

# OLD DARTMOUTH

## HISTORICAL SKETCHES

No. 9

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Being the proceedings of the Second Annual meeting of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, held at the Rooms of the Society, New Bedford, Mass., on March 17, 1905, and containing the following reports:

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REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

Elizabeth Watson

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Lloyd S. Swain

REPORT OF THE MUSEUM SECTION

Annie Seabury Wood

REPORT OF THE HISTORICAL RESEARCH  
SECTION

Henry B. Worth

REPORT OF THE PUBLICATION SECTION

Elizabeth Watson

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[NOTE.—The "Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches" will be published by the society from time to time and may be purchased for a nominal sum on application to the Secretary].

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
SECOND ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE  
OLD DARTMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
AT THE  
ROOMS OF THE SOCIETY, NEW BEDFORD  
MARCH 17, 1905

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The annual meeting of the Old Dartmouth Historical society was held last evening, and nearly all the space in the rooms of the society not occupied by the museum was filled with members.

Officers were elected as follows:

President—William W. Crapo.

Vice presidents—George H. Tripp, Fairhaven; Thomas R. Rodman, New Bedford.

Treasurer—Lloyd S. Swain.

Secretary—Miss Elizabeth Watson.

Directors—James L. Gillingham, Fairhaven; William B. Geoghegan and Ida M. Eliot, New Bedford, and Walton Ricketson, New Bedford, the latter to fill the unexpired term of the late Charles S. Randall.

Amendments to the by-laws which provide for the forfeiture of membership for non-payment of dues after six months from the time the same shall have become payable, and also for the establishment of a photograph section to collect, acquire and preserve photographs of people and places, and to promote an interest in the assembling of historic photographs, were adopted.

Mr. Crapo congratulated the members of the society on its present position at the beginning of the third year of its corporate existence. It has survived the perils of infancy, he said, is strong and healthy and gives promise of usefulness in the future. The past two years have been years of prosperity,

not so much in a financial way as in work accomplished, as shown in interesting papers prepared with care and research, that have brought to light forgotten or half forgotten incidents and events. The printing of them has given permanency and form that has been greatly appreciated at the present time, and will be highly prized in the future.

What has been done is merely the beginning, and what has been begun can and will be continued. The cheerfulness and willingness manifested in uncovering the mysteries of the past will promote renewed activities in the future.

Mr. Crapo spoke of the zeal and intelligence shown by the museum section, and he ventured to assert that no similar organization in two years had been able to collect so much. A woman from another historical society in the state who visited the museum and examined the possessions remarked, with reference to her own society, that it could not expect to have so good a museum for it had been in existence only ten years.

The members of the museum committee, he said, were entitled to commendation without limit, although the space which they were allowed is limited, and their request for more room had been denied by the directors because of lack of funds. "The great pressing need of the society," said Mr. Crapo, "is a permanent fund with a fixed income

to supplement the funds which we now receive. I do not favor an increase of the annual tax, for I prefer there shall be 600 members paying \$1 a year to 300 paying \$2. The Old Dartmouth society should be a popular organization, and there should be no feeling of inconvenience through the yearly assessment made on its members. Thus far by dint of prudence and frugality, the society has paid its bills. Following the practice of our ancestors the society has lived within its means, and no deficit stains our records. There is no blight so chilling to an organization like this as a deficit, it is as difficult to eradicate as the gypsy moth or the boll weevil."

Mr. Crapo said he had no plan to propose to obtain the larger income that the society needs, but some appeal may be made during the year, and it is hoped that it will meet with liberal response.

Miss Watson stated that the premium offered for new members is an extra three months included in the first year's dues, for those who join now will be in good standing until July, 1906. She said that a collection of New Bedford and Fairhaven directories is being made, and the volumes desired are numbers 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 19, 36 and 37. The society has now two shelves filled with directories. The directors would be glad to have also an Ellis and a Ricketson history of New Bedford, or any books of local history.

## Report of the Directors

By Elizabeth Watson, Secretary

The Old Dartmouth Historical society, having lived through its second summer, a critical time for infants, can now be reasonably expected to continue its existence through many prosperous years. Perhaps its vigorous and healthy condition is due to the fact that it was not born into a fortune (though it would be most beneficial for it to inherit one!) and has not been pampered with luxuries, as its sponsors have been able to provide only the bare necessities of life.

The details of the work of the past year will be reviewed by the sections having it in charge, and only general statements can be made by the directors. At the last annual meeting 672 names were on the membership roll. During the year 38 have been added, and 26 have been withdrawn by resignations. Forty-five persons have not yet signified their intention to continue their membership, but we trust that

these are instances of neglect rather than a desire to withdraw from the society.

Since our organization, 22 months ago, seventeen of our members have been taken from us by death, eight of them having died during the past year. Among the number was Charles S. Randall, the senior founder of the society, a member of the executive board, and a man to whom we owe much for his wise counsel and active work. With deep regret and kindest memories we recall the other names:

Francis Ellingwood Abbott of Cambridge.

Deborah E. Allen of Fairhaven.

Benjamin S. Batchelor.

George Alfred Briggs of Fairhaven.

Mary T. Chase.

Pardon Devoll, Jr.

Robert Swain Gifford.

Mary A. Kane.

Angeline B. Knowles.

Charles Henry Lawton.  
Nathaniel G. Macomber of Westport.

Charles H. Peirce.  
William B. Randall.  
Grace S. L. Stanley.  
Mrs. William C. N. Swift.  
Hiram Van Campen.

The hearty co-operation of the various divisions of Old Dartmouth in making arrangements for the quarterly meetings of the society has been most gratifying. The banner meeting of the year was held at Acushnet, where we were favored not only with fair weather, but also a very energetic committee. Such a fascinating collection of historic articles was on exhibition at that time, that the museum committee has been looking northward with covetous eyes ever since.

Dartmouth, in spite of her many members and wealth of historic material, seems thus far to have won her highest distinction by the memorable clambake of September, 1903. Fondest recollections have clustered about that meeting, many and frequent have been the anxious inquiries concerning a repetition, and the directors are quite convinced that clams are a most essential article of diet for this society.

There is so much of Dartmouth that we are obliged to appreciate her piecemeal. Already preparations are being made for the June meeting at Smiths Mills, and we hore at no distant time to gather at Russells Mills and do honor to the first settlers of old Dartmouth on their native soil.

We regret that Westport is inaccessible without much inconvenience and expense, as a delightful place has been offered us for a meeting. But we know from the faithfulness of our directors from Westport and the helpful interest shown by individual members, that the old town is with us in our aims and ambitions, and we trust the future may bring us into closer touch.

Fairhaven, from the first agitation in regard to forming the society has been prominent in the work. As the old records say of her, when we were struggling to make the history that we are now struggling to preserve, she has always "furnished her quota of men, money and ammunition." New Bedford being the happy possessor of the rooms, the president and the largest membership, has naturally had the greatest share of responsibility, and has borne it well.

It has been our purpose, as far as possible, to have the papers read at the quarterly meetings treat of subjects connected with the locality where the meetings have been held. Six papers have been given within the past year, as follows:

"Fifty Years on the Fairhaven School Board," by Job C. Tripp.

"Fairhaven in Four Wars," by George H. Tripp.

"Early Industries of Upper Acushnet River," by Mrs. Daniel T. Devoll.

"Old Acushnet," by Mrs. Clement N. Swift.

"Benjamin Crane and Old Dartmouth Surveys," by Alexander McL. Goodspeed.

"Friends Here and Hereaway," by Mrs. Mary Jane Howland Taber.

At the time of reading this paper, Mrs. Taber presented to the society a water color, by William A. Wall of the Gideon Howland house at Round Hill.

The education section hopes at the next annual meeting to have a creditable report. There has been unavoidable delay in making arrangements for carrying on the work of this section. Its purpose is to provide occasional lectures or informal talks for the benefit of members and to make the museum available for the entertainment and instruction of children.

Anyone who has seen the interest manifested by the few children who have visited the rooms will appreciate the value as well as the difficulties of this work. Sometimes newsboys or youthful candy merchants have been invited in and have viewed the exhibition with critical eyes. One liked "the writings of great men," another "their ivory things over there," while a third returned again and again to the huge tarpon and thoughtfully meditated upon "what kind of a line he used." To be sure, there are often times when the thirst for information must not be wholly satisfied. It is dangerous to work the machine for mincing blubber to see how sharp the edge is, and there are objections to removing the harpoons from their places for amateur whalers to hurl at each other.

This committee is particularly hampered by the lack of room; it being impossible to have a lecture and to show the museum to advantage at the same time. One of our real necessities is a hall connected with the museum. We have just received substantial encouragement by a gift from the executive board of the Unity club. Friday, March 17, that organization formally disbanded, and presented to the education section of this society the sum of \$32.20 remaining in the treasury. The record books were also given to the society. Later in the evening you will receive the recommendation of the directors for the establishing of a photograph section. Through this agency we hope to add to the treasures of this society a valuable collection of photographs of houses, localities, ships, and people associated with the history of

Old Dartmouth, and to continue the work of preserving for the future the likenesses of the many ship masters which have made Old Dartmouth famous; a work already commenced by the museum section.

The last step to complete our self-respect in the presence of other historical organizations has been taken, since we are now in possession of a seal. That is, we shall be when we can afford to make available for representation in our correspondence paper the design lately accepted and adopted by the directors as a seal for the society. It was made and presented to us by Clement Nye Swift of Acushnet, and represents the extreme peril which the hardy men of Old Dartmouth experienced when engaged in that industry which has made us famous throughout the world. The life and strength and daring in the design make it wonderfully suggestive and a fitting sign by which we shall henceforth be known.

It is not the purpose of your directors to report our affairs in a falsely propitious light for the sake of appearances. If what you shall hear to-night seems to speak only of satisfaction and success, it is because we are satisfied with results thus far, because we have succeeded. We have everything to be thankful for, everything to hope for, but we have a tremendous responsibility to justify the confidence reposed in us.

Perhaps, while we are recounting what we have accomplished, we may also tell what we have learned, for the past two years have been but an education for the years to come. The one fact which has been most often and most forcibly impressed upon us is that the society should have been started fifty years ago. As many of us are quite irresponsible for this neglect, our consciences are clear, but we echo the

sentiment most heartily as we realize how hard it will be to make up for that lost half century. We beg the old people, the oldest people, to help us. Save for us the traditions of your fathers and grandfathers before it is too late. Your recollections are the links which must connect us with that past of which the printed accounts are so scant and unsatisfactory. Will not those who might have started the society fifty years ago make amends by giving us their best now?

And we have learned how great and wide-spread is the interest in our work; how willingly help is given if we but ask it; how many friends we have outside the membership; but over and beyond all we have learned what a glorious opportunity is ours if we can only rise to grasp it.

It is necessary in all organizations that the direct management be in the hands of a few people, but there is surely no organization which belongs to every member more than does the Old Dartmouth. The various sections offer such a diversity of interests that every one can take some part in the work.

Never has an appeal to the community awakened as much public spirit as has favored us. Here is an object for which all can work together. We have no creed, save "We believe in Old Dartmouth;" no politics except the motto of our country, thriftily adapted to meet our needs, "One grand result achieved by the many." It is no foolish air castle that we are building, no unwarranted flight of the imagination when we say, that with our peculiar opportunities for collecting articles and data connected with the whaling industry, there is no reason why in a few years we should not hold an honored place, not only among the historical societies in the state and the country, but in the world. Shall we do it?

# Report of the Treasurer

By Lloyd S. Swain

Statement of the condition of the Old  
Dartmouth Historical society for the year  
ending March 17, 1905:

Balance on hand March 31, 1904, \$19.37.

## RECEIPTS.

Life membership,	\$25.00
Year membership,	608.00
Publication account,	37.79
Museum account,	28.35
Gross,	\$699.05
Deposited with N. B. Institution for Savings, account life mem- bers,	25.00
	674.05
Total,	\$684.42
Gross receipts for year ending March 31, 1904,	\$1702.20
Deduct for loan exhibition,	675.50
Deduct for life membership,	400.00
Total deductions,	1075.50
Net receipts of last year,	625.30
Net gain over last year,	48.75
	\$674.05

## EXPENDITURES.

(Publication Account.)

E. Anthony & Sons,	\$124.00
Last year,	41.25
Increase,	82.75
	\$124.00

(Museum Account.)

Postage,	\$12.50
F. E. James,	35.00
G. F. Winslow,	47.25
H. S. Hutchinson & Co.,	7.36
E. Anthony & Sons,	18.82
E. L. Hathaway & Son,	7.76
A. R. Caswell,	6.00
Mercury Publishing Co.,	1.50
C. F. Wing,	7.87
Sundry bills,	7.20
	\$151.06
Last year,	\$241.72
Decrease,	92.66
	\$151.06

(Expense Account.)

C. F. Wing, rent rooms and chairs,	\$112.28
N. B. Gas Co.,	15.48
Carting, etc	7.25
Elizabeth Watson, secretary, services to Jan. 1, 1905,	150.00
W. H. Caswell,	12.44
Mercury Publishing Co.,	28.44
E. Anthony & Sons,	12.36
Postage, etc.,	14.77
	\$253.02
Total expenses,	\$628.08
Balance on hand,	56.34
Total expense for last year,	1291.82
Less for loan exhibition,	659.74
	632.09
Total for 1904-5,	\$628.08
Decrease of	4.01
	\$632.09

# Report of the Museum Section

By Annie Seabury Wood

In reviewing the work of the museum section for the past year, in order to present its second report to the members of the Historical society and the public, we feel that we may speak with justifiable pride of the steady growth of this department.

The museum is open once each week, on Saturdays from 11 in the morning until 6 at night, and hardly a week passes without some interesting addition to the collection. It is particularly gratifying to introduce strangers to the rooms and to note their interest in the exhibition and their surprise at its extent.

During the past year the museum committee has held eleven regular meetings, and under its auspices teas

have been most successful in generating a habit of coming to the rooms on the part of the general public, and in keeping alive an interest in the work. Another gratifying fact is that the museum has proved itself to appeal to all sorts and conditions of people, young and old, rich and poor, former citizens who have retained their love for their old home and strangers within our gates for the first time.

It is almost impossible to say just how many articles have been received at the rooms during the past year, because a great many were brought there at the time of the loan exhibition in February, 1904, and were not marked and entered in the books until afterwards. Perhaps, as the museum sec-

tion is really not as old as the Historical society, it will be pardonable to mention the entire number of gifts and loans which have been recorded during the year and seven months that it has existed.

We possess, according to our record books, 560 gifts, and we are the guardians of 787 loans. There are, however, some collections in which each individual article has not been enumerated, so that we may fairly lay claim to an exhibition of 1500 articles at least, a rather remarkable record, it seems to me, in point of number, for a museum so recently established.

Of these articles those given by the late William P. Randall possess a special value, inasmuch as they are the first and only bequest that the society has received, and we wish to express our deep sense of gratitude that the

museum was made the recipient of the sword and belt worn by him on the Cumberland when she was sunk by the Merrimac, as well as of other articles which have made an interesting addition to our natural history department.

An enterprise of this sort must always be of slow growth, especially if a fund is lacking, but the end of the second year of our existence brings with it a feeling of security, and a sense that our progress has been sufficient to warrant our looking forward with confidence to a permanent existence.

A home of our own and money to support it is one of our dreams for the future. If we have faith to work and to wait until that dream shall be realized, then, it is safe to say, an unending life of increasing usefulness stretches before us.

## Report of Historical Research Section

By Henry B. Worth

The historical research section has to report progress along some lines, and presents some suggestions.

Members and friends have donated papers and books so that the collection is reaching a considerable extent. It is not expected that there will be unexpectedly discovered any great mass of historical material. There is a popular notion that in nooks and corners are documentary treasures of great value to antiquarians. This, however, is an error. During the war of the Rebellion old paper brought a fabulous price, and houses were ransacked for every pound that could be sold. All that was retained was considered of some peculiar value to the owners. Consequently very few, if any, papers exist of which the custodians have no knowledge. The chief hindrance in obtaining possession of paper writings is not this ignorance nor selfish interest of the owner, but a reluctance felt by the families in placing before the public matters and events which they think ought to be withheld from strangers. There are in this city manuscript histories, diaries and collections of letters of great historical interest that the owners shrink from filing in the archives of this society. They are led into the mistake of thinking that the foibles and family eccentricities which may be disclosed will be the chief use to which the documents will be put. If this view had always prevailed the diaries of Bradford, Winthrop and Sewall, and the letters of Governors Prince and Hutchinson would have been destroyed; but as a matter

of fact no student cares for exhibitions of childish views and ideas concerning religion, education and government that are to be found in these works, but considers only the mine of information about the men and events of that period. It is to be hoped that the members of this society will view this question from the same standpoint from which they would read the works of these Colonial dignitaries and treat non-essentials as of no consequence to either relatives or strangers, and when their own use of these documents has ceased that they will file them in the archives of this society where their value will be understood and appreciated.

It will be necessary, as soon as possible, to provide books in which to file documents that are now fast accumulating. These should be fastened into scrap books constructed for the purpose, and carefully indexed. The preliminary outlay required need not be extensive, but before these papers can be accessible they must be so arranged, and the plan suggested is the best that can be adopted because there is no wear to injure the paper.

There should be memorial histories in relation to all the old families of Dartmouth. The published genealogies are not always as full as desirable, and of some families none have been compiled. Among the original owners were the Kemptons, Spooners, Jenneys, Hicks and Sowles concerning which there should be articles relating to their history of this section. Then there were

the subsequent purchasers, Briggs, Brownell, Barker, Brightman, Cornell, Corey, Devoll, Gifford, Hart, Hathaway, Lapham, Lawton, Maxfield, Mosher, Peckham, Potter, Sherman, Sisson, Sampson, Taber, Tinkham, Tripp, Tucker, Ward, West, Waite and Wilcox. These were prominent land owners in old Dartmouth and appear in all the proceedings of the town. They filled the town offices and were the strength and support of the early churches. They furnish an exceedingly interesting theme, and this society should have in its collection the history of all these families so far, at least, as relates to the first half century after their settlement here. This work can best be done by descendants of these men in order that there may be chronicled and preserved traditions that have been handed down in the families from the beginning.

It may be doubted whether any great advantage will be derived from marking many historic spots, particularly those remote from the traveled ways. If a tablet were erected at the roadside nearest the location of Russell's garrison, it would be observed by only a few persons besides the local residents. If the site of the first town house in Dartmouth were similarly designated it would be noticed only by those who attend Perry's clambakes. The difficulty is that they would not be seen by most persons interested therein; but there is a decided interest in being able to locate and identify ancient buildings and places, and then, having ascertained the localities, those interested might visit them with much satisfaction. Thus it is well known that the house on the southwest corner of County and Union streets, in recent years owned by William J. Rotch, was built by James Arnold, one of New Bedford's merchant kings; but it is not so well known that his earlier residence was on the southwest corner of South Water and Madison streets, next to the holder of the New Bedford Gas company. Few have ever heard of the meeting house of Mr. Lewis, but it stood on the County road, near the extreme north end of New Bedford, during the closing years of the eighteenth century.

There is a growing interest in the buildings, sites and locations. People eagerly seek information concerning the homes of their ancestors and the scenes of their activities. To meet this demand this society should have on file, fully indexed, the history of every house and locality in Old Dartmouth,

carefully investigated and identified. The value of this branch of study has so impressed two of the members of this society that they have photographed over 200 houses, and these have been investigated and identified. A part of the collection has been duplicated and purchased by the New Bedford Public Library, containing the pictures of houses built before 1800. This society will be welcome to the notes and information concerning these houses if some arrangement can be made in relation to the cost of the book and pictures; but even without the photographs a valuable amount of information can be gathered and kept for reference. Two illustrations will indicate the plan. In the index under the title "Almshouse" would be the statement that in 1828 New Bedford built the present building on Clarkes point, but before that date, in 1817, the town purchased a tract that extended from Sixth to Fourth streets, next north of Morgan Terrace, the west part of which in later years being the residence of David R. Green, and built the poorhouse in the northwest corner, a few feet south of the residence of the late Joseph Vera. When the town's needs demanded the present stone building was erected, and the land between Sixth and Fourth streets divided into lots and sold.

Under the title "schoolhouses" would be identified numerous buildings and sites. One was located on the west side of Bethel street, at the top of the hill; on a lot on the west side of Bethel street was once a schoolhouse which was destroyed by fire. On the south side of School street, between Sixth and Fifth, was maintained a school, which fact gave name to the street, when after the Revolution the original name of "Queen street" was discarded.

Where is now the Waite building, on Purchase street, next north of the Wing building, a schoolhouse was built in 1796 by the joint contribution of several New Bedford merchants.

At Acushnet, southeast of the residence of Humphrey H. Swift, was erected by the local residents a schoolhouse, named once "The Social school," and later "The Phoenix school," and the same many years ago was removed west of Lunds corner.

A collection of this sort, giving a brief history of the ancient landmarks of Old Dartmouth, would be one of the most valuable works this society could accomplish, and if supplemented by photographs it would reach the pinnacle of success.

# Report of the Publication Section

By Elizabeth Watson

By vote of the directors the publication section has been in the hands of the secretary for the last year, and its work has been the issuing of the reports of the four quarterly meetings in pamphlet form.

It is through this section that the society keeps in touch with similar organizations and lets its light shine from the Atlantic to the Pacific, our most distant subscribers being in San Diego, Cal. These pamphlets are sent to many of our non-resident members, to the Old Colony Historical society, Taunton; the Essex Institute, Salem; the Massachusetts Historical society, the Old South Historical society, the State Library and New England Historic and Genealogical society of Boston; the Pilgrim society, Plymouth, the New York Public Library, the Congressional Library, Washington, and also the libraries in New Bedford, Acushnet and Fairhaven. We receive in exchange the interesting publications of the Old Colony Historical society and Essex Institute, and have the cordial good will of all the older organizations who have welcomed us into their ranks.

Our pamphlets are beginning to be recognized as valuable additions to local history, and even now form a very creditable beginning for a complete history of old Dartmouth. Forty cents

a year, payable quarterly, seems a most liberal instalment plan, by which those who purchase the reports of each meeting can eventually possess this history complete. Arrangements can be made with the secretary for mailing these reports to subscribers as they are issued.

It has been suggested that we issue our reports in the form of a quarterly magazine, which shall contain additional matter of historic interest. This could no doubt be done satisfactorily if the subscription list should be sufficiently large to warrant the extra outlay of time and expense. A splendid project has been considered by this section, and one in which many can aid by furnishing material. When the photograph section shall have a fine array of pictures of whaling masters and ships, and the historical research section shall have a fund of information regarding them, and the museum section shall have still further increased its collection, then we can publish a volume on the whaling industry that, should the society accomplish nothing more, would alone justify its existence.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of printing historical records, and we are glad to say that we have received many compliments and congratulations from the other societies that have seen our work.