



Braintree Historical Society, Inc.

31 Tenney Road, Braintree MA 02184 – www.braintreehistorical.org – 781-848-1640

March 2024

A Message from the President:



Dear Members and Friends,
The Historical Society is planning a number of events that we hope will be interesting, enjoyable and educational for all members and friends.

On March 20 at 7:30 pm, Society Historian John Dennehy will be giving a talk on Abigail and John Adams. The location will be the Thayer Public Library conference room on the top floor of the library. As many of you know, Professor Dennehy possesses a wealth of knowledge about the Adams family and always provides a great experience for all who attend his events

The Society's map expert, John Donovan, will be speaking on the "Paths and Roads of Braintree - 1600 to the Present". John will describe and explain how foot paths created by native Americans became the basis for roads that were created after Braintree was established in 1640, and how and why other roads and streets were built in the 1700s, 1800s and right up to the present day. The date and location has not been set yet for John's presentation, but the presentation will probably occur in late April or May. Please check the Society's website and Facebook page for date and location information so that you do not miss John's enlightening and enjoyable presentation.

The General Sylvanus Thayer House will reopen for the season in April. Public tours will be offered one Saturday per month. Please check our website and Facebook page for dates and times. Of course, the Thayer House School Program will be operating again this year in conjunction with the Braintree Public Schools. All third-grade students

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Our Next Meeting and Lecture:

**John Dennehy On
John and Abigail Adams
Wednesday, March 20, 7:30**



Past President, John Dennehy began his career with a Law degree, but has always been a local historian, ultimately teaching College History. So it's no wonder we enjoy hearing from him.

It should be most interesting when he tells us about John and Abigail Adams, on Wednesday, March 20, at 7:30.

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will have the opportunity to visit the Thayer House as part of their Social Studies curriculum. This program has been operating continuously for over 60 years. It is estimated that more than 30,000 elementary school students have toured the Thayer House since the program began!

As this year marks the 150th anniversary of the opening of the original Thayer Public Library Building (adjacent to Town Hall) the Society will be displaying exhibits highlighting the life and achievements of General Sylvanus Thayer. The exhibits will be displayed at the Society's Barn building at 31 Tenney Road (right behind the Thayer House). We also plan to have one or more speaker events where the amazing life of the "Father of West Point" will be described. These events are tentatively scheduled to begin in May and continue throughout the summer months. Please check our website and Facebook page for dates and times. The Thayer Public Library will be leading the 150th anniversary celebration, and the Society will do everything that we can do to support and supplement the Thayer Public Library celebration events.

For the first time, the Society is planning to partner with the Chinese American Association of Braintree for a joint event. Tentatively, the event will be held on Saturday afternoon May 18th in the backyard of the Thayer House. Please check our website and Facebook page for confirmation and more details as we get closer to May. This event is likely to have activities for younger children, and should be a fun and educational experience for all.

We have many other events in the planning stage. Heritage Day will happen in late September or early October, and we hope to have many reenactors participating. A Ghost Hunt in one of our old buildings is possible for October or November. We are also hoping to get more speaker events, perhaps with one or more authors of recent books. Of course we are already looking forward to next year and the 250th anniversary of the prelude to the American Revolution, which was led in large part by Braintree residents.

We hope to open the Research Center at 31 Tenney Road at least one Saturday per month

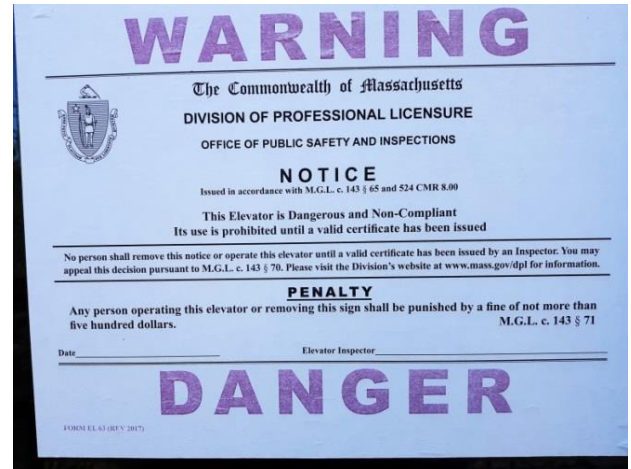
beginning in April. Please check our website and Facebook page for updated information.

Finally, we will be holding the Society's Annual Meeting in May. More details will be on our website and Facebook page by April.

Many thanks to all for your continuing support.

Steve Leonard

Update On Our Needs:



This is the sign you'll see attached to the front door of the Mary Bean Cunningham Resource Center as you enter the building. It's a sad indication of maintenance deferred; however, we're attempting to remedy this situation.

In December, 2023 Alan Flowers, Society Corresponding Secretary, applied for a grant to the Mass. Cultural Council Capital Grants Program. This program provides matching grants for the repair or renovation of equipment for cultural institutions. The Society's grant was for elevator repairs and a new heat pump unit for the Barn and Resource Center for a total of \$15,947.50 - **this is half the estimated cost of the repairs, the balance of which must be raised by the Society to match the grant.** We expect to hear if we get the grant in May



Society Celebrates Chinese Year of the Dragon



Society Tour Guide Ryan Daniels, Director Adrienne Whitehouse and President Steve Leonard man the booth

On February 4 the Braintree Historical Society participated in the Lunar New Year Celebration at Braintree High School. The event was hosted by the Chinese American Association of Braintree and celebrated the Year of the Dragon, Asian culture and history in general. There were many great performances, and a fun emphasis on culture and history.



Mayor Erin Joyce stopped by to obtain more info about the Society

The Society's table had many visitors including Mayor Erin Joyce, State Senator Walter Timilty, State Senator John Keenan, Town Councilor Meredith Boericke, Town Councilor Julia Flaherty, and Justine Huang, President of Chinese American Association of Braintree. The Society's participants included Steve Leonard, Sunny Shaw, Alan Flowers, Adrienne Whitehouse, and Ryan Daniels.

Ryan, who wore his 18 th Century attire that attracted much attention from the large crowd which attended.



Senator Walter Timilty discusses the Braintree photo book *Images of America, Braintree* with President Steve Leonard as Adrienne Whitehouse and Sunny Shaw discuss the event.

Our thanks go to Justine for inviting the Society to participate in such a fun event. The event not only highlighted Asian culture and brought awareness of the Asian history and community to all participants, but the event also highlighted and brought awareness of American and Braintree history.



Society members learn about Chinese items while working the booth

Braintree Historical Society Board of Directors

President: Stephen P. Leonard, Vice President: Sonya Shaw, Treasurer: Thomas M. Kent, Sr., Corresponding Secretary: Alan Flowers. Clerk: Pepe Goodhue. Director to 2024: Adrienne Whitehouse. Directors to 2025: Christopher Griffin, Wesley Painter. Director to 2026: Gail Saccone, Derek Manning. Immediate Past President: Robert Harris.

Ron Frazier is Editor this News-Letter, with the assistance of Mary Frazier.

**SUPPORT THE BUSINESSES
WHO SUPPORT THE SOCIETY**

Our Business Members are those businesses in the community who have demonstrated their support of the Historical Society. As such we should patronize them when we can and let them know we appreciate their support for the Society.

\$2,500 and above FOUNDATION LEVEL

Quirk Auto Dealerships
The Braintree Knights of Columbus and the
Braintree Knights 1462 Foundation

\$1,500 and above PARTNERSHIP

\$500 and above PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

Adams Street Enterprise LLC Blue Hills Cemetery
Frye Agency Braintree AARP

\$250 and above EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Tufankjian Auto Group Williams Energy
Penniman Family Foundation Grillo Oriental Rugs

\$100 and above CORPORATE MEMBER

Braintree Chiropractic Braintree Rug Company
Braintree Rifle and Pistol Club Herbst Law Group LLC
Glow Beauty Boutique King Optical Company
Century 21 Marella Realty Crossroads Pub
Lane, Lane and Kelly, LLP Portland Pottery South

Welcome New Members

Daniel Dunn Jan Marie Ring

Donations since our last News-Letter

Sincere thanks to the following:

Sunny and David Shaw Walter Opanesets
Barbara and Alan Flowers (matching donation)
Alan and Edith Weinberg Ron Frazier
David Parr Ben & Terry Feehan

\$5K Will Help Pay for Thayer House Heater

A new heating system boiler was recently installed at the Thayer House. The old boiler was suffering from severe corrosion and was leaking water from the internal boiler drums. The Society was informed by two different heating contractors that the boiler was in danger of a severe failure event. Thankfully, Williams Energy of Braintree was able to install a new boiler at a reduced price. Nevertheless, this was another in a long line of unanticipated expenses for the Society's new board.

**New Accessions Reported by the
Curator, Mary Small Frazier**

Scrap Book – Braintree White Sox – Harry “Babe” Collins 1930s.. Henry was an outstanding member of the Kenesaw Club and Braintree White Sox baseball teams, a long time Braintree resident and active Mason. Gift of Frank Collins

WWII letters plus three photos of sender, Edward St.Andre. Edward of Bowker Avenue corresponded with his sweetheart, later wife. Along with the letters, William St.Andre included photos of his uncle along with his service record and radio operator's license. Gift of William St.Andre.

Men's Gloves – tan leather, dark stitching 1980s. As a volunteer, Ruth, realized the need to enhance our collection of men's apparel and ephemera. The gloves were her husband, Marvin's. Gift of Ruth Powell

Journal of Wm. L. Holmes – grocery business 1882-1894. This member often finds and sends us wonderful eclectic artifacts of Braintree. This ledger gives a glimpse into the time and economy of Braintree a century ago. Gift of: David Parr

Painting – oil on canvas, by Helen Hare Brooks 1960s. Framed landscape of the tranquil grassland on the corner of Packard Drive and West Street seen from the Pattavina's home before the Bryant lands were developed. Donor: Elizabeth Pattavina Flynn.



**Braintree Historical Society
31 Tenney Road
Braintree, MA 02184
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**