



THE NURSE HOMESTEAD

Newsletter of the Rebecca Nurse Homestead Preservation Society • FALL 2004

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Danvers Alarm List Hosts Two Encampments

The Alarm List Company decided it just wasn't enough to *attend* a number of events this year and therefore made the commitment to organize and host two separate activities this campaign season. It was our intention to make use of our own wonderful piece of real estate while utilizing a multitude of encampment experience and knowledge within the company ranks.

The first event the Alarm List hosted came to us out of the blue when Bethaney Groff, site manger for the Little Farm in Newbury, a Historic New England (formerly known as S.P.N.E.A.) property, called and asked if our Company would be interested in helping put on a weekend encampment at her farm, with the main theme being one of the first readings of the Declaration of Independence on July 19, 1776. With the help of Bob Allegretto and friend, from Tallmadge's Troop of the Second Light Dragoons acting as post riders, a copy of



the Declaration was delivered and received a spirited reading to all in attendance. On Saturday evening, the troops and public, were entertained by Sweet Loretta's Snake Oil Jug Band.

On Sunday, the Company put on a drill demonstration and engaged in question and answer conversations with the public. The distaff members of the Company, Niamh Dolan, Vicky Rebal and

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The Rebecca Nurse Homestead Preservation Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and programming of the Nurse Homestead, a 27-acre historic site in Danvers, Massachusetts.

The Rebecca Nurse Homestead
149 Pine Street
Danvers, Massachusetts 01923
978-774-8799
www.rebeccanurse.org

Hours of operation:
June 15 through Labor Day
Tues. through Sun. 1 PM to 4:30 PM
September and October
Sat. and Sun. 1 PM to 4:30 PM

Notes from the President...

The Homestead Management Committee has collectively decided that it might be beneficial to give some new ideas a try and see what the reception is by the Preservation Society (R.N.H.P.S.) members. I hope that you will avail yourselves of the opportunity to contact me with your feedback at either president@rebeccanurse.org or by U.S. mail to to the Homestead.

First, I'm sure you have all noticed that the May and current issues of the newsletter have exhibited a drastic change in format. Each is different and we are still searching for a combination of design components that we can settle on for a time. Long time member Don Hayes of Lowell helped organize the May issue, using time tested styles borrowed from another periodic publication. The current issue is the first to show the new design, and with an upgrade to the publication process, the newsletter can display photographs and other images that enhance the content.

Another effort on our part is to strive to make this publication a true quarterly. It is the present plan to issue editions in May, August, November and February. This will undoubtedly curtail the

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DALC Hosts Events - from page 1

Laura Abraham-Miller noticed a greater than normal interest from the public around the camp kitchen and when not authentically creating some fine meals for the troops, they were quite busy dealing with a host of visitor questions.

The second event was the brain child of our own Lt. Henry Rutkowski. Last summer Henry came up with the idea of celebrating the Company's 30th anniversary by inviting a number of units, both American and British that we have campaigned with over the last thirty years, to the Homestead for a weekend of 18th century living history. We also contacted our long time friends and sister organization, Col. Bailey's Second Massachusetts Regiment, who are also observing their 30th birthday, and asked if they would like to co-host the event. The two groups formed a planning committee that has met regularly since last September. The date was set for September 18-19, 2004 and a number of activities took shape that we don't normally have a chance to do at the usual battle reenactment encampments. The organizers wanted to provide the public with views of the civilian and military lifestyles that are out of the ordinary for us to portray and hopefully educationally interesting for our visitors. The camps will be open to the public on Saturday, Sept. 18th from 11:00 AM until 5:00 PM, and from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Sunday the 19th. We hope that many of you who live locally will be able to find some time and come to the Homestead. Further information will be forthcoming in local newspapers.

Expanded Member Benefits

In gratitude for the dedicated support of our members we have begun a program to expand member benefits. This is the second issue of our new quarterly newsletter so members may be informed on the many changes and events at the Homestead in a timely manner.

This fall a new event has been added to our schedule. Next spring we plan to include Homestead Preservation Society members in an event that will be open only to them. Our hope is that membership in the Rebecca Nurse Homestead will become more valuable because members will have more opportunity to enjoy the property in a variety of ways.

Rain Fails to Dampen Festival Success

by Don Hayes

Our annual fund raiser was hit with rain for the first time since its inception but it still added a significant amount to our income. The event's success came from the large number of enthusiastic volunteers who helped the Danvers Alarm List Company.

This year the Explorer Police undertook the responsibility of the parking area freeing the DALCO members to do other functions such as operate the membership recruitment table and cook in the Nurse House. Boy Scout Troop 67 was back again this year to help with the clean up and then to camp overnight on the grounds.

Strawberry Festival 2004 Volunteers

Many thanks to our volunteers who were key to making the day a success.

Balch Tavern: Dave Osgood, Joanna MacDonald, Don Perry, Ashley Perry

Parking: Explorer Police, Dave and Joan Townley, adult leaders, Derek Torkildsen, Matt Chaves, Heather Fuller



The strawberry crew looks ready for a successful day, despite cloudy and damp weather

Strawberry Shortcake: Meghan Walbran, Shanna Devoy, Jen Rutkowski, Katheryn Rutkowski, Liz Levenson, Martha Duncan, Chris Wiley, Eva Bramesco, Candice Clemenzi, Chris Clemens, Susan McKenna

Gift Shop: Kathryn Morano

Spinning in Nurse House Great Room: Carol January, Martha and Thera Driscoll

Clean-up: Boy Scout Troop 67 sponsored by the Holy Trinity Church, Tom Maniscalco, Scoutmaster

General Help: Nick Cavaliere

Lightening Strike Silences Parrot

by Bob Osgood

On June 14th Josie and I hurried home to our apartment in the Rebecca Nurse Homestead to beat the fast approaching thunderstorm. Within minutes it hit. Josie was sitting in the Blue Room (the TV room) and I was in the kitchen. The thunder was loud and the lightening vivid. I said to Josie, "Boy, this storm is in our back yard!"

Wham! We were hit by lightening. Josie saw the parrot's (Keto) cage light up. Keto ended up on the floor missing a few feathers, and squawking loudly.

The intrusion alarm went off but the power and telephone were not affected. The alarm usually shuts off after ten minutes but it kept going, as well as the parrot kept squawking. We checked the entire homestead and found no entry point or damage done. The alarm was still sounding and the parrot was still squawking. I called Henry Rutkowski our 1st Lieutenant and alarm expert and told him of the problem. He arrived shortly after 11 PM and silenced the alarm. The parrot stopped squawking too. We found that our personal Direct TV box

that sits beside the parrot's cage was out of commission. Apparently, that is how the lightening came in. The flash also brought our personal computer down.

The next day we called the insurance company and had a new TV box installed. We are still working on the computer. No one was hurt but the parrot didn't talk for two days. Sore throat.

New Trolley Tours to the Homestead

For the month of August a new tour from Salem by trolley to the Rebecca Nurse Homestead commenced. Sponsored by Salem Historical Tours, The trolley carried people to the heart of the Witchcraft Scare of 1692 in Danvers. Visitors viewed the multimedia presentation at our Meeting House, toured the Nurse Homestead and walked to the cemetery to view the monument.

The tours ran on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only. The tours will commence again for the month of October. If your friends are interested in reservations for the tour they may call 978-744-5469 or click on www.salemhistoricaltours.com.

Around the Homestead — *Highlights of our historic property*

While the Nurse House itself rightly gets most of the attention, the Homestead also is fortunate to have other historic structures as well. In this edition of the Homestead newsletter, we're taking a closer look at Endecott Barn and Shop.

This structure was originally built in about 1681 as the home of Dr. Zerubabel Endecott, the son of Governor John Endecott. Originally located at what in recent times was 139 Endicott Street in Danvers, this building had undergone numerous additions over the years.

In 1973 a group of volunteers, led by Richard Trask and including Robert Osgood, Skip Lotito, John George and Marshall Moore, dismantled the oldest section of the house, as the property was slated for demolition to make way for the Endicott Shopping Plaza.

The "First Period" portion of the house was re-erected here on the Nurse Homestead in 1983, under the direction of contractor

Howard Haynes. The frame has been sheathed on the exterior to appear as a barn in order to blend with the character of the Nurse Homestead. This structure now sits on the location of the original Nurse barn, which burned in the 1950's.

Portions of the interior frame has been left exposed to exhibit the construction methods of "First Period" style houses. The main upright frame beams in this structure are oak, while the summer beams are pine. The interior is designed to show visitors how these "post and beam" houses were built. Wood painted in gray indicates modern replacement beams.

The Endecott Shop is housed in this building. Here visitors purchase admission to the property, as well as quality goods, including books, videos, postcards, jewelry, reproduction pottery, and colonial children's games. All proceeds are used for restoration and programming at the Rebecca Nurse Homestead.



Upper: Exterior of the Endecott Barn

Lower: The Endecott Shop (note the original beams above the display area)

Expanding Our Membership

by Victoria Rebal

We truly hope that as a member of the Rebecca Nurse Homestead Preservation Society you realize how much your support is valued. Without the continued support of our members, the preservation and educational goals of this cherished historic site would not be fulfilled. For this reason, we have begun to make new efforts to achieve higher membership goals.

You may have already met me at this year's Strawberry Festival in July, where I made an effort to speak with everyone who came

to celebrate our yearly fundraiser's festivities with us. Don Hayes (DALC recruiting officer) and I enjoyed speaking with many current and prospective members.

Membership information will also be going shortly to the mailboxes of many of our visitors from the last couple years. Bob Osgood (RNH caretaker) has been saving the guest book entries, and as a result, our enthusiastic visitors will hopefully be pleasantly surprised to hear from us.

If all goes well, at our October member reception there will be many new faces for our current members and us to get to know and thank for the much valued support!

The arrest warrant against 71-year-old Rebecca Nurse on the charge of witchcraft

To the Marshall of Essex or his deputie —

There Being Complaint this day made (before us by Edward putnam and Jonathan putnam Yeomen both of Salem Village, Against Rebeca Nurce the wife of francis Nurce of Salem Village for vehement Suspition, of haveing Committed Sundry acts of Witchcraft and thereby haveing donne Much hurt and Injury to the Bodys of Ann putnam the wife of Thomas putnam of Salem Village Anna puttnam the dauter of Said Thomas putnam and Abigail Williams &c

You are therefore in there Majesties names hereby required to apprehend and bring before us Rebeca Nurce the wife of francis Nurce of Salem Village, to Morrow aboute Eight of the Clock in the forenoon at the house of Lt Nathaniell Ingersoll in Salem Village in order to her Examination Relating to the aboves'd premises and hereof you are not to faile Salem March the 23'd 1691/2.

Ghosts in the Homestead?

Over the past thirty years, we had never heard of ghosts or other paranormal incidences in the Homestead. Many of the older Danvers Alarm List Company members slept overnight at the Homestead when we first bought the property and had no resident overseers. None of us experienced anything beyond the creaks of an old house.

Recently, one of our guides had an unusual experience, however. As is the routine, she led the tour through the ground floor and sent the guests up to the chamber above ahead of her. When she entered she noticed the cradle was rocking back and forth. She assumed one of the guests had rocked it and continued with her tour. The cradle kept on rocking and she didn't see anyone touch it again. It was still rocking when they left.

Since this incident several people have tried to make the cradle rock without touching including stomping up the stairs and treading heavily on the floor boards. No rocking. When given a push by hand the cradle rocks only a short while.

There may be no explanation for this incident, but it does make a good story!

“Neighbourly Accompanying One Another”

The Nurse Homestead Perambulation

“Where exactly is our property line?” That was the question one frigid January evening at a RNH executive committee meeting. A planning discussion was going on about where a permanent restroom facility might be placed, and the group was considering setback rules and environmental regulations. One result of the discussion was a professional survey of the Homestead’s northern property line, completed in March. The other result was a walk by members of Danvers Alarm List Company on a lovely spring day.

On Memorial Day 2004, the Danvers Alarm List Company revived the English and Early American ceremony of Perambulation, known in religious circles as a Rogation procession. In the past, many New England towns required their selectmen to walk boundary lines yearly or once every two years, although this particular custom is rarely seen nowadays. The celebration of Rogation has continued in many local churches however, and processions are often a part of Rogation Sunday services.

In 1652, Rev. George Herbert gave four reasons for perambulations in his book “The Country Parson,” a set of instructions to 17th century English clergy;

“Firstly, asking a blessing of God for the fruits of the field; thus will our endeavours be protected from disease, pestilence, misuse and harm. Secondly, as an act of justice in the preservation of bounds; that lands are received into our hands as apportioned by the hand of the Almighty, to be transmitted thus intact to our successors. Thirdly, to beg Almighty God’s mercy, in relieving the poor, the distressed, the sick, and those under the persecutions of ignorance and tyranny; that we are ever mindful of the work of Christ being wrought in and through us. Fourthly, to provide for charity in loving, walking and neighbourly accompanying one another; that we, walking in joy and love with one another, may be defended from hardness of heart and weakness of resolve.”

While our modern world is often too far from farms and orchards for us to worry about “the fruits of the field” (unless a drought in the Midwest causes milk prices

to skyrocket, or a frost in Florida doubles the price of orange juice), the issue of preservation of bounds is of great importance to the to the Rebecca Nurse Homestead, surrounded as it is by a variety of commercial and residential property. As Rev. Herbert instructs, we must be prepared to transmit the Nurse Homestead property to our successors in at least as valuable a condition as it was when it was placed under our control.



Memorial Day turned out to be one of those perfect-but-too-few New England spring days, sunny and warm, with the Nurse apple trees blooming and the birds singing loudly. The perambulation ceremony began at noon with a picnic on the lawn by the ladies and gentlemen of the Alarm List Company in their 18th century finery, then proceeded to the meeting-house, where the group sat patiently through the 18th century prayers assigned to Rogation Days, followed by remarks from chaplain Tom Macy (portraying the Rev. Enos Hitchcock). The remarks consisted of the complete perambulation text from “The Country Parson,” and closed with an excerpt from a 1771 Rev. George Whitefield sermon.

Then came the most important duty of the day... the actual walking of the Nurse property boundary lines. To accomplish this, the Alarm List Company followed an 18th century-style map of the property – one that had been created using some distinctly 21st century sources! By overlaying the 1981 survey with the 2004 survey of the northern boundary, then adding measurements from a detailed satellite image of the Homestead property, an accurate map was drawn using 18th century style typographic and topographic elements.

Making the map was one thing, but following the property lines down embankments, across swamps, and through woods was another. Over the course of an hour and a half, the men of the Alarm List Company carefully searched for marks, posts, riverbanks, and other clues, and were rewarded on several occasions by finding granite property markers (the first marker was found by accident when DALC captain Bill Clemens tripped over it in a grassy field). Upon completing the perambulation, members were satisfied that an adequate knowledge of the legal bounds of the Nurse Homestead had been gained, and that they had accomplished the rest of Rev. Herbert’s instructions as well, including “neighbourly accompanying one another; that we, walking in joy and love with one another, may be defended from hardness of heart and weakness of resolve.”

An unexpected result of the perambulation was a reminder of the variety of landscapes and the great natural beauty found in the 27 acres of the Nurse Homestead. On the property are two vernal pools surrounded by rushes, 800 feet of riverbank (the Crane River stretches along the northern boundary line), a marsh, substantial areas of woodland, and two large meadows. The Rebecca Nurse Homestead is truly as much an environmental gem as it is a historic one. Perhaps this direction can be included in future RNH programming.



Members of Danvers Alarm List Company follow the Nurse Homestead property boundary along the bank of the Crane River.



Bob Osgood Saves the Turtle

as told to Don Hayes



An argument can be made that the animals living on the Homestead actually have more of a claim to ownership than the humans. At least Bob Osgood, our resident caretaker may view the situation that way. Bob recently related to me that a large snapping turtle has made its home on the Nurse property for an untold number of years. As long as he has lived in the Nurse House, Bob has observed the turtle. Each June in the week or so before our Strawberry Festival the turtle emerges from the vernal pool closest to Pine Street and slowly, methodically and with determination makes its way across the field to our drive, across the drive and across the parking field and into the woods. Presumably, the turtle lays its eggs somewhere near the Crane River that borders the northern part of the property.

Unfortunately, Turtle makes its trek across the property at the same time we need to have the alfalfa cut by Dunajski Dairy that grows it here.

This year Turtle made its crossing and came back out of the woods under Bob's watchful eye. Turtle headed across the fenced area in front of the Meeting House and right for a spot where an aged rung of the fence had sagged to the ground. This did not deter Turtle who headed straight for the spot and tried to clamber over it, getting stuck on the rung! Bob, seeing Turtle's predicament headed to the rescue. Using his one good arm, Bob levered Turtle over the rung whereupon Turtle thanked Bob by snapping hold of his cane and holding on! Eventually, Turtle released Bob's cane and continued on its journey.

The rescue wasn't over yet because Turtle headed directly into the path of the cutting machine the dairyman was using on the alfalfa. Fearful that Turtle would not be seen, Bob went and got the large plastic recycle bin, and placed it over Turtle and then sat on it until the cutting was completed. Turtle then made its way safely back to the pool.

Now, was that the tenant protecting the owner, or the owner protecting the tenant? Maybe it is simply a story about existence.

Beehive Oven Baking Revival

By Laura Abraham-Miller and Niamh Dolan

During the Annual Strawberry Festival in July, a new fragrance wafted through the windows of the Nurse Homestead's Great Hall with its huge fireplace. The distaff members of the Danvers Alarm List Company were baking bread and pie in the beehive oven. This is the first time in thirty years (and perhaps many more) the beehive oven was used as it was intended to be. With much enthusiasm the ladies produced several loaves of bread. Fresh rhubarb was picked from the Homestead kitchen garden for a pie that was reported to be superb by those who sampled it.

The visitors enjoyed observing the demonstration and felt that it greatly added to the interpretation of everyday colonial life.

The demonstration began early in the morning with the building of a fire within the beehive oven. After several hours the bricks had absorbed enough heat so the fire was removed



and the interior of the oven was swabbed out with a wet cloth mop. The loaves of bread and pie were placed inside the heated oven and the beehive was closed up with its wooden door. Less than an hour later the bread was served with freshly churned butter.

The success of the cooking demonstration at the Strawberry Festival has led to the consideration of a series of cooking classes for the membership of the Homestead. Watch for future details.

From the President - from page 1

ten or twelve page editions of the past but the belief is that four smaller and regularly issued newsletters will be of greater value to you, our members.

The Management Committee is also investigating plans to get interested Preservation Society members more involved in the goings on at the Homestead. Whether this is in the form of volunteering for events, contributing articles to the newsletter, taking part in classes at the property (this idea is still in the preliminary planning stages) or submitting your own ideas of what you would like us to do, we hope that many of you will participate. Please feel free to contact me if you have any type of ideas for participation at the Homestead.

To that end we will be hosting another Preservation Society membership open house at the Rebecca Nurse House on Sunday, October 2, 2004 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. Members of the Alarm List/Management Committee will be on hand to say hello and discuss whatever's on your mind as well as lending an ear to your feedback.

William Clemens, President



ARE YOUR DUES UP TO DATE?

Please check your mailing label now to make sure you have paid your dues for 2004. Your dues are an important source of income for maintaining the Homestead and the open space acreage we all enjoy. Many forget that the open space, vernal pools and wooded areas comprise a natural habitat for many species of birds and small animals. The Nurse Homestead is one of the few large tracts of open space left in Danvers.

To maintain the Rebecca Nurse Homestead is to maintain our historical, cultural and environmental heritage!

Dues categories: Individual \$15, Family \$20, Supporting \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Donations to the Rebecca Nurse Homestead above the Individual membership level are fully tax deductible. Many thanks for your support.

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149 Pine Street
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The Rebecca Nurse Homestead Preservation Society



Danvers Alarm List Company's 30th Anniversary

Revolutionary War Encampment

at the Rebecca Nurse Homestead



- Recreation of an 18th century military camp – see how soldiers on both sides ate, slept, and lived!
- Demonstrations of Revolutionary War-era tactics, weapons, and uniforms
- Cooking demonstrations – over outdoor campfires and on the hearths of the Nurse House
- Nurse Homestead tours

Saturday, September 18
Sunday September 19

11:00 AM to 4:30 PM daily

Nurse Homestead, 149 Pine St., Danvers