

Newsletter

(508) 358-7959

<http://www.waylandhistoricalsociety.org/>

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Founded in 1954

John Heckscher, Editor

The Grout-Heard House is open to the public on Tuesdays and Fridays, 9:30 – Noon

TOWN CENTER MUSINGS FROM OUR PRESIDENT – CONTINUED

I am just not ready to give up on my fixation on the “New Town Center.” Maybe it is all those meetings I have been attending lately at the Town Building: Planning Board, Road Commissioners and Historic District Commission. I really feel that I have a dual mission there – as president of the Historical Society I represent an organization that dedicates itself to the preservation of Wayland’s unique heritage. But I also represent the physical embodiment of this organization – the Grout-Heard House. The Grout-Heard House sits at an intersection that has not only been through years of reconstruction recently, but it now faces the real possibility of further change to accommodate the proposed shopping center. Is everyone aware that there is movement afoot to put a traffic light at the intersection of Routes 126 and 27 and to create a right-hand turning lane in front of the Grout-Heard House – smack dab in the Historic District that gives character to our town and brings to mind a 19th century village? This makes me recall the October program – an open house at the Mellen Law Office. As many of you know, it was a beautiful Sunday afternoon. I strolled down to the Law Office from the Grout-Heard House, and on my way there and back I stopped to talk to friends and neighbors who were making the same circuit. I was back in that 19th century village and I loved every minute of it. I wonder whether I will be able to do that again next year.

Jane Sciacca

IT’S A WHALE OF A TALE – AND IT’S ALL TRUE

On Tuesday, December 4 at 7:30 p.m. in the Raytheon Room of the Wayland Public Library, Eric Jay Dolin will bring to light the importance of whaling to life in the 19th century. Much of America’s culture, economy, and even its spirit were literally and figuratively rendered from the bodies of whales. Nineteenth century Wayland was no exception as it impacted so many aspects of local living – everything from what people wore to how they lit their homes. Dolin is the author of *Leviathan: The History of Whaling In America*, the first one-volume history of American whaling in many years. Dolin also is the author of *The Smithsonian Book of National Wildlife Refuges and Political Waters* and has written extensively about wildlife and the marine world. This event is co-sponsored with the Wayland Public Library. Minnette Harrington will be hostess.

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Start the holiday season with a visit to the Community Open House Sunday, December 9, from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Grout-Heard House. There you will find our period rooms overflowing with sparking decorations and arrangements. Jill Stapleton and Susan Thomas and their Wayland Garden Club

members are hard at work with big plans for the Draper Room and Heard Room. The Woodridge Garden Club, under Sandy Coy, are busy preparing the festive trimmings for the Campbell Room and Stone Room. Girl Scout troops from all over Wayland will be decorating the alcove. Their hand-made ornaments will reflect this year's theme-- Birds. Gloria Backman is in charge of decorating the antique toys room.

A Wayland High string quartet and the fourteen Madrigal Singers will be proving lively musical entertainment. Home-baked cookies, punch and coffee are planned. Aida Gennis and Mary Alice Hoes are event chairmen. The event is free and open to the public. The Library, Depot and First Parish Church will be participating in this traditional Wayland Center celebration.

FATAL FORECAST: AN INCREDIBLE TALE OF DISASTER AND SURVIVAL AT SEA

Author Michael Tougias not only has a powerful story to tell, but its hero, Ernie Hazard, grew up in Wayland. The story takes us back to November 1980 when two fishing vessels set out from Cape Cod to catch offshore lobsters at Georges Bank. A terrible storm tossed Hazard into the sea where he fought to endure for over fifty hours. Others were not so lucky. This exciting adventure is filled with thrills and chills, and a "bad guy" to boot – the National Weather Service, whose incorrect forecast was blamed for all the tragedy. Michael Tougias has written extensively about local history and nature. Check out his website at www.michaeltougias.com. Be sure to join us on Thursday, January 24, 2008 at 7:30 in the Raytheon Room of the Wayland Public Library. We are co-sponsoring this event with the Wayland Public Library and Mary Alice Hoes is hostess.

TOWN BUILDING TO HOST SLAVERY EXHIBIT

The Wayland Town Building is hosting an exhibit on this little-known chapter of our town's history in January and February 2008. "Negro" slavery was legal in Massachusetts until after the American Revolution and many of Sudbury's [Wayland and Sudbury in colonial times] most prominent citizens were slave owners. They included the minister, doctors, town fathers and veterans of the War for Independence. The exhibit will feature slave biographies, a map of slave households, and documents on Sudbury slavery including a bill of sale and an emancipation paper. A Gallery Talk on the exhibit has been scheduled for January 17 at 7 p.m. at the Wayland Town Building with Jane Sciacca, principal researcher, as guest speaker. This exhibit has been made possible with a grant from the Wayland Cultural Council.

CHANGES, CHANGES...

On page 188 of Helen Emery's "Puritan Village Evolves" is a picture of the house of Hodijah Braman on Old Sudbury Road. The house was situated on a rise of land behind two fieldstone pillars at the end of a driveway and was torn down in 1980. This land has become known as the Raytheon property in recent years and is undergoing a major transformation as the site of many housing units called Wayland Commons.

This former Braman property so close to Wayland Center has been the scene of several changes that should be known by Historical Society members. Across the land where housing and the new Town Center will be built, once extended Bridle Point Road which ran from Old Sudbury Road through Russell Garden Center property crossing the brook, passing over the northern end of the Sandy Burr Golf Club by the Noyes-Parris house and joining Old Connecticut Path.

Braman, a furniture and upholstery manufacturer in Boston, was an influential leader in Wayland and was thought to be responsible for the decision of Sarah Heard in 1878 to relocate the Grout-Heard house from its present site to one beside and to the right of his own large house on Old Sudbury Road – just where the Wayland Commons housing units will be built. There it remained until it was moved back beside the library in 1962.

Moving south to what is now known as Center School Park where the 1896 High School (later called Center School) once stood centered behind two large oak trees, we note that this past summer the one remaining tree was taken down. That tree was very old and although the massive stump was found to be hollow, rings counted in one of its large branches revealed the tree to be at least 200 years old. Suffice it to say that this landmark had survived any of us now alive.

It is worth noting that this area has been the home to three of the four high schools in Wayland: the 1855 building (later the Odd Fellows Hall and now a Trinitarian Church hall), the 1896 building where the Center School park is now; and the 1935 building (first the high school, then the junior high and now our Town Building.

We should be photographing the buildings and landscapes that will be out of our sight forever, including the 1960 high school buildings whose shelf life is limited.

TEACHING WAYLAND'S HISTORY

During the month of November, the Education Committee has been very busy teaching the children of Wayland about their town's history. On four Tuesday afternoons, Joanne Davis, Kathy Heckscher, Kate Jenney, Helen Kampion, and Janet Schmidt used dolls from the collection to teach about Wayland's role in topics of importance during different eras of our nation's history.

First we taught about colonial days, followed by immigration, transportation (particularly the first train to come to Wayland), Lydia Maria Child, and women's rights. Twelve 3rd and 4th grade girls from our three elementary schools had fun with projects, games, and stories about these topics.

In addition, Joanne, Kathy, Kate, and Marney Ives taught fifty-six 3rd graders from Happy Hollow about Native Americans in our area, Wayland's settlement, and colonial life using artifacts in our collection. Paul Gardescu talked with the students and showed them Native American artifacts from the town digs – inclement weather prevented the students from going to the landfill site on a dig themselves.

The children in both groups loved hearing about Wayland's history.

2007-8 DATES TO REMEMBER

<u>Date-Time-Place</u>	<u>Event</u>
Tuesday, December 4 th , 7:30 p.m. Raytheon Room, Wayland Public Library	Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America Eric Jay Dolin
Sunday, December 9 th , 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. Grout-Heard House	Holiday Open House
January & February Wayland Town Building	Exhibit on Slavery in Colonial Wayland Jane Sciacca & Lois Davis
Thursday, January 17 th , 7:00 p.m. Wayland Town Building	Gallery Talk on Slavery in Colonial Wayland Jane Sciacca
Thursday, January 24 th , 7:30 p.m. Raytheon Room, Wayland Public Library	Fatal Forecast: An Incredible Tale of Disaster and Survival at Sea – Michael Tougias

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