

Newsletter

(508) 358-7959

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John Heckscher, Editor

The Grout-Heard House Museum, 12 Cochituate Road, Wayland, Massachusetts
Open to the Public Tuesdays and Fridays, 9:30 – Noon

A Local Woman's Voice from the 18th Century: the Revolutionary Writings of Experience Wight Richardson

Sunday, January 11, 2015

2:15 pm

Wayland Public Library

We hear about men marching off to war in the 18th century to secure American independence, making momentous decisions at Town Meetings, and serving in town government. A few even attended college and entered professions. But what about the women who made up at least half the population? What were their thoughts and actions? Fortunately we can gain some insight through the diary of Experience Wight Richardson, who lived in colonial Sudbury (today's Wayland and Sudbury) during the turbulent years that led up to the American Revolution. Jane Sciacca will share Mrs. Richardson's story in a discussion of women's lives in colonial times.

Refreshments will be served.

Holiday Open House "Thank You"s ...from Aida Gennis

I sincerely hope you enjoyed being at the Holiday Open House. The House was resplendent with holiday finery, thanks to the women of the Wayland Garden Club who worked thoughtfully and creatively to bring a holiday atmosphere to each room. The treats were delicious and plentiful thanks to the Museum volunteers who also kept the punch bowl full and the tea ready. Wayland Girl Scouts outdid themselves in providing decorations for the Stone Room alcove; almost every troop in Wayland participated by crafting a decoration related to a children's book. You may have noticed books under the tree standing on the tree skirt; these were donated by the WGS to the Wayland Free Public Library. The high schoolers participated with a wonderful string quartet and the terrific Madrigals entertaining us. We also made a concerted effort this year to 'count heads' as guests entered through the front door. Our gentlemen greeters counted 251 guests, and with so many coming through the House it was one of the cheeriest Open Houses we've had recently! Thank you for your presence, enthusiasm, your greeting guests so graciously - and directing guests. I wish you all a very merry holiday season, much joy and warmth.

...and Joanne Davis

Our thanks to all who baked those elegant Christmas cookies and to the kitchen help, to the dish washers, and to those who kept the cookie plates replenished and the punch bowl full! And a Merry Christmas to you!!

Why should we know about Hodijah Braman?

All around us are visible reminders of bygone eras in Wayland. The background stories, even though interesting, may remain a mystery. Every week, some of us travel West on Old Sudbury Road (Rt. 27) to enter the rear entrance of the New Town Center. On the left, as one passes by the Wayland Commons condos, two large, round fieldstone pillars stand guard on the roadside. It's obvious that these carefully crafted sentinels were once the entrance to a dwelling – now long gone.

An elegant Victorian stick style house built in 1873 sat on a knoll up a driveway through the pillars, until 1980 when it was torn down. The builder and owner of this three-story home was Hodijah Braman, whose chief business in Boston was that of upholstery and furniture. There was a good reason why he was locating this substantial house on Old Sudbury Road as a summer home since he had married Elizabeth Noyes whose parents lived up the street on the corner of Glezen Lane.

Braman's house lot ran 40 feet along Old Sudbury Road and extended 70 feet in the rear where several outbuildings and a large barn were located. His 31 acres of mowing and tillage were valued at \$147 an acre, the most valuable large piece of land used for farming in the town. Braman was the fourth largest owner of valuable farmland in Wayland soon after the house was built. Large parcels of pasture, river meadow and woodland required him to employ a farm superintendent to supervise farming operations. Much of this land later became part of Raytheon and now the New Town Center.

Perhaps Hodijah Braman's name is less well known because he was an absentee landowner. He was, nonetheless, an active participant in town affairs. In 1877, town meeting passed the article to build a new town hall to replace the 1841 town house (the white columned building later known as Collins' market). Braman was chosen to head the committee of prominent townsmen to oversee the construction of the new Town Hall. A tall Victorian style building was built in 1878 on the site of the 'Grout estate' where the Grout-Heard House Museum stands today. It was Braman who delivered the keys to the Selectmen at the dedication exercises.

We do not see Braman's name attached to any street or public building in Wayland. If you wend your way to the rear of North Cemetery, you will find a lichen-covered grave stone with the name "Braman" chiseled on it. In front are two small stones with the names 'Hodijah' and 'Elizabeth'. Elizabeth Noyes Braman died at 44 years old. If one looks across the cemetery road about 30 feet away, another stone says: "Wife of Hodijah Braman" - a second marriage for this prominent man.



This post card picture of Hodijah Braman's house is labeled with the name of A. B. Hastings, a later owner. Undoubtedly, the house was painted red when the picture was taken but had been returned to white later in the 20th century with the front porch enclosed. There is a Hastings Way at Town Center; more building may reveal Braman Avenue! By looking on page 188 of Helen Emery's book, *The Puritan Village Evolves*, you may see a view of the house just prior to its demolition.

Dick Hoyt



Approximately the same view of the two large, round fieldstone pillars as they look today. Rt 27 has been widened and paved, and the housing in the background are the condos in the New Town Center. The single large tree was the only one saved along Rt 27 when the rest were cut at the start of construction.

John Heckscher

Wayland Historical Society
P. O. Box 56
Wayland MA 01778

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2015 DATES TO REMEMBER

<u>Date-Time/Place</u>	<u>Event/Presenter</u>
Sunday, January 11, 2:15 pm Wayland Public Library	An 18th Century Woman's Voice: Experience Wight Richardson Jane Sciacca
Friday, March 13, 7:30 pm First Parish Church	Mozart on the Fringe Musicians of the Old Post Road
Sunday, March 22, 3:00 pm Wayland Public Library, Main Reading Room	Wayland People in the World David Hackett Fischer
Sunday, April 12, 2 to 4:30 pm Grout-Heard House Museum	Mass Memories - One Year Later A Drop-In Photo/Video Exhibit
Sunday, May 3, 3:00 pm Wayland Public Library	World War I Wayland WHS, WPL, & Kevin Delany
Wednesday, May 13, 7:30 pm Grout-Heard House Museum	Annual Meeting: A Review of the Year WHS Board of Directors

Thank you for supporting the Grout-Heard House Museum!