

GALE FORCE

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

Gale Free Library: Opening doors for 128 years.

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Editor's Note

On this page, Tom Dresser of Martha's Vineyard, formerly of Manning Street in Jefferson, hosts a roundtable reminiscence of Gale Free Library in the 1950s and '60s. Then on page 2, Margaret Watson continues her local histories that have already brought you the lives of Mary Rowlandson and Samuel Chenery Damon, the good cheer of the Abbott Tavern, and the hearty ring of the Damon Memorial bell. Now she tells the story of our library's towering time-piece, the Howard clock, which you can see from Highland Street, burnished with glittering gold leaf. And on page 3, GFL Assistant Director Jen Rhoades reveals what's cooking at the library's monthly Cooking Club.

Please Join or Renew Your Membership for 2017

If you received this issue by mail, please use the enclosed envelope to join FGFL or renew your membership for 2017. (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.



Growing Up with the Gale Free

BY TOM DRESSER

RECENTLY, classmates of the Wachusett Regional High School Class of 1965 sat down to discuss plans for their collective seventieth birthday party. Last year's successful fiftieth high school reunion prompted a desire to meet again soon. At a break, a question was raised about memories of the Gale Free Library.

"It was a short walk from Holden Junior High," said retired principal John Locke. "So convenient."

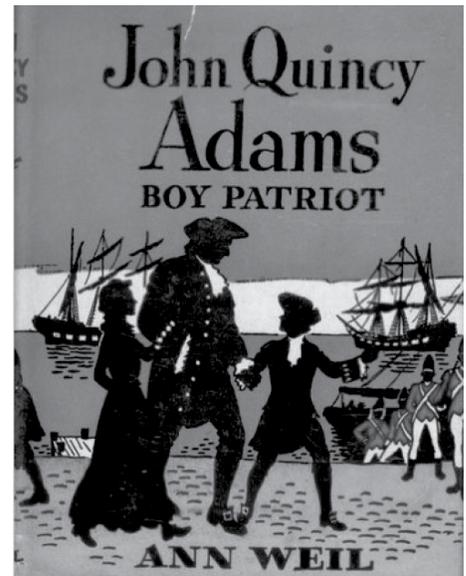
"I remember the big dictionary on a stand, as you walked in," recalled Sandy (MacGregor) Hakkarainen, who now lives in a condominium, formerly the Rice School. "We used to look up naughty words," she smiled. "The Bookmobile would come right to your house. My mother was the Bookmobile Librarian," she added.

Tom Dresser, from the rural wilds of Manning Street, Jefferson, and former editor of the *Springdale News*, housed in the library's Local History Room, recalled returning to the Gale Free time and again to take out the same book: *John Quincy Adams, Boy Patriot*, in the Childhood of Famous Americans series (by Ann Weil, published in 1945). He claims he read the book eighteen times.

Gail (Johnson) Mannila read everything at her level at the Chaffins branch of the Gale Free. "It was really very small," she said.

"Only about twenty books?" someone kidded her.

"It had a nice selection of books for all age groups," Gail went on. "The Chaffins Branch had what I guess was thousands of books in a large room in the basement of Chaffins School. I would bring a new stack home every week or two. The women in my family were all



voracious readers, so the three of us probably took home twenty books each visit!"

Joyce (Cournoyer) Dresser recalled her excitement in seventh grade at the big library in town, after the limits of the Chaffins Branch. Sandy, Gail, and Joyce treasure fond memories of Mrs. Potvin at Chaffins. Joyce went on, "I remember one book, *The Pink Dress*, I think it was by Jane Alexander." (Pretty close: it was Anne Alexander, published in 1959.) She explained: "It was a young-romance kind of novel. Everyone was in hot pursuit of that book."

Gail shared a story: "There was this one large children's book at Chaffins that had beautiful illustrations of mountains of Easter eggs. My sister and I were in love with that book. We would both run for this book and fight over who was going to get to take it home. Mom did not like the running or the fighting, so we took turns, so that when one of us returned the book, the other would take it out again. Mom got wise to that strategy pretty quickly as she

Continued on back page

The Howard Clock and One Man's Quest for Perfection

BY MARGARET WATSON



The Damon Memorial in 1888, the year the building opened. The Howard clock on the tower reads 11:46 a.m.

IN A FORMAL CEREMONY held on August 29, 1888, the Damon Memorial was publicly dedicated and presented to the town of Holden by Samuel Chester Gale and his wife, Susan Damon Gale. The building boasts a tower of particular distinction, sixty-four feet in height and built in a bold and massive character. Directly below the belfry on the north and east sides of the tower are the open dials of the Howard clock with hands and numerals made of solid iron. The clock is the work of Edward Howard, a man who revolutionized clockmaking in the nineteenth century, not only in this nation but across the world.

Edward Howard was born in 1813 and remained a New Englander throughout his life. As a youth, he was apprenticed to Aaron Willard, son of one of the famous Willard brothers, master clockmakers from North Grafton, Massachusetts. Howard began his own firm in 1840 in Boston, manufacturing clocks and watches. He continued in the business until his retirement in 1882, under different company names with a variety of partners.

Celebrated to posterity as a clockmaker, Howard was originally known as an inventor and maker of weighing devices. At age twenty-seven, he was appointed Deputy Sealer of Weights, Measures, and Balances for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. With a passion for accuracy, he standardized the weighing of gold, which was of particular importance

during the gold rush of mid-century. Howard's balances can still be found on display in several Boston banks.

After Congress passed a law requiring that postage be determined by weight, Howard won the contract for the first postal scales, which were used in United States post offices for forty years.

But Howard's real love was clockmaking, which was one of the earliest and most important industries in America. When he was learning the craft, clockmakers used hand tools and could construct only a limited number of timepieces. No two were exactly alike. Howard conceived the idea that watches and clocks could be machine-made with interchangeable parts, which would greatly increase the productivity of the craftsman.

At first he met ridicule, but his new vision turned New England into a world pioneer in the use of automatic machines, and his methods were emulated by other American clockmakers and by English and Swiss manufacturers.

Howard's perfectionism may have inspired the main character in Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1844 short story, "The Artist of the Beautiful," in which a young clockmaker seeks to incorporate perfect beauty into a manmade mechanism. Hawthorne apparently intended the clock shop to symbolize the transition of the United States from an agricultural to an industrial nation.

In one passage that recalls Howard's early tribulations, Hawthorne writes: "It is requisite for the ideal artist to possess a force of character . . . he must keep his faith in himself, while the incredulous world assails him with its utter disbelief."

Many of Howard's clocks endure and keep near-perfect time to this day. Six of his street clocks still grace the sidewalks of Boston. Of the 4,000 tower clocks produced by the firm he founded, E. Howard & Co., many still keep



The original Howard clock mechanism inside the tower of the Damon Memorial. The shaft on the right turns the clock hands on the east face of the tower. Hidden by the mechanism is the shaft driving the hands on the clock's north-facing dial.

Sources

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Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Artist of the Beautiful." *Democratic Review* (June, 1844).

Mariana Mussetta and Andrea Vartalitis. "The Transcendental Experience of Beauty in 'The Artist of the Beautiful.'" *American Transcendentalism Web*, <http://transcendentalism-legacy.tamu.edu/criticism/artist.html>.



Edward Howard (1813–1904), inventor of the Howard clock at GFL.

time for passersby, including the tower clocks of Trinity Episcopal Church in Williamsport, Pennsylvania; the Unitarian Church of Nantucket; the Wrigley Building in Chicago; the Goodnow Memorial Library in Princeton, Massachusetts; and, of course, the Damon Memorial in Holden.

The Howard Company made five models of tower clocks, numbered from zero to four. According to the Howard records, the Holden clock is Model #1 TP (time piece). It does not strike the hours.

The Howard clock in the Damon Memorial still runs on its original mechanisms using weights and pulleys for its operation, just as it did 128 years ago. The directions supplied by E. Howard & Co. indicate that the clock must be wound every week. Further instructions give guidance for oiling. During Gale Free Library's renovation in 1988–1989, the clock was disassembled and thoroughly cleaned. At that time, gold leaf was applied to the hands and numerals so that they now glow jewel-like in the morning sun.

An object of beauty, the Howard clock is constructed of mahogany, brass, and iron. If Howard did seek to incorporate perfection in a machine made by human hands, then the Howard tower clock must come close to that ideal in its beauty and longevity. It has been faithful for 128 years, running accurately through tornadoes, ice storms, and earthquakes. With faithful attention, it may well endure for centuries to come.

What's Cooking on Tuesday Nights?

BY JENNIFER RHOADES, *GFL Assistant Director*

IF YOU'VE VENTURED into the Library on a Tuesday night and noticed the delicious smells of food wafting through the air, you are not hallucinating. You've come during the monthly meeting of the Gale Free Cooking Club! Formed in June 2014, the Cooking Club meets the second Tuesday evening of each month to explore the culinary arts, whether it is sampling food, sharing recipes and cooking tips, learning about local food, or getting advice from local experts.

Every other month, participants bring in food and recipes related to a particular theme to share with others. Topics have included healthy snacks, favorite family recipes, and international foods, as well as recipes highlighting specific foods, such as apples, chocolate, and cranberries. We've also explored uncommon foods and brought in our favorite cooking gadget (onion goggles, anyone?). These meetings offer a great opportunity to eat, socialize, and walk away with a pile of new recipes.

On alternating months, we invite a local expert to share knowledge and tips with us. They have offered presentations and demonstrations on a variety of topics, such as herb gardening, cooking with dietary and allergy limitations, bread-making, and even creating a decorative—and edible—still-life buffet.

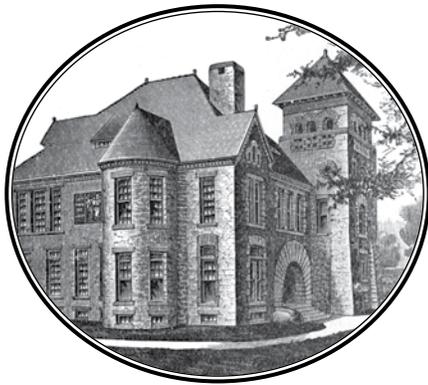
“During our meetings, we talk about our recipes and we share how we made things and which ingredients we used,” says GFL Program Assistant and Cooking Club co-founder, Danielle Yanco. “It's fun because we always seem to learn things about kitchen gadgets that we weren't aware of, along with different products that we didn't know existed. We've also shared our favorite places to shop for hard-to-find items.”

Recent programs include a history of the kitchen in America, cranberries, a cheese-making demonstration from a local farmer, and upcoming in December is our third annual Holiday Cookie Swap. If you have a love of food and would like to celebrate that love with others, we welcome you to join us!

For more information about the Cooking Club, ask at the GFL Reference Desk or call (508) 210-5569.



Favorite holiday recipes at GFL's Cooking Club. Bon appétit!



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Growing Up with the Gale Free *from page 1*

was tired of reading the same book every week. The book was banned in our household until Easter, when we got to bring it home again. Once.”

Susan (Daniels) Lellis’s mother was the Children’s Librarian, another classmate recalled. “She was the best.” Mark Davis remembered Mrs. Harding, a popular librarian, and another classmate spoke fondly of Mrs. Snow. “Mrs. Snow was Mrs. Harding’s mother,” said Sandy. “And I thought Mrs. Harding was old,” said Joyce.

Mark Davis recalled “the tock of the old grandfather clock softly penetrating the hush-hush of energetic silence, and the long, slow swing of its pendulum; you could actually see the minute hand jump ever-so-minutely with

each tock.” He went on: “I recall wondering about some special strangeness in the name: The Holden Gale Free Library.”

Mark remembered the layout of the library: “The Children’s Room used to be on the ground floor to the right after you entered from the Highland Street main entrance. When doors were locked, and when the need arose, that main entrance was a good place to find shelter from a passing storm.”

Sandy added, “I think we used to see a fallout shelter sign near the library entrance, but I don’t know where that would be or if my remembery is working well. I also remember taking sanctuary in the library entrance where it was cool and dark and safe and gale-free.”

Memories of the Gale Free Library persisted, but the committee had to return to their birthday party planning.

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