

## Minutes of the August 4, 2015 Annual Meeting of the Plainfield Historical Society

Except for Pleun Bouricius, all PHS officers and trustees were present.

- I. President's Report- Judy Williams read from the president's annual report.
- II. Treasurer's Report - Bettie Briggs read from the annual treasurer's report.
- III. Webmaster's Report - Lori Austin updated members on the current status of the PHS's website. - see attached.
- IV. Curator's Report - In Pleun's absence assistant curator Linda Melle read from the annual curator's report - see attached

V. Elaine Sidney read from this year's slate of officers and the following members were unanimously voted in for another term:

President Judy Williams

Vice President Dario Colletta

Secretary/Webmaster Lori Austin

Treasurer Bettie Briggs

Curator Pleun Bouricius

Curator's Assistant Linda Melle

with the following new trustees for the term 2015 - 2018

Linda Melle and Matt Stowell

Lori will update all these officers and trustees on the PHS's website ASAP

VII. New Business - Judy introduced our guest speaker, Professor Granville Ganter, Associate Professor of English at St. John's University who spoke for approximately 45 minutes on his current research on Anne Laura Clark, (July 4, 1788 - August 15, 1861) sister of Plainfield's own Elizabeth Clark. Ms. Clark was a circuit lecturer in history, an unusual occupation for a woman at this time period - 1826 - 1834. While conducting research on Ms. Clark, Professor Ganter visited the Shaw/Hudson House and found many interesting items related to Ms. Clark's lectures and had a few of her hand drawn maps on display. There were 21 people who attended our annual meeting.

FYI

1. Saturday, Sept. 19, 12-4 PM The Shaw Hudson House will come to life with Dr. Samuel Shaw, Sarah Bryant Shaw, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Hudson, and Lydia Richards. This is a combined open house with the Bryant Homestead.
2. A descendant of Andrew Ford, an early Plainfield resident visited recently. She was doing research on her family.
3. The PHS received great press in the [Hampshire Gazette](#) on exploration of the Old Indian Burying Ground Cemetery.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Austin

PHS Secretary/Webmaster

### **PHS Secretary and Webmaster Annual Report - August 4, 2015**

This year has been a busy year for the PHS and we am constantly adapting our website to meet the community needs and to make our history more accessible to both residence and historians. This year we

have revamped the site to give it a more consistent and professional look. We have added dozens of new photographs, a donation page, complete with a Paypal account that links directly to our Florence Savings account. Our HWHM site is complete with online maps and I encourage residence to download these maps and take a hike. There is a google earth map showing both the visual and the geo-coordinates of the location of all the town cemeteries, along with most of the research on each cemetery done over the years. We have a few new items, including a new featured items section which will be changing weekly to keep up to date with local happenings, a calendar of events, a recent historical society news link, a new blog entitled, From the Curator's Desk, a new email account - [info@plainfieldmahistory.org](mailto:info@plainfieldmahistory.org) - and a link to our Facebook page - you don't have to be a member of FB to view the photographs on this page. just click. We also have a very informative page on the continuing process of creating a historic district in town, which very useful information on the entire process and just what constitutes a historic district. I am continually adding relevant resources. We are currently working with Rebecca Mlynarczyk on an oral history project that will include her latest project - Coming of Age in Plainfield: Honoring Women's Stories, focusing on three important Plainfield women, Kay Metcalfe, Irene Jordan Caplan and Blanche Cizek, and will soon include interviews with Anna Hathaway, Mary Connell, Evelyn Guyette and Arvilla Dyer. I am also hoping to work with members of the Plainfield fire department to create a page on the history of fire fighting.

#### **PHS Curator annual report 2014/5**

The most weighty thing I have to report to you is our new agreement with the Plainfield Congregational Church about our use of the Shaw Hudson House. I am sure that Judy Williams will tell you more about it, but the long and the short of it is that we have formalized the *informal* agreement that was initiated in 1974 to exhibit parts of the collection at the Shaw Hudson House.

From its' 1962 inception, the Plainfield Historical Society looked for a home for its expanding collection, which was initially stored in Tom Packard's barn. That barn unfortunately burnt down soon after. However, by the late 1960's the Society was looking again, and asked the Town to use the East room of the Schoolhouse (now town offices).

That was voted down and a new plan was hatched, to have a "branch" of the Plainfield Historical Society at the Shaw Hudson House until a suitable place would be found for a museum. In 1974/5 materials were moved from Tom's barn to the Shaw Hudson House and museum rooms were created. With the new agreement, almost exactly forty years later, we mark the end of the era in which the history rooms at the Shaw Hudson House are seen as a temporary expedient, and we are ready to move forward in jointly taking care of our historic treasure.

During the past year, we've made a head start on implementing the State's Roving Archivist's recommendations for updating the collection inventory by doing a "shelf read," that is, take everything off the shelf, check it against the inventory, and take care of it as needed. As you know, the collection was ably inventoried and taken care of by Dot McMahon and Ann Kohn in the seventies, eighties, and nineties, but had gotten into disarray. Specifically, intellectual control of the collection ("what do we own and where is it?") had been in the memory of a few, who then passed away. Similarly, physical maintenance of the materials entrusted to us depends on knowing what we have and where it is.

Items that are in need of care, in particular, are the books, photographs, and other paper-based materials, as well as the textiles. They need rehousing, reshelving, and climate control. We have received a \$1000.00 dollar grant from the State Historical Records Advisory Board for supplies such as acid-free archival boxes, folders, and sleeves. That sounds like a lot, but we think we will not quite make it all the way through with that!

During the past year, I was joined every Saturday morning for some hours by a small but dedicated team of volunteers, including Lori Austin, Bettie Briggs, Linda Melle, and Elaine Sydney. You may have seen us at the library during the winter when it was too cold in the Shaw Hudson House. We have "shelf read" most of

the books by now, and they are ready to be moved into the small storage room on the second floor of the Shaw Hudson House, which will be climate-controlled by this winter (climate control is most needed in the summer). However, the grant does not cover the powder-coated steel shelving required for archival preservation for the books, photos, and textile and map boxes, for which we need to raise an additional \$1,000.

During the shelf reading project we were joined by Linda Melle, who has a great and longstanding interest in the materials of history, and who has consented to becoming the curator's assistant. She will take charge of the filing cabinet we have just put at the Shaw Hudson House for the administration of the collections.

One final note: About a month ago a ledger from the Dyer store, operated by Charles Newell Dyer from the house on Main Street from about 1892 to 1913, unexpectedly came up for sale on E-Bay. I managed to win the auction and bought it, only to find out the dealer had two others. They are here, you should feel free to look at them but PLEASE do not open them further than open at 90 degrees!. I paid \$50 a piece for them. Matt Stowell has volunteered to adopt and buy the first one for the Historical Society, and I am still looking for two people to each adopt one of the other ones to donate to the Society. Please let me know if you are interested, and we will draw up deeds of gift, anonymous or named, as you wish, and put an article on our website and in the Post.

We are looking forward to a fruitful year in which we will "tackle" documents, photographs, and textiles, inventorying and rehousing them as appropriate, and working towards obtaining a comprehensive database for managing the collections, which is our next hurdle! Let us know if you are interested in joining us.

Respectfully submitted,

Pleun Bouricius, Curator.