this part of New England, but the furniture industry today is almost non-existent. Its rapid decline was caused by the passing of the trade agreement call NAFTA, which gave a great financial advantage to other countries. Thus with relatively no large scale farming and now a marginal lumber industry the landscape has become one of rapidly growing forests. The renewable woodlands in this area are still harvested some, but the lumber is used primarily for construction and an active cord wood business. Some is exported to other countries and although it continues to contribute to furniture employment globally, this once major industry is now lost to the United States.

# Sponsorship

# Gold Sponsor 2017



# Silver Sponsor 2017



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*Thank you to our sponsors.*

Your support will ensure the success of our community driven events.

If you would like to become a sponsor, please contact us here via email. Talk to your place of business to see if they want to get involved through sponsorship, participation, donations, or services.

# Bronze Sponsors 2017



**TANQUAY JEWELERS**



\*\*\*\*\*

**SCOTTY'S POTTIES**

Our biggest supporters are all of you! Our membership. If you are an annual member, consider becoming a lifetime member at only \$100.00 by doing this, you will be making a donation to our cause, and saving us time and money each year asking for your renewal.

\*\*\*\*\*

# Event Sponsor



# May 24th Elections / Annual Meeting

## Ballot 2017

President- Brian P. Tanguay

Vice President -(Vacant)

Secretary -Christine Stone

Treasurer -Deb Caisse

## Directors

3 year term Darlene LaClair, Open, Open

2 year term Amy Guthrie, Tom Jeleniewski, Dennis Rich

1 year term Tom Hurd, Jessie Duguay, Ann Lyons

## Trustees

David Huhtala, John Brooks, Tom Jeleniewski

TEMPERANCE TEA  
&  
SPEAKEASY

DRINKS!

SWEETS!

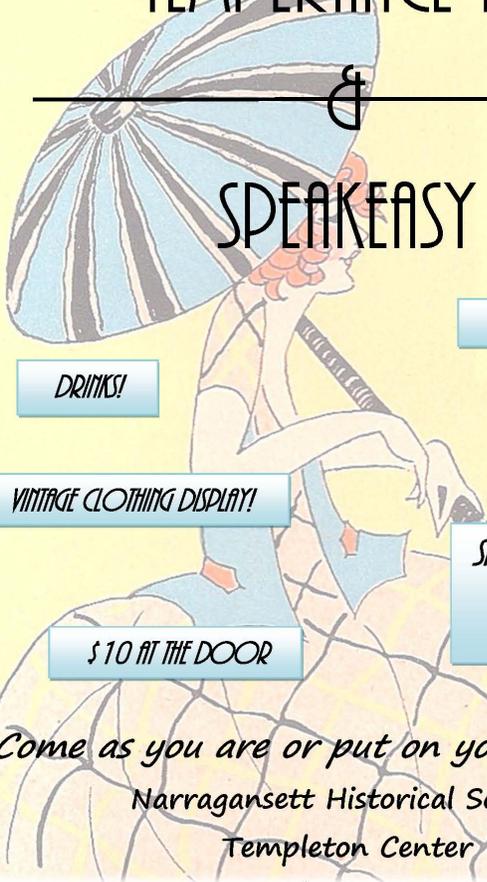
SAVORIES!

VINTAGE CLOTHING DISPLAY!

\$10 AT THE DOOR

SATURDAY, JUNE 24  
2-4:30  
(RAIN DATE: JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup>)

*Come as you are or put on your glad rags!*  
Narragansett Historical Society  
Templeton Center  
On the Common





## **“A moment in time”**

by: **Harry Aldrich Jr. *Historian***

### **BROOKS VILLAGE**

**Brooks Village is located on top of a hill on the westerly side of Templeton. I do not know when it was given its name but I think it would be safe to assume that it was named after the Brooks family, they were quite popular in the village operating a tavern, a farm, and slaughter house.**

**As you approached the village coming up the hill, you came to John Brook’s Tavern which was a good sized building with stables attached. The stage coaches ran from Worcester to Greenfield, MA and Keene, NH and Boston to Brattleboro VT. They would stop at the tavern, give the passengers a rest and get a team of fresh horses before leaving, some times, I am assuming stay over for the night. On the left as you came into the village, you saw Bowker’s Shoe Shop. The shop employed many of the men that lived in the village. The shop along with a home next door belonging to Sphear family was destroyed by a fire. The shop was never replaced.**

**At the very top of the hill as you entered the village was a big Elm tree that stood on a small patch of land between the roads that branched out of the village. From what I have read, this was a favorite spot for the men to gather and talk about their day while smoking. Sadly, I have to say, I believe I cut that tree down with my dad when he was the town tree warden due to Dutch Elm disease.**

**If you went on the road to Phillipston Center you came to a big farm just out of the village. This was the Bowker farm and still stands today. The farm was later sold to a Sardis Fairbanks who grew apples. I do not know if Mr. Bowker had an orchard or if it was started by Fairbanks. When Mr. Fairbanks gave it up, he sold the farm to brothers, Clarence and Lester Pease. They continued to operate the orchard for many years, growing many different varieties of apples. Lester Pease also served the Town of Templeton as a tax assessor for over fifty years. His son, Robert, who had move out of the area for a spell came back and took the business over after his father retired and now operates it with his son David, so it is now a three generation business. Before Robert moved he owned and operated a dairy farm in the village that was once owned by the Brooks family. The farm included quite a bit of land and a brick house. It was the only brick structure in the village. Robert sold the farm when he moved and unfortunately it was allowed to fall into a state of disrepair including the house which collapsed a few years ago.**

**More next month, *Harry***

# President's Page

by: **Brian P. Tanguay**



If you will have me as your president again this year, it will be my 4th year holding this position. One I do not take lightly and I consider it an honor to be in a place where many have been before me. It was my goal to create a Society filled with eager volunteers willing to get things done and keep the momentum going. So far so good. We are maintaining a checking account balance of \$11,000.00 and a growing portfolio which just topped \$45,000.00 in total investments. Money is now being moved into investment vehicles for better returns, you know that \$11,000.00 is only bringing us 95 cents a month for a total of \$2.28 year to date.

The Community Foundation fund is almost complete with money transferred from our stocks and we can also begin to entertain grant money offered from the Community Foundation as well.

All of the strategic planning and all of the leg work these past few years are the stepping stones to the future with the hope that this position will be easier to handle going forward.

The Grange hall is back on track with the new windows coming soon, this only means more grant writing for the ceiling, walls, insulation, wiring, heating, plumbing, and displays. Breathe deep, one, two, three.... There, feel better? One step at a time and we'll all be fine.

This year we will clean up the cellar (as you may have noticed the dumpster out front,) complete the new fencing in the back garden, plant some trees, maybe get that front railing on those new steps out front, Possibly construct a new pergola in the back garden in the place where the old one once stood, and begin the forestry program which will bring in substantial funding.

Don't forget the events we have planned as the year rumbles on, Teas in the garden, engines roaring out on the common with music by Bootleg Express, Flying kites, pumpkin fest, haunted walk, and the Jack Frost festival with Santa to round out the year.

***Volunteer when you can, host the building for a Saturday afternoon, visit on a Tuesday night, or carry a membership application with you to sign up someone who will enjoy the history or to help us in our fundraising efforts to keep the place going. We are coming up to 400 members, a great accomplishment of almost doubling in 3 years. Let's keep it going so we can double up to 800 members in the next few years.***

This train keeps on rolling and I'm happy to be steering it in the right direction.

**OFFICERS:**  
**President:** Brian Tanguay  
**Vice Pres.** Vacant  
**Secretary** Christine Stone  
**Treasurer** Debbie Caisse  
**Curator:** Brian Tanguay  
**Historian:** Harry Aldrich

**DIRECTORS:**

|                 |               |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>3 year</b>   | <b>2 year</b> | <b>1 year</b>   |
| Amy Guthrie     | Tom Hurd      | Karen Rich      |
| Tom Jeleniewski | Jessie Duguay | Tom Hill        |
| Dennis Rich     | Ann Lyons     | William Buckler |

**TRUSTEES:**  
 Tom Jeleniewski  
 David Huhtala  
 Brian Tanguay  
 John Brooks



**Contact info:**  
 Main email: [narragansethistoricalociety@yahoo.com](mailto:narragansethistoricalociety@yahoo.com)  
 Newsletter Editor: Brian Tanguay

Find us on Facebook—Search for **Narragansett Historical Society**. It's filled with the History of Templeton, Baldwinville, Otter River and East Templeton. Pictures, stories, and faces of the people who lived here years ago. Some new images will be shared from around the town. We have created a "page" instead of a "profile"  
<https://www.facebook.com/narragansethissoc/>

**ITEMS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER ARE WELCOME any time.**



**Meeting Notice: 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM unless otherwise advertised.**

**May 24th Annual meeting at the Museum Document room**

**June 28th Membership meeting 7pm Document room**

**Thank you to the Templeton Senior Community Center for helping us print 45 copies of our newsletters each month for those without email accounts.**

Narragansett Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 354  
 Templeton, MA 01468

