



THE ANNISQUAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

7 Walnut Street
Annisquam MA 01930

Visit the Firehouse

The Firehouse will open this summer on Monday and Thursday afternoons from 3 to 5 or by Appointment: contact: avhistorical@gmail.com

Admission

Admission is free but donations are gratefully accepted.



An Annisquam Remembrance

This passage is taken from the memoirs of Ida Pulcifer Andrews. It was read by her husband, Dr. Earl Andrews, at her memorial service in 1975. The service was held in the house where she was born in 1897 and lived in for most of her life.



Ida Pulcifer Andrews growing up in Annisquam

Ida's story begins on the next page.

An Annisquam Remembrance

by

Ida Pulcifer Andrews

I had a happy childhood in Annisquam in spite of the differences of my parents which resulted in their living apart from the time I was three.

In my early years my mother and I spent the winters in Medford with the Tays. Ida Wright Tay was my godmother. Winifred and Ruth, her daughters, were of high school age and devoted a lot of time to telling me fairy stories or to teaching me poems like “The goblins will get you if you don’t watch out.” I loved plays and dressing up, which they never failed to provide.

When I was five, my mother married Frederic Phillips Smith who became Wilder, Norman, Rosamond and Phillip’s father. We moved to New York and memories of the winters I spent there between the ages of five and nine were unpleasant. The only bright spots were trips to Central Park or the Bronx Zoo where I could watch the animals.

When I was ten I came back to Annisquam for good to live with my father and grandmother. In winter, the chief entertainment was skating on one or the other of the four ponds in the village. The shallowest and earliest to freeze was little more than a swamp at the top of Sunset Hill straight up from the store across the cove. If you broke through there, you only got your feet wet.

Another diversion was coasting. Sometimes we coasted down Bridge Hill, especially after the first snowfall, but for a really long ride we chose to use Madam Goss Hill. My father had a fine sled made for me when I was twelve, which could hold three large girls or four small ones. It was made of birdseye maple and is still in the barn loft. It was the custom to coast on well-packed snow with two sleds, which we called going “foot in the roller.” On a very cold afternoon in January or February,

boys would fill a washtub with water and put it over the snowy hill before going home to supper. By early evening it would have frozen and the iced hill was ready. There was no traffic. The worst we could expect was an occasional horse drawn vehicle and none after dark. Sometimes we coasted from the top of Madam Goss Hill to where Raymond’s garage is now.

Maybe we had more snow in those days for I seem to remember the winters mostly for their fun.

In summer I was always bringing home the first wild flowers, violets and bluets and strawberries which grew on the hill and in the pasture leading from Squam Rock to the Lighthouse.

Later, in June, I never failed to gather the blue flags growing in abundance near the beach.”



This photo was taken on the occasion of Ida’s graduation from the Leonard School. Ida went on to graduate from Gloucester High School and Framingham State Normal School. She returned to teach at the Leonard School until she was married.

The second passage that I would like to read was addressed to her children and grandchildren. It was dated August 31, 1954.

“On this day of the hurricane I am alone in the old house, going from attic to cellar, looking out of windows at the school house weather vane and watching the noble old trees. I pray that nothing happens to them, for those that are left have stood a hundred years or more. I, myself, feel perfectly safe within these walls. And now with the wind raging and the blinds banging, I’ll try to tell you, my dear children, something about your inheritance from me.

I do not know very much about our family before 1829 when the old house in Annisquam was built.

Over 100 years ago young Thomas Pulcifer, 25 years old, bought the old blacksmith shop which used to stand in our barn yard along the lane, and the parcel of land that is now Bridgewater Street running to the cove. He brought his bride with him and they set up housekeeping in the story and a half house across the street, where the Rowers live, while our house was being built.

I am thinking of the man who built so well and with such good taste. Or it may have been my great grandmother whom I would thank for that. Sophronia, by legend, was a strong-minded woman, industrious and endowed with thriftiness, if not downright Yankee closeness.

A blind has come loose in the bathroom and with great difficulty I finally tied it down to the mullions as the glass was broken in several panes. When I returned to my writing there was the big tree lying full length across the road.

To return to my story: In my father’s memoirs he mentions that his grandmother boarded the carpenters all one winter while the house was being “finished off” as the saying goes. Presumably this means while the wainscoting and the trim were put up, doors were made and hung, mantles designed

and constructed, closets finished and other fine work done. Originally the house had smaller windows and some of them had wooden shutters inside. Sarah, my grandmother, took just pride in the fact that it was a well-built house and often remarked upon it. As for the furnishings, I do not suppose that much we have now belonged to the original. Grandma told me that the little pine tavern table in the south sitting room was built by her father as their first dining table when they set up housekeeping. I found it covered with layers of white and black paint in the woodshed over 100 years later. And the high chair has held all the little ones for six generations.

I have loved living in this typical New England clapboard house with its central chimney. The nicely finished and well-proportioned rooms have generous windows letting in plenty of sun and air. Both my grandmother and I were home bodies and never wanted to live for any great length of time in any other place and never did.



The Pulcifer House on Leonard Street (1829)

Photo by David McAweeney 2018



Sarah Hackett (above) is the most recent of the Pulcifer family who have continuously lived there since the house was built in 1829. She has provided the Historical Society with the historical photographs in this article. Sarah is Ida's daughter.



Ida picking up the mail at the Annisquam Village Post Office about 1900



Ida standing on the old wooden bridge in the early 1900's



Past Sea Fair Posters On View At Firehouse

By Holly Clay

For the last 172 years Annisquam's Sea Fair, and before that its Church Fair, has graced the village center in mid-summer. The poster announcing the event bears the date of the year it was produced. Thus, it is that the posters serve a historical purpose and make a contribution to the Annisquam art scene. Every year's Sea Fair poster is unique, none more so than those created by Lisbeth Bornhofft in the 1970's and 1980's.

Lisbeth Bornhofft's Sea Fair posters will be on view in the Firehouse this summer. Lisbeth has been coming to her family's Annisquam house since childhood. A naturalist and scientist, she worked at the New England Aquarium for the last 25 years. Previous to her career in science, Lisbeth was a practicing artist and art teacher. She graduated from Smith College with a BA in Fine Arts (concentration in screen printing) and an MA in Education from the Philadelphia College of Art (University of the Arts).

A Duck Tale

Rita Teele, Rosalie Hughes, John Hughes and David Teele

Circa 1850, Cornelius Peasley Keeler, great grandfather of Donald K. Usher, shot a duck near Irasburg, Vermont. Fast forward to 1976: the bird was identified by the Department of Ornithology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York as being an unusual cross between a mallard and ringneck duck. This information was on a card beside the bird which was standing in a large glass case on the second floor of the Firehouse. The taxidermist who placed the specimen on a marble base with ornamental tree branch included his label: Pertia W. Aldrich of Readville Mass. The bird had lived upstairs for quite a while--possibly since its identification in 1976 when Donald K. Usher was taking charge of the Firehouse.



In the intervening years, the Firehouse, itself became stuffed! The number of items increased as the space available to adequately display, or store, items decreased. And, funnily enough, when asked, most people could not remember having seen a duck on the second floor! In 2017, Don

Usher's descendants relinquished ownership of the duck and other items that he had left in the Firehouse. Since the guiding principle of a local historic society, such as ours, is to house artifacts and documents that link to the surrounding area, the duck from Vermont did not qualify. But it did not seem appropriate to send a flightless bird out on its own. Since the American Museum of Natural History had taken an interest in the duck in 1976, perhaps they would like it back....

Last year, emails between the museum and Annisquam flew thick and fast. (Who could resist that pun!) Engagement photographs of the duck were sent to New York. After several conversations, Paul Sweet, who is in charge of the museum's Department of Ornithology, agreed to accept the duck. Because some of his family members are based in Massachusetts, we had a tentative agreement that he would collect the specimen in the spring of 2018. The museum however, had other plans for his time. In early June, he was scheduled to go to West Africa. Just when we thought that we could clear some space on the second floor of the Firehouse, the easy option was no longer available. Plan B was to send the duck via courier--a rather expensive alternative. But good luck intervened. Rosalie Hughes attended the clean-up day/open house at the Firehouse on May 21st--and she mentioned that she was going to NYC the next week... Rosalie graciously offered to deliver the duck to the museum the next Friday afternoon. Paul Sweet would be there that day. Perfect.

But how should we pack the accessorized duck? There was no standard box that would completely enclose the bird and its adjacent decorative branch. The branch was wired through the oval base so couldn't be removed without damage. Would the entirety fit in the Hughes's car? And would the Grace, their dog, who was traveling with them, mind? Since Gloucester is a fishing town, and fishermen need fish crates, off we went to Three Lanterns Marine where Jessica

and T.J. sold us a sturdy plastic flapper box--the



first they had sold to hold a duck.... But would the box fit into the Hughes's car? It was off to their house to meet an unsuspecting husband who was home alone. John knew nothing of the plan, but he was quite willing to go along with the idea of having a duck accompany him to NYC. And when Rosalie returned home in their car, the box fit into its cargo space. Whew.

Back to the Firehouse we went with plastic bags, to cover duck and ornamental branch, heavy duty double stick adhesive tape (dare we say duck tape?) to keep the marble base firmly attached to the bottom of the crate, all of my left over quilt batting to pack around the duck, bubble wrap from past Christmases, and Steve Harris's strong back.

The final packing job was truly a Rube Goldberg result but the duck survived its trip down the Firehouse stairs and was loaded into the Hughes's car on Thursday afternoon.

We toasted the duck with glasses of gin and tonic and crossed our fingers that there would be no drama on the trip.

Rosalie continues the saga below:

We arose early on Friday morning, eager to begin our adventure. The American Museum of Natural History had been our daughters' rainy day playground growing up, and the thought of adding Annisquam's rare duck to its collection thrilled us.



Said duck, mostly but not fully encased in a lobster crate the size of an apartment-sized refrigerator, occupied most of our trunk but we were able to squeeze our small duffels into gaps beside it. Fortunately, one of our daughters had volunteered to care for our aged labrador and lithesome cat while we were away. The cat insists on riding free on top of the luggage so he can see out the windows, and on this trip, the duck's head would have been his perch of choice. We set off.

We arrived at the AMNH in relatively good time for a Friday, and as Paul had suggested, pulled into the subterranean parking garage and gave him a call. John was rather disappointed there was no marching band to meet us, no Ellen Futter to throw the doors wide open and welcome the duck. We were both disappointed that Paul seemed to be out of the office. I texted. He eventually texted back that he was at the physical therapist but would return. We waited, recalling Deep Throat's meetings in a similar underground garage. Eventually Paul strolled in, hip in jeans, earring, unshaven face and army shirt. I could sense John's disappointment deepening; Paul didn't look like his idea of a New York museum curator.

John and Paul hoisted the crate and we entered the museum via the school children's entrance. We

were immediately enveloped by pack of lunch-bag-clutching eleven year olds. We continued on a circuitous route, by the lower gift shop, up the elevator, past the glass windows and the new fountains where children splashed in their underwear, up another elevator to the fourth floor, down long corridors, and ultimately to Paul's office. In New York fashion, no one we passed or shared an elevator with mentioned the duck's head poking out of the crate. No one said, "Oh my goodness, you must be delivering an important specimen to the museum." Once inside the 1930s vintage office with dead birds, a vintage wooden desk and several cloudy specimen jars, Paul opened the crate. He was speechless, or at least he said nothing.



Once the duck was fully unpacked, Paul spoke.

"What is this supposed to be?" he asked. I reminded him it was a rare cross of a mallard and a ringneck, or something like that.

"It looks pretty big," he said, "like it was shot in a farmyard." John and I shifted nervously; would Paul accept the duck? Would we have to drive it back to Annisquam and face the Teeles, mission unaccomplished?

Paul was silent. He looked us up and down and must have read our unspoken desperation. "Let's put it here on my desk," he said, in the tone of a

tired mother accepting yet another piece of artwork for the refrigerator, "and I'll show you around." John and I exhaled in unison. Paul gave us a tour of the Department of Ornithology which involved his sliding out huge, shallow drawers from wall length cabinets that contained row upon row of "skins" which are, as you would expect, everything but the inner workings of the bird. Eventually after some polite conversation about how much all the birds looked alike, and his upcoming trip to someplace exotic, Paul directed us back to the elevator and we ducked back to our subterranean car.

Paul sent a thank you note the next day:

"Dear Rosalie, Thank you and John for bringing this specimen to the AMNH. Best, Paul"

The crate is back in Annisquam. If anyone would like a lot of bubble wrap and many bits of quilt batting, please let us know.....



Katie Teele on clarinet and Al Robinson on trombone at the 2013 4th of July parade

Al Robinson missed at parade

The Annisquam parade began after the ringing of the Leonard School bell, the recitation of the Declaration of Independence, and the singing of the national anthem.

Al Robinson and his trombone were sorely missed this year. We hope that he was leading an angelic band, at the time. The musical accompaniment to the parade was provided by Art and Linden Adamson, of Rockport. Art was on trumpet; Linden played saxophone. A thank you to them both!

Village Church History



On Friday June 29, 2018 Reverend Sarah Clark was front and center, on stage, at the Annisquam Village Hall. Introduced by Rob Russell, president of the Annisquam Historical Society, she presented an interesting, articulate discourse of the history of the Annisquam Village Church.

Supporting players in this presentation were Beebe Nelson and Terry Sands. Each took turns at reading historic excerpts from letters, memoirs and sermons--and, memorably, a public confession.

Reverend Sarah Clark's lecture was videotaped by Steve Harris:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3W1hFHKdHI>

An exhibition of artifacts and documents related to the history of the Church will be on display in the Firehouse at 6 Walnut Street, home of the Annisquam Historical Society, until mid September. The Firehouse is open Monday and Thursday afternoons, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., or by appointment by calling 978-381-3141 and leaving a message with contact details.