

# The Scituate Historical Society

## BULLETIN

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Scituate, MA  
Permit No. 23

Vol. XLVI

Scituate, Massachusetts

No. 2

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### January 22, 1994 - Important Announcement

*Book price*

We are happy to announce that our first 1994 dinner meeting has been planned. It will take place on Saturday, January 22, 1994 at the Harbor Methodist Church, 55 First Parish Road, Scituate Harbor. A roast turkey dinner with homemade pie of your choice, catered by the ladies of the church, will be served at 6:30 sharp. Reservations are received and the first 200 requests for them, received with a check payable to the Scituate Historical Society will be accommodated. Reservations will be confirmed at the door. Attached you will find a reservation request. Detach, fill out and send with check or cash to the Kathleen Laidlaw Historical Center, 43 Cudworth Road, Scituate, MA 02066. Reservations are \$8.00 per person.

#### Dinner Meeting Program

The program for the evening will provide an interesting and unique sixty minute presentation, which takes you back to the early, formulative days of recorded sound (1877-1925). This program features not only the early history of the recording industry, including the inventors, their inventions and the entrepreneurs of the industry, but, more importantly, the forgotten stars of the early talking machine era.

This fascinating review is presented through the utilization of original vintage 10 and 12-inch 78 RPM discs (records), played on Victor Talking Machines from the early era of Acoustical Playback Devices.

The sound of these old recordings is enhanced for your listening enjoyment by modern equipment, which helps project but does not alter that wonderful and distinctive sound of the old Victor Victrolas. A brief historical overview will accompany each recording segment type (i.e., Opera & Classical, Comedy & Novelty, Harmonizing (Duets), Dance Music, World War I songs and record oddities.) Historic slides taken from old record company publicity photos and rare publications are shown during the playing of each of the recorded sound segments.

Let us take you on a historic trip back in time, before the age of home radio and talking motion pictures, when the old crank phonograph and wonderful old acoustic 78 RPM records reigned supreme in home entertainment. From DeWolfe Hopper's turn of the century eccentric recitation of "Casey at the Bat" to Georgie Price's 1923 novelty classic "Barney Google," you will truly enjoy everything from the innocent to the outrageous as we present one hour of sheer comedy delight.

At the meeting we will also have the drawing for the lucky winner of the beautiful handmade quilt made by Faith Moorhead.

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#### ***Reservation form - complete and return to attend our Annual Dinner Meeting***

Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_ payable to the Scituate Historical Society, for \_\_\_\_ reservations at \$8.00 each for dinner at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 22, 1994.

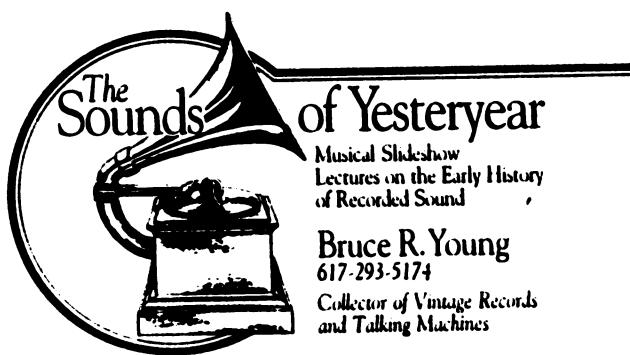
Reserve early. Only the first 200 reservations accompanied by payment will be accepted. Please send you check to the Laidlaw Historical Center, 43 Cudworth Road, Scituate, MA 02066.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## About Our Speakers

Bruce R. Young has been a resident of Hanson since 1971, and is a member and Director of the Hanson Historical Society. He is also a former Chairman and member of both the Hanson Board of Selectmen and the Hanson Finance Committee. For the past 20 years he has been employed as the Treasurer/Controller for Tilcon Massachusetts Inc., a large construction material producer and highway contractor headquartered in Brockton. He is an ardent collector of vintage crank Talking Machines, 78 & 80 RPM records, sheet music, and related ephemera. His enthusiasm for the early history, recordings and music of the early Talking Machine era inspired the creation of his "Golden Age of the Phonograph" program two years ago, as a way to keep alive the memory of this early era of recorded sound and those great forgotten artists of the past.

Mark A. Vess is a lifelong resident of Hanson and is a member of the Hanson Historical Society. He is also a former member of the Hanson Conservation Commission and the Hanson Board of Selectmen. When he is not performing his regular duties as a Testing Engineer for a West Bridgewater electronics firm, Mark can usually be found restoring, maintaining, or collecting items for his Museum of Antiquated Technology, located in his 19th Century Barn next to his home on High Street in Hanson. His Museum contains a vast array of antiquated technological items from early cameras, light bulbs, radios, and Talking Machines, to early motor cycles, cranberry sorters, vintages gas engines and Model A Ford tractors, to name just a few. Mark, who shares an enthusiasm for the early technology and great recordings of the past, has been assisting with the audio/visual segments of the program for the past two years.



Bruce Young and Mark Vess

## Remembering the Olde Victrola in the Parlor

Journey back to the time when the old crank in the parlor wasn't Grandpa asleep on the couch, instead it was the crank handle on the side of the victrola. Victrola was the brand name of an early phonograph machine, later absorbed by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), and then made famous by the endearing image of the little black and white dog, one ear cocked, listening to the sound of "His Master's Voice."

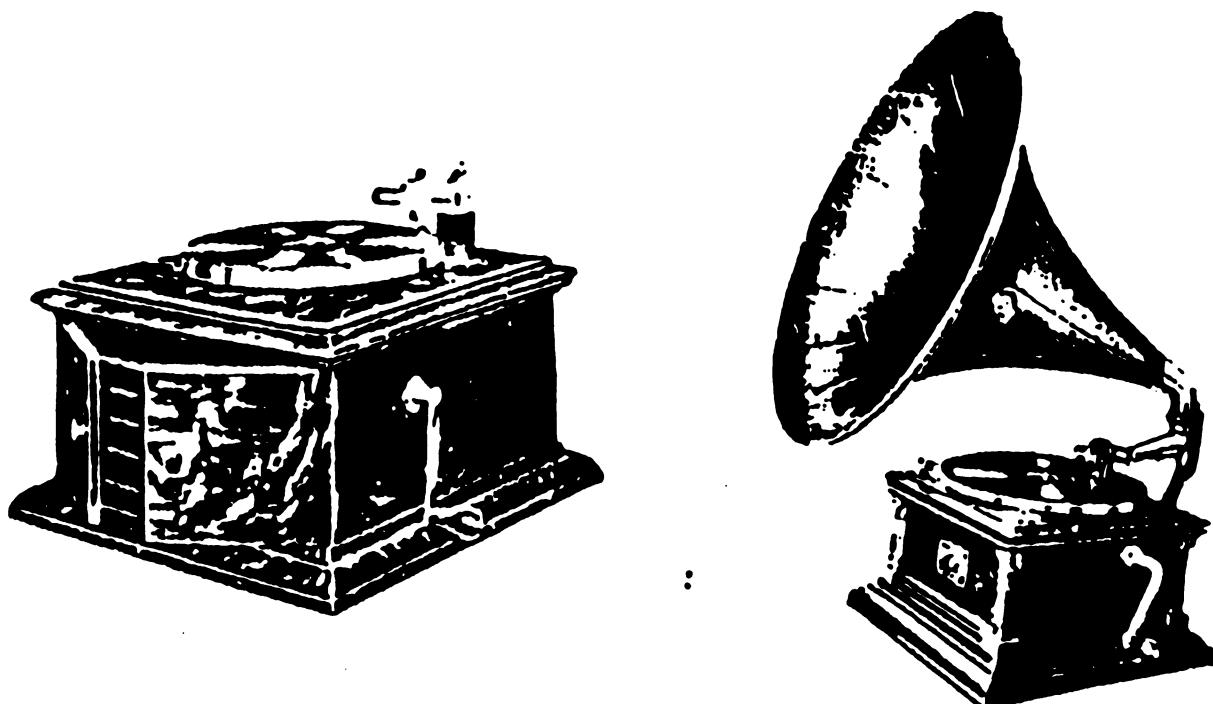
On Saturday, January 22, 1994, the Society will host Bruce Young and Mark Vess at our annual Dinner Meeting at the Harbor Methodist Church, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

They will be accompanied by a collection of actual machines from the early era of recording technology. Along with actual 10 and 12-inch 78 RPM discs played on the actual machines of the period. Starting about 1900 and extending until about 1925 most recordings were made without the benefit of electric amplification. The musicians and performers had to pack themselves tightly in front of a large bell and almost literally bellow their sound into the apparatus in order to make the recording. This era ended with the development of amplified lathes to make the recordings and the nature of recorded sound changed after 1925.

Messrs Young and Vess enhance the sound from these acoustical recordings using modern techniques that project the sound without altering the wonderful and distinctive sound of the old Victor Victrola machines. A brief historical overview will accompany each recording segment and type.

Historic slides taken from old record company publicity photos and rare publications are shown during the playing of each segment. Anecdotes and history of the formative days of recorded sound starting from 1877 up to 1925 highlight the early inventors (Edison, Berliner), their inventions, the entrepreneurs, and the nearly forgotten stars of the early talking machines.

Mark your calendar for what promises to be both an entertaining and informative journey back to a time when recorded sound was something unique and special. Perhaps you know some young folks who might be fascinated to learn what came before the cassette tape, Walkmans and the CD disc.



### Mrs. Laidlaw Reports

I was very pleased to welcome 40 students from France and 25 students from the Ukraine. I took them up in Lawson Tower and for the French I played *Les Marseilles* on the bells and, for both, a few other pieces like *America* and *The Old Oaken Bucket*. I understand the French had host families and stayed three weeks. I also took them to the Lighthouse and to the Cudworth House and Barn.

We had another very interesting school program organized by Fred Freitas at the Gates School. The students went on a tour of Scituate and came to the Cudworth House where we told them how people lived in those days and what they had to do which was different than how we live today. We had three classes one Monday and the next Monday we had four classes. The students were very interested and the teachers felt it was successful as a program for the schools in the future.

### Donations to the Society

From Dorothy Wood's estate we received from the auction \$24,848.00 and she left in her will 17% of the estate which was \$81,000. I also received a letter from Kidder Peabody in New York that Mary Gordon left us \$40,000 in her will.

Each year we have received from Hurdle Hill Foundation from the Phippen family \$250.00 These funds help us to build a strong foundation for the future of the Scituate Historical Society and we appreciate the thoughtfulness of our former members. This money goes into the Endowment Fund and we will use only the interest.

### Historical Inventory

We have almost completed the research necessary for the first volume which means over 200 houses have been plaqued. We encourage anyone whose house is over 100 years old to contact David Dixon at 545-8132 or Duncan Todd at 545-5736.

### Tapes

We have the Lawson Bells by Linae Badger. There are 72 patriotic songs. The cassette is \$8.00. We also have a tape by Georges Jacques Danton, our last speaker, on the *Etrusco*, which gives a complete picture of that important episode in our history. These tapes are \$15.00 each. It is called the *Holiday Tramp*.

### Historic Headquarters

We have been very busy at our Historic Headquarters. We have had sign in 845 people from 27 states and three foreign countries. We are open all year around from 10:00 to 4:00, Monday through Saturday. Our staff are volunteers who will help people who come in to look up their ancestors. We have a wonderful research library of over 100 genealogies and many books on the history of towns in the area.

I want to thank all of the volunteers who give so much time to the Historical Society. Our volunteers are: Betty Whitaker, Richard Curry, Charles Sparrell, Philip Weeks, Douglas Fields, Evelyn Davies, Ruth Downton, Duncan Todd and Willard Thomas. We could not keep the headquarters open if it were not for them. Maureen Upton sells the chances on the beautiful quilts and raises so much money for the Society.



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Ms. Hilda Stenbeck  
45 Otis Place  
Scituate MA 02066

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Vol. XLVI

Scituate, Massachusetts

No. 3

### April 30 - Important Announcement

We are happy to announce that our second 1994 dinner meeting has been planned. It will take place on Saturday, April 30, 1994 at the First Trinitarian Church, 379 Country Way, Scituate, Mass. A Yankee pot roast dinner will be prepared by Mrs. Kent Karlberg and her committee from the church and will be served at 6:30 sharp. The cost will be \$8.00 per person. Reservations are required and the first 200 requests for them, received with a check payable to the Scituate Historical Society, will be accommodated. Reservations will be confirmed at the door. A reservation request form is provided below. Detach, fill out and send with check or cash to the Kathleen Laidlaw Historical Center, 43 Cudworth Road, Scituate, MA 02066.

### Dinner Meeting Program

The program for the evening will be presented by David S. Kruh of Reading, Mass., who will present a slide show entitled **Always Something Doing: A History of Boston's Infamous Scollay Square**. This one hour slide show covers the history of Scollay Square (including Joe & Nemo's, The Old Howard, and the Crawford House) from the founding of Boston to the construction of Government Center.

In 1981, after several years working as a disc jockey in small towns, Mr. Kruh came to Boston to work as a technician at a radio station. While working behind the scenes on a number of radio programs including Boston Celtic game broadcasts, Mr. Kruh completed his masters degree in Computer Engineering. During his tenure at Boston radio station WRKO, he developed an interest in a place that had once been the very heart of Boston's entertainment district. Mr. Kruh had heard a story about a bawdy place his uncle, a former sailor, had visited during World War II--a place called Scollay Square. Surprised by the lack of information available about the area, Mr. Kruh began collecting photographs, stories, anecdotes and historical materials about Scollay Square. After completing his masters degree, Mr. Kruh wrote a book about Scollay Square, which had the same title as our dinner meeting program. The book has been very successful.

Now Mr. Kruh has developed a program and slide presentation which lasts about an hour and includes about 90 slides. He discusses the history of the Square from its beginning in 1795 to the present day. We'll find out how the Square got its name, what famous people lived and worked there and hear some wonderful stories about the places and people, from John Winthrop to Sally Keith, who made Scollay Square famous world wide.

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Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_ payable to the Scituate Historical Society, for \_\_\_\_ reservations at \$8.00 each for dinner at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 30, 1994.

Reserve early. Only the first 200 reservations accompanied by payment will be accepted. Please send you check to the Laidlaw Historical Center, 43 Cudworth Road, Scituate, MA 02066.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Mrs. Laidlaw Reports

This will be a brief Bulletin because we do not have much time before the meeting on the 30th of April. It is necessary that you send in the reservation form for a place at the dinner.

We are getting ready for a very busy spring and summer season. I already have tour groups coming in from California and Florida, as well as local groups. Our tour dates, when we will have all seven historic sites open from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., are June 5, July 10, August 6 and 7, and September 11, 1994. We have hundreds of people come to Scituate to take advantage of this tour of our historic sites. The Scituate Lighthouse, the Lawson Tower, Cudworth house, barn and cattle pound, Laidlaw Historic Center, Mann Farmhouse and Historic Museum and wildflower garden, the Stockbridge Mill, and the Old Oaken Bucket Homestead and Well, the most famous of them all.

We are still making arrangements to buy the Benjamin James House (ca. 1757) on the Driftway. We plan to restore it and use it for a Maritime and Mossing Museum. It is on the National Register so it is a most important historic house and site.

Our annual meeting will be held on June 25, 1994, so another Bulletin will be coming out very soon, in May or early June.

### New Book Available

We have a new book called *South Shore Stories*, by Paul Reale. It is very interesting, easy-to-read and you will learn a lot of history about the people who made the South Shore famous. It is available at the Little Red School House Historic Center, 43 Cudworth Road, for \$7.00. We have many more books on the history of the area and will send you a list if you wish one.

### Historic House Plaques

The interest and enthusiasm for our Historic House project have generated requests from people in all parts of the town to have their houses dated and plaqued. To date more than 200 houses have been researched. If your house was probably built before 1882, please contact David Dixon at 545-8132 or Duncan Bates Todd at 545-5736. Duncan Todd is available at the Historic Center every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

### Additions to Our Library

Our members who are interested in genealogy and local history should stop by our library to refer to a number of newly acquired volumes. Included are: *Vital Records of Plymouth, Massachusetts to the Year 1850* compiled by Lee D. van Antwerp, edited by Ruth Wilder Sherman and *Vital Records of Marshfield, Massachusetts to the Year 1850*, compiled by Robert M. Sherman and Ruth Wilder Sherman, both published by Picton Press. We also have *History of Duxbury with Genealogical Registers*, written by Justin Winsor in 1849, as well as the newly published history of Hingham, *Not All Is Changed: A Life History of Hingham* by Lorena Laing Hart and Francis Russell Hart. For our members with an interest in the Civil War, we have two new volumes: *Brother Against Brother: The War Begins* by William C. Davis and *Gettysburg: The Confederate High Tide* by Champ Clark. Both of these are Time-Life Books.



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Scituate, Massachusetts

No. 1

Through its newsletter, the Society attempts to keep alive the history and traditions of Old Scituate. Articles of interest and historical value are always welcome. Send to: Kathleen Laidlaw, 121 Maple Street, Scituate, MA 02066.

### ANNUAL MEETING

The seventy-eighth annual meeting of the Scituate Historical Society will be held on Saturday, June 25, 1994, at 2:00 p.m. at the Laidlaw Historical Center, 43 Cudworth Road off First Parish Road. The meeting will include reports and election of officers and trustees and any other business that should come before the meeting. Refreshments will be served. This meeting is open to the public.

### PROGRAM

#### *Lighthouses of New England*

We will show a video of Lighthouses of New England which was made several months ago. Scituate resident and Society board member Joe Lebherz, president of the Lighthouse Preservation Society, will tell us a lot more about our many lighthouses in New England. The video will explain the history of the Scituate Lighthouse. Refreshments will be served and the public is invited.

Our Scituate Lighthouse is our number one attraction. More people come to see our lighthouse than any other historic site in Scituate.

### IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Your notice of dues slip is included with this newsletter. (Life members please disregard this slip.) Starting with this year's renewal, we will no longer be sending back membership cards unless a membership is given as a gift or to life members. If you feel you need a membership card, I will gladly mail you one. All you have to do is to make a note on your renewal slip. We would appreciate receiving your dues by the end of July. Thank you for your cooperation.

*Joan Nelson, Membership Chairman*

### HISTORICAL SITE TOURS

Our remaining tour dates, when we will have all seven historic sites open from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., are July 10, August 6 and 7, and September 11, 1994. The sites which are open are: the Scituate Lighthouse, the Lawson Tower, the Cudworth house, barn and cattle pound, Laidlaw Historic Center, the Mann Farmhouse and Historic Museum and wildflower garden, the Stockbridge Mill, and the Old Oaken Bucket Homestead and Well, the most famous of them all. For more information or to schedule a tour at another time, call Mrs. Laidlaw at 545-0474 or the Society Headquarters at 545-1083.

### **Mrs. Laidlaw Reports**

We had two very interesting and successful dinner meetings this past winter. Our January 22 meeting was held at the Harbor Methodist Church. A roast turkey dinner was catered by the ladies of the church. The program of the evening was presented by Bruce R. Young, who discussed the history of recorded music and Victrolas.

Our March meeting was Saturday, April 30, 1994 at the First Trinitarian Church, 379 Country Way, Scituate, Mass. A Yankee pot roast dinner was prepared by church members. The program for the evening featured David S. Kruh of Reading, Mass., who presented a slide show entitled *Always Something Doing: A History of Boston's Infamous Scollay Square*.

### **Education**

We have had 20 different schools come to Scituate from Dedham, West Newton, Hanover, Cohasset, Hingham, California and Florida, and of course, Scituate to visit our historic sites and to hear the history of these places, and we still have more on the list. It is very exciting that Scituate is so interesting to so many schools. The Lighthouse, Lawson Tower, Cudworth House and Barn, and the Mann Farmhouse and wild flower garden, designed and maintained by the Scituate Garden Club, are most important as a part of our town.

We have had at least 650 students from schools in the area so far. They write me letters to tell me what they saw and learned. The following are letters from two of the children from Cushing School.

Dear Mrs. Laidlaw,

Thank you for your tour you took us on. I really liked it. I learned a lot. First of all I never knew that the Scituate Grist Mill is the oldest Grist Mill in the country! Second of all I never knew the story of the Old Oaken Bucket. My two favorite trips were the tour of the gardens at the Mann House and the tour of the Lighthouse and the lunch on the rocks. Well, thank you again!

Sincerely,  
Kelly Vose

Dear Mrs. Laidlaw,

I want to thank you for your time to take us on a field trip. I have never been to the Grist Mill before and I have never heard the Old Oaken Bucket poem before. So thank you again for bringing us on a field trip.

Sincerely,  
Danielle Duffey

### **Museum update**

We are working on the final arrangements to buy the Benjamin James House on the Driftway. I think it will be a most interesting historical place to restore and make into a Maritime Museum and Mossing Museum.

### **Historic House Plaques**

The interest and enthusiasm for our Historic House project have generated requests from people in all parts of the town to have their houses dated and plaqued. To date more than 200 houses have been researched. If your house was probably built before 1882, please contact David Dixon at 545-8132 or Duncan Bates Todd at 545-5736. Duncan Todd is available at the Historic Center every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.