



# The Newetowne Chronicle

Summer 2010  
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Editor, Michael Kenney  
Design, Gavin W. Kleespies  
Contributing Editor,  
Daphne Abeel  
Copy Editor, Luise M. Erdmann

## Swimming in a Countercultural Sea

By Dick Cluster

For much of its brief existence between 1968 and 1970, the 16-page tabloid underground newspaper *Old Mole* featured a column of short items called Zaps on page 4. Here are two:

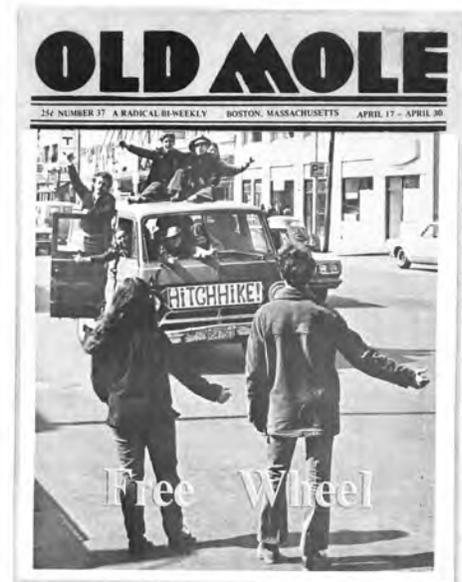
- “PEACE CORPS EXPELS 13 FOR ANTI-WAR ACTIVITY — a real, live headline from the Washington Star.”
- “If it isn’t in the New York Times Index, maybe it didn’t happen.” [cut and pasted from an ad in the *Times*]

The point being, there was a lot that happened that didn’t get reported, and a lot that was reported incorrectly. Or, let’s say, we saw it from a different point of view.

The *Old Mole*, whose nameplate pronounced it “a radical biweekly,” grew out of the radical



April 3-16, 1969



April 17-30, 1969

student movement of the 1960s. Its staff members, paid and volunteer, had been or were active in the national movements for civil rights and against the war in Vietnam, for shaking universities loose from their liberal or conservative adherence to the status quo, for women’s liberation, tenants’ rights, welfare rights, abortion rights, school reform, labor organizing . . . that list might go on and on, and some of the words (let’s try “school reform”) would not mean what they mean today. In the national spectrum of the “underground” press (that is, poor, alternative, and illegitimate in the eyes of authoritative voices in whatever field), the *Mole* was more toward the “politico” than the “hippie” end, but all the papers swam in the same countercultural sea.

The paper drew its name from an obscure speech by Karl Marx. The version on our masthead said, “We recognize our old friend, our old mole, who knows so well how to work underground, suddenly to appear: the revolution.” That appealed to a sense that, while no new American revolution seemed anywhere near a point of triumph, one did seem necessary.

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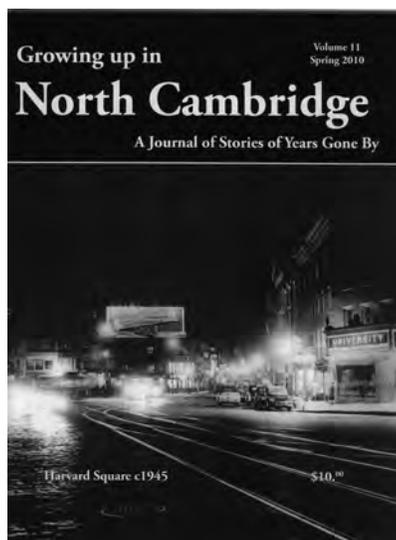
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The Cambridge  
 Historical Society  
 The Hooper-Lee-Nichols House  
 159 Brattle Street  
 Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138  
 617-547-4252  
[www.cambridgehistory.org](http://www.cambridgehistory.org)  
[info@cambridgehistory.org](mailto:info@cambridgehistory.org)

Working with Our Neighbors *By Gavin W. Kleespies*

Cambridge is a remarkable place. From the chocolate factories of East Cambridge to the studio of Washington Allston to the hallowed halls of Harvard and the clay pits of the New England Brick Yards, this town has a deep and interesting history. It may seem a little overwhelming to document it all, but the Society is lucky to work with a lot of partners to preserve the different aspects of this history, and some of them are doing really creative and fun projects. We host joint programs with the larger institutions — the Cambridge Historical Commission, the Longfellow National Historic Site, and Mount Auburn Cemetery — such as our Open Archives Tour, which is coming up in July (visit [www.cambridgehistory.org](http://www.cambridgehistory.org) for additional information). But there is also a wealth of small groups and individuals that are putting together impressive histories of a part of Cambridge’s past. I thought I would mention a few of the groups and tell you a little bit about their projects.

Stephen Surette grew up in North Cambridge and went on to become a teacher at the Rindge Technical School and Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. At Rindge, Steve became involved with the student newspaper, the *Register Forum*, becoming its faculty advisor in 1976. When he retired, he merged his memories of a childhood in North Cambridge with his interest in helping to publish the stories of current and former residents and started the journal *Growing Up in North Cambridge*. This



magazine, generally available in stores in North Cambridge and by subscription, has just put out its 12th volume. Steve prints 1,000 copies and reaches people in Cambridge, surrounding communities, 30 different states, and five other countries. Working with Steve, I have submitted a few articles and was honored to be asked to speak at the first Growing Up in North Cambridge Luncheon, where I had to admit that I had actually grown up in the Agassiz neighborhood. (For more information, visit: [http://growingupinnorthcambridge.com/.](http://growingupinnorthcambridge.com/))

The New England Folk Music Archives was founded in 2009 to create a central place for all the stories, music, and memories created by the long history of folk music in New England. The group has hosted a number of events, including a very popular program at the Society in March. Working with the



Cynthia Brennan explores the Steamer Trunk

Harvard Square Business Association, they mounted a display of photographs of folk singers in the storefronts in Harvard Square. The Society has worked with NEFMA on programs and hosts a display on the history of folk music in Cambridge, which currently includes their interactive Steamer Trunk display. Some of the NEFMA collections are also housed at the Society.

In 2009 Michael Kenney and Henrietta Davis started the Cambridgeport History Group, which plans the Cambridgeport History Day. Last year’s event was dampened by a tremendous rainstorm, canceling some of the events. However, even with the rain, the popular “If This House Could Talk...” signs were posted around the neighborhood.

These signs were coordinated by Cathie Zusy and the Cambridgeport History Group. Residents were asked to write down what they thought was interesting about the history of their house. Some people shared information about when their house was built, others talked about former residents or what they had dug up in their backyard, while others told stories of famous people who had spent the night in their house. All of the text from these signs is available on our website ([www.cambridgehistory.org](http://www.cambridgehistory.org)). The Cambridgeport Group includes members of the Neighborhood Association, the Historical Society, the Historical Commission, the Cambridge Arts Council, and residents.



If This House Could Talk.. sign from 2009

There are other groups in the city; let me mention a few in passing. The Historical Society works with the African American Heritage Alliance to document the city's African-American past. We are on the Centennial Committee of the Harvard Square Business Association, working to collect stories of the Square over the past 100 years. We are working with a talented photographer, Phyllis Bretholtz, and the Historical

Commission to produce a series of then-and-now photos of Central Square. Finally, an oral history project is documenting the history of Mid Cambridge. I am excited that the Society is able to work with all of these groups.

## I Shudder to Think! Shutters Stabilized for the Summer



The 200-year-old shutters on the front of the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House are showing their age. They need to be taken down and restored, but that is an expensive project. Last fall, Charlie Allen and the CHS staff evaluated their condition and decided that, with winter approaching, we needed to remove the shutters before they were damaged further.

Charlie then recruited a team of carpenters to volunteer for an afternoon, and we had a shutter-fixing party. Jonathan Detwiler of Buttonwood Construction, Jim from S+H Construction, Charlie and Dan from Charlie Allen Restoration, William Burns from the North Bennet Street School, and Richard Lingner from the Cambridge Historical Society tightened up all the shutters on the front of the house and rehung them.

The shutters still need a lot of work, but the house looks much better thanks to this effort.

## Large Format Digitization Marathon



Matt Pearson and Michael Kenney

the American Antiquarian Society. Thanks to their generosity, we now have reproducible images of some of our rarest and most fragile materials.

With the help of technical photographer Matt Pearson, the CHS staff converted the Chandler Room into a digital photo studio for the Memorial Day weekend. The holiday gave us an extra day to use the rented equipment to make digital images of hundreds of oversized maps, blueprints, photographs, and art. Matt, who has worked with the Northeast Document Conservation Center, led the team with the help of Cynthia Brennan, our assistant director, formerly the rights and imaging coordinator for



Matt Pearson and Cynthia Brennan

# Volunteers



Katrina is working to document the history of music venues in Cambridge. She has volunteered with CHS before as an archives student, and is now collecting oral histories from musicians and club owners.



Anna, a North Cambridge native, is creating a cell phone tour of Cambridge during the American Revolution, which should be done by the end of the summer.



Katie is helping to document the history of Harvard Square businesses for the Harvard Square Business Association Centennial.

# Riverside's Neighborhood Resource at 80 By Daphne Abeel

From the outside, the red clapboard building that houses the Cambridge Community Center (CCC) at 5 Callender Street in the Riverside neighborhood is deceptive. Few would guess that it is big enough to contain a full-size basketball court as well as a large first-floor art gallery and spacious, well-lit classrooms on the second floor.

The CCC has been carrying out its mission since 1929, when it was incorporated by a group of local African-American ministers and residents of Riverside "to provide a center for the recreational, educational and social activity for the people of the community, who desire to make wholesome use of their leisure time."

The building was once the Tarbell Elementary School, named for Mary A. Tarbell, a longtime Cambridge schoolteacher. The CCC bought it in 1948. Its function is similar to that of two other Cambridge nonprofits, the Margaret Fuller House in Area 4 and East End House in East Cambridge, which began as traditional settlement houses.

Today, according to David Gibbs, its new director, the CCC serves about 2,000 people a year, including children who take part in a licensed afterschool program. The CCC also sponsors computer programming classes, tutoring, sports programs, and has a library.

"We serve more than Cambridge," said Gibbs. "A lot of our people still come from the Riverside neighborhood, but we have many who come from places further away, such as Arlington and Dorchester."

Since the 1960s, Gibbs said, "there's been a trend for African-Americans to move

out of Riverside." Veterans began finding job opportunities outside the immediate neighborhood, and that trend was sharply accelerated by the end of rent control.

"Riverside used to be a stable middle-class black neighborhood," Gibbs said. "Now, it is the most diverse area in the city and also the poorest after Area 4." CCC now draws Hispanics in large numbers as well as a sprinkling of Asians and whites.

Gibbs, trained as a lawyer and formerly director of the Family Institute in Watertown, is the first white to serve as director. He succeeded long-time head Janet Kendrick.



Storm Williams, 7, a student at the Kennedy-Longfellow Elementary School, works through a reading lesson with her tutor, Ross Cannon. (Photo by Daphne Abeel)

The CCC currently employs 13 staff members, including Tasha Pogue, who directs and oversees the afterschool

program. R-Jay Jones serves as site coordinator, and the organization uses hundreds of volunteers, many of whom come from nearby educational institutions and businesses. Harvard's Operations Services oversees CCC's buildings, grounds, and any construction projects.

A capital campaign hopes to raise \$5 million, which will support expanded programs for seniors, a parenting program, and the infant-toddler program. A large portion of the funds will support the construction of a new health clinic, to be administered by the Cambridge Health Alliance.

On a recent afternoon, a young girl worked with her tutor on a reading lesson, a boy sat on a bench in the hall reading a book, and another boy did his homework at a table in the art gallery. The mission seemed alive and well.

## When Sweet Flavors Filled the Air By Michael Kenney

When Orra L. Stone compiled his *History of Massachusetts Industry* in 1930, he counted no less than 29 candy-manufacturing firms in Cambridge.

There were giants like the New England Confectionary Co., whose 1,400 workers produced some 500 varieties of candy, including the iconic NECCO wafers, at its plant on Massachusetts Avenue, and small family-run firms throughout Cambridgeport and East Cambridge.

Old-timers remember that when you walked those streets you'd know, depending on which way the wind was blowing, who was making what flavor that day. Even today, you can catch the sweet, chocolatey smell of Tootsie Rolls from the Cambridge Brands plant at 810 Main St.

The confectionary industry, which at its height in the 1930s employed some 9,000 workers, is among the industries that are the subject of the Cambridge Historical Society's Industry in Cambridge project. One aspect of that project involves interviews with the men and women who worked in the candy factories.

Earlier this year, Carmela Cipriano LaConte, now a spry 92 who worked at the Daggett Chocolate Co. as a teenager in the 1930s, told us of her experiences. It was very much a family affair. Her father, Rocco, went to work there sometime after emigrating from Italy in 1913. In the family photograph, Carmela (in the center) is flanked by her sister Teresa (on the left) and their three Montecalvo cousins. Assorted uncles and spouses also worked there.

"It was a nice place to work," Carmela recalled. "We didn't make much, but we enjoyed it." She said that every

morning "when we came in, there was a plate of seconds for us to take."

"I was a feeder, not a dipper," said Carmela, explaining that as the fillings came along on a belt, the "feeders" would arrange them to get the bottoms coated with chocolate. But if they were not properly positioned, the "feeders" would have to roll them right side up — a process she demonstrated with agility, rolling her fingers on the tabletop.



The Cipriano and Montecalvo sisters at Daggett's Chocolates, ca. 1930 (Courtesy of Carmela Cipriano LaConte)

"We really had to work fast because the belt kept moving," she said, adding that "if the belt was slow, you could take your time."

According to Stone's history, the firm began in 1891 as a small retail candy store in Chelsea. After outgrowing several locations in Boston, it moved to Cambridge in 1925.

"Here every working day in the week," according to Stone, "five tons of cocoa beans are roasted and blended with cane sugar and vanilla, producing over nine tons of rich chocolate coating which is used to cover velvety creams, nuts, fruits, and specialties that are packed in 24,000 fancy boxes."

The Daggett building at 400 Main St. was purchased and remodeled by MIT in 1964.

The Industry Project will document the years when Cambridge was a leading manufacturing center in Massachusetts, producing such goods as rubber tires, pianos, carriages, chemicals, furniture, and books. Ongoing reports will be posted on the Society's website, with a final report later this year. Printed publications may follow. Working with the executive director, Gavin W. Kleespies, is CHS editor Michael Kenney (maps and interviews) and interns William Burns (industry research) and Laura Benedict (photographs).

## Support Your City's History

Become a Member of the Cambridge Historical Society

Single	\$35	_____	Dana Fellow	\$100	_____	Sponsor	\$250	_____
Family	\$60	_____	Family Dana Fellows	\$150	_____	Benefactor	\$500	_____

Make checks payable to the Cambridge Historical Society and mail, with name, address, phone, and email for you and the recipient of your gift membership (if applicable), to 159 Brattle St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

## Modernist Tour

By Cynthia Brennan

The Cambridge Historical Society was invited to participate in Historic New England's walking tour of Modern architecture in Cambridge on May 12. One of the highlights was the Baker House on MIT's campus.



Baker House's façade on the Charles

Designed by Alvar Aalto and constructed in 1947-1949, the brick exterior is a clear reference to Scandinavian Modernism. Aalto placed deformed and burned bricks at intervals throughout the surface, giving an interesting texture and movement to the building's surface. The undulating façade gives each room a view up or down the Charles River, not just across it, and creates unique floor plans in each room. The dining hall is constructed with sharper angles and more industrial materials, contrasting sharply with those of the main dormitory. Along the roof of the hall, playful lights hang over



The Dining Hall of Baker House

moonlights to ensure plenty of light enters this common space. Aalto also designed the furniture, and the original bent plywood chairs are still used.

## Countercultural Sea *(continued)*

There was a lot of exciting movement and heresy out there, and who knew where it might lead? The paper's job was to offer some journalistic help.

The *Old Mole* published 47 issues from September of 1968 to September of 1970, mostly out of a storefront and basement office at 2 Brookline Street in Central Square. The first issue covered, among many other things, the demonstrations at the Democratic Party's National Convention in Chicago; the last, the Black Panther Party's Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. About half the coverage was local. The masthead ("staff of the *Old Mole*, an anti-profit institution") listed 20 to 30 people who had worked on a given issue of the paper, none with ranks or titles. I don't think there were ever more than four paid staff (at something like \$140 a month). Most of the staff had other jobs; they also got free bundles of the paper to sell on the street. Most were college graduates, some from local schools, others who had gravitated to Boston from elsewhere. A few were high school or college students or dropouts or grad students. They were about half female and half male, and almost all were white.

The paper circulated by subscription, street vendor sales, and newsstand and bookstore sales. The cover price was "15¢ cheap" for the early issues, 25¢ later on. Subs were free to prisoners and soldiers, and there were quite a few APO and FPO addresses on our list. The subs to soldiers and sailors went out inside a brown wrapper; letters we got back often said the paper provided the only touch of sanity in their lives. Press runs were about 8,000-10,000, as best I can recall. Donations as well as sales supported the paper.

The only issue that had a second printing was the one in which we reprinted letters and memos liberated during the 1969 student strike that described Harvard's CIA links and its



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administration's duplicity in trying to get around student and eventually faculty pressure to end its ROTC program. Two printings of that issue sold out. "But how can we know these files are authentic?" asked reporters from what we called the straight, or bourgeois, or pig press. A few months later, Daniel Ellsberg started copying the Pentagon Papers. Two years later, after six years of growing antiwar organizing and education, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* finally printed those truths about the war. The underground press, including the *Old Mole*, had something to do with that.

Thanks to Dick Cluster, the CHS now holds a collection of *Old Mole* issues, including those issued during the 1969 Harvard Strike. Cluster's donation augments an earlier one from Paul Buffone of Worcester.

Dick Cluster is a writer, Spanish-English translator, and teacher. He is the author of three detective novels all set partly in Cambridge and, most recently of *The History of Havana* (with Rafael Hernández); he is associate director of the University Honors Program at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. He lives in North Cambridge.

# Spring Benefit: Printed in Cambridge

We would like to thank Alexandria Real Estate Equities for hosting our spring gala, Ambit Press for donating the printing of the invitations, our four speakers, and the businesses and individuals whose support made the event a success.

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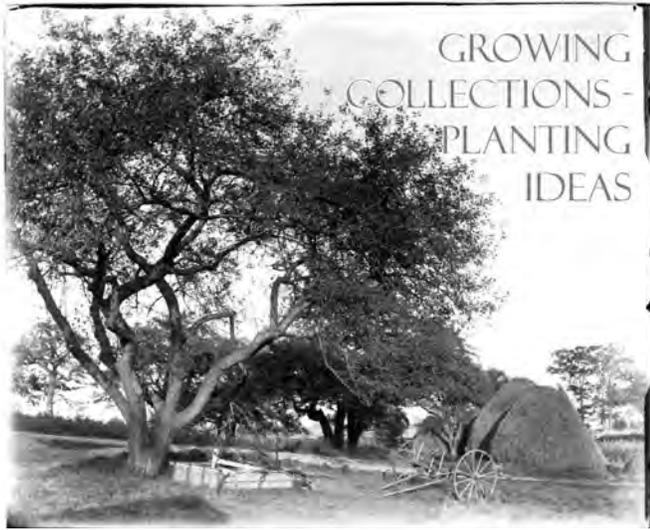
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The Cambridge Historical Society, the Longfellow National Historic Site, Mount Auburn Cemetery, and the Cambridge Historical Commission invite you to our Open Archives tour.

You will have a chance to see examples of rare, original material

from our collections of manuscripts, photographs, and ephemera.

This program will focus on the changing landscapes and horticultural diversity of our sites and our city. Following the presentations, there will be time for questions and comments.

Due to the fragile material, space is limited and reservations required. Please visit [www.cambridgearchives.org/OpenArchives.html](http://www.cambridgearchives.org/OpenArchives.html) for details and to register.

If you have questions, contact us at [info@cambridgehistory.org](mailto:info@cambridgehistory.org).

**CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

*The Hooper-Lee-Nichols House*

159 Brattle Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Return Service Requested

The year 2010 has been good thus far for the Cambridge Historical Society, and the summer is looking even better. We had a packed house for our screening of the film *Perkins 28* and our joint program with the New England Folk Music Archives was standing room only. A few weeks later, the Dana Fellows tour of Frank Shirley's Hartwell and Richardson house in Cambridgeport was a great hit, and we've received rave reviews of the Spring Benefit program on printing in Cambridge.

Speaking of printing in Cambridge, our publication on the history of the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House is currently in production and will be mailed to all of our members, thanks to the generous support of the Cambridge Savings Bank.

We will be hosting an exhibit on the legacy of George Washington in June and July and have a full calendar of exciting events coming up. I hope to see you at our Open Archives program or on our tours for the Cambridge Discovery Days in August. Watch the calendar on our website, [www.cambridgehistory.org](http://www.cambridgehistory.org), for further details.



Jinny Nathans, President

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