

DECEMBER 2015



THE ANNISQUAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

4 Walnut Street
Annisquam MA 01930

Visit the Museum

The museum will open this spring on Monday and Thursday afternoons from 2 to 5 or by Appointment: contact: avhistorical@gmail.com

Admission

Admission is free but donations are gratefully accepted.



The Last Stagecoach From Annisquam: Never Left Town

Thanks to work by many interested people, we now know much more about this treasure resting peacefully in the back of the old firehouse. For several generations of visitors, the coach has simply been a three dimensional piece of “wallpaper”, if you will.



This fall, Steve Harris, the new President of the Village Hall, contacted two experts of international renown, Ken Wheeling and Peter James, from Vermont and New Hampshire respectively. Only a few minutes of detective work determined that our coach is a “Concord Mail Coach” built by the Abbot and Downing Company of Concord, New Hampshire somewhere between 1847 and 1865. The best estimate suggests a build date early in this period; its serial number, carved in roman numerals under the jump seat, is 54 (LIIII).

Transportation Timeline:

1788 First scheduled open carriage service Boston to Salem and Gloucester

1819 Chard Brothers begin service to/from Annisquam/Gloucester

1831 (or before) Bridge across Goose Cove opens

1837 Causeway across Goose Cove and tidal mill (Gideon Lane et al.)

1847 Railroad reaches Gloucester

1848 Bridge across Lobster Cove opens

1869 Transcontinental railroad completed. This meant, that from this time forward, one could: Buy a stagecoach ticket at 58 Leonard Street and proceed to the Gloucester depot.

From there travel by train to Boston

In Boston purchase a ticket to San Francisco to: Catch a scheduled packet to Yokohama and beyond (or Sydney or Auckland, NZ) The world had suddenly shrunk, as Jules Verne and Phineas Fogg pointed out in 1873.

1889 Horsecars begin service to Riverdale.

1890 Electric tram car arrives at Annisquam



Peter and Ken at work finding the serial number

We have a rare beast indeed. Of Abbot and Downing coaches of this model, only about 160 still survive worldwide. We want our visitors to admire the coach, but not to climb on it, let their children or their children's children climb on it. In other words, at least for the time being: please do not touch.

For much of the nineteenth century Annisquam served the Cape much the way Gloucester does today. Busy, prosperous, and populous, the village supported not one stagecoach line, but two. At least three other companies served Lanesville, East Gloucester, and Essex.

The Chard brothers, William and Ezekiel, ran the first company, from 58 Leonard Street. Their successors, James Cunningham, John Pierce, Orin Griffin, and James Griffin continued until put out of business by the arrival of the electric trams at the other side of bridge. Our stagecoach was put out to pasture, almost literally.

The Steering Committee

The Annisquam Historical Society is currently run by a steering committee whose members are appointed by the president of the Village Hall Association. The committee meets at least once per month in the Village Library. The committee has been working for just over a year.

Current members are:

Robert Griffith
Matthew Whitlock
Tom O'keefe
David McAweeney
Mary Ellen Lepionka
Dave Pearce
John Bishop
Denise Nichols
Diane Sargent
Steve Harris
Judy Juncker
James Groves

Alternates are: John Perry, Rob Russell, Geraldine Herbert, and Dow Wieman.

Volunteers are: Pippy Giuliano, Betsey Horovitz, Noel Mann, David Teele, Brad Dickinson, Dave Simmons, Mack Sinkinson, Marilyn Short, Annie Storr, Seana McCarthy, Ron Beck, and Tom Moriarty.



Our stagecoach, at rest, along with other vehicles owned by the Griffin family, circa 1897 (photograph from AHS)

Our coach rested in the custody of the Griffin family until a local group, including Charles Bradley, bought it for the Historical Society. We now must decide what we should do. Should it be left in its current condition? Should it be made “road worthy”? Should it be brought back to its original condition (bright red and glistening)? Whatever we do, we should do it the same way porcupines make love, i.e. slowly and carefully.

There are many more stories attached to our coach, and we hope to include some of these in future editions of this newsletter. Much more information may be found in a video recording posted on the website of the Village Library (<http://annisquamvillagelibrary.org>).

Tribute to Thomas O'Keefe III

Everyone knows Tom. He either runs or has a hand in just about everything that happens in the Village. What you may not know is that it is because of Tom that you still have the documents and artifacts that tell the history of Annisquam, its streets and houses and vessels, its families, and the people who came here.

There was a time after the last curator, Donald K. Usher, died, in 1990, when the Annisquam Association looked into deaccessioning the firehouse contents, moving

AHS Partners with CAM

On October 23rd members of the Annisquam Historical Society met with members of the Cape Ann Museum to forge a collaborative relationship. Ronda Faloon, CAM Director, Stephanie Buck, Archivist, and Kate LaChance, Program Coordinator, extended offers of assistance in our efforts to preserve Village history.

The CAM received from us on loan for safe keeping two cartons of ancient, unique, historically significant documents and recordbooks from the firehouse. The loan is for up to five years, during which time we hope to provide the firehouse with the climate control system and archival storage needed for their return.

As part of our partnership, the CAM Library will collect fees for us for the use of AHS materials there and will buy AHS publications, prints, and postcards to sell in their gift shop. In future the AHS and the CAM will be able to plan and mount joint exhibitions there.

Other help is forthcoming. During December, the CAM is sending Cara White to the firehouse to evaluate our 19th and early 20th century clothing and advise us on textile conservation. We look forward to learning more about museum practices through our partnership with the CAM.

important items to other museums and discarding the rest. Tom obstructed those efforts, which were abandoned, and he took over the job of running the Annisquam Historical Society himself.



Tom has resisted changes ever since, but diligently, lovingly, and single-handedly created and cared for charming exhibits for Squammers and their children and grandchildren to see and touch. Without benefit of curatorial training and strictly as a volunteer, he added to and stood guard over your treasures of the past. He also conscientiously helped those inquiring into family or house history, saw to the publication of Lydia Thayer's historical memoirs, and opened the Deluge 8 firehouse to the public for a few hours each week in summers.

Today Tom is on the steering committee of a reconstituted Annisquam Historical Society, as a new chapter opens on the preservation of Village history. Thanks in large part to Tom, this process is now underway. We hope you will join in helping to transform the firehouse with its treasures into the local historical museum it can and should be.

The Wright Letterbook

One of the artifacts on loan to the Cape Ann Museum is a thick scrapbook of letters to Henry C. Wright (1797-1870), Massachusetts abolitionist of the 1830s and 1840s, decades before the Civil War and Emancipation Proclamation.



Wright was raised in New York, educated at Andover Theological Seminary, and became a Congregational pastor in West Newbury. In 1823 he married a wealthy widow, Elizabeth LeBreton Stickney of Newburyport. Elizabeth Stickney had relatives in Annisquam, including John F. Stickney, who died in Annisquam in 1866, and his 2nd wife Mary Ann Tarr Hillier. Stickneys also married Cape Ann Lanes, Sargents, Chards, Duleys, and Peirces. Exactly how Wright's letterbook ended up in the firehouse, however, remains a mystery.

In 1834 Wright joined the American Anti-Slavery Society and for the next three years traveled to cities and towns throughout Massachusetts to spread the movement. Annisquam was one of the first communities to establish a local chapter of the Anti-Slavery Society. Wright met with famous abolitionists of his day, such as William Lloyd Garrison and Theodore Weld, and he and his wife entertained the famous Grimke sisters in their Newburyport home.



Then, from 1842 to 1847 Wright traveled in Europe, lecturing, and many of the correspondents in his letterbook refer to the planning and execution of his efforts there and the response. The letters, from activists in England, Scotland, and Ireland, also discuss the outrages of the times and advise Wright to invite Frederick Douglass to speak in Boston. Wright came to be regarded as too radical, however, and changed his allegiance to fighting for women's rights and world peace.

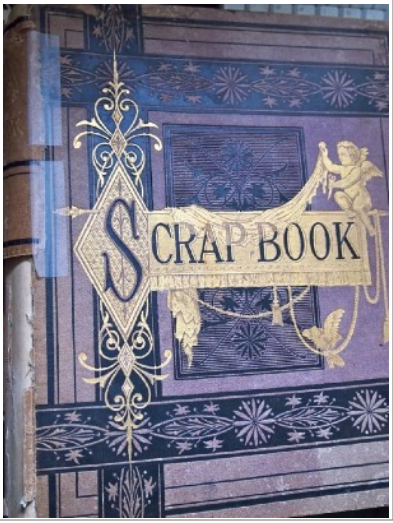
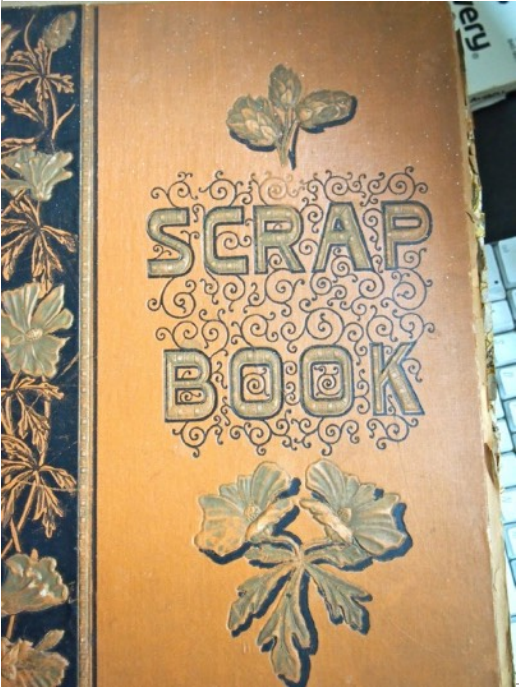
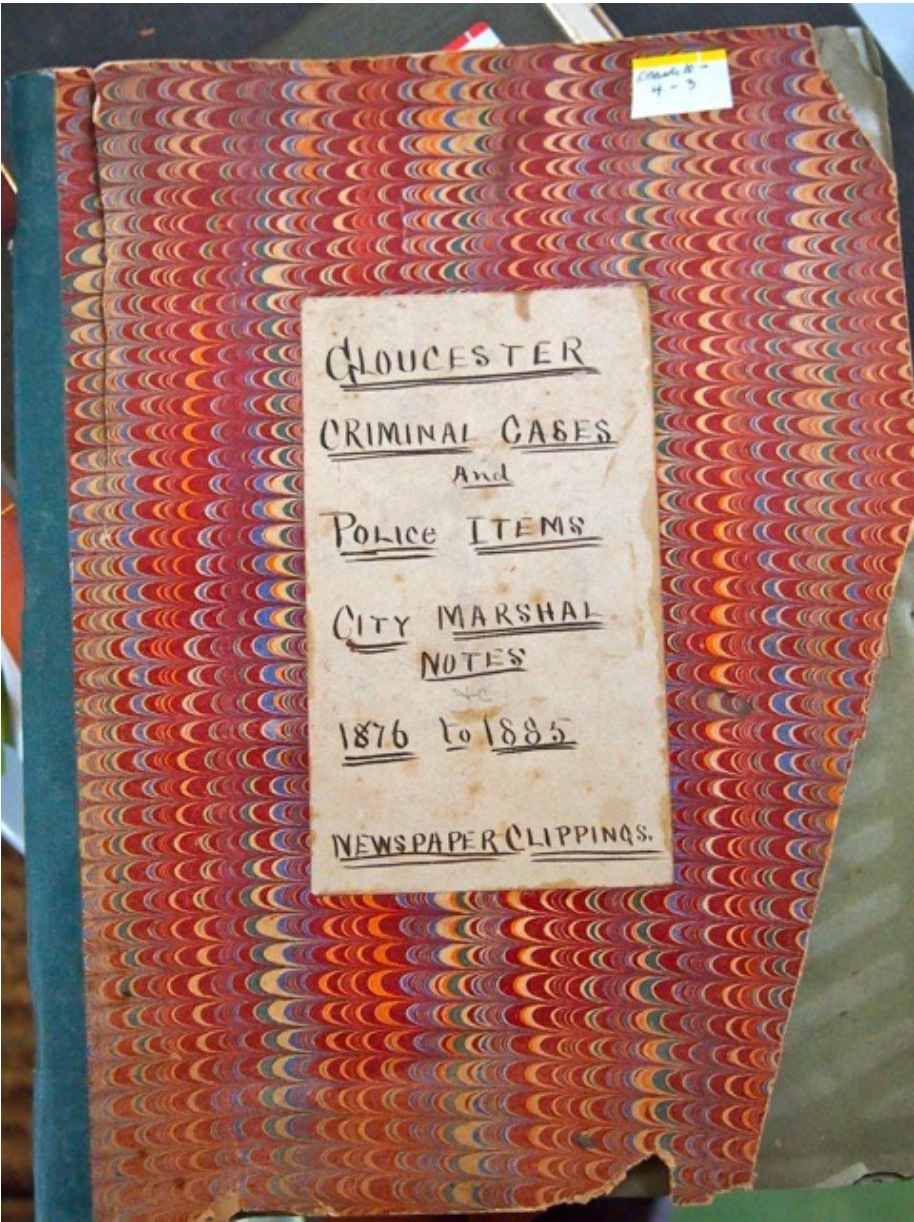
Wright's letters need to be transcribed, by the way, for history's sake. Transcribing our ancient handwritten documents on loan to the CAM is on the list of volunteer tasks, if anyone is interested.

Henry C. Wright and Letters from his Letterbook

Historical Society Receives Grant

The Annisquam Historical Society has received a grant from Mass Humanities for a professional research inventory to be made of 39 nineteenth-century scrapbooks and albums that have been deposited in the firehouse over the decades. The title of the project is "Squam: An Intimate History". The researchers are a graduate student and her instructor from Gordon College, the Public History and Museum Studies Department. The work will be done between January and July in the Cape Ann Museum, where the scrapbooks have been moved for safekeeping and in consideration of the fact that the firehouse is unheated. The researchers will catalog the scrapbooks, index the contents, and advise us on how best to

preserve them while also making the contents available to the public.





A Mystery from Our Photographic Collection

Help us out! Can you name any of the girls? Can you tell us the name of the driver? What sort of uniform were the girls wearing? What was the name of the horse? Tell us if you meet us in the street, or e-mail your information to:
avhistorical@gmail.com.

We are in the midst of scanning our collection of negatives. To date, we have digitized more than 700 glass plates. These are in addition to the more than 600 glass plate negatives by Martha Harvey previously scanned by Jane Harris. Photographers other than Martha Harvey account for virtually all of these new images; names include Clark, Mellen, Dyer, and Lufkin. Many plates lack any information as to who created them, and many lack information about people who appear. The youngest of these plates date from about 1920, but most date from 1870-1910. This means that we are looking at some images that haven't been viewed for a hundred years.

We scanned a large number of anonymous 3x4 glass negatives, and the scans told us that the photographer lived in Annisquam all year round. He or she took many photographs of ordinary people doing ordinary things. And, the photographer was skilled.

The challenge now is to try to identify some of the people shown, and so, indirectly, identify the photographer. A few of the girls in this image appear regularly, and may well have been the photographer's children.

This photograph was taken on Leonard Street close to where it intersects with the western end of Walnut Street. We can guess at the date, say 1890-1900.



December 2015

Special thanks to David Teele who contributed the article about the stagecoach and the photo article. David has been doing all the photo scanning for the museum.

Other articles were provided by Mary Ellen Lepionka.

If you would like to volunteer to help in the firehouse or work on a collection, please contact Mary Ellen Lepionka, 978-283-1531, me.lepionka@verizon.net.