

Williamstown Historical Museum

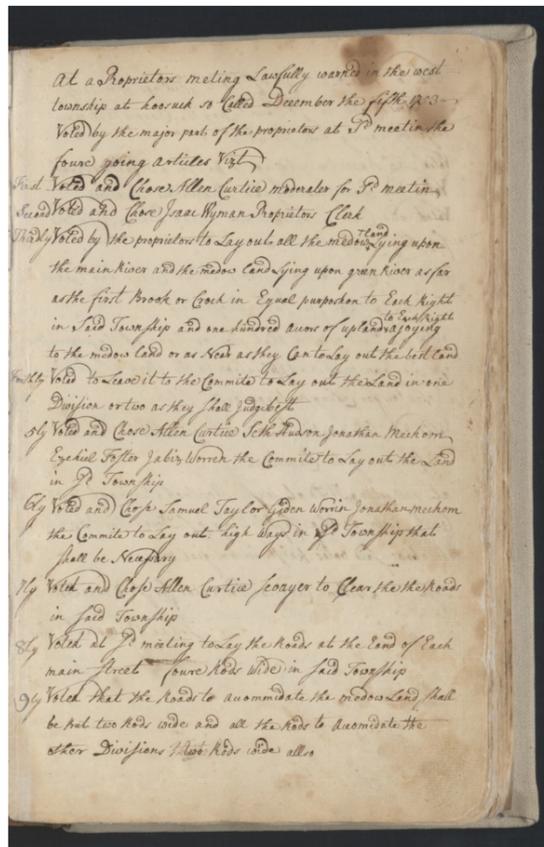
Newsletter

Williamstown, Massachusetts

Summer 2016

Update from the Museum

By Sarah Currie



Page from the Proprietors Book detailing the first town meeting, held on December 5, 1753.

As members and friends of the Museum, many of you know a great deal about what the Williamstown Historical Museum does, but I'd like to give you a deeper look into what your support has permitted. In 1994 we were designated the "Official Custodian of Town Artifacts" at a Special Town Meeting. We take our responsibility seriously and work diligently to preserve and promote Williamstown's history through four primary activities:

1. the presentation of exhibits, 2. hosting free public pro-

From the Museum continued on page 2

Fun Facts from Cable Mills History!



The A. Loop & Co., c. 1873

- The site was occupied by a factory from 1873 to 1996. It then was a space for businesses, and now is being reincarnated as apartments.
- The first factory on the site opened in 1873 and manufactured mainly twine. It was called A. Loop & Co. Several influential residents of Williamstown were involved in this mill, including Dr. Hopkins' son, Mark Hopkins Jr., and the president of the College at the time, Paul Chadbourne. Chadbourne believed himself to be a talented businessman, and so Dr. Hopkins felt it would be a good career for his son. Unfortunately, Chadbourne's reputation for business was rather short-lived, as the mill closed by 1883.
- The next factory to occupy the site was the Boston Finishing Co., which had some very ingenious employees. One, in 1900, was awarded a patent for a device he called a holder, which could be used both to hold fire extinguishers and milk cows, and could additionally function as a wagon brake.
- Baseball was a popular pastime throughout the history of the mill site, and *Transcript* newspaper articles detail how the mill's team alternated between a rivalry with the local high school team, and recruiting their players.

Cable Mills continued on page 4

From the Museum, continued

grams, 3. maintaining a collection of historic artifacts, and 4. conserving the artifacts in our collection.

Our collection consists of a vast archive of historically valuable and singular works as well as ephemera, maps, news clippings and larger objects, all focused on the town's residents, institutions and businesses. These research materials are used frequently and we fulfill nearly 100 research requests a year. We maintain and continually update our online collections database, which is tapped into on a regular basis by interested folks looking to find images of pieces from our collection.

Our conservation work has been a town wide effort, using, in part, CPA Funds after a vote by residents at town meeting. In 2015 we were able to carry out a project to conserve and digitize Williamstown's Proprietors Book, one of the town's most significant records, dating from 1753. With town support, we have started our third conservation project of the historic Southworth anniversary album of photographic portraiture.

These oil portraits are of two notable South Williamstown residents: Nathan Rossiter, (1756 -1829) and Hannah Tuttle Rossiter (1758 - 1824). They are wonder-



Nathan Rossiter, Esq.

ful examples of how captures portraiture real representations of individuals. Nathan Rossiter and Hannah Tuttle lived in South Williamstown in the early 19th century. Nathan served as the third postmaster in Williamstown and his name appears frequently as a witness to deeds and other legal documents in town.

According to the appraiser's report, based on the ages of the couple at the time the portraits were painted, it is likely they were done between 1810 and 1820. Both sitters are attired in fashions typical of the period.

In 1810 Nathan and Hannah lost their two sons, Timothy and Nathan within a month of each other, which may account for the mourning clothes worn by Hannah. However, women often wore black dresses for formal portraits. We are unsure of the artists, but it is possible that the portrait of Hannah may have been executed by a firm such as Waldo and Jewett of New York, while Nathan's may have been done by a lesser known portrait artists of the period, such as John Vanderlyn or John Wesley Jarvis. These portraits came from folks like you. For instance, three brothers who were selling one of their family's homes on Martha's Vineyard decided that these portraits of their ancestors had to come home to Williamstown.

The album featured on the next page is a splendid example of late 19th century photographic portraiture. A far cry from the Rossiter portraits, but no less precious, the cabinet cards and cartes de visite on the pages within the album are breathtaking.

Created in 1875 for Sumner and Emily Southworth's 50th wedding anniversary, the album is a virtual social register of Williamstown at the time it was assembled. The Southworths were very prominent citizens,



Hannah Tuttle Rossiter

residing on Main Street almost across from the Methodist Church for which they provided much of the funding for construction. The celebration for their anniversary was held on April 9, 1875, in the Methodist Church and nearly 400 guests were said to have attended.

Sumner made a name for himself by investing in the Walley Mill and later the Station Mill. Sumner and Emily served as stand in parents for a number of town children and paid for their education. These were exceptional citizens whose album is a window through which

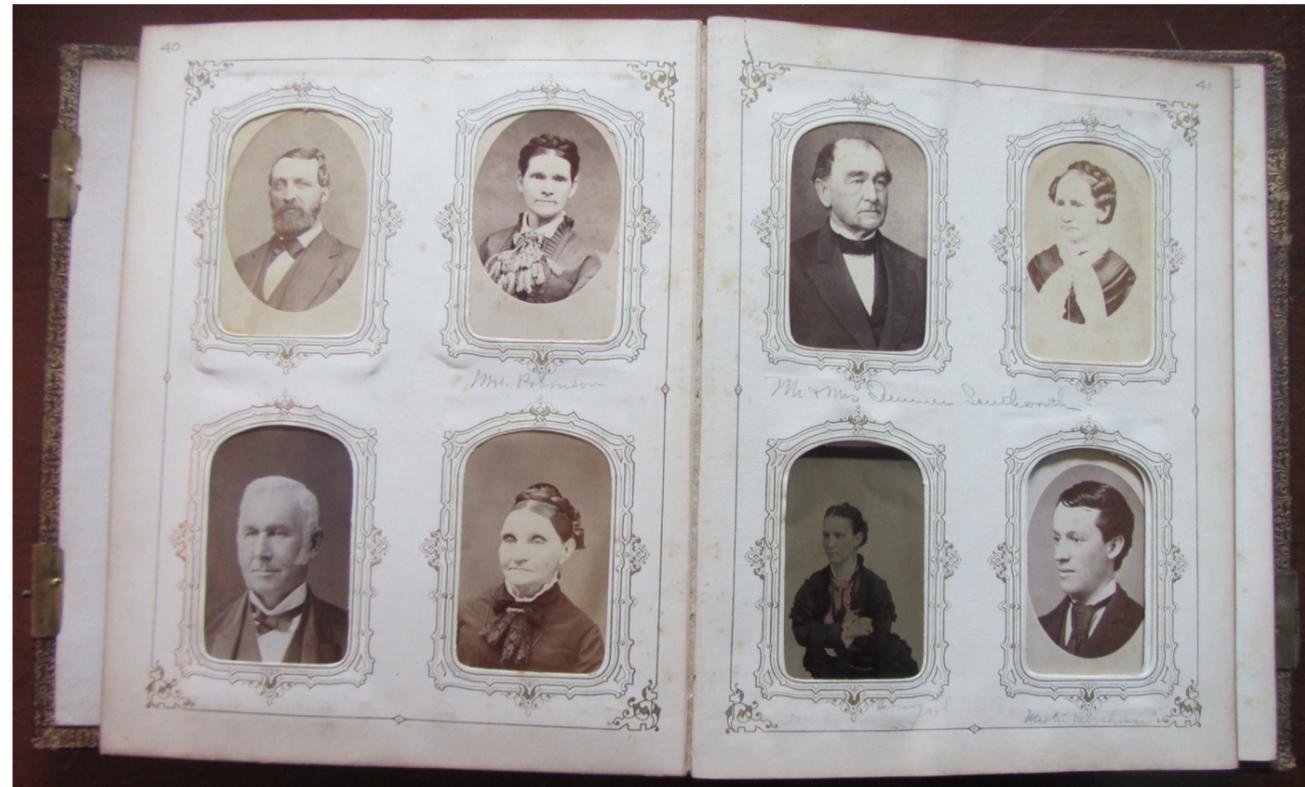
to view the town's history.

The objects in our collection are varied and unique and their preservation is of utmost importance. Preserving and putting the town's historic objects on display is a critical part of our mission, and soon our wonderful collection will have a new home at the South Center School in South Williamstown. The School will serve as our headquarters and will house offices, collections, permanent and rotating exhibits, a children's room and combined research and program room.

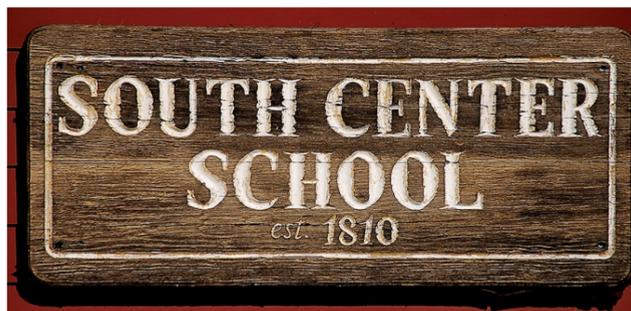
As plans progress, we will be sure to update you,

and, if you have any questions, please email us at info@williamstownhistoricalmuseum.org or call us: 413-458-2160.

As we envision life at the South Center School we see ourselves making the Williamstown Historical Museum the center of a constellation of activities generating excitement about Williamstown's history. We will continue to emerge as Williamstown's history center, a vibrant community resource, connected to multiple constituencies, serving as a repository of memories and a framework for observing our lives today.



Above, page spreads from the Southworths' Golden Wedding Anniversary album of historic photographic portraiture, 1875. Sumner and Emily are at the top of the right hand page. Below, sign from the historic South Center School and the South Center School, c. 1900.



Currently located in the Milne Public Library
1095 Main Street, Williamstown, MA 01267
413-458-2160
info@williamstownhistoricalmuseum.org

Hank Flynt Reflections

By Nancy Burstein

I first met Hank Flynt in 1985 when I became curator of the Williamstown House of Local History (now Williamstown Historical Museum). I was familiar with Williamstown, as I live just over the border in Petersburg, N.Y. I was also familiar with local history, having worked on several projects involving Petersburg local history. What I didn't know, was Williamstown's history.

Enter Hank Flynt, a long-time resident, and a driving force behind the construction of the 1753 House and other Bicentennial activities. He was head of Financial Aid at Williams. Hank welcomed me with his inimitable graciousness and immediately connected me to others involved in Williamstown's local history, and pointed me in directions to begin my learning.

I remember with pleasure the climb up the tower of Thompson Chapel he organized for a group of us,



Henry Flynt with one of his many antique bicycles, c. 1974

with the amazing panoramic view of the town from the top. Then there was a delightful day-trip with him, as a member of one of the groups he treated to tours of Historic Deerfield, including lunch.

I tremendously appreciate all he did to help the museum (far too numerous to list here), but I particularly enjoyed our connection and his friendliness when we happened to meet at various places in town: in the lobby at Williamstown Theatre Festival performances, at a Clark members' event, or on the lawn at an outdoor band concert. Hank seemed to be everywhere. I especially enjoyed the tour of his beautiful, historic house on South Street.

Thoughts of him return in all these locations, and every time I drive around the 1753 House which means I think of him often. He made me feel welcome and a part of the town, a special gift to a shy introvert! I miss you, Hank, but am pleased to see you living on in so many town organizations and activities. Thank you for everything!



"Bosses at the Bleachery"

Boston Finishing Works, date unknown

(L-R) Manny George, H. H. Heap (owner), Tom Green, Arthur Vallencourt, E. E. Cartwright, Jim Green, Dr. Goldwait, Hawkins, Bill Madden, Louis Evans, Jim Gibbs, Kirkman

Cable Mills continued

- During the occupancy of the Boyd Company, from 1912-1930, *The Transcript* excitedly reported that the company expected to have the "Williamstown high twirler on the mound" once the high school season ended.
- Another company (Cornish Wire) contributed to the war effort during WWII. A young private wrote to his father, who was employed at Cornish, that they were using his wire at the front, in switchboards and other communication equipment. Cornish Wire was present at the mill from 1936 to 1960. Later, office space was leased to a number of local businesses.



Cable Mills during construction and as it appears today, looking from the north parking lot toward the main entry. Color photos courtesy of Traggoth Companies.

250 Years Together

First Church and Williamstown

By Moira Jones

In 1740, the Great Awakening began shaking congregations to their roots both in England and in the Colonies. Among the topics of heated debate was the question of whether a person whose parents had not both been members of a church could become a member.

It may have been a reaction to these spiritually unsettling times, that drove the General Assembly of the



First meetinghouse, 1768-1798

Commonwealth of Massachusetts to pass legislation requiring that each town have a "settled and learned pastor" in order to incorporate in Massachusetts. The first proprietors tried many times to obtain a pastor and spent a great deal of money on that task. In connection they built a meeting house in the town square.

In July of 1765 they had luck. The Rev. Whitman Welch, Yale College class of 1763, was called to be the first pastor of the Congregational Church in Williamstown, thus fulfilling the requirement for the incorporation of the Village of West Hoosick into the town of Williamstown. Rev. Welch served until May 4, 1775, when he sold his farm to accompany the Williamstown volunteers leaving

town to fight in the Revolution. He died of smallpox in prison in Quebec in 1776.

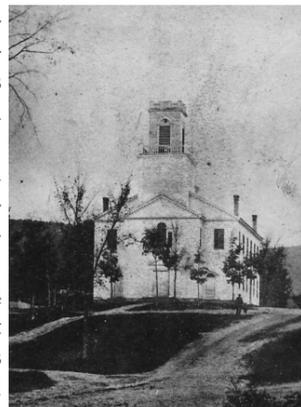
The next major event in the Church's history is the Haystack Prayer Meeting held on a Saturday in August, 1806. The significance of the haystack prayer meeting was revealed a few years later after Samuel Mills and James Richards (Williams alumni) enrolled at Andover Theological Seminary. Joined by other enthusiastic seminarians, in 1810, they convinced the General Association of Congregational Ministers to form The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

The Rev. Ralph Gridley was the fourth pastor. Called in 1816, he was the first pastor to be paid by the congregation, rather than by the town and his service ended with a disagreement between Gridley and Williams College president, Edward Dorr Griffin.

This first recorded instance of town-gown discord centers on a key component of the Great Awakening: the revival meeting. In 1834 President Griffin felt that public display of emotions should be discouraged, and sermons should be read. Rev. Gridley felt that emotional displays were a natural part of a revival, and that sermons were best delivered extemporaneously. This disagreement eventually resulted in Gridley's resignation. He headed



Haystack Monument



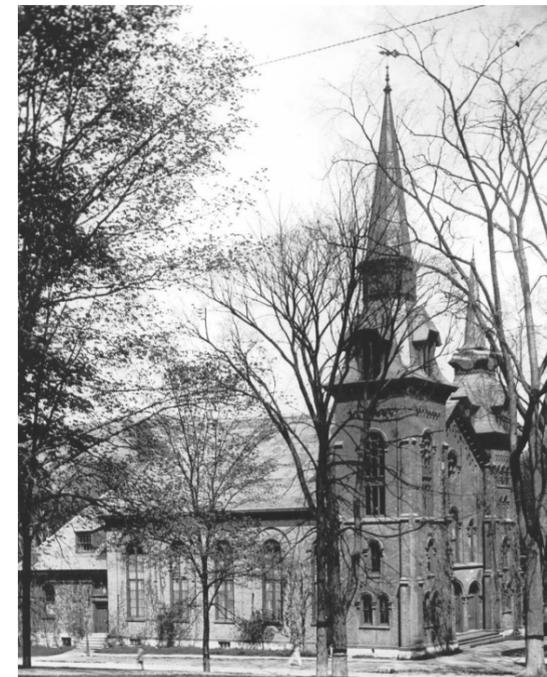
Second meetinghouse on the east end of what is now known as Field Park at the intersection of North, South and Main Streets. Built in 1798, it remained at this location until it burned in 1866.

west to establish missions on the frontier.

At the end of 1849 Samuel Harrison arrived in Pittsfield to become the first pastor of the Second Congregational Church, a mostly black Congregation. Immediately after arriving in the Berkshires from New Jersey, Harrison decided to go to a Berkshire Association meeting held in Williamstown in 1850. Harrison was ordained in the First Congregational Church in Williamstown, which was large enough for such an event. Rev. Harrison is best known for winning equal pay for black soldiers in the Civil War.

There were five pastors called between the resignation of Rev. Gridley and the time the Rev. Mason Noble came as an interim in 1865. Noble, the only pastor to have been brought up in this church, came to serve his native Church in its centennial year, only to watch it burn to the ground three months after the celebration.

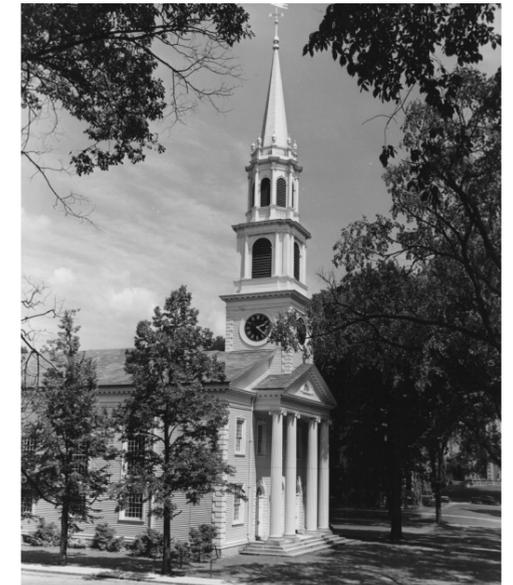
The "New Congregational Church" was built in 1869, of brick to discourage future fires. It was designed by Charles Rathbun of Pittsfield. The College gave a sub-



The New Congregational Church, built in 1869.

stantial sum to ensure that it would be large enough to hold its annual ceremonies. The Church spent all the money they raised to build this Church. And Professor Albert Hopkins volunteered to serve as pastor without pay until his death in 1872.

When the College received the gift to build Chapin Hall in 1910, it decided it no longer needed the auditorium at the Church. The Church debated building a new building on a new site, but decided against it. Three years later, Robert Cluett presented a plan whereby the Church could renovate to make the Church appear Georgian in style, in keeping with the new buildings at the



The First Congregational Church on Main Street as it appears today.

College. The idea was to replace the two brick steeples with a single spire, and wrap the entire structure with clapboard. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cluett paid the cost of the renovation. The following year, the 150th celebration was an extravagant affair, taking up an entire weekend of October 1915.

After being re-incorporated in 1934, there came a turbulent period when the Church wrestled with the question of independence versus solidarity. The Church chose first to join, then leave, then rejoin an organization that would eventually become the United Church of Christ.

In the 1970's there was an experiment where the three congregational churches in town hired a minister in common.

Currently, the church has called a new pastor, Rev. Mark Longhurst, and is heading into the three hundredth year as a community organization dedicated to improving the Northern Berkshires.



The current WHM exhibit, 250 Years Together, First Church and Williamstown, curated by Moira Jones, features a number of artifacts from the church.

Williamstown Historical Museum

NAME(S) _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____

JOIN or RENEW your MEMBERSHIP

Mail to: Williamstown Historical Museum
1095 Main Street
Williamstown, MA 01267

I would like information about:

Volunteering

Sponsoring a gift membership

ENCLOSED is my membership contribution for:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other

The President's Note

"Don't know much about history..." This is true for most of us, not because we are ignorant or unwilling to learn, but because there is so much of it. The more we know, it has often been said, the more we come to understand what we don't know.

I would argue that a good place to begin learning about history is right here where you live. You can start almost anywhere along the continuum (even before 1753 when the Proprietors met for the first time) and find some fascinating historical tidbit. If you are saying to yourself, "Stop right there! What do you mean by the 'Proprietors?'" then you have found an almost magical entry point to begin to learn more about your town. Do you ever wonder who all those people were whose names are found on every other Williamstown street corner? Each represents a distinguished local family with its own amazing story to tell.

The Williamstown Historical Museum, its permanent exhibition, temporary displays, rich archives, and lively free programs have all been created to help you find the answer to these questions and others of your own devising. Please drop by and join in the fun!



Pat Leach, Board President



The Origins of Field Park

Excerpted from *Williamstown the First 250 Years*

"1875—Cyrus W. Field, it was reported today, has given the town the sum of five thousand dollars to be used in beautifying the Main Street, provided that all the fences are pulled down. This will be a hard blow to poor men and college students. Poor men have pastured their cows, hogs and geese on Main Street since time out of mind. College boys have badgered the cows and stolen the geese as long as man's memory runs. The pulling down of the fences may beautify the scenery but it will force the cows, hogs and geese to seek pasture elsewhere and deny the college boys of a principle pastime. Property owners will insist that the cows, hogs and geese be removed before their fences."



The South Center School, located on Rt. 7, at 32 New Ashford Road will soon be our new home. We look forward to sharing it with you in the near future!

A new addition to the collection: Sand Springs Famous Summer Drink Recipes!

THE ANALYSIS OF THE WATER OF SAND SPRINGS IN WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS.

Grains per United States gallon

Lithium Chloride	0.0353
Sodium Chloride	0.0768
Acid Calcium Carbonate	3.2249
Acid Magnesium Carbonate	2.6479
Calcium Sulphate	0.7262
Aluminum Sesquioxide	0.0325
Iron Sesquioxide	0.0075
Silica	0.7026
Sodium Carbonate	0.1611
7.9178	

**Sand Springs Corporation
Williamstown, Mass.**

The water comes from a half mile down

CURRENT PUNCH

2 cups currant jelly	Juice of 3 oranges
1 pint boiling water	Juice of 2 lemons
¼ cup sugar	Sand Springs Mineral Water

Whip currant jelly to a froth, add the boiling water and the sugar, orange juice and lemon juice. Chill and serve diluted with Sand Springs Mineral Water and garnish with halved slices of orange. This makes about 3 pints.

RASPBERRY PUNCH

1½ cups juice from canned raspberries	½ cup sugar
½ cup lemon juice	3 thin slices cucumber
1 cup orange juice	1 quart Sand Springs Vichy

Mix the fruit juices, sugar and a little grated orange rind. Add cucumber, rind left on, and let it stand in the refrigerator for several hours. Strain, mashing the cucumber a little and add the Sand Springs Vichy. Serve with cracked ice. Fresh raspberry juice may be used in place of the canned, in which case a little more sugar may be needed. Makes 1½ quarts.

SAND SPRINGS in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts is one of Nature's rare gifts to America. The earliest history of Williamstown tells us that the Indians of the Five Tribes traveled many miles to drink the water of this now famous Sand Springs. It is a thermal spring having a temperature of 76 degrees the year round.

Bubbling up from "a half mile down in the earth," filtered by Nature's sand and gravel, this water comes to you sparkling, clear and marvelously pure—and carrying in solution an alkaline mineral content which is of real value to the human system.

Sand Springs Water is used exclusively in the manufacture of ALL Sand Springs products.

The formula for Sand Springs Ginger Ale was originated by Dr. S. Louis Lloyd in 1894, and has remained our carefully guarded secret—so that Sand Springs Ginger Ale is the wonderfully pure, refreshing, different beverage that he created so many years ago. This, plus the finest ingredients purchasable, blended with the mildly alkaline natural water of Sand Springs, makes a Ginger Ale of true quality and distinction—**and it costs no more.**

Sand Springs Ginger Ale
is always a sparkling toast to

GOOD HEALTH
and
GOOD TASTE

Williamstown Historical Museum

1095 Main Street, Williamstown, MA 01267