



# The Spy-Glass

Summer 2011

Raynham Hall Museum

(516) 922 6808

20 West Main Street, Oyster Bay, New York 11771

[www.raynhamhallmuseum.org](http://www.raynhamhallmuseum.org)

## "A Scrap-Book for the Ages:" Matrilineal Genealogy and Four Alices of the Weekes Family

By Dara Shore

In traditional genealogy, family lines are described as stretching into the distant past along the fathers' side. However, this practice often ignores the rich history of the women of a family. For this reason, matrilineal genealogies – those traced along a female line – can provide a wealth of information on the female members of a family.

Raynham Hall's new exhibit, which opens with a cocktail reception on September 9<sup>th</sup> (see inside, page 3, for more details), focuses on the lives of women of the Weekes family, a prominent Oyster Bay clan related to the Townsends of Raynham Hall. The four women featured in this exhibit come from families whose men included ship-owners, settlement-founders, and even a United States President – Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With such prominent individuals represented by a traditional genealogy, it can be easy to forget the accomplishments of the female members of the Weekes family. As such, the use of a matrilineal genealogy allows the achievements of the Weekes women to shine.

In this exhibition, the four Alices include a mother, daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter. That four successive generations of women in this family bore the name "Alice" illustrates a tradition that stems from the extraordinary nature of each Alice, and allows the matrilineal line to be emphasized more clearly despite the absence of a last name common to all of them.

*Continued on page 2 ....*

## Education for the Future

By Stephen Waldenburg

With the 2011-2012 school year upon us, Raynham Hall's Education Committee has spending the summer upgrading the core educational programming for the coming year. In meetings with Committee Chair John Bonifacio, the Committee, and Raynham Hall's Educators, a push towards a more interactive and hands-on program has been adopted.



Illustration by Michael Goudket for the Education Program

A hands-on element with replica colonial items will give students the ability to experience many of the items and tools used in a Colonial home, and the students will also be able to guess their uses. We are also adding more emphasis on the

story of George Washington's agent Robert Townsend, a.k.a. Samuel Culper Jr. Using the work of Mike Goudket, Raynham Hall Educator, we have also devised a manual on the Culper Spy code.

Raynham Hall is also aligning its curriculum more closely with the New York State Teaching Standards. This new and improved style of programming will be ready for September 2011 and the following school year.

For more information about this programming please contact Stephen Waldenburg, Education Coordinator, at [Swaldenburg@Raynhamhallmuseum.org](mailto:Swaldenburg@Raynhamhallmuseum.org), or 516 922 6808.

*"...Wednesday continues rough, frequent squalls. Stove smokes badly. Miss B. & Mrs. D. took seats in the round house but I do not know why it is called so, it is square I am sure. Commenced reading the Sentimental Journey in high glee. Just then a tremendous wave came over and really seemed as though it would sweep the deck. I was a little frightened and yet there was a mixture of pleasure, wonder and admiration. I know not why it is so but I do feel as safe here as at home...."*

– Newly married twenty-year-old Alice Howland Delano writing in her diary in January 1826 aboard the packet ship *Columbia* on its voyage to London from New Bedford, Massachusetts

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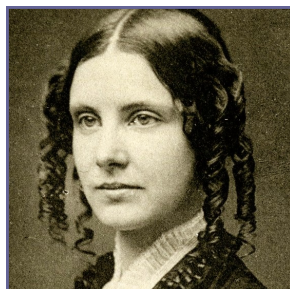
*The mission of RHM is to enable visitors to the nearly three-hundred-year-old Townsend family home in Oyster Bay to experience what it meant to be prominent merchants and heroic patriots and to become engaged in the worlds of espionage, domestic life and the decorative arts.*

*Continued from page 1*

The four Alices are as follows:



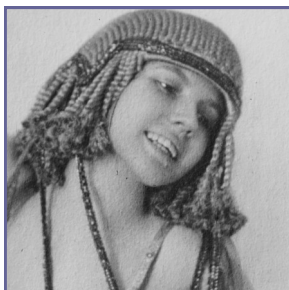
**Alice Russell Howland Delano (1806-1834)** was born into a founding family of New Bedford, Mass., and her father was successfully engaged in the coastal trade between New Bedford and Alexandria, Va. At age twenty, a few days after marrying trans-Atlantic packet-ship captain Joseph Clement Delano in December of 1825, she went to sea with her husband to England and back aboard the *Columbia*, where she used her social graces to keep passengers' spirits high, all the while keeping a high-spirited diary of her experiences, including her visit to London. Tragically, Alice died in childbirth at the age of 27, and all five of her children died in childhood save her daughter Alice.



**Alice Hathaway Delano Weekes (1827-1917)**, the daughter of Alice and Joseph Delano, lived a relatively quiet life quite unlike that of her mother. In 1849, she married John Abeel Weekes of Oyster Bay. Like her mother, she did not stay in one place for long, travelling throughout Europe and America with her husband. This Alice was the first to compile a scrapbook of letters, sketches, and other ephemera pertaining to her mother and the rest of her family, a book she later passed on to her daughter. Alice Delano Weekes had six children, among whom is the next woman in our exhibit.



**Alice Delano Weekes (1878-1949)**, unlike her mother and grandmother before her, never married, instead living with her brother Frederick. In many regards Alice Delano Weekes lived much the same privileged life as her mother. However, Alice was also an accomplished artist and writer of ornithological and horticultural treatises, family histories, and etymological articles, as well as transcriptions of earlier pieces pertaining to her family. The reflective life this Alice lived stands in contrast to the life of the final Alice of our exhibit.



**Alice "Wynne" Delano Weekes (c.1900-1964)** was the niece of the previous Alice, being the daughter of her brother, John Abeel Weekes, Jr. The world in which this Alice chose to live was a different one from that of her predecessors. Breaking radically from the domestic lives of her ancestors, Alice became an accomplished ballet dancer under the assumed name of Alice Wynne. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Alice performed at many prominent venues, mostly in New York, dancing for renowned choreographer Michel Fokine in his corps de ballet, and also performing in a 1937 recital at the White House of her distant cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Like her aunt, Alice never married. Most remarkably, for a dancer, Alice is reported to have been completely deaf.

*The Friends of Raynham Hall are grateful to the Weekes family, the Ann Eden Woodward Foundation, Astoria Federal Savings and the Oyster Bay Historical Society for their essential support in bringing this exhibit to life.*

## Mark Your Calendars...

A Scrap-Book for the Ages: Four generations of Alices of the Weekes Family of	September 9, 2011, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
A Scrap-Book for the Ages exhibit opens to the public. A tour of the exhibit can be scheduled during regular museum hours, 1-5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.	September 10 through August 1, 2012.
Oyster Festival 2011: Look for Raynham Hall's booth on Audrey Avenue and sample some of the finest pickled oysters ever! The museum will be open FREE of	Saturday, October 15th and Sunday, October 16th.
Halloween at Raynham Hall: The museum will be decked out in high Victorian mourning. Participate in a "how-to" session on ghost hunting and a discussion of other haunted locations on Long Island. Come on a haunted history tour, including your choice of tarot or crystal ball reading.	Evenings of October 28th and 29th.
Victorian mourning and Oyster Bay cemetery procession with a blessing of the Townsend resting sites.	Afternoon of October 29th.
Scrapbooking and découpage workshops for children and adults.	Schedule to be confirmed.
Etiquette for the Holidays: For young ladies and gentlemen. Learn the all-to-often forgotten basics of table manners, answering a phone, and greeting acquaintances. Make your parents proud! Appropriate for ages 7-12.	Schedule to be confirmed.
Delicious and decorative holiday chocolate workshops presented by Raynham Hall and Oyster Bay's own Chocolate Lady. For children and adults.	Afternoon of Saturday, December 10th.
Colonial 12th Night Celebration. A free event for friends and members on the 12th night following the Christmas holiday. Live period musical performance.	Thursday, January 5th

*For information on upcoming events and schedules, please call Raynham Hall at 516.922-6808 or visit Raynham Hall online at [www.raynhamhallmuseum.org](http://www.raynhamhallmuseum.org)*



**A SCRAP-BOOK for the AGES:  
FOUR GENERATIONS of ALICES  
of the WEEKES FAMILY of OYSTER BAY**  
Exhibition opening cocktail reception  
Friday, September 9th, 2011

*(or Saturday the 10th in the event of a serious downpour)*

from 5:30 to 7:30 in the evening  
in the garden.

*\$100 per person or  
\$125 at the door  
to benefit  
the collections at Raynham Hall Museum*

**KINDLY REPLY by AUGUST 30th**

**by CALLING 516 922 6808**

*(VISA and MASTERCARD accepted).*

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1740 Society	\$125
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Victorian Society	\$500
Raynham Society	\$1,000

## Look inside for information on upcoming events!



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Oyster Bay, NY 11771

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