



Braintree Historical Society Inc.

News-Letter

31 Tenney Road, Braintree MA 02184 • 781-848-1640
braintreehistoricalevents@gmail.com • www.braintree-historical.org

September 2019

Letter from the President:



Dear Members, Volunteers, & Contributing Organizations & Companies,

As I ended the President's Message in our first News-Letter, I said "It is critical that the Society and its members

and volunteers function as a team, partnering with community stakeholders as we make steady strides toward our vision of the future." Over the course of the first quarter of this fiscal year, I can say, without hesitation, that we are functioning as a team and that we are making significant strides forward.

This newsletter includes a New Feature. In each issue, we will be recognizing and thanking one or two volunteers who have made a significant contribution to the success of the Braintree Historical Society. This issue of the News-Letter recognizes and thanks Mary and Ron Frazier for their decades-long commitment to the Society and for their ongoing critical efforts to support the organization.

Included in this issue's News is an article on the newly funded Thayer House Roof Replacement Project, the bright blue tarp on the Barn roof, an update on the Gallivan House and a reminder of our new website at braintree-historical.org.

Updates from our Departments include exhibit updates and other news from our Curator, Mary Frazier, news from our Librarians, Claudia Shutter and Claudette Newhall, and a brief article on the upcoming relocation of the American Legion Post 86's "Braintree Remembers WWI" Project archives to the Braintree Historical Society's M. B. C. Resource Center at 31 Tenney Rd.

Continued on page 2

2019 Farm to Table Dinner Honors Mayor Sullivan September 14

The Heritage Weekend Farm to Table Dinner on September 14, 2019 marks the sixth Farm to Table Dinner hosted by Sustainable Braintree and the Braintree Historical Society. This year both organizations are joining together to honor Mayor Joseph Sullivan as the first recipient of the Annual Appreciation Award from the two organizations. This award is intended to recognize someone from Braintree who has contributed significantly to Sustainable Braintree, the Braintree Historical and/or the Town of Braintree.

Mayor Sullivan has been and continues to be a longtime supporter of the Braintree Historical Society having once served on the Society's Board of Directors. The founding of Sustainable Braintree coincided with Mayor Sullivan's election to office as the first Mayor of Braintree. Mayor Sullivan strongly supported all the initiatives put forth by Sustainable Braintree including the Community Garden and the Farmers' Market. The Farmers' Market continues to be one of the most successful markets on the South Shore.

The Dinner catered by Fasanos and featuring locally grown produce on the grounds of the Historical Society will provide an enchanting venue for this outdoor event which, this year, will honor Mayor Sullivan in his last year in office. What could be a better way to spend an evening with friends, support two community organizations and say Thank You to our first Mayor who has given so much to Braintree,

President's Letter, Continued from page 1

Included is a very busy Events schedule through the end of the calendar year, with articles on the sixth annual September 14th Farm-To-Table Dinner, the Old Time Baseball Game at noon on the 14th, the second annual two-month long Beer Garden starting on the Thayer House grounds on the first Saturday in September, and details of this year's Heritage Day on Sunday, September 15. For the first time, at this year's Farm-To-Table Dinner, joint sponsors Sustainable Braintree and the Braintree Historical Society will present the first Annual Appreciation Award to Mayor Joseph Sullivan for his ongoing support to both sponsoring organizations.

Fund Raising is always a need for historical societies and Braintree Historical Society is no exception. We appreciate your support in renewing your membership, and in suggesting that friends and extended family members join the Society and that businesses that you support become Corporate members. Included is also an article suggesting ways that those who wish to donate to the Society can do so.

For newer members and those who have lost touch, we have also included refreshers explaining what happens at General Membership Meetings and explaining the Thayer Birthplace Endowment Trust. As I said at the end of the first President's Message, we welcome your support, your ideas, your input and your help as the newly elected Board and volunteers move forward, unified with a new energy and purpose. It's a busy and exciting time to be a part of the Braintree Historical Society.

Bob Harris

Beer Garden Moves to Thayer House Grounds

The Braintree Historical Society's grounds will be the site for this year's Second Annual Braintree Beer Garden. The Beer Garden, operated by Aviron (Avi) Shemtov of the Tapped Beer Truck and Kay Young of the Craft Beer Cellar, will be held for eight consecutive Saturdays from September 7 to October 27 from Noon to 5 p.m.

Shemtov and Young held the first Beer Garden last year on the north side of the original Thayer Public Library next to Town Hall. Typically, the event attracted 250 to 300 people each week.

Asked why they were moving across the street, Young said, "We outgrew the space. And, there's shade." They said they also wanted to assist the Braintree Historical Society, which owns the Thayer House and the adjacent properties. This year, temporary handicapped pathways will be in place to add handicapped accessibility to the Beer Garden.

The area will be fenced off with a single entrance to the Beer Garden from Washington Street. There will be no age restriction for entering the family-friendly Beer Garden, but only those 21 or older who have valid IDs will be served alcohol.

Article adapted from the Patriot Ledger.

The Gallivan House Historic Preservation Restriction Agreement Nearing Completion



The Gallivan House, the brick Neo-Georgian home directly across the street from the Town Green, was purchased by Braintree Historical Society in 2005 to join the General Sylvanus Thayer Birthplace, the Asa French House and the Barn at 31 Tenney Road, as one historic campus. Rented by the Society for a brief period time, the home has remained unused for a majority of time since its purchase.

The house sits on land that was originally a part of the French family's land. Dr. Gallivan purchased the land in 1930 from the French family to build the brick colonial for his bride. Originally, the home had a doctor's waiting room and examination room/office on the first floor, north side of the building. The remainder of the home served as living quarters for Dr. Gallivan and his family.

Dr. Gallivan sold the home to Dr. Flanagan in 1968 for his dental practice. Initially, Dr. Flanagan converted the first floor to office space and examination rooms for his practice and converted the second floor to an apartment for his family. The Society purchased the home from Dr. Flanagan. In 2013, the Society was granted Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to replace the home's roof, which had failed and was causing escalating water damage to the interior of the home. The Society agreed, in 2013, to complete a Preservation Restriction Agreement with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, as a condition of receiving CPA funds, in order to preserve the property and restore the Doctor's Office as a small museum example of an in-home physician's office typical of the 1930s.

After multiple attempts to complete the Agreement, Bob Harris, then a member of the Society's Board of Directors (now Board President) worked with the Massachusetts Historical Commission in the winter and spring of this year to complete a draft of the Agreement which met the Massachusetts Historical Commission's requirements for final signatures. After a review by Town Solicitor, Nicole Taub, Mayor Sullivan has signed the Agreement, as have the representatives of the Braintree Historical Society and the Thayer Birthplace Endowment Trust, the owners of the property.

The Braintree Historical Commission has voted to approve and sign the Agreement. The Agreement is also on the Town Council Agenda for September 3. The Massachusetts Historical Commission will be the last to sign the document.

The Society is looking forward to the completion of the long-awaited final steps in this process.

The Society's Email Address is Here for You

Please feel free to contact the Society at any point through the Society's email address – braintreehistoricalevents@gmail.com. Either Cheryl Edgar, our Corresponding Secretary, or another one of our Society volunteers will promptly respond to your email message.

What is the Blue Tarp Doing on the Roof?



The Gilbert L Bean Barn & Mary Bean Cunningham Historical Resource Center & the bright blue tarp have raised many questions. Passer's by may have noticed that a large portion of the Resource Center's roof is covered by a bright blue tarp. The roof of this building and the siding have been failing for some time, as there are dried signs of water intrusion in several places throughout the building.

During this past winter, after a snowstorm, water was again leaking into the attic section of the building, causing damage to stored items and to the building's structure. Private donors, Carl Kilmer and Mary Ellen Zanghi Kilmer, offered to have a contractor place a temporary tarp over the roof to minimize water coming into the building. As the Society looks for ways to bring its buildings back up to optimal conditions, the Kilmers have offered to work with the Society to develop the fundraising strategies necessary to bring in funds to make the necessary repairs. We anticipate the roof being the next priority after the completion of the replacement of the Thayer Birthplace roof. (See next page, A New Roof for the Thayer Birthplace.)

A New Roof for the Thayer Birthplace



Mary Frazier, longtime Society member, Past President and the Society's volunteer Curator, often refers to the Thayer Birthplace and its circa 1700s furnishings as the Braintree Historical Society's crown jewel. In the late 1950s, the Birthplace was painstakingly dismantled in its original location in the Highlands, moved to its current location at 786 Washington Street, Braintree, and carefully restored with more than 60% of the original wood still intact.

In 1987, the roof was replaced with red cedar shingles for the first time with funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). Having lasted 32 years, the roof has been showing signs of failure. Missing shingles and a leak around the chimney above the Cobbler's Shop on the south end of the building have moved this repair-replacement item up to the top of the Society's priority list. The photo above tells it all.

In March of this year, Board Member Bob Harris, prepared and submitted a grant to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for matching funds to replace the existing roof, with support from Mayor Sullivan, the Braintree Historical Commission and private donors, Carl and Mary Ellen Zanghi Kilmer.. In June, the Massachusetts Historical Commission awarded the Society 50% of the funds to replace the roof. The Kilmers have agreed to fund the balance of the roof replacement.

The Society has contracted with Wendall Kalsow of McGinley, Kalsow and Associates, Inc, architects with considerable experience in historic restoration, to complete the State-required design and specifications for the roof replacement project. Plans are anticipated to be ready to submit to the State for approval by the end of August.

In keeping with the historic nature of the building, the roof will be replaced with either Western red cedar shingles or Alaskan yellow cedar shingles, a product more closely resembling the Eastern white cedar that was likely used in 1720 when the home was built.

Bob Harris was voted by the Society's Board to be the Local Project Coordinator, a (volunteer) position required by MHC. Derek Manning, a Society volunteer and new Board member with a Masters in Historic Preservation, is serving as a Consultant on the project. The Society will work closely with the Braintree Historical Commission, the Braintree Department of Planning and Community Development and the Massachusetts Historical Commission to complete the roof replacement before June 30, 2020, in the most optimal way possible.

The birthplace, a property on the National Register of Historic Places at the National level of significance, will be 300 years old in 2020. The replacement of the new roof is a huge kickoff for this important milestone for the Thayer Birthplace and the Society.

Membership Meetings – What Are They?

Five times a year, the Society holds General Membership meetings. All Society members are invited to attend. Meetings are open to the public as well. In addition to the Annual Dinner Meeting held in May of each year, the Society hosts Society members and others, typically on Wednesday evenings for a very brief business meeting with news and updates, followed by a talk from an author, historian or other speaker on a historical topic of general interest.

In the distant past, these meetings were dinner meetings held in one of two local churches, the First Congregational Church on Elm Street and Emmanuel Episcopal Church on the corner of Washington and West Streets. Over time, the location of these meetings shifted to the Society's own building, and the dinner portion of the meetings fell by the wayside. Over the past year, following the success of the Grand Reopening of the Gilbert L Bean Barn and Mary Bean Cunningham Historic Resource Center, the Society

returned to hosting a Social Hour before each membership meeting. This popular activity allows attendees to catch up with old friends, meet new ones, tour the current exhibit in the Barn and enjoy light refreshments.

A talk on the History of the Braintree Municipal Golf Course, including the roles of Archie T Morrison and the Hollingsworth family in that history, will be included in local author John Donovan's talk on Wednesday evening, November 13.

Stay tuned for announcements about other upcoming meetings in October of this year and March and April of 2020.

Braintree Remembers Military Project to be at BHS

Braintree Post 86 of the American Legion, sponsor of the Braintree Remembers World War I Centennial Memorial Project, has joined with the Braintree Historical Society, and is providing financial support to the Society to fully fund the initial creation of a genealogical archive of individual personal military records and/or related items, of the more than five hundred Braintree men and women who served in the armed forces in World War I.



One of the photos from the collection: Sergeant William Wallace Dyer, Jr. Recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross for "gallantry in action" (Photo courtesy of Mr. Richard H. Dyer, representing the Dyer Family of South Braintree, Massachusetts)

Individual files will vary in content but among the type of items which are included are copies of detailed official military records received from the Adjutant General's Corps Archives-Museum Branch of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in Concord, MA, articles and news items from contemporary newspapers, letters "from the front" and photos. The ceremony to formally dedicate the Memorial Archive will be held in the Gilbert L Bean Barn & Mary Bean Cunningham Historical

Resource Center (the Barn at 31 Tenney Road) on Sunday, November 10, at 2PM.

Patrick J. Leonard, Jr., a Society member and the American Legion Post 86 Historian, has been the Coordinator of the commemorative Braintree Remembers Project.

Now's a Great Time for Giving to Braintree Historical Society: Here's Why

Some of the Christmas ads we're seeing is an indication that the end of the year is approaching, albeit not that fast; however it is a good time to be considering your year-end donations and the best tax strategies to make those donations.

As you know, the Historical Society is totally funded with membership dues and donations. Both are tax deductible. And here's how you can help support the Society and benefit from it.

We have all seen our regular portfolios rise in the last few years, in many cases, substantially. If you have securities that have risen to new highs, consider transferring some of them to the Society. Your broker can tell you how. You can take the total value of the donation as a tax write-off. (No capital gains tax, plus a deduction.)

If you have a regular IRA or 401 K, when you take money from it, it's taxable at the regular income rate. And those of us who are over 70 ½ have no choice but to take a pre-determined amount. You can reduce your taxes by making a donation to the Society, directly from the retirement account, reducing the minimum required distribution amount on which you pay taxes. You've helped the Society and helped yourself. Who knows, it may keep you out of an even higher tax bracket.

Contact the Society about this for further details.

Visit The Society's 21st Century Website

In May 2018, board Treasurer and new Webmaster, Aziz Karsan, developed and launched the Society's new website at braintree-historical.org. This new website takes advantage of software already in use by the Society to electronically manage its membership and contact information. If you have not had to opportunity, please take a look. There are a variety of drop-

down menus to keep members and others abreast of what has been happening, what's available and what's coming up.

With the use of this expanded electronic capacity, we have been able to take advantage of several new options. For ticketed events, those who wish to do so can purchase tickets online.

Individuals and families can join online and can renew their memberships online. Others have taken advantage of the option to donate to the Society through the secure website using their credit cards.

The software also allows us to send out email messages to all members or all contacts at one time, while keeping each member's contact e-mail address private.

We continue to find occasional errors as we develop and expand the new website, so please be patient as we find and correct them and please do not hesitate to contact us at braintreehistoricalevents@gmail.com with any errors or problems with the website that you discover.

The Society website, still under development, will include ongoing updates and new features as it expands, for example, the opportunity to purchase items from our Gift Shop, including many Braintree books that we have available.

Aziz is always looking for help with the website. If you would like to volunteer your time, please contact us at

braintreehistoricalevents@gmail.com

What's New In The Library?

Claudia Shutter and Claudette Newhall, both retired master's level librarians, volunteered in late 2016 to lead the efforts to return the Society's historical library and genealogical resource center to the first floor of the Barn addition where it was originally intended to be. Many of you will remember the October 2018 Grand Reopening of the Gilbert L Bean Barn and Mary Bean Cunningham Historical Resource Center. Without the efforts of Claudia and Claudette and a team of volunteers supporting them, this would not have been possible.

As we approach the one-year mark since the Grand Reopening, reorganization has steadily



Several views of the Mary Bean Cunningham Historical Resource Center Library as it looks today

moved forward. In May, Thayer Academy seniors George Rowe and Christian Collins developed an evolving inventory list of all the library's acid-free document boxes, holding documents from Braintree Town departments, clubs, societies, churches, schools, and papers of noteworthy residents among others. Over the course of more than a year, volunteer Gail Saccone has been painstakingly reviewing the contents of each of these boxes and sorting and organizing the contents to optimize their usefulness to researchers.

Librarian Claudette Newhall has been similarly reviewing a recently donated AARP collection and organizing pertinent information to optimize the value of this collection to users.

Thayer Academy interns, George and Christian, developed an evolving listing of categories of books in the library to assist the librarians with organization, to assist visitors to the library with their onsite research and to add the listing to the Society's website to inform viewers of a portion of what the library has to offer.

With the addition of one new map/large document file cabinet to add to the three already onsite, Mary Frazier, Ruth Powell, and our librarians have been involved in an ongoing process of reviewing the Society's large historical maps and

documents. Efforts have focused on sorting what is and is not in adequate condition to retain for our collection, while at the same time unrolling, encapsulating, sorting and filing these valuable items. The large collection of rolled maps and documents awaiting flattening have been organized and stored in climate-controlled locations on the ground level and lower level of the archives. With our flat storage capacity expanded by 33%, the map cabinets have been reorganized into new categories while the development of an inventory list continues to move forward. An assessor's map on the wall in the library guides researchers to old Town assessor's records listing the history of properties in Braintree.

Volunteers Kari Mofford and Yvonne Dimitri are currently working on organizing, assessing and cataloging the Society's large collection of glass negatives from Braintree photographers whose old negatives include a wide range of area subjects, including streets, buildings, people and local areas of significance. Once this cataloging and filing process is complete, those negatives that will tolerate the process will be developed into new photos to add to the Society's large collection of old Braintree-centered photographs.

As the deep reorganization and cataloging of the Resource Center's genealogical information and files continues, the librarians are excited about the news that Braintree's Town Records from 1640 through 2006 have now been digitized through a service administered by the Boston Public Library. These records now reside in the Internet Archive.

Are you Interested in finding out something about Braintree? Visit the library to see what the Braintree-centered historical library and genealogical resource center have to offer. Better yet, volunteer and help the librarians to continue the reorganization process and to assist researchers.

The Thayer Birthplace Endowment Trust What Is It & Why Is It Important?

The General Sylvanus Thayer Birthplace is a part of the Braintree Town Center Historic District, is listed on the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places and plays an important role in the history of our nation. The Birthplace is listed on the National Register of Historic Places a national level of

significance.* It is recognized as nationally significant because of General Thayer's role as the longest serving Superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point and for his transformation of the Academy into the rigor and excellence that it maintains to this day. Because of his accomplishments, General Thayer is officially recognized as the Father of West Point, as well as the Father of Engineering Education in the U.S.



Through the efforts of Gilbert L. Bean, the Thayer Birthplace Endowment Trust was created in 1967, less than 10 years after moving the Thayer Birthplace to its current location. It was amended in January 1976 to include the Barn, which Bean considered an integral part of the house story. The Trust was created for "charitable, historical and educational purposes" for the benefit of the Braintree Historical Society primarily to maintain the General Sylvanus Thayer Birthplace and its "outbuildings" which included the barn and a no longer existing shed. At the time of the 1976 amendments, the only property owned by the Society was the Thayer Birthplace. The Society built the Barn in 1975. The Barn was expanded in the late 1990s. A considerable portion of the Trust is currently invested in the majority ownership of the Gallivan House.

The Trust is responsible for maintaining the principal in the Endowment with the interest income to be made available to the Society, as needed, for maintenance, repair or improvement of the General Sylvanus Thayer Birthplace and associated property. The Trustees are charged with investing and reinvesting the principal held in trust to provide the greatest security to the present and future condition of the Thayer Birthplace for as long as it is in existence.

To grow, the Trust relies on contributions from benefactors in the form of memorials, gifts and legacies to expand the Trust's principal.

* Historical sites can be listed on the National Register of Historic Places with a local, state and/or national level of significance.

Curator's Corner:

Summer Almost Gone, Fall Coming

Our summer exhibit is coming to a close soon. In the Good Old Summertime really did hit the mark. We had swimsuits from the 1880s to the 1960s along with beach balls and shells, summer time games for rainy days, wooden golf clubs for a quick round, Braintree's own White Sox baseball uniforms and even a 1930s score book.



A good relaxing time was had by all who visited.

September is our Farm to Table dinner and we have an exhibit to show you just how a New England farm yields such bounty. For the Fall we have old farming tools, old utensils for harvesting, preparing, cooking, and finally serving all that fresh, mouth-watering produce in style. Come and take a look. Mary Frazier, Curator.

Seeking Business/Corporate Members

After more than a decade, the Braintree Historical Society is once again launching a Corporate Membership Drive.

The Society has been a leader in preserving the history of Old Braintree which includes all of Braintree, Quincy, Holbrook and Randolph. We take great pride in the many accomplishments of

our world-renowned leaders, including John Adams, John Quincy Adams, John Hancock and General Sylvanus Thayer, Father of West Point, all born in Old Braintree.

We enjoy sharing the world-altering contributions of town resident Thomas A Watson, best known for working alongside Alexander Graham Bell to invent the telephone, for creation of the Fore River Ship and Engine Building Company, and, with his wife, for establishing the first kindergarten in New England. We are proud of these and many more Braintree residents and it is our mission to not only preserve but also to spread the historical contributions of those who have gone before us.

Our Corporate Membership Program is designed to create and sustain business relationships in a mutually beneficial manner. We offer a unique opportunity for businesses to share in the vision, dedication and foresight of our founders. A Corporate Membership not only supports the great things happening in the Society but also makes sure that those businesses supporting our efforts benefit from their membership.

Annual Business/Corporate Memberships benefit monthly programs and events for individuals, schools, educators and families from throughout the region. Monies from business contributions also benefit the restoration and upkeep of our historic properties and the more than 12,000 items in the Society's historic collection of artifacts, books, photographs and documents.

We are proud of our Braintree history, proud of the Society's 89-year-long history and proud to share this history with our community. If you are a business owner or business owners are among you family and close friends, please encourage these business owners to become Business/Corporate Members of the Braintree Historical Society and enjoy the many benefits we can offer companies. Please contact us at braitreehistoricalevents@gmail.com if you know of business owners who you think can become a part of preserving Braintree's invaluable history.

Some of our current, diverse business/corporate memberships now include:

Braintree Council 1462, Knights of Columbus
And
Quirk Auto Sales

Upcoming Events for Your Calendar:

Below is a list of upcoming events that have been scheduled to date. You will note that some events are events sponsored by the Society, some are jointly sponsored by the Society and the American Legion and some are American Legion events commemorating various aspects of the nation's military history. One event is a Braintree Time Capsule event. The Society and the American Legion are endeavoring to partner when appropriate, through our mutual connection, Patrick Leonard, to inform everyone of upcoming events that celebrate Braintree's history.

Mark your calendars. We look forward to seeing you!

Thursday, September 5, American Legion Event Michael J Griffin Day; Charter Commander Post 86 6 PM; American Legion Hall

Saturday and Sunday, September 14 & 15 Heritage Weekend Society event

Saturday, September 28 American Legion Event Time Capsule Anniversary of the Treaty of Paris 1783 Saturday 2:00 PM Town Hall

Thursday, October 3, American Legion Event American Legion Hall 6 PM Salvation Army Donut Girls

Saturday, October 5, Society Event Outdoor Craft Fair – Society Grounds

October (Date to be Determined) Society Event General Membership Meeting (open to the public) Guest Speaker & Topic TBD

Saturday, October 26, Society Event Cemetery Tour, Pond Street Cemetery. Dave Crispin (Rain Date, Sunday, October 27)

Sunday, November 10, American Legion/Society Event Dedication of the Braintree WWI Military Service Archives 2:00 PM Braintree Historical Society Mary Bean Cunningham Historical Resource Center (the Barn) 31 Tenney Road, Braintree, MA

Wednesday, November 13, Society Event, Membership Meeting (open to the public) Local Author, John Donovan will give a talk on the History of the Braintree Municipal Golf Course.

Saturday, November 16, Society Event Paranormal Tour of the Thayer House, the French House, the Gallivan House and the Barn 6:00 PM

Sunday, December 8, Society Event Barn Holiday Tree Decorating

Friday, December 20, Time Capsule Committee Event Time Capsule Gift Inspection Town Hall Washington's Resignation 1776 for the 2076

Sunday, December 29 Society Event Thayer Birthplace Holiday Open House

June 7, 2020 Society Event Celebration the Birthplace & 275th Birthday – Recognition of New Roof; Grand Reopening of Exhibit Space.

The Braintree Historical Society Says Thank You

As we end the summer with the second edition of the Society's revived Newsletter, we are including a new feature, an article recognizing past and current Board members and officers and Society members and volunteers who have contributed significantly to the Society over the course of time. While most of those recognized will be individuals who are alive today, we may, at times, include individuals who have passed away. Those recognized will be mentioned in this and subsequent editions of the Newsletter in no particular order. Members of the Society including current and past Board members will contribute to the list of those recommended for the Thank You Recognition. Some editions will feature more than one individual as this Newsletter does.

The Braintree Historical Society Thanks

Mary Small Frazier

By Robert Harris



Mary Frazier, a Life Member of the Society, has been a major contributor of her time, energy, ideas and effort to the Society's success over several decades. Over time, Mary served on the Board and in many other capacities within the Society. In the older version of the School Program, Mary was the weaver, demonstrating to young children how individuals used a loom to design and weave cloth centuries ago.

From 1978 to 1998, Mary served as the Society's volunteer Curator of Costumes and Textiles, during which time she ensured that all of the Society's women's wear and men's wear and other historical artifacts were identified, cataloged with the necessary information regarding their provenance and stored, since 1995, in a climate-controlled environment in an organized way so that they could be easily located when needed for exhibits.

From 1994 to 1998, Mary was the Society's Board President. It was during this period that Mary Bean Cunningham, Mary and other members of the Society determined that the Gilbert L Bean Barn required expansion with the addition of what is now the Mary Bean Cunningham Historical Resource Center. This effort more than doubled the square footage of the Barn, with a ground floor Braintree-centered historical library and genealogical resource center, added attic storage, and doubled lower level space designated for climate-controlled storage of the more than 12,000 items in the Society's collection of historical artifacts, books, photographs and documents. Upon the disability of Malcolm Walker who was acting as "clerk of the works" during construction of the addition to the barn, Mary took over that responsibility until the job was finished.

The importance of the Barn addition to the Society's properties cannot be emphasized strongly enough. The Society's collections have steadily grown and continue to grow. Current climate-controlled space is almost at capacity. Without the timely construction of this addition, the organization would have exhausted its ability to properly store and care for historical artifacts as they continue to arrive. It is noteworthy that all of the funds to build this addition to the Barn was raised before the Society broke ground on the new construction.

Over the 20-year period following Mary's presidency, the Society took a different turn. Mary and many other significant individuals in the Society's ongoing success took an almost two-decade hiatus. After what she reports as a very long conversation with Past President, John Dennehy, Mary was persuaded to return in the role of volunteer Curator of the Society's collections. Unfortunately, Mary found that the collections were

not only in disarray but they were stored in parts of the Barn that had no climate control, including some parts of the building that were subjected to seasonal extremes of heat and cold. Mary has played a leading role in relocating all of the collection items to the climate-controlled lower level of the Barn and Mary Bean Cunningham Historical Resource Center. The deeper effort of locating, photographing, describing, cataloging and organizing all of the artifacts in the Society's is underway.

With many other Past Presidents having moved on, Mary serves on the Society's Board as the most recent active Past President, as Curator and as Chair of the Nominating Committee. In this multi-role capacity, Mary contributes significantly to the Board from her decades of Society experience while remaining open to new ideas and the need to ensure that the Society preserves the past while remaining in step with the 21st century.

Since her return approximately three years ago, Mary has played a major role in the total reorganization of the Society's Barn, returning it once again significantly to its original purpose. Working with volunteers Derek Manning, Ruth Powell, Claudia Shutter and Claudette Newhall among others, the newer section of the ground level was returned from museum space to the library and genealogical resource center that it was intended to be.

Known internationally as an expert, author and curator of ladies' fans, including Braintree's Hunt and Allen fans, with researcher and editor, Ruth Powell, 30 years ago, Mary authored the first book on the history of fans made first in Weymouth and then in East Braintree. The request from the Fan Association of North America to create an April 2019 exhibit of the Society's fan collection prompted Mary and Ruth to undertake a dramatic revision of the original fan book which was published this April.

While Mary (wife of Ron Frazier, mother of two and grandmother of four) has a BA in biology and chemistry, from Merrimack College, she later went to Clark University to be certified in I.T. She is also a certified genealogist, and has been an valuable asset for her photography skills, her knowledge of historical artifacts and her organizational skills which have been invaluable

resource to the Braintree Historical Society. A 1997 recipient of the Society's Gilbert L Bean Award for Service and Devotion to the Braintree Historical Society, the Society once again recognizes and thanks Mary Frazier for her ongoing efforts to move the Society forward and for her decades-long role in ensuring that Braintree's history is preserved.

The Braintree Historical Society Thanks

Ronald F Frazier

By Robert Harris



Ronald Forrest Frazier, a Past President, Past Treasurer, Past Chair of the Investment Committee and 1986 recipient of the Gilbert L Bean Award for Extraordinary Service and Devotion to the Braintree Historical Society ranks among those at the top of the list in his invaluable efforts to support the

Braintree Historical Society, the Town of Braintree and the preservation of Braintree's History.

As a professional with a decades-long history of leadership in nonprofit organizations, including General Manager of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce and CEO of the Builders Association of Greater Boston and Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Dedham Historical Society, Ron has for 50 years volunteered the results of his years of nonprofit learning and expertise to the Braintree Historical Society.

A Life Member of the Society, Ron was Board President from 1974 to 1976 when Mary Bean (wishing to follow through on her deceased husband, Gilbert's dream), Ron and other members of the Society agreed that the General Sylvanus Birthplace needed a reproduction Barn to add to the Society's property. Completed in the late 1976, this structure was constructed with all the necessary funds on hand before ground was broken at its location in the middle of the block behind the Thayer House at 31 Tenney Road. Built as a Barn with reclaimed timbers and beams using 18th century tools and techniques, the ground level and loft resembled a typical 1700s barn that might have been part of the Thayer property at one time. The

lower (basement) level included office space and storage space for the Society's files, artifacts, books, photos and documents.

In addition to serving as the Society's President, Ron was Vice President from 1972 to 1974, a member of the Board of Directors from 1976 to 1993, Treasurer from 1979 to 1993 and Chair of the Investment Committee from 1980 to 1999. During his tenure in these roles, Ron contributed significantly to fundraising efforts, to a very successful investment effort and to defining fund categories that were restricted for investment and growth purposes. Through all these roles, Ron contributed to the development of the Society's long-range plans, the establishment of an investment policy, the development of financial planning and policy, fundraising, and professional operations.

When the Society took a different direction in the late 1990s, Ron as well as several other significant contributors to the Society's success stepped back from his active roles as a Society officer and volunteer. He cautiously returned in a limited capacity in the fall of 2016 to offer his thoughts on the changes that had taken place over the previous 15 years in the Society and the steps that would be required to return the Society to optimal functioning. This input was significant in the development of the 2017 Five-Year Strategic Plan. As the reorganizational changes began to take place in the Barn beginning shortly thereafter, Ron was encouraged and began his support for these efforts.

Finally, believing that the Society had returned to its original path, Ron was the featured speaker for the Grand Reopening and ribbon cutting for the Barn/Library complex in October 2018. In addition to providing an exhibit commemorating Gilbert L Bean and Mary Bean Cunningham, Ron's talk focused on the origins of the Barn and Resource Center, the twists and turns they had taken and the Barn's return to its original purpose.

In May of this year, Ron volunteered to undertake the role of editor of the revived Society News-Letter and to serve as one of the trustees on the Thayer Birthplace Endowment Trust. With his history of involvement with the Society's investment funds, Ron also agreed to act as an advisor to the Society's Finance Committee,

specifically to support the Society's return to the position of financial health and stability that it enjoyed two decades ago. In addition, he also agreed to serve on the task forces to revise the Society's Bylaws and Policy and Procedure Manual.

A veteran of the United States Air Force who served in the U.S, Europe and Viet Nam, Ron continues to be a member of American Legion Post 86. As a Director and as Clerk for the Knights of Columbus 1462 Charitable Foundation, Ron was central to the 2018 initiative to relocate the Knights files to the Braintree Historical Society.

Prior to moving from a Town Meeting style of government to a Mayoral structure, Ron was an elected member of the Braintree Town Meeting for three decades, serving as a member and Secretary of the Braintree Town Finance Committee and as Legislative Chairperson for a portion of that time. Ron was Chair of the Town's Braintree Historical Commission for 15 years and has been Vice Chair for the last 10 years. In that capacity, he represents the Historical Commission as a member of the Community Preservation Commission.

Among his many other contributions to other society's and organizations, Ron is a Life Member of the Wedgwood Society of Boston, having held positions as Vice President and President (twice). Ron continues to serve on the Wedgwood Society Advisory Council where he has served for more than 35 years and has been the Wedgwood Society's News-Letter editor for 17 years.

As a writer, Ron has contributed to local, national and international publications, including the Business and Industry chapter in the book, Braintree – Its History. He has written many feature articles for BHS and local news media. Ron is currently writing the history of the Braintree Knights of Columbus. This year, Ron was given a Who's Who Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Society is grateful to Ron for his "return to the fold", to his offer to manage this newsletter and to the variety of committees, task forces and trusts to which he has agreed to contribute. His knowledge and experience are invaluable, and we are grateful to have his contributions once again to the success of the Braintree Historical Society.

Welcome New Members

Erin & Edward Kennedy, Laura McGrath, Caleb Penniman, Jim & Kathy O'Connell. Richard & Linda Schumacher, Brittany Bartow, Dean Hobart, Delores Legg, Kari Mofford, Jan Ring, William Walker, Phyllis Cardinale Field, Stacy Bloom, Paul Connor, Gail Lerner, George O'Brien, Thomas Quinn, Steven & Sarah Sciasia.

Thanks to Continuing Members

Irving Adler, Frederic Bailey, Earle A Thompson, Julieann Clougher, Lucille Barton, Donald Blunt, Rosemarie Bonani, Ann & Dr. Spyros Braoudakis, Ginny Clement, David Crispin, Dr. Robert Harris, Gail Saccone, Blaine Banker, Marie Canavan, Dorothy Delano, Pepe Goodhue, Aziz Karsan, Linda Laitine, Elizabeth Lemieux, Patrick Leonard, Joseph Moscaritolo, Ann Toland, Edward & Cheryl Berman, Richard Curry, Cheryl Edgar, Charles Stone.

BRAINTREE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
31 Tenney Road
Braintree MA 02184

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Please give us your e-mail address so that we may send this Newsletter to you paperless in the future