

Newsletter

(508) 358-7959

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

Vol. 32, No. 3, Jan-Feb 2009

Founded in 1954

John Heckscher, Editor

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

LYDIA MARIA CHILD

February 11 marks the 207th anniversary of the birth of arguably Wayland's most illustrious resident, Lydia Maria Child. Her relentless efforts on behalf of America's oppressed people have won her recognition in this century in both the National Women's Hall of Fame and the new National Abolition Hall of Fame. Her election into the Abolition Hall of Fame is recognition that she was one of the nine leading anti-slavery advocates in pre-Civil War America. She was a pioneer in American literature both as a writer and a woman editor. Her advice books for middle-class women, most notably *The Frugal Housewife*, are on display in parlors of mid-nineteenth century house museums such as Old Sturbridge Village. Child has also been the subject of several impressive biographies, including *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child*, and *Lydia Maria Child: The Quest for Racial Justice*. In Wayland, both Rev. Kenneth Sawyer and former curator Joanne Davis have been strong advocates and promoters of Child's incredible accomplishments. Despite all this, Child remains largely unknown. When I mention her name to Historical Society members in other towns, I am invariably greeted by blank stares and the query, "Who?" Even in Wayland that response is hardly unknown until I reveal her most remembered line, "Over the river and through the woods.." Few people know of her ground-breaking work, *Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans*, written in 1833 and the storm it stirred up in abolitionist and anti-abolitionist circles. It not only called for an end to slavery, but for equality under the law. All politics aside, I have to smile when I imagine Child's joy at the recent election of Barack Obama. She would see this as the fruition of all her efforts to ensure that "all men are created equal" meant just that.

Lydia Maria Child always kept her light under a bushel. She shunned the spotlight and public appearances. Many of her good deeds received no public acclaim because people simply did not know about them. This is what she wanted. Yet after all this time, her words still ring true, and her vision of America is still being fulfilled. Just because she wanted to be forgotten, does not mean we should allow this to happen. Her message is still resonating in today's world.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MRS. CHILD

Jane Sciacca

LOOKING BACK 100 YEARS AGO IN WAYLAND

As you turn your calendar forward to 2009, you might like to take a look at Wayland one hundred years ago. Back in 1909, Wayland had a population of just over 2,200 and would be continuing to lose residents for the next ten years. Considerably more than half of the Waylanders lived in

Cochituate. Most of the shoe industry had left Cochituate in the 1890's. At this point only the Williams Shoe Company and Charles W. Dean Company remained. Wayland's older farming community to the north exercised substantial power considering its smaller population size. Despite some grumbling, the Town Hall, the railroad line and the Town's High School and Grammar School had all been built in Wayland Center.

The 1909 Town Report gives an incredibly detailed picture of Wayland in 1909. The names of all sixteen grammar school graduates, the entire high school curriculum, the names and salaries of every teacher in town and a list of the eleven students with perfect attendance – all are given in loving detail. The Public Library listed the title of every one of its 277 new books. The Fire Department detailed all seventeen of the fires to which it responded the year before. The Finance Committee asked Town Meeting to appropriate \$34,910 to run the town for the coming year.

These statistics and many more are available in the Town Report for that year and in Helen Fitch Emery's Wayland History, *The Puritan Village Evolves*.

Joanne Davis

BACH AND HIS LEGACY

Musicians of the Old Post Road join with the Wayland Historical Society in presenting the program "Bach and his Legacy". This program will present exquisite trio and solo sonatas by J. S. Bach, his sons Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philip Emmanuel, along with star pupils Johann Philipp Kirnberger and Johann Gottlieb Goldberg. The performance is scheduled for Friday, February 20, 8:00 pm at First Parish Unitarian Church, Wayland Center. Tickets may be bought at the door: \$25 General Admission; \$20 Senior/Students; Free for Children 7-17. Tickets may also be ordered by phone: (781) 466-6694.

LYDIA MARIA CHILD AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE HUMANITARIAN SPIRIT

Step back into nineteenth century Wayland with author and reformer Lydia Maria Child. Child – Wayland's most renowned citizen – was recently honored in Peterboro, NY at the National Abolition Hall of Fame for her outstanding efforts to bring an end to slavery and secure rights for the oppressed. President Jane Sciacca represented the Wayland Historical Society at the October commemoration ceremony and will reprise her talk on Child. Highlights of the talk were Child's almost thirty years in Wayland which encompassed John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry, the Civil War and Reconstruction. An exhibit accompanying the presentation will feature Child artifacts from the Society's collections. The talk will be presented on Sunday, March 8, 2009 at Grout-Heard House at 2 pm. Janet Schmidt will hostess.

WHDC HEARING ON TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT IN WAYLAND CENTER

In January of 2008, the Town Administrator sought the opinion of Town Counsel, Mark Lanza on the jurisdiction of the Wayland Historic District Commission (WHDC) on objects/items located outside of homes/structures in the historic district. Town Counsel responded in part that within the historic district no structure may be constructed or altered in any way that affects its exterior architectural features unless the WHDC has first issued a certificate of appropriateness, non-applicability or hardship. However, when the Board of Selectmen (BOS) certifies that the proposed changes are necessary for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition the WHDC may not prevent the changes or deny a certificate. When such changes are proposed, the WHDC's role is advisory in nature.

Over the course of the year, the WHDC provided many comments and suggestions to the developer, the BOS, and the Board of Road Commissioners (BORC). The WHDC encouraged that an application for a certificate be applied for in order to allow the WHDC to act in a timely manner. This January the BOS wrote the WHDC noting the traffic improvements necessitated by the increased traffic resulting from the Town Center project. The letter continues, "The BOS has determined that the alterations and construction of structures within the road layout as approved by the BORC within the Historic District are necessary for public safety due to the dangerous conditions that will result from the Town Center project-generated traffic if the improvements are not made." The WHDC wrote the BOS with a request for independent counsel and the request was denied.

On January 8, 2009, Twenty Wayland, LLC submitted the request for a certificate along with a set of site plans and the above quote from the BOS. In the letter of transmittal, the developer notes that the improvements have been certified by the BOS to be necessary for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition. The developer continues: "We understand that this certification requires that the Commission issue a certificate of non-applicability and limits it to an advisory role". The WHDC has sent the developer a letter requesting additional information including: design details of structures, photographs and plans for items that are going to be relocated and methods of protecting historic items among others.

The hearing is scheduled for February 5, 2009 at 8:15PM in the Town building. All who are interested in the preservation of the Wayland Town Center Historic District are encouraged to attend.

George Ives, Member, WHDC

REMINDER ABOUT DUES

The Membership Committee does not wish to have the reputation as "nags" but the membership dues for this year will be received with thanks as soon as you have a moment to write a check. If you look at the address label on the front after your name and '09' appears there, you have paid for this year. Obviously, if another year ('08 or '07) appears there, you are in arrears!

2009 DATES TO REMEMBER

Date-Time-Place	Event
Friday, February 20 th , 8:00 p.m. First Parish Church, Wayland Center	Bach and his Legacy Musicians of the Old Post Road
Sunday, March 8 th , 2:00 p.m. <u>NEW DATE</u> Grout-Heard House, Wayland Center	Lydia Maria Child and the Triumph of Humanitarian Spirit – Jane Sciacca
Sunday, April 19 th , 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Isaac Damon House, 357 Commonwealth Road	Cochituate House Tour/Exhibit/Talk Pauline DiCesare
Tuesday, May 12 th , 7:30 p.m. Grout-Heard House, Wayland Center	ANNUAL MEETING plus Exhibit: History of the Wayland Public Library

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Wayland Historical Society
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