

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Gail A. Pinna, Secretary

The commission's prime objective is still to preserve our local artifacts. We are again grateful for the many donations we received during the past year.

In April and October, Dr. Carole Owens spoke and did a book signing. April's subject was "The Berkshire Cottages" and in October it was "Coach Inns to Cottages." The Friends of the Dalton Free Public Library co-sponsored both events with us.

Also in April, the commission toured old Dalton High School. Wanting to preserve the façade of the old structure at least, a petition was presented to the Select Board regarding the placement of our museum, and requested the question be placed as an warrant article at the May Town Meeting.

Members came before the Dalton Community Cable Association, Inc., showing pictures of local interest and many buildings now gone. We also conveyed our reasons for the Historical Museum being placed in the Library should it move to a new location, and also urged the town to save the Dalton High School building. In October the Select Board voted to save at least the façade of the building.

Members have been doing extensive research on many areas, such as Gulf Road (Wizard's Glen), the Hoose property, the Main Street Cemetery, a local quarry, Dalton in the Civil War and the Dalton branch of the Mass. State Guard, Co. 5.

Information was also given to the Select Board regarding the Elm Street section of town. A party was interested in buying a parcel of land bordering the Housatonic River. We were concerned about this as the Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area is still working to have Congress designate this area as a National Heritage Area. Members have met with the Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail. This group will encompass all of Berkshire County; hopefully we may find more information regarding the Underground Railroad going through the Gulf Road.

At our annual Christmas dinner the commission honored Mary Jane Caliento who retired from the commission after forty years of service to the town. The commission presented Mary Jane with a plaque. The Select Board sent a framed Certificate of Appreciation and Shaun Kelly sent a citation from the House of Representatives. Mary Jane will still be an associate member and her constant work with this commission is invaluable. George White has been appointed to fill the vacancy on the commission. The commission welcomes George with his known interest in the history of Dalton and his vast knowledge of the Dalton cemeteries.

We have a seven member Historical Commission and ten associates. We do welcome more associates, so anyone interested may come to one of our meetings. We meet on every second Tuesday of the Month at 6:30 p.m. in the Crane Room at the Town Hall. All meetings are open to the public. Some of us also meet on Thursdays at the Historical Commission Room.

Finishing the year, the Historical Commission and the Beautification Commission again combined their efforts for the Light up the Holidays walk. Both groups placed pictures of the town at Banknorth.

To paraphrase Charles Dickens, *the only thing duller than a person who knows nothing, is one who only knows of one thing to talk about.* You will not find that with the Historical Commission, so if you are interested in

the history of Dalton or have something that you may want to contribute, please give us a call 684-6111 Ext. 35.

Fund raiser this year is a 2005 calendar.



Some friends and members of the Historical Commission during 2004 Light Up the Holidays: l to r: Mary Bartlett, Mary Walsh, Gail A. Pinna, Carolina Galliher, Louisa Horth, Mary Jane Caliento, and Mary Ellen Shea