



President's Column Nostalgia from Another Era

by John Anderson



It's great having the opportunity to examine the artifacts people donate to MHSM. We recently received a collection of items

relating to the Medford High School Class of 1946. We have the "Class Day Exercises" program held on June 5, 1946 and programs from their 20th reunion in 1966 held in Saugus and from their 25th reunion in 1971 at the newly opened Montvale Plaza in Stoneham.

Also included was a copy of a handwritten speech with a scrawled notation "Pete" in another hand. The donor thinks it was Pete Brady. Any survivors of the Class of 1946 would now be 97, so it's unlikely we will ever be certain.

The year of the speech is also unknown. The changes referenced in the speech would suggest the 1970s as the earliest possible date, but it could be at a much later reunion particularly with the speaker's emphasis on the audience's "survival."

Here's the text of the speech:

FOR ALL OF US BORN BEFORE 1945
WE ARE SURVIVORS!!! CONSIDER
THE CHANGES WE HAVE WITNESSED:
We were born before television, before
penicillin, before polio shots, frozen

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The Day Officer Robot Took Over Medford Square

by Kyna Hamill



Medford Square showing revolutionary traffic control mechanism which replaced a human traffic officer in 1929.

On Saturday, July 27, 1929, more than 5000 people including visiting dignitaries from more than a dozen cities and towns gathered in Medford Square to witness one of the most technological advances in traffic control in New England. Since traffic control systems attempt to regulate the behavioral patterns of drivers and pedestrians, and Medford Square had been called "the second worst center of congestion in the cities of the country,"¹ a lot was riding on its success. Mayor Edward H. Larkin was so nervous about the demonstration that he asked for the mechanism to begin an hour earlier to test its capacity. The traffic policemen, who normally stood on Main Street at the junction of Forest Street and on High and Salem Streets, were replaced by an approximately twelve-foot high automated traffic signal in the middle of the square that the newspapers called "Officer Robot." Finally, at 4:30 pm in

the afternoon, when traffic was supposed to reach its peak, the crowd watched as a traffic robot "blinked a green eye" and was officially put into operation. Here is the headline from the *Boston Herald*:

**Robot Directs 5 Traffic Lanes in Medford Sq.
Automatic Signal Amazes Experts & Straightens out Tangle
May Revolutionize Control Problem
Mayor Throws Switch and Device Relieves Police Squad
from Duty²**

The "control problem," what the *Boston Globe* called a "grave problem," was the traffic confusion at the convergence of High, Salem, Forest, and Main Streets and Riverside Avenue. Readers might know a little something about that.

The event was covered widely by the *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, the *Medford Mercury*, *Zion's Herald*, and featured in Volume XXXII of the *Medford Historical Register*. All gave emphasis to Medford as being the "first community in the world" to install

¹ *Boston Globe*, 2 August, 1934, p. 10.

² *Boston Herald*, 29 July, 1929, p. 1.

continued page 2

Officer Robot *continued*

a mechanical policeman. Brought to Medford from the Automatic Signal Corporation of Connecticut, Medford was the first city in New England to have such a system. The traffic robot was expected to “revolutionize traffic control in every large city in the east.”

According to the *Boston Globe*, the purpose of the exhibition “was to demonstrate the superiority of mechanical brains over human brains in traffic regulation.” Operating using “electro-matic controls,” cars would register their presence by passing over the “sensitive plates” in the street pavement adjacent to the intersections. “These plates indicate the arrival of automobiles, the speed at which they arrive at the intersection and the length of time they are held...No car need wait when there is no opposing traffic where the robots are working.”³ If two cars reached the intersection at the same time, Officer Robot gave the right of way to the vehicle in the more heavily traveled artery.

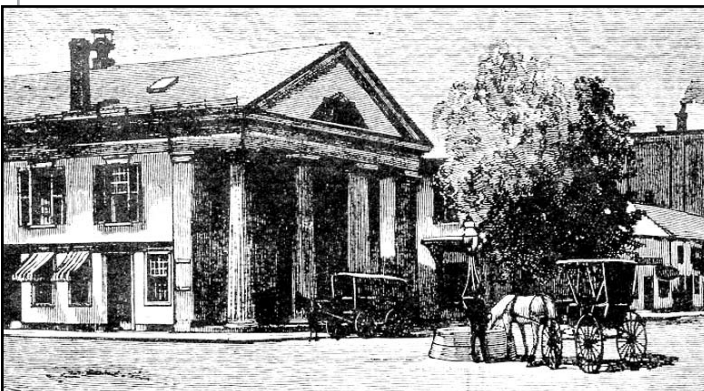
The *Boston Herald* emphasized that Medford officers should not fear for their jobs because there would always be work for policemen. Anxieties about labor being replaced by mechanical automatons is nothing new.

These same robot traffic lights were also installed at the junction of Main Street and Mystic Valley Parkway and Mystic Valley Parkway and Winthrop Street.

Unfortunately for pedestrians, the amber lights remained only five to seven seconds to cross by foot. For a four-way intersection, the pedestrian could cross with traffic, but with five arteries, the pedestrians had to dodge in and out of traffic to cross the streets. One pedestrian complained that it took twenty minutes to cross through the square on a Saturday.⁴ In a follow up article a few days later, “Officer Robot directed traffic as usual, although the square was so flooded that foot traffic was impossible.”⁵

The word *Robot* came into use through a play called *R.U.R., or Rossum's Universal Robots* by Karel Čapek in 1921. It is a Czech word meaning a laborer, or working automaton. According to one character, “The Robots are not people. Mechanically they are more perfect than we are, they have an enormously developed intelligence, but they have no soul.” The best ones would live twenty years.

Before the automated traffic signal there was a watering trough in the middle of Medford Square.



The word soon became a signal both for technology and fear of it throughout the 1920s and 1930s. By the end of the 1920s in America, the term became aligned not with humanoid figures, but to automated mechanical apparatuses used to assist such varied activities as golf, reading, and telephone operating. However, in early 1929, Eric the Robot, a “Metallic Man without a soul,” built by British engineer Capt. William H. Richard, toured the U.S. The automaton was exhibited at Lorimor Hall at Tremont Temple in Boston on February 24, 1929. “He Talks! He Moves! He Speaks if Spoken to!” Admission was 50 cents.

The *Boston Globe* wrote that six-foot-tall Eric was actually “the second all-metal mechanical marvel” to visit Boston. The first was R. J. Wensley’s *Herbert Televox* in December 1928, although it was more a dispatch for communication in the outline of a two-dimensional human figure than Eric the Robot.⁶ Herbert’s voice was a loudspeaker, and the language he spoke was a series of mechanically operated signal buzzes. But Eric could stand up and sit down, move his arms and show his teeth. He could talk and answer questions, and even deputized for the Duke of York at an event for 2,000 engineers in London.⁷ The lettering on Eric’s breastplate included the initials “R.U.R.” signaling Čapek’s play, and his inventor said that he was less for a practical purpose than for entertainment and publicity.

Medford’s “Officer Robot” had the capacity to “demonstrate the superiority of mechanical brains over human brains” in traffic regulations, but it could not do any tricks, nor did it take on a human form. By late 1929 and early 1930, traffic robots were installed in Wilmington, Philadelphia, New Haven, Baltimore, Providence and New York City using the same “electro-matic” device.⁸

In 1937, Medford Square traffic patterns changed again to comply with the State Public Works Department. Until then, Salem Street and Riverside Avenue moved together, Main Street and Forest Street moved together and High Street was on its own. “Motorists coming from any of the five intersecting streets were allowed to pass on both sides of the robot.”⁹ In the new pattern, drivers coming out of Riverside and High had to “make a right swing around the robot regardless of what direction they were heading.”¹⁰

By 1938, the red and green lights of the traffic robot were replaced by a continuous amber flash, a circumstance accused by the state traffic Engineer as being illegal.¹¹ There is still research to be done to find out what happened to “Officer Robot” in Medford Square, but with the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and the building of the I-93, Medford Square had to change again to accommodate even more traffic.

³ *Boston Globe*, 28 July 1929, p. A18.

⁴ *Boston Globe*, 22 July, 1929, p. 8.

⁵ *Boston Herald*, 2 August, 1929, p. 2.

⁶ *Harvard Crimson*, 14 December, 1928.

⁷ *Boston Globe*, 22 February, 1929, p. 9.

⁸ *New York Times*, 15 September 1929, p. XX14; *New York Times*, 9 January 1930, p. 11.

⁹ *Boston Globe*, 8 October, 1937, p. 45.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ *Boston Globe*, 11 December, 1938, p. B24.

The Hall Family of Colonial Medford: Rum Merchants and Landowners

by Douglas L. Heath and Alison C. Simcox

In the early 1600s, Matthew Cradock, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company, sent agents from England to establish settlements in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He was particularly interested in finding a plantation for himself beside a navigable river. As a principal investor in the company, Cradock was entitled to 200 acres for every 50 pounds that he had invested.

A small group of these early settlers traveled a few miles up the “Missi-Tuk” (or “great tidal river”) from Charlestown village, through salt marshes and wetlands rich in fish, oysters, and waterfowl, to a narrow stretch of deep water that was navigable by ships. Beyond the river’s lowlands was forested upland, seasonally inhabited by native peoples and home to animals such as boars, wolves, bears, and deer.

Upon hearing about this ideal location for trading, Governor Cradock ordered the creation of a plantation that became known as Cradock’s Farm. Cradock stayed in England and never saw this farm. He left it to others, including John Winthrop, the colony’s second governor, to create a village, originally called “Meadford.” Settlers cleared forest to plant crops, and built houses, roads, bridges, and wharves. The main roads, dirt cart paths at first, led to places that took advantage of the town’s setting and natural resources: wharves, fisheries, shipyards, brickyards, and taverns. By the early 1700s, these roads also led to rum distilleries.

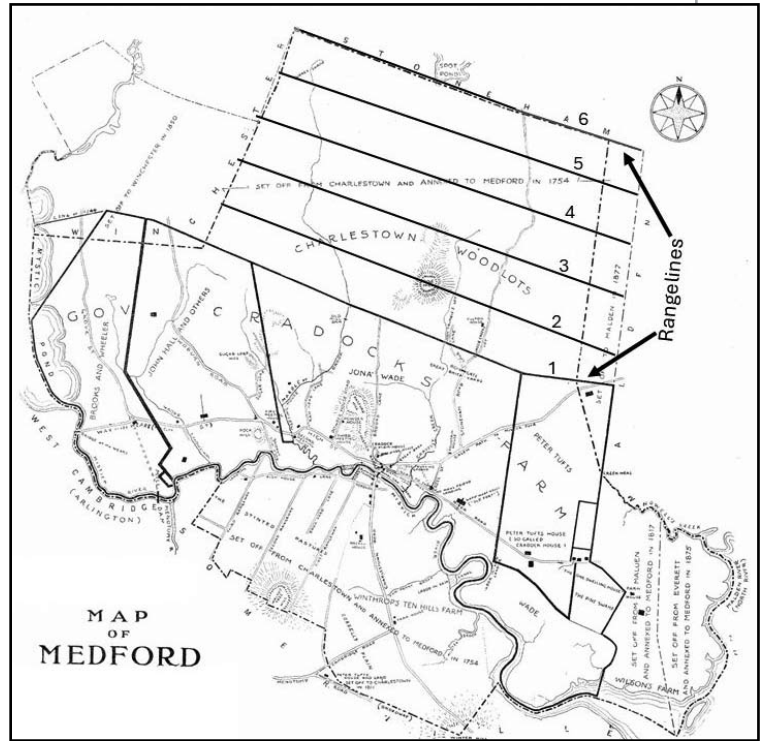
Of the prominent families in Medford’s colonial history – Brooks, Fulton, Hall, Tufts, Willis, Wade, and others – no family was more involved in the rum industry than the Halls.

The First John Hall (1627-1701)

John Hall was born in 1627 in Cambridge, England. In 1630, young John sailed with his parents, Nathaniel and Mary Hall, to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Records show that the family lived in Dorchester in 1634 and in Concord in 1656, the year that John married Elizabeth Greene. In 1675, John and Elizabeth moved to Medford. Although it was not yet an official town, the previous year local families had created a board of selectmen.

In 1675, John Hall bought 250 acres of Cradock’s Farm from Caleb Hobart (Hobart had bought the land earlier that year from Edward Collins, who had acquired it in 1650 from Cradock’s heirs). Hall’s parcel was bordered on the south by the Mystic River, and on the north by a range line that marked the southern border of the “Charlestown Woodlots.”

These woodlots, which were spaced at quarter-mile intervals separated by 10 range lines (marked by stone walls soon after being surveyed), stretched from Cradock’s Farm northward to Redding (now Wakefield). Figure 1 shows the six range lines within



Basemap map by John Hooper of Cradock’s Farm, showing the Charlestown Woodlots and 17th century landowners with range lines added.

Medford. Most of the ten range lines still exist in Middlesex Fells Reservation.

Early settlers claimed this land in 1658 as part of the Charlestown settlement and distributed the woodlots among Charlestown’s male residents. They considered this claim legal because, in 1639, the chief sachem of the Massachuset Federation, known as Squaw Sachem or Saunkswa Mysticke, had “sold” this land to Governor John Winthrop for “21 coats, 19 fathom of wampum, and three bushels of corn.”

Between 1680 and 1694, John Hall bought a 105-acre parcel in the Charlestown Woodlots for its valuable wood resources, which he likely sold to shipbuilders and housewrights for building materials, and to brickmakers to fuel their brick kilns. In addition, there was a ready market for wood to heat houses and businesses.

The Halls had 10 children, some of whom became farmers and brickmakers. Others became church deacons. Two of John Jr’s children, another John called “Captain John” (born 1690) and Andrew (born 1698), went into the rum business.

Why Rum?

Rum was probably first produced in the 1500s on sugar plantations in the West Indies. Originally called “rumbullion,” it consisted of a type of beer fermented by yeast spores that settled on pools of uncrystallized

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cane juice and molasses discarded from sugar mills. It was also called “kill-devil.” English speakers shortened rumbullion to rum, while French speakers modified kill-devil to guildive, a brandy made from molasses.

In the 1600s and 1700s, Europeans in the West Indies burned forests of mahogany, ebony, and other trees to clear areas for planting sugar cane. These plantation owners relied on enslaved people to plant and harvest two crops each year in the fall and spring. Enslaved workers harvested cane by hand and brought it to a sugar mill where they crushed it between rollers to extract juice containing sugar. They dried the leftover cane fiber, called megasse, and used it for fuel to boil off excess water.

By the 1650s, New England merchants had begun shipping molasses from Barbados to Massachusetts and Rhode Island to be distilled into rum. While still warm, workers would pack muscovado (partially refined sugar with a strong molasses content) into barrels, and the molasses would settle to the bottom of the barrels during a sea voyage.

Rum and Enslaved People

New England towns, especially ports like Medford, actively participated in the Triangular Trade, especially from the mid-1600s to the early 1800s. This term refers to the geographic pattern of trading. Ships from New England travelled to the West Indies to acquire molasses, which they transported in barrels back to New England to distill into rum. Merchants then shipped the rum to Africa, where it was traded for enslaved people. Ships took these people to the West Indies, especially Barbados, to work on the sugar plantations. After King Philip’s War ended in 1678, New England rum merchants also shipped enslaved native Americans to the West Indies.

First Rum Making in Medford

From the early 1600s, Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colony produced alcohol for drinking. According to historian Charles Brooks in 1855,

“The manufacture of alcohol as a business was held in good repute by our Medford ancestors, and some of the most worthy men of the town were engaged in it. It was not uncommon in the first century of the growth of Medford for private families to have a ‘still’ by running which they supplied themselves with alcohol for medicinal purposes, sold small quantities to their neighbors and made for use different kinds of cordials.”

Historians credit Captain John Hall as the first person in Medford to make rum. Between 1715 and 1720, he opened a distillery on the north side of Riverside Avenue. Charles Brooks (1855) described Captain Hall’s distillery:

“[It was] of wood, and the spot was chosen chiefly for the reason that a most copious spring of peculiarly good water issues from the earth at that place. The great reputation obtained by the Medford rum is attributed to the singular properties of this spring. ... The building was close to the Cradock Bridge and Mystic River. Ships from the Caribbean offloaded barrels of molasses which could be rolled to the distillery and made into Old Medford Rum, considered the best in New England.”

During this period other “distil houses” opened, notably those operated by John Dexter, John Bishop, Hezekiah Blanchard, and Isaac Hall (Captain John Hall’s nephew).

The first John Hall’s sons, Nathaniel and Stephen, went into another famous Medford business: brick-making. Medford had abundant quantities of clay, which was deposited over thousands of years along the floodplain of the meandering Mystic River. From 1650 to 1750 many Medford businessmen (including those in the Adams, Blanchard, Bradshaw, Brooks, Casey, Hall, Page, Shedd, and Tufts families) were involved in brickmaking and brickyards existed throughout the town.

Each fall, workers would dig clay and place it in large piles where it remained throughout the winter. In spring, they would form the bricks and cure them in large kilns for 10 to 12 days. These kilns used huge quantities of wood so some brickmakers, including Nathaniel Hall, bought forested land for this purpose. Records show that, in 1722, Hall bought several acres along Gravelly Creek (now covered by I-93), and, between 1729 and 1738, he bought 45 acres in the Charlestown Woodlots.

Andrew Hall (1698-1750)

Andrew Hall, younger brother of Captain John Hall, began buying land in Medford in the 1720s, including the land formerly owned by Jonathan Wade, Medford’s largest landowner in the 1600s. In 1722, Andrew married Abigail Walker and, between 1723 and 1749, they had 13 children (Their sons Andrew, Jr., Benjamin, Isaac, and Ebenezer all became involved in the family rum business). Andrew built a house for his growing family at the corner of High Street and Bradlee Road (45 High Street). This house still stands, but is known as the “Isaac Hall house” because Andrew’s son, Isaac, lived there in 1775 when Paul Revere stopped to warn him about the approaching British.

In 1735, Captain John Hall sold his rum business to his brother Andrew. By this time, members of the Hall family also had a cooper shop, a general store, a shipping business, and a slaughterhouse. In 1738, Andrew’s brother Stephen Hall, Jr. bought two-thirds of the rum distillery.

In 1739, in addition to helping Stephen manage the Hall rum business, Andrew worked as a boatman. He owned a fleet of boats called “lighters” to transport

produce from farmers and bricks from local brickyards down the Mystic River from Medford to Boston Harbor. From there, these products would be transported to seaports up and down the east coast. After unloading his cargo, Hall (or those he employed) would return to Medford with goods from foreign ports.

Andrew Hall served as a representative to the General Court from Medford from 1744 to his death in 1750. An inventory of his possessions includes all or part of three sloops, one schooner, and a whaling ship, woodlots, pasturelands, buildings, warehouses, wharves, and personal items, including a silver-gilded sword and 52 barrels of mackerel. The inventory also included "A Negro Man Named Jack." Andrew Hall, Jr. managed his father's estate and his mother, Abigail, and his brother, Isaac (and, later, Isaac's wife) continued to live in the High Street house.

Benjamin (1731-1817) & Isaac Hall (1739-1805)

Andrew Hall, Jr. hired his younger brother Benjamin to be foreman of the distillery (or "distil house"). When Benjamin turned 21, he took over operation of the distillery and ran it for the next 51 years. In Benjamin's words,

"After that I Hired itt for Eighteen Months which time on[e] Timothy Fitch was in Partnership with me soon after that the administrator of my Father's Estate sold itt at Vendue I purchased itt and Carried the same on for Fifty on[e] Years and then Quitted business."

Benjamin hired his brother Isaac to work at the distillery and, in January 1775, made him a partner. The following month, the two brothers acquired a second distillery from John Dexter.

In 1761, Isaac had married Abigail Cutter, and they continued to live at 45 High Street with his mother (also named Abigail). There, Isaac and Abigail had eight children. In 1775, as well as working in the distillery with his brother Benjamin, Isaac was Captain of the Medford Minutemen, who were among the first to respond when war broke out. Paul Revere wrote that after he changed course on his ride in Somerville to avoid British officers, *"I went through Medford over the bridge and up to Menotomy [now Arlington]. In Medford I waked the Captain of the Minute Men [Isaac Hall], and after that, I alarmed almost every house till I got to Lexington."*

According to historian Helen Wild (1903), *"Captn Hall and his company marched to Lexington and there joined Captn John Brooks and his Reading company . . . The combined companies met the British at Merriam's Corner [in Concord] and followed them to Charlestown Ferry, continuing their fire until the last of the troops had embarked."*

Later in 1775, Isaac Hall organized another company of men from Medford, Stoneham and adjoining towns. In March 1776, this company marched to Dorchester Heights. While on military duty, Isaac and



Benjamin Hall's 1797 distillery (center) and warehouse (left) looking west along Ship Street, now Riverside Avenue. Note road being paved about 1912.

his brothers lost a large amount of money after providing the colonial government with rum and other supplies without being paid. In 1787, Isaac sold part of his distillery to his brother Ebenezer and, in 1789, sold off the rest of his interests in Medford's rum business to Boston merchant John Coffin Jones.

In 1797, Benjamin Hall took down a wooden distillery, which was either the one his father had built or a second one on the same site, and replaced it with one made of brick. Benjamin also owned a two-story brick warehouse across the street, where he stored rum in 63-gallon barrels called hogsheads.

To age the rum, some of these barrels were shipped as ballast in vessels to the west coast of Africa and back. According to historian Charles Brooks (1886),

"This enlargement of the business, together with the high reputation justly acquired by the manufacturers in Medford, gave employment to many workmen; and the business was considered lucrative, and desirable as an industry of the town."

Isaac Hall was a friend of Colonel Isaac Royall, a prominent Medford merchant who had more Black slaves than any other man in Medford. Three days before the battles of Lexington and Concord, Royall fled to Nova Scotia before going to England. He instructed Dr. Samuel Tufts (also a slaveowner) to sell his slaves to finance his exile in England. In 1778, because Royall's wealth was tied to powerful Loyalist families, he was investigated by the Committee of Safety in Medford. Isaac Hall testified in support of Royall:

"The winter before said battle [Lexington and Concord], he [Hall] went to settle accounts with said Royal at his house, and that said Royal showed him his arms and accoutrements (which were in very good order), and told him [Hall] that he [Royall] determined to stand for his country. etc."

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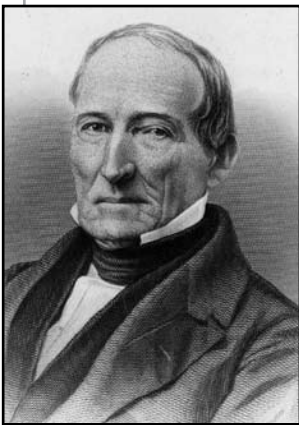
Hall Family *continued*

A records search did not reveal whether Isaac Hall owned slaves. However, his relationship with Royall suggests that he did, and records show that his close relatives owned slaves. Specifically, his brother Benjamin owned "a Negro girl named Mira," his father Andrew owned a "A Negro Man Named Jack," and his uncle Stephen owned "a Negro girl named Flora."

Benjamin Hall, Jr. (1754-1807)

In 1801, Benjamin Hall passed his share of the rum business to his oldest son, Benjamin Hall, Jr. and Joseph Manning, who together formed the firm of Hall and Manning. In 1806, Benjamin Jr. and his wife, Lucy (Tufts) Hall, moved to a house next to his father on High Street. However, Benjamin Jr. died just a year later.

The Family's Last Rum Merchant: Dudley Hall (1780-1868)



Dudley Hall

After Benjamin Hall Sr. died in 1817, his grandson Dudley Hall inherited a large estate that included land that had been bought almost 200 years earlier by the first John Hall, including more than 100 acres of farmland that had been part of Cradock's Farm and about 100 acres of Charlestown Woodlots. His inheritance also included the family distillery near Medford Square, which is described in a deed as "one piece of land with a distill house thereon," and a

wharf on the Mystic River. As well as his rum business, Dudley Hall built cotton and woolen mills, was a shipping merchant, and was a director of the New England Bank in Medford.

Eliza Gill, the daughter of Dudley Hall's foreman, Solomon Gill, wrote an article describing the transport of molasses and rum:

"Molasses was brought from the wharves in Boston to Medford by ox teams and boats called Gundelows. My father did the teaming, and has told me he had many times arrived in Boston, five miles away with a load of rum by sunrise, when the thermometer was below zero. There was no complaint of hard work or long days then. ... The rum jug was carried along with hired men (then all Americans) and was considered very necessary when haying on the marsh."



About 1831, Dudley Hall sold his distillery to Daniel Lawrence, possibly because of a moral objection to producing rum. This is suggested by Eliza Gill in her account of a conversation between her father and Hall, in which Hall said to Gill: "Solomon, I hope you will not drink this rum we make here, it is damaging to drink it. It is ruining many young men who come down from the country, as you did."

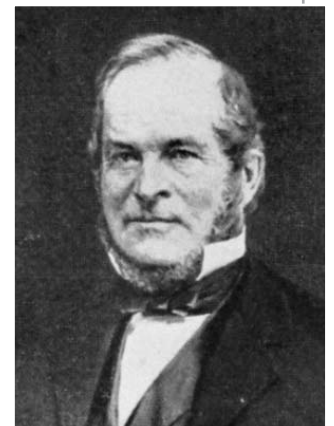
With that sale, the Hall family passed their 100-year rum business to the Lawrence family, who continued it for another 74 years.

End of Medford's Rum Era: Daniel Lawrence (1797-1884)

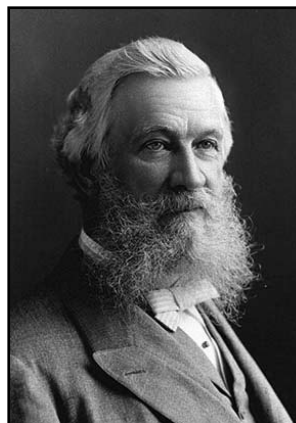
Daniel Lawrence moved to Medford from Tyngsborough in 1823 and began working at the distillery firm of Bishop & Goodrich in which he maintained an interest until about 1856. After

buying Dudley Hall's distillery in 1831, he changed its name to Daniel Lawrence & Sons and marketed his rum as "Old Medford Rum." This became famous around the world. *"The aim of the Lawrence distillery was to deliver a racy rum made from the best grade of molasses which would give splendid satisfaction."*

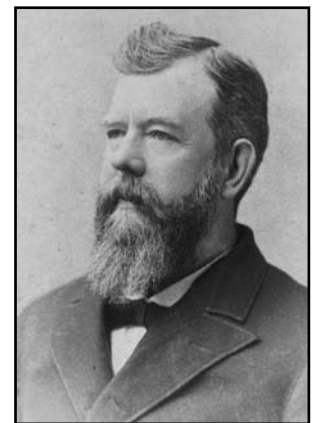
However, by the 1830s, demand for rum had declined because of the Temperance movement. Other rum distilleries in Medford had already closed. When Daniel Lawrence died in 1879, his sons, Samuel Crocker Lawrence and Daniel Warren Lawrence, carried on the business for another 25 years. In 1905, they announced, without giving a reason, that the distillery was closing. And, thus, the age of rum in Medford came to an end.



Daniel Lawrence



Samuel Crocker Lawrence



Daniel Warren Lawrence

Loss of the Family Land: Dudley Cotton Hall (1818-1899)

After Dudley Hall died in 1868, his sons, Dudley Cotton Hall and Horace Dudley Hall inherited his land holdings and became partners in Dudley Hall & Co., importers of tea. They lived next to each other on the west side of Forest Street. Dudley Cotton Hall's house, built about 1853, still stands at 14 Woodland Avenue, but has been converted into a multi-family residence.



Dudley Cotton Hall

In 1889, the firm of Dudley Hall & Co. as well as Dudley Cotton Hall himself went bankrupt and much of Hall's property, which had been put up as collateral, was taken by creditors. In 1891, Hall's estate on Forest Street was sold to a group of investors who formed a trust. In 1909, the city granted then-owner, Catherine Freeman, a permit to build a single-family dwelling.

Concluding Thoughts

For more than a century (1715 to 1831), rum was key to the Hall family fortune. They tapped into an industry that became an important part of the colonists' daily routines. It was consumed at home, in taverns, and during work. It was a key element in the infamous Triangular trade, which trafficked in African and Native American people. During the Revolutionary War, rum was essential for soldiers' morale and for maintaining their fighting spirit. Ironically, it was the high demand for rum that began the reversal of the Halls' fortune. As patriots, they provided the American colonial government with rum, but they were not paid. Following the war, the rise of the Temperance movement dealt another blow to their business. With the emergence of cheap domestic whiskey and the end of a ready supply of free slave labor, rum production had lost its allure. By then, four generations of Halls had participated in every phase of this fleeting, but lucrative, industry.

If you would like a list of Selected References, contact the authors at dougheath28@hotmail.com or acsimcox1@gmail.com.

President's Message *continued*

food, xerox, plastic, contact lenses, frisbees & "The Pill."

We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams & ballpoint pens, pantyhose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes – and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be?

In our time, closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of." Bunnies were small rabbits and were not Volkswagens.[VH2]

Having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins.

We thought fast food was what you ate during lent and outer space was the last row at the drive-in.

We were before house-husbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages.

We were before day-care centers, group therapy, and nursing homes.

We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt, and guys wearing earrings.

For us, time-sharing meant togetherness, not computers or condominiums.

A "chip" meant a piece of wood, hardware meant hardware and software wasn't even a word.

In 1940, "Made in Japan" meant junk, and the term "making out" referred to how you did on your report card.

"McDonald's" and instant coffee and were unheard of.

We hit the scene when there were 5 & 10 cent stores, where you bought things for five and ten cents.

"Brighams" sold ice cream for a dime. For one dime you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi, or enough stamps to mail a letter and two postcards.

You could buy a new Chevy coupe for \$600 but who could afford one? - a pity too because gas was only 11 cents a gallon.

In our day cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was mowed, coke was a cold drink, and pot was something you cooked in, rock music was a grandma's lullaby, and AIDS were helpers in the principal's office.

We were certainly not before the difference between the sexes was discovered, but we were surely before sex change; we made do with what we had.

And we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby!

No wonder we are so confused and there is such a generation gap today!

BUT WE SURVIVED!!! WHAT BETTER REASON TO CELEBRATE?

Editor: First year of the VW Rabbit was 1974

MHSM Events Calendar

JANUARY

Gandhi's American Friend: The Untold Story of Richard Gregg

Speaker: John Wooding, Emeritus Professor, Political Science, University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library



Richard Gregg was Gandhi's confidant and friend for more than twenty years. He was American activist and writer whose social philosophy and ideas would influence Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and many other pacifists and activists throughout the 20th century. He was the son of a Congregationalist minister who was born and lived in Medford. Gregg was educated at Harvard University and worked as a labor lawyer and arbitrator in Boston and

Chicago before moving to India to work and study with Gandhi. He returned there many times.

Gregg was driven by a deep sense of justice, a commitment to nonviolent and humane practices towards people and the planet, and a steady belief in the possibilities of peace. He wrote *The Power of Non-Violence*, published in 1936, perhaps the leading book of its day on pacifism and the signature guide to peaceful protest. The book inspired Dr. Martin Luther King, and Gregg's ideas would shape the American Civil Rights movement's perspectives and tactics. A respected conduit for Gandhian thought in the western world, Gregg was a sought-after commentator and advisor on conflict resolution for decades. He was a friend and colleague of leading pacifists and activists, such as Scott and Helen Nearing, and his work profoundly influenced social justice, peace, and civil rights movements. This is his story.

FEBRUARY

Defining Moments

Speaker: Dave McGillivray, Race Director of the B.A.A. Boston Marathon and Motivational Speaker
Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library

Dave McGillivray translates his extraordinary life journeys and athletic achievements into life lessons that leave each audience wanting more.

Everyone has a story to tell. For Dave McGillivray, it was his strong desire to be an athlete that led him to run across the country in 1978 at age 23. That 80-day trek across the United States led to a life of push-



ing himself both mentally and physically. McGillivray has been race director of the B.A.A. Boston Marathon and has directed many of the country's most prestigious races, such as the 2004 and 2008 U.S. Women's Olympic Marathon Trials, the 1990 ITU Triathlon World Championship, the TD Beach to Beacon 10K, the ASICS Falmouth Road Race, and numerous other races. He addresses audiences with a motivational account that is not about running...it's about what's possible if you believe in yourself and your own ability to do the seemingly insurmountable.

Dave's story all starts in Medford- his hometown. It was the days he spent on the field and the track in Medford as a young boy that set the stage for his life on the run. Dave was the valedictorian of his graduating class at Medford High School. The track at Hormel Stadium bears his name and he is part of the Medford Mustang Hall of Fame. Dave continues to organize a road race, Run Medford, to benefit the community.

MARCH

Amelia Earhart: Beyond the Skies

Speaker: Margaret L. Arnold, Ph.D., Suffolk University
Thursday, March 6, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library

Most people know that Amelia Earhart was a pioneering pilot who disappeared over the Pacific Ocean in 1937. But did you know she lived in our hometown and worked in Boston? And did you know that she developed her own line of clothing and luggage? She also fought for women's rights and equality, and just last year Amelia was voted one of America's Greatest Mentors. Join us as we learn about the life and legacy of this courageous American icon as presented by Dr. Margie Arnold, an Earhart enthusiast. **American Sign Language interpretation will be provided for this program.**



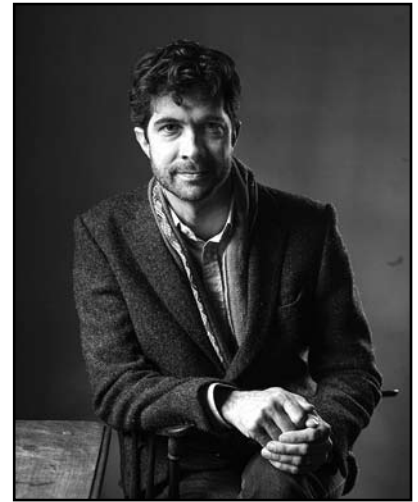
APRIL

A House Restored: The Tragedies and Triumphs of Saving a New England Colonial

Speaker: Lee McColgan, Author and Preservationist
Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., Charlotte and William Bloomberg Medford Public Library

Old houses share their secrets only if they survive. Trading the corporate ladder for a stepladder, Lee McColgan commits to preserving the ramshackle Loring House, built in 1702, using period materials and methods and on a holiday deadline. But his enchantment withers as he discovers the massive repairs it needs. A small kitchen fix reveals that the structure's rotten frame could collapse at any moment. In a bathroom, mold appears and spreads. He fights deteriorating bricks, frozen pipes, shattered windows, a punctured foundation, and even an airborne chimney cap while learning from a diverse cast of preservationists, including a master mason named Irons, a stone whisperer, and the Window Witch. But

can he meet his deadline before family and friends arrive, or will it all come crashing down? McColgan's journey expertly examines our relationship to history through the homes we inhabit, beautifully articulating the philosophy of preserving the past to find purpose for the future.



Program information available at
www.medfordhistorical.org/events

What's New for 2025 - MHSM Embraces 21st Century Technology!

This is not meant to be tech for tech's sake, but a thoughtful process of adopting new technology to improve the things we already do.

Starting Point:

When a new Board of Directors assumed responsibility for MHSM in 2006, all records available to us were paper based. Our most important records have always been:

- **Collection:** In 2006 we had out of date 3x5 cards and many lists of varying quality. For example, one donated item was simply described as "Red Dress."
- **Financial Records:** The former Treasurer had used his own computer for record keeping. We received a printout of the balances in the accounts and a stack of cancelled checks, receipts, and bank statements.
- **Membership:** We reviewed paper financial records to build a membership list of names and mailing addresses. There were no emails but we started collecting them immediately.

Status in 2024:

- **Collection:** The entire collection has been inventoried and entered into electronic records, either in MS Office or Past Perfect, an application written specifically for museums.
- **Financial Records:** Our records are in Quickbooks, a standard financial program. Up to this point, thank you letters for contributions have still been sent individually by mail or email.
- **Membership:** We use an Excel spreadsheet to manage membership and mailing addresses. We use another program, Vertical Response, to send emails and manage a number of different lists..

What's New in 2025:

Thanks to incredible volunteer efforts, we now have converted all of the membership spreadsheets and email lists into an integrated system that links membership, financial accounting and emails into one integrated system. This will free up volunteer time for more projects!

Just a few weeks ago we used email addresses (which we have for most of you), for our Annual Appeal. As a result, I only needed to mail about 25 letters instead of the normal 200+, saving a lot of paper, money, and time.

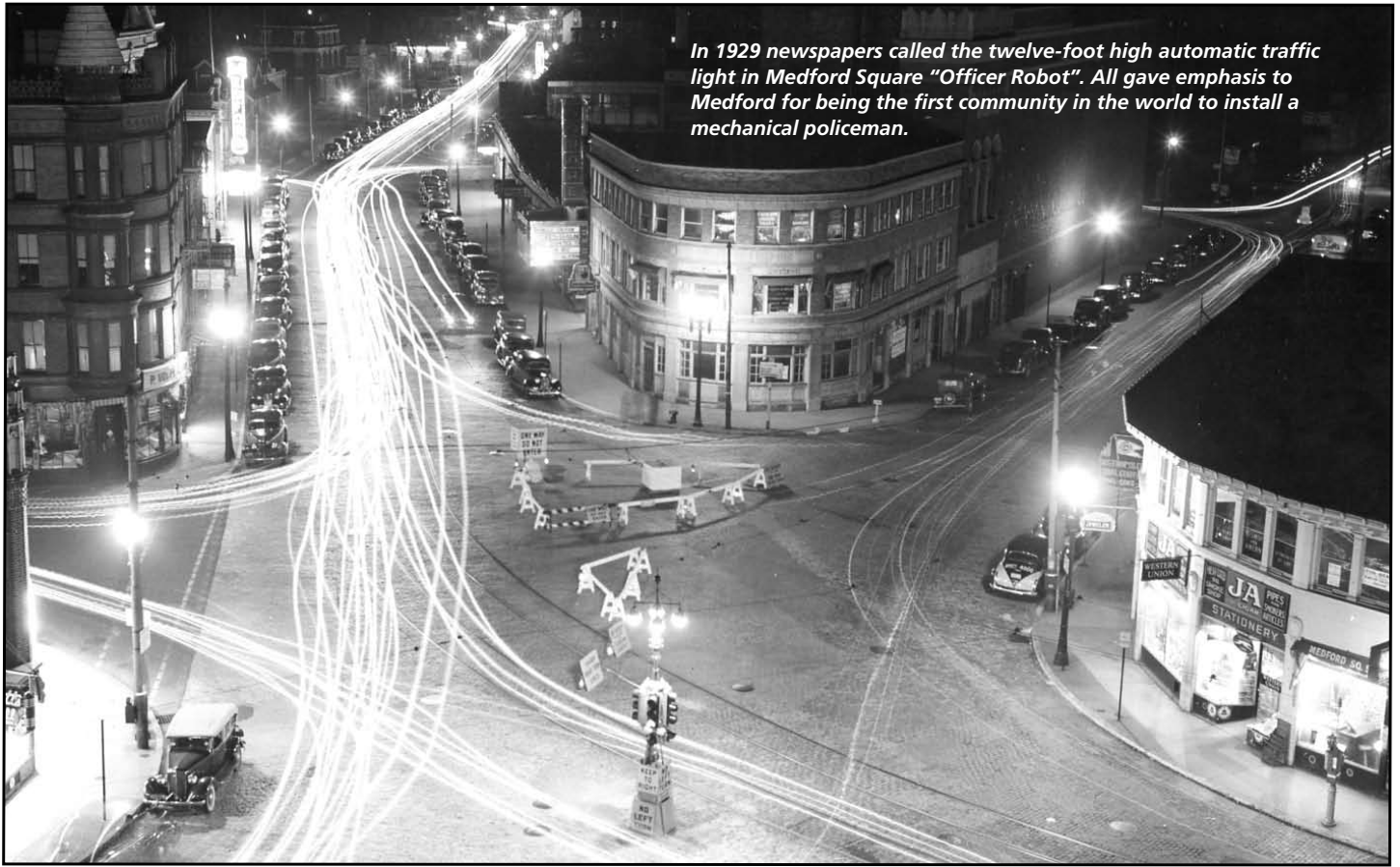
This newsletter will also be the first time we've used our new system to print mailing labels.

Setting up this new system has been a lot of work. I want to thank Will Miller, our new Assistant Treasurer, for taking on this project! This has been a huge undertaking, comparing and merging lists, transcribing, checking, and double checking. We have over 2000 contacts, including members, former members, people who sign our guestbook at 10 Governors Avenue, and attendees at our events.

Please remember, we are all volunteers! Will and I have probably made some errors doing the conversion.

If you see an error, for example if you receive multiple emails or there are errors in the email, please let us know. If there are errors in the paper letters we send, please let us know that too. You can email tech@medfordhistorical.org or if you don't have an email, feel free to call me, John Anderson, at 781-395-5138.

Thank you for your patience and continued support!



In 1929 newspapers called the twelve-foot high automatic traffic light in Medford Square "Officer Robot". All gave emphasis to Medford for being the first community in the world to install a mechanical policeman.

Your Medford Historical Society Newsletter

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM
10 Governors Avenue
Medford, MA 02155

