

“WELCOME TO THE AGE OF CANDLELIGHT”

ONCE AGAIN THE AGAWAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION WILL PRESENT

“AN EVENING OF CANDLELIGHT”

IN THE EARLY 1800’S THE VAST MAJORITY OF POOR FAMILIES WERE STILL MAKING CANDLES AT HOME. CANDLE MAKING WAS AN IMPORTANT JOB AND OFTEN DONE BY THE CHILDREN AND WOMEN.

AT THIS TIME CANDLES WERE MADE OUT OF TALLOW, A SUBSTANCE RENDERED FROM THE FAT OF SHEEP OR COWS, USUALLY DONE WHEN THE FAMILY’S LIVESTOCK WAS BUTCHERED FOR THE WINTER.

THE TALLOW WAS MELTED IN A LARGE VAT AND BOILED UNTIL THE WATER WAS REMOVED AND THE DIRT SKIMMED AWAY. MAKING TALLOW WAS DIFFICULT AS A CHANGE IN TEMPERATURE CAUSED DEFORMITIES.

TALLOW CANDLES PRODUCED A FOUL SMELL, CREATING NOXIOUS FUMES AND EMANATING A GREAT DEAL OF SOOT AND SMOKE.

WICKS WERE MADE OF PIECES OF HEMP DIPPED INTO SALTPETER. WICKS WERE REPEATEDLY DIPPED INTO THE TALLOW TO THICKEN THEM ENOUGH FOR A NIGHT’S USE.

CANDLE MOLDS HELP TO IMPROVE CANDLE MAKING.

COLONISTS ALSO USED BAYBERRY WHICH WAS READILY AVAILABLE HOWEVER EXTRACTING THE WAX WAS TRICKY. EIGHT POUNDS OF BERRIES WOULD ONLY YIELD ONE POUND OF WAX.

ALSO IN THE 1700 AND 1800’S CRYSTALLIZED SPERM WHALE OIL PRODUCED A CLEAN-BURNING WAX CANDLE AND WAS USED UNTIL THE 1850’S. AGAIN ONLY AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO COULD AFFORD THEM.

AT THIS TIME CANDLE LIGHT WAS CONSIDERED A LUXURY IN USE ONLY A COUPLE OF HOURS A DAY. COLONISTS WOULD HAVE THEIR EVENING MEAL JUST BEFORE SUNDOWN OR SHORTLY THERE AFTER AND THEN RETIRE FOR THE NIGHT.

THE AGAWAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, WE WILL BE HOLDING OUR 5th ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT EVENING ON FRIDAY OCTOBER 23RD FROM 6-8 P.M. AT THE THOMAS SMITH HOUSE LOCATED AT 251 NORTH WEST ST.

WE WILL BE SERVING HEARTH COOKED SOUP, CORN BREAD AND BROWN BREAD. PERIOD MUSIC PROVIDED BY THE NE’ER DO WELLS.

AT 6:30 WINNERS OF OUR “SCARY STORY” CONTEST WILL BE READING THEIR WINNING ENTRIES.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF CANDLELIGHT IN THE 1700’S. THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND SPONSORED BY THE BERKSHIRE BANK CHARITABLE FOUNDATION.