



Holden Historical Society, Inc.

SOCIETY OFFICERS

- President:
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- Vice-President:
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- Curator:
Charles Skillings
- Secretary:
Clare Nelson
- Treasurer:
Ross Beales, Jr.
- Membership:
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- Historian:
Joan Nichols
- Councilors:
Robert Fournier
Daniel McCauley
D.Vanfechtmann
Patricia Hurley
Nancy Blanchard
Edna Sexton

Daniel McCauley – Holden’s Repairman

The minister’s apartment needed plumbing; Chaffin Congregational Church needed repairs; a handicap ramp was added to the backstairs of the First Congregational Church; the Lutheran Church required a rear fire escape; the Baptist Church wanted its oil tank removed and a new front entrance built; and the Town Hall Memorial Hall needed a large movie screen installed; the Mountview School Coastal Studies group required money for a trip to the Cape, and the Holden Eagle Scouts needed seed money for their projects ... and the list goes on.

Whom did these organizations contact for the work and assistance? Daniel McCauley. Dan, a founder of the Chaffin’s Men’s Club (later called Chaffin’s Recreation Association); Dan, a member of the Masonic Lodge in West Boylston; Dan, an officer of the former Trowel Club; Dan, a former part-time police officer; Dan, a former firefighter for the Town of Holden; and Dan, the former building and grounds supervisor for Holden School Department.

Early Years

Born in Grafton, Massachusetts, in 1918, he moved with his family to the Worcester area in 1926 and lived in Norton Village – the area in and around Salter School on Ararat Street. In 1928, when he was 10, his family moved to Holden where he attended Chaffin School through the eighth grade. He graduated from Holden High School in 1937.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Society is looking for volunteers who would be willing to help in two areas. We are looking for a volunteer to catalog picture negatives and another volunteer to transcribe some audio tapes.

After high school Dan developed into a talented and multi-skilled individual. He worked for a variety of general contractors in the Holden area, until September 1942, when he enlisted in the Navy. For the three years of his service, he was repairman on landing craft (for) infantry (LCI). What equipment repair was unfamiliar, he tinkered with until he figured it out. What parts that could not be readily obtained, he created, recycling old parts. This philosophy of adapting old items for new uses carried over into his civilian life.

When he was discharged in October 10, 1945, he returned home to work for general contractors. Dan initially worked as the custodian for Chaffin Elementary School in 1946, and he was named head of buildings and grounds for the Holden School Department starting around 1948. He worked continuously for the School Department for 45 years.

From extra construction lumber and castoffs from torn-down buildings, he built the shed behind Mountview School and a shed behind the former Bubar building on Main Street.

McCauley Fields

As Linda Lehans, reporter for The Landmark, stated in her newspaper 1991 article on Dan, “He had an uncanny talent for stretching tax dollars for maintaining and repairing school facilities. When Town Hall and the library were renovated, he salvaged their old lights, shelving and other items to replace dated fixtures in the school buildings. He scrounged replacement parts for machines at the former town

dump. He took the throwaways from the Massachusetts and Holden Department of Public Works and put them to use at the schools. He even got free dirt. When I-190, the Parker Avenue sewer project, and the Greendale YMCA were under construction, Dan convinced contractors to haul thousands of truck-loads of fill to the Mountview fields – and even bulldoze it into place as it was deposited.

“His efforts transformed the 25-foot sloping landscape into level fields for baseball, football, track, soccer and field hockey. The town recognized Dan’s life-time devotion to the school department on July 23, 1990 when special town meeting voters named Mountview School’s refurbished and expanded playing fields in Dan’s honor.”

Dan joined the Trowel Club, a Masonic Lodge, and through this connection he found money to pay for the materials to build Chaffin Congregational Church’s front walk, to repair the rear fire escape at the Lutheran Church, to remove the oil tank and construct a new front entrance on the side at the Baptist Church, to build the handicap ramp in the rear of the First Congregational Church, to repair the large clock in the tower of the Damon Memorial, and to install the large movie screen in Memorial Hall.

Through his work with the Masonic Lodge in West Boylston, he was instrumental in creating the Lloyd Starbard Scholarship Fund, which continues to provide money to graduating high school seniors for college.

As volunteer firefighter for Holden’s Fire Department, Dan and Arvid Johnson built the first fire

barn in Chaffins next to the old Zottoli garage. Dan was a firefighter for 10 years, and for 21 years, he also worked as a part-time police officer.

Dan is known for his thriftiness and getting the community involved in a project. When he was approached by the Coastal Studies group at Mountview School looking for ways to raise money for a field trip, Dan got his friends and the community involved in finding ways to raise the funds. He first contributed \$200 of his own toward their fund and then discussed the need for money with his nephew, Skip, and the two of them collected scrap iron from construction companies including Whelan McGregor, which installed windows, and the scrap metal heap behind the former Parker Oil Company. Companies that didn't have scrap metal to donate, donated money instead. In appreciation for his efforts, the Coastal Studies group presented Dan with an award. On top of the award is a young girl, an empty beer can makes up the middle, and a plaque at the bottom expresses the gratitude for the money he raised. It remains one of Dan's favorite possessions.

As a member of the Masonic Lodge, he was instrumental in giving money to the Holden District

Hospital, the Gale Free Library for handicapped chairs, and for maintenance of the large tower clock on the library.

He continues his philanthropy and volunteering today through the Masonic Lodge. Dan and his wife, Gloria, gave money to the Holden Boys Scouts so that they could take a trip to Iceland, and to build benches at Eagle Lake. He has built benches around the pond at Trout Brook Reservation on Manning Street, so that children can fish. He works on behalf of Earth Day, donating money for gloves and plastic bags. If you have visited the town-wide Holden Hazardous Waste Recycling Days, you have seen Dan's handiwork – the signs that name the different materials. The Wachusett Resource Center was re-floored and the walls repainted due to Dan's efforts.

Dan's ingenuity has touched many lives – he is definitely Holden's repairman.

Honors and Awards

Through the years Dan has received many honors and awards for his hard work and volunteerism:

- 1956—Chaffins Men's Club Award Field House Dedication
- 1969—Holden Junior Olympics

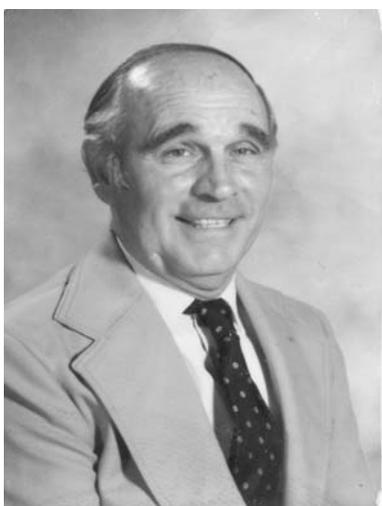
MONDAY, APRIL 24 — Annual joint meeting with Holden Grange at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Hall at Town Hall. We provide refreshments, your contribution is appreciated.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17 — The Holden Historical Society's Annual Meeting & Dinner. 6 p.m. at Chaffin Congregational Church. The church's Mary Martha Circle will provide the dinner. A program on Revolutionary War reenactment will follow the dinner. Cost is \$8. Non-members are invited to attend.

For more information about the above dates, please call Ross at 508-736-3887 or e-mail him at rbeales@charter.net

- 1969—Exchange Club of Golden Deed
- 1974—Holden Youth Soccer
- 1978—Holden Summer Basketball League
- 1981—Grange Award
- 1992—Certificate of Appreciation from Holden Women’s Club
- 1995—Citizen of the Year from Sunnyside Motors
- 1996- Good Neighbor Award from the Democratic Party

If you are a Holden resident and would like to share your memories or experiences of Holden, please contact Nancy Rocheleau at 508 829-5675



Dan McCauley



Geocaching with Historical Holden

A great new way to combine hiking, geography, history, and expanding our national and global interactions, geocaching is catching on for owners of global positioning systems (GPS). These hand-held devices provide longitudes and latitudes of where the user is standing. Originating in Oregon and spread-

ing out over the United States, geocaching is now world wide. All you need is a hand-held GPS unit and a map of the area you are visiting.

Using the GPS units and the location coordinates provided in each cache, participants can seek out particular locations that provide a clue to part of the final answer. The final clue and/or the puzzle answer often contain trinkets, gizmos, souvenirs, and other similar objects in the final hidden places. Through the clues given in the cache, a puzzle is completed and a token is exchanged at the completion of the hunt.

Through the work of Lisa and Thomas Sutter of Holden, a historical Holden geocache link can be found on the www.geocaching.com website. The historical Holden geocache is for those who want to get some fresh air and learn some local history.

Once you log onto the www.geocaching.com website, you can search for other Holden area caches by entering Holden’s zip code in the upper right-hand corner where the zip code prompt is located. In doing so, you’ll find over 240 geocaches just in the Holden /Worcester County area.



New Computer System

After months of evaluating our computer needs, the Holden Historical Society is the proud owner of a new computer system. Mike Kimball of Computer Central in Holden looked over our ‘needs’ list of computer gear, and put together a computer

system that either meets or exceeds our needs. We took delivery of our new system on January 29th.

This new equipment will allow us to create a database of our inventory, organize our membership data, scan documents and photos, digitalize imaging, and allow for searching of artifacts. The Society's catalog of artifacts and documents is currently being transferred to the new computer. Membership records will be updated as well. It is hoped that eventually the new computer can be used as a research component to share the Society's inventory with the public and interested parties. Genealogy searches are also being considered.



Report of the Holden Slave Case

Tried at the January Term of the Court of Common Pleas, for the County of Worcester, A.D. 1839

An interesting piece of Holden history few people know of can be found at the web site http://dlxs.library.cornell.edu/m/mayantislavery/browse_H.html. It is an article on a slave girl named Anne, who moved to Holden in the 1830s with her owner, Mrs. Olivia Eames.

The Eames lived in New Orleans and acquired some property which included, among other articles, a number of slaves. When Mr. Eames died in 1837, Mrs. Eames sold her property, except the slave girl Anne who was 12 or 13 years of age. Anne was retained by Mrs. Eames as a house servant and nurse, and accompanied Mrs. Eames in that capacity to live in Holden.

According to the Board of Directors of the Holden Anti-Slavery Society, as soon as Anne came into Massachusetts, she was as free as any native born citizen of this State and had the right to remain with or leave her mistress, as she saw fit.

The case involved Holden citizens who thought Anne was being held against her will and was still being treated as a slave by Mrs. Eames. The court proceeding was to determine whether Anne sought out people so that she could file for writ of personal replevin which would have released Anne from further non-paid work with Mrs. Eames.

Mrs. Eames stated that Anne was taken against her will, was forced to sign the writ, and that Anne should be returned to her. The defense witnesses stated that Mrs. Eames, on numerous occasions, stated that she was planning to return to New Orleans and sell Anne, that she was worth \$800 when the Eames first purchased her and should be worth \$1000 now that she was older.

While Anne played with the other children in the area, she did not attend school or attend church meetings since coming to the area. Her principal work, as per Mrs. Eames, was 'to nurse the child [ren] and to do other chores', such as getting water for the house.

Further details of this court proceeding can be found at http://dlxs.library.cornell.edu/m/mayantislavery/browse_H.html.

Anne was eventually freed because of the efforts of the citizens who filed this case.



SOCIETY WEB SITE
COMING THIS SUMMER



Newsletter

Holden Historical Society, Inc.

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Preserving Holden's past for the future.



Town of Holden Police Department. April 11, 1955. Wallace B. McInnis, Chief of Police.

First Row: John G. Harvey, James V. Armstrong, Mrs. Clarence Johnson, W. B. McInnis, Edward Hale, Daniel D. McCauley. Second Row: William F. Durant, Joseph Greene, Elmer Blum, James Riordan, John C. Oliver, and Stephen Novak. Absent: James Oliver, Edward D. Harrington, Jr.