

## Randolph Historical Commission

Your Historical Commission is pleased to report on its activities in 2013:

- ⤴ **Randolph Historic Preservation Plan Project** – The project, funded through a Survey and Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and a local Community Preservation Grant, started in 2012 with the hiring of Eric Dray Associates. In 2013 the project proceeded through community surveys and forums to a preliminary report, further review by the Historical Commission and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, resulting in a final report which the Commission received in July.
- ⤴ **Survey & Planning Grant** – In early 2013 the Commission successfully applied for a Community Preservation Grant in anticipation of applying for a State Survey and Planning Grant to implement one of the initial projects of the Preservation Plan, continuing the identification and evaluation of the oldest houses in the Town. Unfortunately, federal budget cuts made it necessary to limit availability of the Survey and Planning Grant to Certified Local Governments, and Randolph is not one of them. The Commission is seeking other sources of funding to allow the documentation project to resume in 2014.
- ⤴ **Friends of Randolph History** – Commission member Lynn Feingold continued her service as the administrator for the Friends of Randolph History page on Facebook. This has become an excellent medium for disseminating local historical information and notices of Randolph history and preservation events being offered by the Historical Commission, the Historical Society, the Turner Free Library, and the Randolph Women's Club. This year, Ms. Feingold continued the work she began in 2012 on the Town's Civil War records, integrating documents with images of some of the soldiers from the GAR image file and other sources, and images of the soldier's gravestones where they could be found. This has proven to be a popular resource. In the coming year, work will begin on the development of what we hope will eventually become a “museum without walls”, and the Friends page will be an important part of presenting Randolph's rich history to a diverse audience.
- ⤴ **Exhibit: “Winter in Randolph”**- During the winter of 2013, Town Historian and Commission Chair Henry Cooke drew on the resources of the Historical Commission, the Randolph Historical Society, the Randolph Women's Club, his own family and the research collection of Historical Costume Services to prepare and create “Randolph in Winter”, an exhibit exploring how Randolph residents have lived, worked and played in the winter season, which has been on display in the GAR Room at Stetson Hall.
- ⤴ **Demolition Review** – One of the responsibilities of the Historical Commission is the review of demolition applications for buildings over 100 years old. The Commission reviewed six demolition applications, of which two buildings were more than a century old, but had been determined by the Building Inspector to have been unsound, and a public safety hazard. Based on this finding, the Commission approved the applications.
- ⤴ **Preservation in Action: Oakland Cemetery Cleanup** – During the Town's spring cleanup, members of the Historical Commission spent the day cleaning up debris and leaves from the historic Oakland Cemetery. Thanks go to the DPW for removing the twenty large bags of debris, and for maintaining this historic burial ground in an attractive and respectful manner.
- ⤴ **Educating Ourselves** – In October Commission member Lynn Feingold represented the Randolph Historical Commission at a Historic Preservation symposium held at Lexington. Through the various presentations and workshops, she brought home information and resources that she shared with her fellow commission members, and which will be available for future reference.

The Commission was pleased to welcome two new members. William Thompson was appointed to the Commission in February to replace member Joe Griffin, who retired in December 2012. During the summer, Patrick Harrison returned to the Commission after a decade's absence, bringing the Commission up to full strength for the first time in several years. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and knowledgeable Commission to carry out the Town's Historic Preservation Plan in the coming year.

**Looking Ahead:** The Historical Commission's plans for 2014 will largely focus on the implementation of the newly completed Historic Preservation Plan:

- ⤴ Request that the Town Council create a Historic District Study Committee to investigate the Local Historic Districts proposed in the Preservation Plan and to recommend the establishment of one or more such districts in the Town.
- ⤴ Identify and prepare registration forms for the Town's remaining unregistered 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings.
- ⤴ Bolster the Town's Demolition Bylaw to make it a more effective preservation tool.
- ⤴ In October, the Commission was asked by Town Planner Michelle Tyler to create a historic wayside marker for the Bertha Soule Memorial Park, off of Grove Lane. Work on this marker will be completed in early 2014, and it is hoped that the completed wayside will be in place in the spring.
- ⤴ Complete work on the North Randolph and Depot St. wayside markers, begun in 2013, and plan others
- ⤴ Develop an exhibit "Mapping Randolph", a multimedia exploration of the different ways that maps have depicted the various qualities of the town over more than two centuries. It is intended as a collaborative effort between the Historical Commission, and the Turner Free Library, and will include both an exhibit of physical maps at Stetson Hall and other locations, as well as an online exhibit that the Commission hopes will serve as a community resource for many years to come.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Randolph Historical Commission