

# THE FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM

## Newsletter

Vol. 9, No. 11



November 2023

## SCARECROWS

### TREENAILS . . . .

Oh I can hear it now, “surely he’s not going to write about fastening things to trees”? Of course not. How about fastening things with trees (or least parts of trees)?

Back in the day many buildings were timber frame construction and the large main wooden members (the frame of the building) were held together with wooden pegs. This was detailed in last month’s Heritage Museum Newsletter. If you can’t find your copy let me know and I’ll be glad to send you another.

The gist of the article was that these massive timbers were no better than the small wooden pegs needed to hold them together. You will recall that the making of the peg itself was a labor intensive chore because once cut you had to make it round to form the peg and this involved a good deal of work on a shave horse.



How handy would it be if you could skip this entire step of rounding the peg? What if you just used a square piece of wood and let it hang out the end of the hole? If you did, what you would be using (a square peg) is what is known as a treenail, or trunnel.

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### THANK YOU –

With the closing of this season’s Farmer’s Market on October 27<sup>th</sup>, so ends the weekly opening of the Heritage Museum on Friday afternoons. That does not mean we are closed for the season. The Thanksgiving holiday will soon be here. If you, your relatives or friends are suffering from “turkey bloat” and would like a tour of the museum some afternoon, please call me (547-8320). It is no trouble to walk over and open up for you. That is being said with the caveat, “dress warmly”; the museum is not heated. We would also be glad to open for you on any special occasion during the winter – boots optional depending on snow depth. We are not a slave to shoveling.

The staff does want to thank all who attended this past year and for the many donations. We received over 50 new exhibit items and are working on how to best present these to our visitors in the coming year. Probably a couple of the most unusual items donated were the 173-year-old tin bathtub and the 160-year-old pedal pump organ. We have already started working on several new exhibits for next year so don’t be strangers in 2024.

This past summer, the Museum has been open concurrent with the Farmers Market. We would also like to thank Pam Avery and Priscilla Martin for getting the Beehive Museum open and more recently Carol Barr who has also assisted visitors. All these entities complement one another and provide our visitors with a wide range of exhibits and interests to explore.

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## TRUNNELS

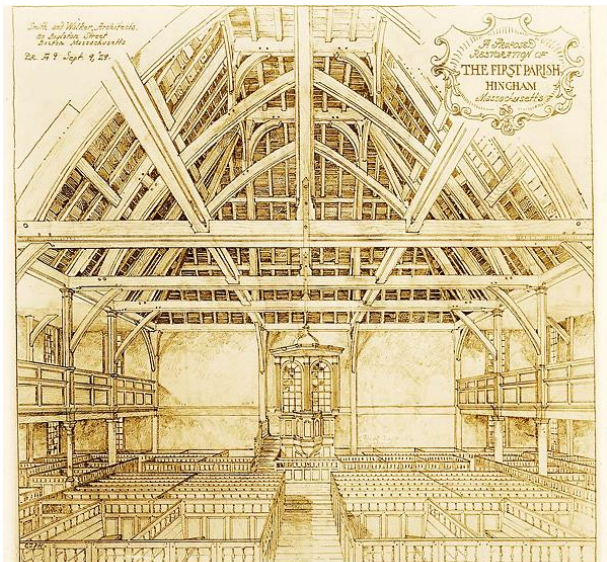
Below is a photo of trunnels being used instead of smooth, round pegs. While they were certainly easier to make we noted that they weren't as esthetic.



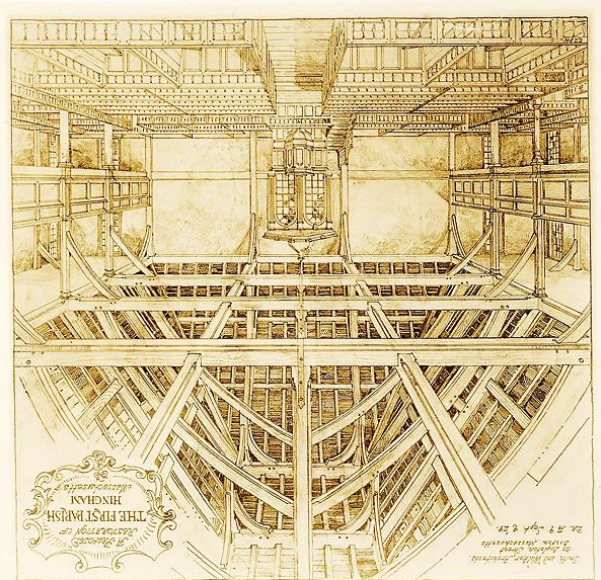
There was some concern that the trunnel was not as strong as it didn't necessarily fill the hole – a real-life example of the proverbial “square peg in a round hole”.

OK, so trunnels were ugly and lacked strength as compared to the round peg. But they were easier to make and life was tough back in those days so most things that could be done more easily were good. But surely an application for them could be found.

What you see here is a famous historic church in Hingham, MA. In fact it is the oldest remaining puritan church known to still be in active use.



Now what would you see if you turned this photo upside down?



For our less nautical readers, what you see is the timber frame of a ship's hull. You may never have seen one in real life as not many folks spend a lot of time in a ship's bilge.

Just like the timber frame in a house or barn, the joints of these timbers have to be held together. In a house or barn you would use nice looking round pegs that form a secure joint. In a ship's hull, who cares what it looks like – no need to spend time and energy shaping the square piece of wood into a nice round peg for that. Since the ship's hull is underwater the space inside the hull is always damp so the square piece of wood swells and fills the hole you have driven it into – now it is just as strong a joint as that made with a round peg. What a great use for a trunnel, and there certainly were a lot of wooden ships back in those days.

Thus you see that your worries at the outset of this article about my going on about nailing things to trees was unfounded. Instead you've learned what a trunnel is, what a historic Hingham church looks like upside down and you have also learned why it is a good place for using a trunnel.

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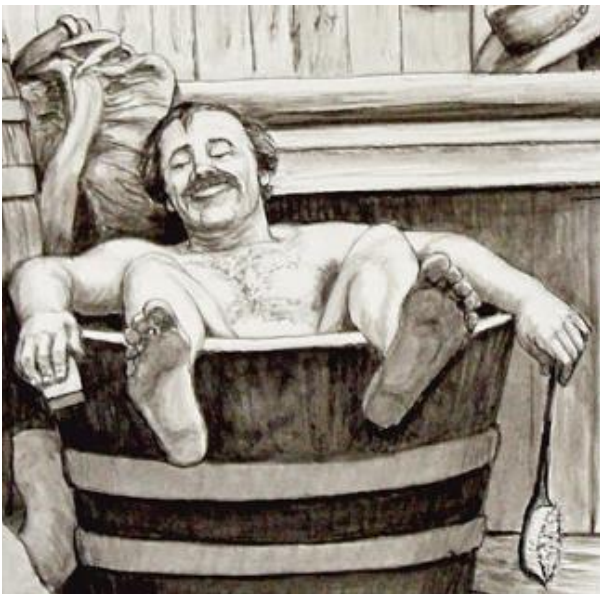


### A VIGNETTE FROM A LIFE WELL LIVED –

A reader in California wrote to us a recollection she had after reading in the July issue of the Heritage Museum Newsletter about the tin bath tub and bathing in times past.

“In Colorado the garden was only for our food, but my dad had cattle to care for and along with my mother that is how we spent our days, herding the cattle, my mother on her horse and I sitting behind her.

Daily cleansing involved pumping water into the kitchen basin to wash hands and whatever needed a quickie. Saturday morning enough water was pumped and put in the huge water heating container on the kitchen wood stove to start getting it warm for weekly afternoon or evening baths. I was somewhere else in the house when my dad and then my mother bathed, but when they were finished I was called for my turn. The water was still warm as the stove had been burning wood ALL day, even on a hot, hot summer day. So that is how it was started in New Hampshire and all the farms across the country (I guess)!! The picture of the man on page 21 wasn't anything I had seen, but



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the little girl's picture on page 5 could have been me! – well without the fancy rug on the floor.”



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Hopefully you have all enjoyed this recollection from the past. The story of a decades ago family ritual that most all of us will never experience.

The above is PART I as the writer sent us a follow up a few days later. We will reprint that in the December issue of the Newsletter. That follow-up also triggered a topic for an accompanying article and a modern day equivalent experience.

Drop me a line ([wfm03043@comcast.net](mailto:wfm03043@comcast.net)) and let me know if you find vignettes such as this interesting.

We enjoy hearing from our readers and would like to encourage everyone to send us recollections from your past. Be they first hand from those of a certain age, or stories that were handed down in your family relating to “how it was”. Ω

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### A CARDIOLOGIST'S DIET:

If it tastes good, spit it out.

- Billy Crystal



(4&5)



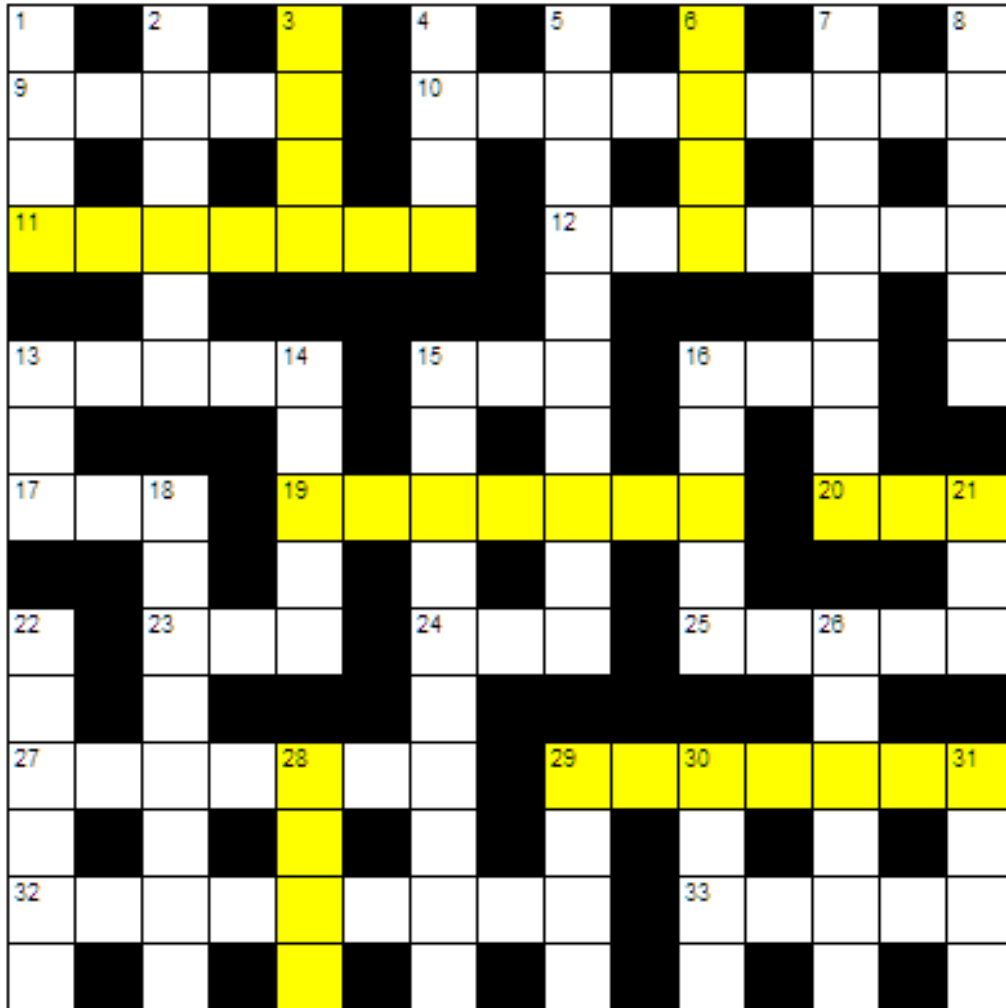
## 2023 HALLOWEEN SCARECROW CONTESTANTS



(6)

# NOVEMBER THEME CROSSWORD

The **yellow** blocks contain the theme words and all come from the text of this newsletter. Enjoy and Happy Thanksgiving!



ANSWERS ON PAGE #8

**ACROSS**

- 9. Hawaiian hello
- 10. Bad luck
- 11. Weekly bath spot
- 12. Emperors wife
- 13. 60's sound equipment
- 15. Talk idly – slang
- 16. It's no \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. Triangular sail
- 19. Old house frame
- 20. Can fasten 19 Across together
- 23. Negative vote
- 24. Creative activity
- 25. Not bold
- 27. Form of needlework
- 29. Treenail
- 32. "Innie" or "outie"
- 33. Ale

**DOWN**

- 1. Enjoy the warmth
- 2. In a way
- 3. Taken to wash your body
- 4. So be it
- 5. Evaluation
- 6. Place for a trunnel
- 7. Involved in a situation
- 8. A being
- 13. Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca
- 14. Asian appetizer
- 15. Simone Biles sport
- 16. Make someone unhappy
- 18. Meaningless nonsense (hint: bunkum)
- 21. Supreme being
- 22. Involuntary breathing spasm
- 26. Members of a household
- 28. Where a trunnel is used
- 29. An exam
- 30. Hideous
- 31. Replaced by Euro in Italy



GOBBLE TIL YOU WOBBLE!





## A GERMAN CHRISTMAS MARKET

The Francetown Community Market and the Recreation Department are holding a Holiday Market on Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10 am – 2 pm at the Town Hall Horse sheds.

The market will be held inside the sheds regardless of rain or snow. Along with market comestibles the vendors will include area artisans and others with goods that will be ideal for your Christmas gift list. 20 vendors have signed up to date.

The theme of the market will be a German Christmas Market and related events are being planned so check the December issue of the Heritage Museum Newsletter for further details.



## PUZZLE SOLUTION

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## THE NOVEMBER WHAT'Z IT . . .

A must for the traveler, both male and female.



As it says on the case, "Best Sheffield Steel."



Compact - 3/4" x 2 3/4" x 6"



Made in England, 1922.

Let us know what you think this is!

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