

# THE FOXBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2014 46th Year Issue #1

Tuesday, September 23, 2014, 7:30 p.m.  
Boyden Library, 10 Bird Street, Foxborough, MA

The Foxborough Historical Society Presents:  
**Doolittle Home: A Century of Service**



We live in a time when options are virtually unlimited for elders to provide for themselves in their advanced age, from assisted living to retirement communities or nursing homes for those needing specialized medical care. Turning the clock back a hundred years, families were responsible for taking care of their own, having parents move in with children or living nearby so assistance was available, a time when many towns established Visiting Nurse offices to provide assistance in the home. There was a greater need not being met, and care of the elderly became the focus of the annual convention of the Massachusetts Universalist Convention in 1913. Attending that convention was Sarah Doolittle of Foxboro who had, over the years, been employed at Boyden Library but was now concerned about her own future. She was 67 years of age when her widowed father, Allen Doolittle, passed away, leaving her the stately family home at the corner of Bird and Baker Streets. The house had a large barn and Mr. Doolittle, who had prospered in the straw hat trade, kept horses and cows and had a large orchard. The Doolittle family had also taken in several boarders who worked in nearby hat factories. Sarah made several attempts to engage a manager for the

property but nothing worked out and she was contemplating a sale. At the convention, Sarah heard members voice a strong commitment to supporting the commitment for establish a home for the elderly, particularly those of the Universalist persuasion. Sarah raised the prospect of donating her family homestead and acceptance was swift. It would prove an ideal opportunity for providing for the elderly and Sarah would receive a lifetime annuity. The Doolittle Universalist Home for Aged Persons was incorporated March 1, 1915. The rest, as they say, is history – and the story of the Doolittle Home will be shared by Town Historian Jack Authelet at the September meeting of the Foxborough Historical Society. Many changes had to be made in the home to accommodate many elderly. A nursing station was established in the barn and the doors were open to elderly of all faiths under a very unique concept of Life Care. Once admitted for an initial fee, they would be cared for the remainder of their days. Eventually the barn would be removed, a mirror image of the original house added, connected by a large dining room and sun room on the first floor, individual rooms for residents on the second, and a large kitchen in the basement. There would also be a medical wing, staffed around the clock, and as such facilities came under close state supervision and standards over the years, Sarah Doolittle’s dream of helping the elderly would earn top state ratings in many categories of care year after year. Doolittle Home is approaching the century mark, still focused on its original mission but long since reorganized without religious affiliation as a 501(c) 3 public charity but also offering a variety of residency options beyond Life Care.

The public is invited to hear the remarkable story of care of the elderly as it evolved within the family homestead as Doolittle Home prepares to celebrate its 100th anniversary. The Foxborough Historical Society meeting will be held Tuesday, Sept. 23 at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Meeting Room on the lower level of Boyden Library. The program is free and open to the public.

For those who have not seen the “Foxborough Center in Miniature” created by Joe Whall, it is on display in the second floor lobby of the library. Elevator access is available.

Events of the historical society are free and everyone is welcome to attend.  
**Parking** is available at the library. **Do not park in the Aubuchon lot.**

### **David Ingram**

We were saddened to learn of the passing of David Ingram on July 2, 2014. David was the husband of Penny who was our Program Chairman for many years. Dave was a very active member of the Historical Commission until both he and Penny relocated to Hingham to be closer to their children and grandchildren.



## Founders Day

Joan Stafford did a wonderful job coordinating volunteers at the field who were Alice Murphy, Ralph Guimond, Joanne Pratt, Margaret Boldrighini, Kathy Grieder, Tenny Fleming and Charlie Clifford. Helping set and take down canopy were Bill Grieder, Heather Harding and Jim Darlington. Thank you! Jeff Peterson spent a few hours signing his new book “Legendary Locals of Foxborough”. A great day!



Author Jeff Peterson signing one of his books on Founders Day at the Foxborough Historical Society booth surrounded by his daughter and members of the society.

## Donations for the Civil War Soldier Statue Restoration

As of September 1<sup>st</sup> = \$13,976    Goal = \$25,000

*From the desk of our President Charles Clifford:*

1. The Officers and the Directors will be presented for Members approval at the September 23, 2014 Meeting of the Members.
2. The Membership New and Renewal Form is part of the September 2014 Monthly Newsletter. Dues will be the same - Family Membership \$10.00 - Single Membership \$8.00. **(Include e-mail address if you have one.)**

Send in a completed Membership Form to stay on the Newsletter E-Mail or Mailing List.

Thanks, Charlie C.

Ask a friend to join, Family = \$10.00, Individual = \$8.00/yr  
Meetings: 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, September to November & January to May.

Memorial Hall is open every Wednesday evening, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
and on the second Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon.

### **50 YEARS AGO IN FOXBOROUGH**

[News extracted from the Foxboro Reporter]

JUNE 1964

- World's Fair here we come! Says local high school band.
- 125 graduate from new high school in largest class.
- Miss Florence Ann Carpenter, 87, of 96 South St., a member of Foxborough's "first family", dies. She was the daughter of Richard and Henrietta Carpenter.
- Auction of Everett School property this Saturday.

JULY 1964

- Judges decision due on school salary controversy.
- No bidders at auction for Everett School as Selectmen set a ceiling.
- Court orders Town to restore \$22,000 cut to school funds.
- Town now has 8 bomb shelters CD Director reveals.
- New public library proposal readied for Town Meeting.

AUGUST 1964

- 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Firemen's Field Days Friday & Saturday.
- State's 1<sup>st</sup> condominium homes are opened for inspection on Chestnut St.
- Girls enjoy many activities at Lincoln-Hill Camp.
- Ada May Hicks, 97, a senior resident laid to rest.
- Merchants revive parking area at rear of downtown stores.
- 15 year old boy bicycles 380 miles to visit his grandparents in Maine.

SEPTEMBER 1964

- Residents will vote in new district for 1<sup>st</sup> time next Thursday.
- Special October Town Meeting for new school on South St.
- Reporter 80 years young keeps pace as town grows. Steady growth of Reporter direct result of Editor Samuel's impetus.
- New Town Hall nears completion.

The Foxborough Historical Society

Membership Application 2014 – 2015

**Renewal [ ] New [ ]**

Name -----

Address -----

Home Tel. No. ----- Cell # -----

e-mail -----

Available for Volunteer Projects? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Family [ ] \$10.00    Single [ ] \$8.00    Donation [ ] -----

Donation for Civil War Statue Restoration [ ] -----

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Make check payable to:

Foxborough Historical Society

PO Box 450

Foxborough, MA 02035

Membership Confirmation Sept. 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015