

Update Report for the Southborough Historical Material Archive Project at the Southborough Historical Society

Prepared by Adam Brooks, Southborough Library Archivist
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Draft

Work on the Southborough Historical Material Archival Project at the Southborough Historical Society (SHS) began on July 21st with an extensive review of the material stored in the basement at the SHS Museum. Work on the collection progressed at the museum building through August. On September 7th I was informed that the materials actively being worked on would need to be temporarily moved to the library so mold remediation work on the museum building could begin. Removal of the majority of the document collection took place on September 8th. Work on the project has continued on a one day per week schedule at the Southborough Library.

As a result of water damage, a subsequent risk of mold, and insufficient storage housing, the original goals of the project have evolved to focus on the physical preservation and care of the collection. I am happy to say that this goal has been achieved with great success. Through this process, much of the secondary goals to organize and inventory the collection have also now been achieved. The change in focus caused by the water and humidity damage forced the project to take a slower and more methodical pace. While these circumstances may have required us to alter or reevaluate the goals of the project the situation also provided us with the opportunity to better standardize the organization and housing of the collection and better position the museum for long term preservation and access.

The SHS Board of Trustees are currently in the process of requesting funds to support a project to fully catalog the collection, at last making the documented history of Southborough fully accessible to the public. My goals in completing the project are to dovetail with and enable the success of the larger project goals submitted by the SHS trustees. This will place SHS on a firm footing to more fully serve the community in the future. To accomplish this I wish to prepare a broad inventory, create finding aids to important collections, and utilize the remaining supply budget to purchase a state of the art archival flat file for long-term preservation and accessibility.

Material Rehoused and Cataloged - Scope

- 29.3 linear feet of documents and manuscripts – the most important of which are the founding/prominent Family papers and the Burnett/Deerfoot Farms archive.
- 3,727 photographs have been rehoused, organized and inventoried including, the Villager Photograph Collection consisting of 2582 prints and approximately 150 negatives.

Material Rehoused and Cataloged – Box Inventory

On September 8th 51 boxes of historic documents, photographs, and archives were moved from the SHS museum building to the Southborough Library. Work on these boxes is now complete. All of the material has been rehoused and in new archival folders, mylar sleeves and boxes. There are now 66 archival boxes of various sizes that will be methodically returned to the SHS museum building. Please find a general inventory of boxes below, broken into categories by material and subject.

Historic Photograph Collection – 10 Boxes Total – Organization Based on drawer location

- Box 1 – American Legion Marker to Knights of Columbus; 23 folders
- Box 2 – Mills to Railroad; 15 folders
- Box 3 – Southborough Arms to WWI Howitzer; 21 folders
- Box 4 – School Photographs, Highland St. Elementary to Peters High Reunion; 35 folders
- Box 5 – School Photographs, Peters High to Worcester Girls Trade; 32 folders
- Box 6 – People, General to Woodward; 32 folders
- Box 7 – Celebrations to Negatives and Transparencies; 18 folders
- Box 8 – Oversized blue board Photo Box; 9 folders and some separate mylar sleeves
- Box 9 – Oversized box; 37 photographs
- Box 10 – Oversized box; 36 photographs

The Villager Photograph Collection – 3 Boxes Total

- Box 1 – Celebrations to Businessess (Not originally in alphabetical order); 41 folders
- Box 2 – Misc. to Woodward Middle School; 46 folders
- Box 3 – Misc.; 21 folders

Family Papers – 6 Boxes Total

- Box 1 – Falconi to Woodward; 18 folders
- Box 2 – Oversize-Howe, Johnson and Othank; 3 folders
- Box 3 – Sawin Family Papers; 7 folders
- Box 4 – Fay Family Papers; 9 folders
- Box 5 – Brewer Family Papers; 12 folders
- Box 6 – Newton Family Papers; 22 folders

Subject Files (Some Photographs are dispersed through Subject Files) – 7 Boxes Total

- Box 1 – Family Genealogy and Subject Files; Amsden – Uhlman, 69 folders; Subject, Agriculture – Bicentennial Celebration; 32 folders
- Box 2 – Subject; Bicentennial Celebrations – Churches; 67 folders
- Box 3 – Subject; Coin – Recycling; 94 folders
- Box 4 – Southborough War Records – Southborough Selectmen; 65 folders
- Box 5 – Southborough Bylaws – WWII Exhibit; 91 folders
- Box 6 – Oversized Subject Files; 1 folder
- Box 7 – Southborough Societies and Fraternal Organizations; 10 folders

Burnett and Deerfoot Farm Archive – 7 Boxes Total

- Box 1 – Long box of misc. Burnett advertisements, games and objects
- Box 2 – Oversized photos and advertisements; 10 folders
- Box 3 – History – Misc. Documents; 21 folders

- Box 4 – Joseph Burnett Company History – Dr. Joel Burnett House; 14 folders
- Box 5 – Genealogy – Joseph Burnett Co., Misc.; 25 folders
- Box 6 – Magazines and Journals; American Cookery Magazine – MA Guernsey Bulletin; 22 folders
- Box 7 – Deerfoot Farms, Byrd Expedition to the South Pole; 31 folders

Southborough Town Records Collection – 9 Boxes Total

- Series I – Box 00 – Tax Assessment Records, 1700-1799
- Series I – Box 1 – Tax Assessment Records, 1800-1815
- Series I – Box 2 – Tax Assessment Records, 1816-1829
- Series II – Box 1 – Treasurers Vouchers, 1800-1809
- Series II – Box 2 – Treasurers Vouchers, 1811-1819
- Series II – Box 3 – Treasurers Vouchers, 1820-1829
- Series II – Box 4 – Treasurers Vouchers, 1830-1839
- Series II – Box 5 – Treasurers Vouchers, 1840-1850
- Series IV – Box 1 – Town Meeting Books

Town Reports Collection – 18 Boxes Total

- Box 1 – Misc. 1800s
- Box 2 – 1855 – 1899
- Box 3 – 1900 – 1909
- Box 4 – 1910 – 1919
- Box 5 – 1920 – 1929
- Box 6 – 1930 – 1939
- Box 7 – 1940 – 1949
- Box 8 – 1950 – 1959
- Box 9 – 1960 – 1964
- Box 10 – 1965 – 1969
- Box 11 – 1970 – 1974
- Box 12 – 1975 – 1979
- Box 13 – 1980 – 1984
- Box 14 – 1985 – 1989
- Box 15 – 1990 – 1994
- Box 16 – 1995 – 1999
- Box 17 – 2000 – 2004
- Box 18 – 2005 - 2009

Framed Photographs and Documents – 5 Boxes Total

- Box 1 – 5 works
- Box 2 – 10 works
- Box 3 – 6 works
- Box 4 – 8 works
- Box 5 – Framed Documents, 6 works

Recommendation

The next step in the project should be to review what documents remain in the museum building and complete the overall inventory. At that point finding aids should be produced and made accessible to the public via the museum and the Southborough Library website. The collections brought to the library should slowly and methodically returned to museum storage. Remaining funds in the supply budget should be used to upgrade storage equipment at the museum. Every folder is now clearly marked with accession numbers allowing us to begin entering object information and locations into a database. If time allows, this process may begin as the first step leading into the Historical Society's comprehensive cataloging project.