Swansea Historical Society Newsletter

The Preservationist

Founded 1941

SWANSEA, MASSACHUSETTS swanseahistoricalsociety.org FALL 2026

Writings of Emma Lenora Borden

Emma Lenora Borden (1851-1927), older sister of Lizzie Andrew Borden (1860-1927), spent several years of her life writing poems, bible verses and thoughts about life.

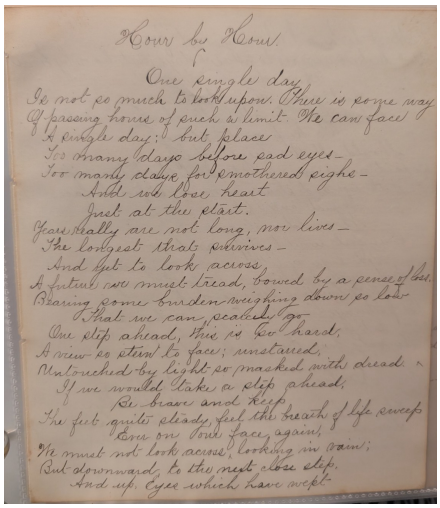
The Swansea Historical Society was willed a series of writings of Emma Lenora Borden from the estates of Henry Gardner and his son Orrin Gardner in 1943. Orrin Gardner was a cousin to Lizzie and Emma Borden.

Through the years, Orrin, Emma and Lizzie were said to be very close. Emma was waked from Orrin Gardner's home at Riverby here in Swansea.

We wanted to share some of Emma's writings with you.

Hour by Hour

One single day
Is not so much to look upon. There is some way
Of passing hours of such a limit. We can face
A single day; but place
Too many days before sad eyes -
Too many days for smothered sighs -
And we lose heart
Just at the start.
Years really are not long, nor lives -
The longest that survives -
And yet to look across
A future we must tread, bowed by a sense of loss.
Bearing some burden weighing down so low
That we can scarcely go
One step ahead, this is so hard,
A view so stern to face; unstarred,
Untouched by light so masked with dread.
If we would take a step ahead,
Be brave and keep
The feet quite steady, feel the breath of life sweep
Ever on your face again,
We must not look across, looking in vain;
But downward, to the next close step.
And up, Eyes which have wept


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Is not so much to look upon. There is some way
Of passing hours of such a limit. We can face
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A Riddle

A great many years ago a prominent merchant in Taunton promised to an eccentric old woman, named Lucy King, living in the neighboring town of Berkley, a desirable prize, if taking her subject from the Bible, she would compose a riddle which he could not guess.

She won the prize with the following:

...continued on page 4

Swansea Historical Society SCC/COA Talks

The Swansea Historical Society continues its monthly presentations at the Swansea Community Center/Council on Aging.

July had an informative talk about Swansea and its ties to the Revolutionary War.

The August presentation discussed 19th Century Shoe Making. Lots of items were on display from tools to shoe molds.

In September, Bob Cembrola returned for another fascinating talk on the Battle of Point Judith.

October welcomed Dennis Binette, assistant museum curator of the Fall River Historical Society, for a talk on Lizzie Borden and her connection to Swansea. Orrin Gardner, cousin to the Bordens, willed several Borden family items to the Swansea Historical Society. Some of those items were on display. The event attendance was our largest yet.

November's talk will be on the Gardner family and their role in the economic growth of the Town of Swansea.

Many of these presentations have been recorded by Swansea Cable Access and the links to the videos can be found on our website.

SHS Elects Officers

The Swansea Historical Society held its Annual Meeting on October 4th at the Swansea Community Center.

A group of about 20 members gathered to hear an update of the Luther Store and a summary of past events, tours and fundraisers.

Future plans were also discussed.

Elections were held to fill the vacancy for Treasurer and three one-year seats on the Executive Board.

Congratulations to Brandon Travers, newly elected SHS Treasurer and new Executive Board members Nancy Allen, Janet Booker and Stephanie Suplido.

85 YEARS Anniversary

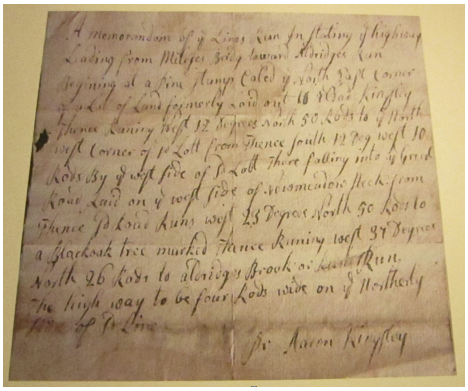
Swansey Colonial Surveyor of Highway

by Russell Easterbrooks

Here is the transcription of a letter to the "Swansey Surveyor of Highway," from Aaron Kingsley. This is not a surveying in the modern sense of mapping, but an overseer of colonial roads.

During colonial times, a surveyor of highway was a locally appointed person, usually a 1 year term, responsible for maintaining, repairing and overseeing public roads in a town or county. He was also charged with organizing able-bodied men living near the road who were legally required to help out 6-10 days per year on said roads. Labors were to bring their own tools, wagons and draft animals.

The position of surveyor of highways was local and essential to colonial government road maintenance.



Original letter

Note: This article is the opinion of the author and not The Swansea Historical Society. It is published with his permission.

Transcription:

A memorandum of ye line run in stating ye highway leading from Mileses Bridge towards Aldridge's Run beginning at a pine stump called ye north east corner of a lot of land formerly laid out to ? Kingsley. Thence running west 12 degrees north 50 rods to ye north west corner of ye lot from thence south 12 degrees west 10 rods by ye west side of Jacob there falling into ye great lane laid out on ye west side of Newmeadow Neck. From thence ye road runs west 23 degrees north 50 rods to a black oak tree marked. Thence running west 37 degrees north 26 rods to Aldridge's Brook or ? run. The highway to be four rods wide on ye northerly side of ye line.

Pr. Aaron Kingsley

This letter sounds like they are moving or building a new section of road in Swansey.

I'm suggesting this letter is dated 1750s, with the possible Surveyor of Highway at that time being Hezekiah Luther or Peleg Barney. Unfortunately, records that far back are fractional at best.

An informative sizing names of wet barrels that were used to transport goods by wagons on colonial roads. But instead of weight limits of wagons, colonial limits were enforced by wheel size and axle width of wagons. It was believed narrow wheels damaged roads.

Fall Events

Our annual Pumpkin Patch Event was held on October 17th on the grounds of the Luther Store. It was a blustery day, but we still had many visitors who enjoyed the baked goods, yard sale items, pumpkins, mums, our straw game and the decorated pumpkins contest. The event raised some much needed funds for the Swansea Historical Society.

October 25th brought the always popular Abram's Rock Walk with Professor Paul Cote.

About 60 people met in the parking lot behind the Swansea Town Hall/Library and followed Mr. Cote on the annual trek to the Rock.

The evening of October 25th brought Gothic Tales by Candlelight to the Swansea Community Center. A small group gathered to hear the talented Rita Parisi of Waterfall Productions tell eerie 19th century tales.



Please visit our website at swanseahistoricalsociety.org and click on the "Store" link to see our available items for purchase – t-shirts, coins, mugs, wind spinners, rope bowls and many other items!

Monetary Donations are always accepted and are tax deductible! They can be sent to

The Swansea Historical Society
160 Old Warren Road
Swansea, Massachusetts 02777

New Items

T-shirts & SHS Coins
$25 $20



Upcoming Events

Please visit our website for event details
swanseahistoricalsociety.org

November 18th, 2026
11:00 a.m.
The Gardner Family and Their Role in the Economic Growth of the Town of Swansea
Swansea Community Center

December 6th, 2026
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Visit us @ Swansea COA Holiday Craft Fair
Swansea Community Center

December 19th, 2026
10:00 a.m. – 12 noon
Santa Claus Visits the Luther Store

2026-27 SHS Officers & Board

President – Cheryl Bogle
Vice President – Karen Bowen
Treasurer – Brandon Travers
Acting Secretary – Brandon Travers

Patricia Redfearn
Ruth Ann Liggett
Nancy Allen
Janet Booker
Stephanie Suplido
Kathleen LeBlanc

Holiday Basket Drawing

As part of our fundraising efforts, we have 14 Holiday Baskets available as part of a drawing. Tickets are on sale until our holiday event on December 19th. The drawing will be held at that event.

Tickets are $1.00 each or 6 for $5.00. The baskets are currently on display at the Swansea Council on Aging/Community Center during COA hours.

Our Baskets:

1.
Handmade Basket
Baby throws
3 children's hats
Blue baby sweater

2.
S'mores Basket
Stainless Steel S'more grill
Marshmallows
Hershey's chocolate
Graham crackers



3.
Belgian Chocolate Basket
Mondose Belgian Chocolates
Desobry Belgian Chocolate Covered Cookies
Frontier Merlot wine
Two wine glasses



4.
Stitch Collectable 2026 & More
Stitch Collectable 2026
Baby Stitch
Baby Lilo



5.
Decorative Wooden Boxes
Hand carved wooden box
Box with marble cover
Smart Pocket printer
$100 gift card to Cardi's Furniture



6.
Art Basket
5- Medium canvases
2- Small canvases
2 Boxes of Acrylic paint
Art Brushes

7.
Play-Doh Basket
Play-Doh cash register toy
Play-Doh Rainbow Favors 50 pack



8.
National Geographic Basket
Mega Slime Tar Pit
Slime Kit -glow in the dark

9.
Handmade Basket
2 Throws
Scarf

10.
Sterling Bracelet Basket
1- LeCalla sterling bracelet
2- Handmade bracelet
Lace pocketbook with insert
Elegant scarf
$40 gift card -Nails on First

11.
Dog Basket
Old Mother Hubbard's biscuits
Two Bully Bows Bow tie collars large and medium
Two ceramic dog bowls
Nylabone
Pet wipes
Photo of a Jack Russell in the fog by Ellen Waxman

12.
Two Puzzle Basket & Goodies
Kodak 3000 collection puzzle & poster
Parragon floor puzzle "Busy City" 46 large pieces
Two Mugs
Ghirardelli Hot Chocolate
Orville Redenbacher popcorn and popcorn oil

13.
Grill Basket
2 – Bottles Dinosaur BBQ sauce
Flip basket
Stainless steel knife set
Grill mitts & Grill claws

14.
Four Puzzle Basket
Three National Geographic puzzles
One New Yorker Puzzle
Three boxes of French short bread cookies
Two boxes of Taylor tea - Chamomile & Black Tea

Writings of Emma Lenora Borden

A Riddle

Adam God made out of dust,
But thought it best to make me first;
So I was made before the man,
To answer God's most holy plan.

My body God did make complete,
But without arms, or legs, or feet;
My ways and acts he did control,
But to my body gave no soul.

A living being I became,
And Adam gave to me my name;
I from his presence then withdrew,
And more of Adam never knew.

I did my Makers law obey.
Nor from it ever went astray;
Thousands of miles I go in fear,
But seldom on the earth appear.

For purpose wise, which God did, see,
He put a living soul in me,
A soul from me my God did claim,
And look from me that soul again.

For when from me the soul had fled,
I was the same as when first made;
And without hands, or feet or soul
I travel on from pole to pole.

I labor hard by day and night;
To fallen man I give great light;
Thousands of people, young and old,
Will by my death great light behold.

No right nor wrong can I conceive,
The Scriptures I cannot believe,
Although my name therein is found,
They are to me an empty sound.

No fear of death doth trouble me,
Real happiness I ne'er shall see,
To heaven I shall never go,
Or to the grave or hell below.

Now when these lines you slowly read,
Go search your Bible with all speed,
For that my name's recorded there,
I honestly to you declare.

continued from page 1:

Answer to Lucy King's Riddle.

God made the whale before the man;
"To answer his most holy plan."
It needed neither arms nor feet
To make its body quite complete.

A soul it had when Jonah's grave
Was made within its mighty cave;
The whale it had a soul not more
When it cast Jonah on the shore.

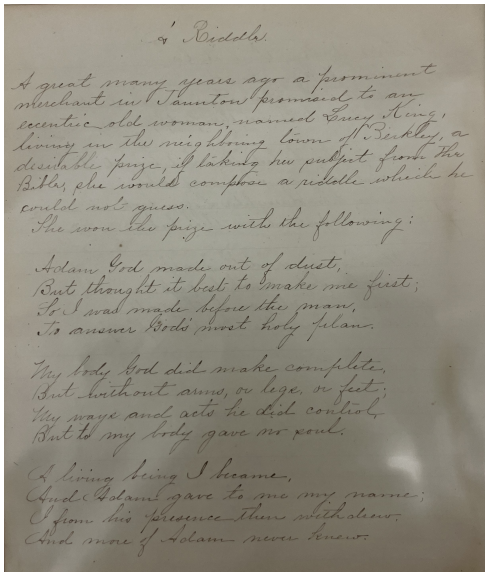
Thousands of people, young and old,
"Will by my death great light behold;"
If this be true, I must affirm
It is because they use the sperm.



Emma Lenora Borden
Photo borrowed from Find-a-Grave memorial for Emma



Emma and Lizzie Borden
Photo borrowed from Find-a-Grave memorial for Emma



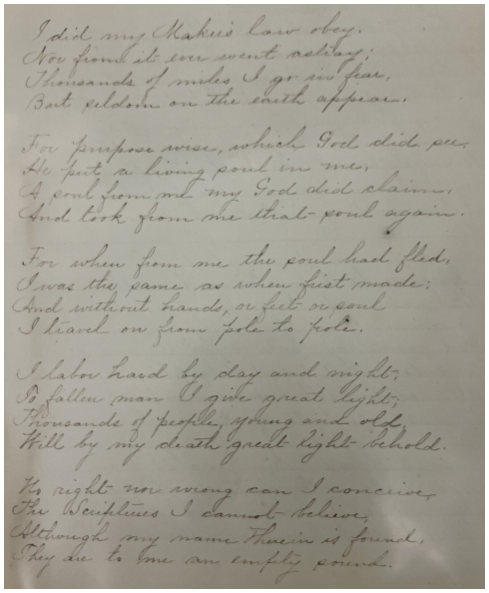
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living in the neighboring town of Berkley, a
desirable prize, if taking her subject from the
Bible, she would compose a riddle which he
could not guess.
She won the prize with the following:

Adam God made out of dust,
But thought it best to make me first;
So I was made before the man,
To answer Gods most holy plan.

My body God did make complete,
But without arms, or legs, or feet;
My ways and acts he did control,
But to my body gave no soul.

A living being I became,
And Adam gave to me my name;
I from his presence then withdrew,
And more of Adam never knew.



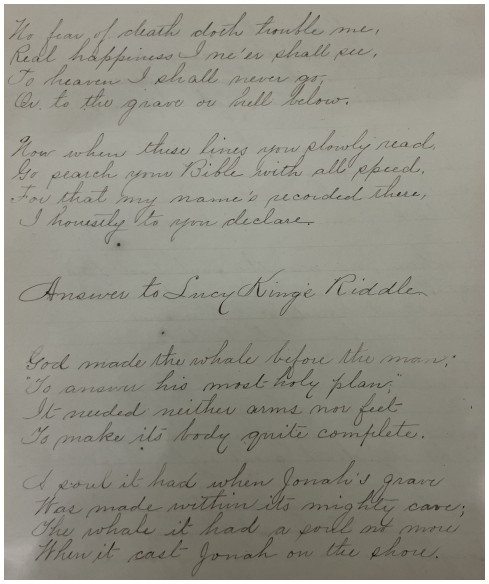
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Nor from it ever went astray;
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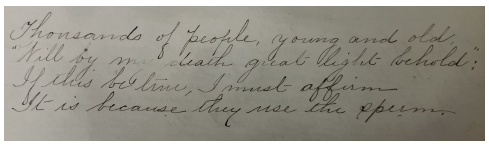
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