



GALE FORCE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF GALE FREE LIBRARY FGFL.ORG

Gale Free Library: Opening doors for 128 years.

Winter 2016, Vol. 26, No. 1

Editor's Note

A Note to Bibliographers

It has come to our attention that back in 2012 *Gale Force* neglected to change the volume number from 22 (for 2011) to 23 (for 2012). Consequently, there are now *two* Volume 22, numbers 1 and 2. Ever since, the volume numbers have been off by one. However, we have decided not to change anything, since the last digit of the volume number now correlates with the year. For example, Volume 26 = 2016. That should make it easy to remember. You may want to hold onto those duplicate numbered issues, in case they become valuable collectors' items!

Please Join or Renew Your Membership for 2016

If you received this issue by mail, please use the enclosed envelope to join FGFL or renew your membership for 2016. (If you have already done so, thank you!) Membership dues are an important source of the Friends' support for the library, helping make Gale Free Library the finest library of its size in the commonwealth.

RIGHT: *The library model may look gigantic in this photo, but the tower is only 5 5/8 inches high. The back page shows a detail from the kit. (Photo and artwork by Al Berg)*

Build Your Own Damon Memorial/Gale Free Library

BY RICHARD MAURER

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, Al Berg was at home recovering from an illness and had time on his hands. What does a retired civil engineer and former head of Holden's Department of Public Works do when he's bored? Al pulled out an old set of plans for Gale Free Library's renovation and addition project from the late 1980s and set about making an exact scale model of the building.

Al picked 1/144th scale because it was convenient for 8 1/2 x 11-inch cardstock, and it produces a reasonably sized replica that is at the same scale as many other models and miniatures. A few years earlier, he had produced somewhat smaller scale models of Holden's Town Hall and Congregational Church.

You can view Al's beautifully rendered

reproduction of GFL (officially, the Damon Memorial) in the library's Local History Room. A second copy is on display at the Holden Senior Center.*

Since you will surely want your very own miniature GFL, Al has put together a professional-quality do-it-yourself kit to commemorate Holden's 275th anniversary in 2016. All you need is the kit, an X-Acto knife, Elmer's glue, and a few hours of cutting, scoring, folding, and gluing.

The kit's instructions are meticulous and easy to follow (Al recommends ages twelve and up). The assembly sheets are handsomely printed, showing many details of the exterior of the building. The roof is particularly fascinating, since the geometry is quite complex

Continued on back page





ABOVE, LEFT: *Holden center in 1892, from a bird's-eye map. The arrow points to the back wing of the Abbott Tavern. The Damon Memorial is at the upper right.* (Gale Free Library)

ABOVE, RIGHT: *A postcard of the Abbott Tavern around 1890. No longer a place of refreshment, it served as the Rice family residence.* (Chuck Skillings)



The Flip Side of the Abbott Tavern

BY MARGARET WATSON

*No flip was more widely known and more respected than the famous brew of Abbott's Tavern at Holden, Massachusetts. This house, built in 1763, and kept by three generations of Abbots, never wavered in the quality of its flip. It is said to have been famous from the Atlantic to the Pacific — and few stage-coaches or travelers ever passed that door without adding to its praises and thereafter spreading its reputation. — Alice Earle, *Stagecoach and Tavern Days*, 1912*

But what is flip? Therein lies a tale.

THE PURITAN General Court in the Massachusetts Bay Colony required that a church be built in the center of every town and, further, that an “ordinary” (a combination tavern and inn) be constructed near the church. There were several reasons for this second stipulation. The Scriptures state that hospitality and refreshment should be provided to strangers and travelers. Also, the town's mail could be delivered to the establishment, with rest provided for both horse and rider. But most importantly, on Sunday the usually unheated churches held two long services with a noon break in between. Worshipers could avail themselves of the tavern to warm up and partake of lunch.

In 1761 John Abbott, a blacksmith from Sudbury, purchased nine acres of land from Reverend Samuel Davis, first minister of the Congregational Church in Holden. The property was located on the south side of Main Street, now Route 122A. Abbott paid the minister the grand sum of seventeen pounds, six shillings, and eight pence for the site.¹

Built two years later, the Abbott Tavern had eighteen rooms. Over the years Abbott added three stables, two blacksmith shops, coach shelters, and a paddock. One blacksmith shop was located near the current location of the Hendricks House. The tavern also boasted a ballroom. The property remained in the possession of the Abbott family for three generations, with the exception of two years when it was leased to Reverend Davis. Abbott's son Captain Lemuel Abbott managed the tavern sometime after the Revolutionary War but died at about age fifty. Lemuel was married to Zillah Chenery, and the marriage produced the third-generation owner, Chenery Abbott, who shocked respectable town citizens by his use of colorful language. Likewise, he opposed any attempts to introduce temperance. The Puritans were not teetotalers but frowned upon drunkenness, especially in public, the reward being time in the stocks.

The Abbott Tavern gained renown for its special drink, known as “flip.” According to historian Alice Earle, “Flip was a dearly loved drink of colonial times, far more popular in

NOTES

1. Newsletter of the Holden Historical Society. No. 4, February 1990.
2. Earle, Alice. *Stagecoach and Tavern Days*. New York: Macmillan, 1912.
3. Prouty, Florence Newell. *History of the Town of Holden 1667–1941*. Worcester, MA: Stobbs Press, 1941.
4. Conroy, David W. *In Public Houses: Drink and the Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts*. Williamsburg, VA: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

America than in England.”² The Abbott Tavern’s recipe called for three eggs, three teaspoons of sugar, one jigger of rum, one jigger of brandy, and twelve to sixteen ounces of homemade beer. This mixture was warmed by a flip iron — a hot poker thrust into the mug to raise the temperature to the desired level. The cost of one mug of flip was eleven pence. It was surely strong enough to refresh any weary traveler on a cold winter night. The Abbott Tavern recipe became famous and was printed in the Charleston Receipts.³ However, the family’s beer recipe, which may be what made their flip so notable, has not survived.

In 1781 the General Court of Massachusetts became nervous about the rapid growth of taverns and drink sellers, especially in Worcester County. The number had more than doubled between the years of 1740 to 1770. One tavern per town was allowed by a new law passed at that time.⁴

Tale of a Table

BY NANCY RICHARDS, LOCAL HISTORY LIBRARIAN

Editor’s note: You may have noticed that between the double passageways that lead from the reference area to the circulation desk is a vintage oak table. It is now devoted to materials and displays produced by the Friends of Gale Free Library. Ah, but if that table could only talk! Here, Nancy Richards does the talking for it.

NOT QUITE sixteen years after the doors of the Damon Memorial opened, the board of trustees approved payment for a table. Listed under “Miscellaneous Expenditures” in the annual report for 1905, the record states: “May 14, 1904 . . . E. W. Coffin, library table, 9 00.”

We cannot say with certainty that the line refers to the little table that now serves the Friends. Even so, we do know that “library table” denotes just such small pieces of work-horse furniture. Furthermore, Edward W. Coffin’s price of \$9.00 is in keeping with a table such as ours — made of solid oak by a Worcester manufacturer and dealer who wasn’t in the business of selling the massive quantities of library tables that Chicago’s merchandising

Nevertheless, the Abbott Tavern endured for more than a century and then passed into the hands of others. For many years, Austin C. Rice owned the building. His three daughters taught in the Holden public schools. The former Margery A. Rice School was named after one of Austin’s daughters.

In 1935 Austin Rice sold the tavern to Albert Zottoli. Mr. Zottoli built a filling station in front of the tavern and renovated its eighteen rooms into three apartments. In 1970 the building was moved to its present site behind the Mobil station at the corner of Main and Reservoir Streets. Access is by way of a driveway leading from Reservoir Street.

Scene of merriment and conviviality in days gone by, the former Abbott Tavern is one of Holden’s oldest buildings, and flip can now be found only in history books.

Unless, of course, you want to concoct a batch yourself!

giant Sears, Roebuck and Co. could manage (their oak library tables sold for \$5.90 in 1902).

Mr. Coffin’s specialty was well-made display cases — the trustees spent \$65.00 on one of his “show-cases” in 1903 — along with other business furnishings and fixtures. A stencil on the underside of the Friends’ table states: “From E. W. Coffin, mf’r of store fixtures/258 Main St., Worcester, Mass.”

Why was the library table purchased? Did Librarian Addie Holden need an additional work space that could be transported easily from one area to another? Was the table the work station for a “Miss O’Connor,” who was paid \$3.90 on October 8, 1904, for “service to the library”? Was it used at trustee meetings?

What we know is that the table eventually ended up in the staff lounge, serving as a telephone desk, sans drawer. When I spotted it in 2004, I inquired about moving it to the reading room, where it could be enjoyed by patrons. There it sat for a full decade, sporting one of Kim Challenger’s handmade covers and a plant, until it suggested itself as the very thing for a long-term Friends’ display.

Admire it as you peruse Friends’ materials, such as the newsletter you are now reading.

Film Lovers, Rejoice!

Your Gale Free Library card now allows you free access to over 8,000 high-quality independent shorts, features, documentaries, and web-series from film festivals around the world. You can access IndieFlix by going to the GFL web page (galefreelibrary.org), click on the “E-Resources” link in the menu, then follow the instructions for “Set-up tips” in the IndieFlix section. You have unlimited viewing on your PC, tablet, or mobile device. IndieFlix’s mission is “to champion filmmakers, launch careers, rethink traditional approaches to distribution, and celebrate the artistry and impact of independent film,” so this is an ideal place to see thoughtful work that is ignored by the major distributors. For more information, call the library’s reference desk at 508-210-5569. Happy viewing!

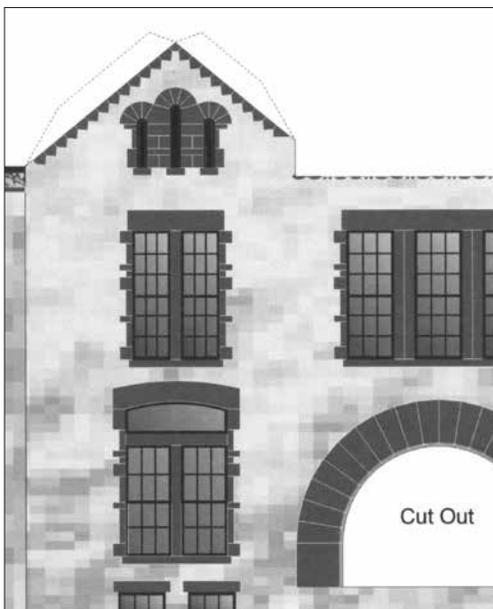




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Library model from page 1



and difficult to see from the ground. If you take your time, your completed model should be as impressive as Al's.

The Gale Free Library 1/144th scale 3-D Paper Model Kit is available for \$15 on the gift cart at the Holden Senior Center. All proceeds go to the Friends of the Holden Council on Aging. Ask if Al is around, since he teaches bridge at the Senior Center and is director of the Wachusett Bridge Club, which meets regularly in the building. He'll offer you tips on this exquisite and immensely rewarding construction project.

**Also on display at the Senior Center is a dollhouse constructed by Chuck Skillings at 1/12th scale. Al's GFL model is 1/12th of that (= 1/144th), so it's a "doll's dollhouse."*

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Friends of Gale Free Library is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Holden Prepares to Blow Out 275 Candles

BY JAMIE CHASE GALVIN

ON JANUARY 9, 1741, Holden was duly incorporated as a municipality in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Therefore this year, 2016, marks the town's 275th anniversary — something to celebrate! An anniversary planning committee has been hard at work lining up a series of events to mark the occasion.

Kicking off the festivities is a winter fundraising gala at Val's Restaurant, 75 Reservoir Street, on Monday, January 11 at 6 pm. Tickets are \$35 each or \$60 per couple, and revelers will be treated to Val's delicious hors d'oeuvres and, of course, birthday cake to celebrate turning

275 years old. A silent auction and cash bar will further enliven the evening.

Heading the 275th Committee are co-chairs Eric Johansen and Roy Fraser, along with committee members Mary Parry, Richard Mansfield, Jeremy Kurtz, Farrell O'Connor, Barbara Mellor, Lois Johansen, and Susan DiNoia.

The committee is also planning an outdoor Family Day with picnicking, music, and fireworks in the summer or fall, and they are open to other ideas. "The goal," says Eric, "is to enjoy an anniversary celebration that gets the town together."

Keep up with the celebration by visiting the "Holden 275th Anniversary" page on Facebook.

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