



The DESCENDANTS *of* WILLIAM DAWES WHO RODE *Association*

Dear Cousins,

May 2008

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Welcome to George Schulz of Lake Forest, Illinois, as the newest member of our board of directors! His mother, Mary⁶ Dawes Schulz, was the daughter of Henry⁵ Dawes (Rufus R⁴, Henry³, William Mears², William¹). George, our organizer for the 2009 reunion, is as you will read later, energetically involved in addressing the Dawes House situation in Evanston.

Our election season, which now stretches for months on end, invites comparison of today's political climate to that which surrounded William, Who Rode. There are many differences, but one contrast drawn from recent news relates to attitudes toward image. "Elitism" is a tag that aspiring politicians now struggle to avoid. They seek to show that they are just regular folks, and they play down experience that sets them apart, such as an Ivy League education or ability in a foreign language (especially French). In 2004, John Kerry did himself no favors when he went windsurfing (an "elite" sport) or asked for Swiss cheese on his Philly cheesesteak, a blue-collar staple in the City of Brotherly Love. Potential nominees risk looking slightly foolish by engaging in supposedly middle-class pastimes – e.g., bowling or downing shots of whisky – just to demonstrate how "average" they are.

The landscape was different in 18th century Massachusetts. To be sure, the Yankees were beginning to remold the rigid social structure they inherited from England, but class was still important. In political life, membership in the elite was actually an advantage. William Dawes and Paul Revere were not members of the elite. They were tradesmen who took huge risks to ride out to Lexington to warn two members of the resistance movement who were proudly of the elite. Sam Adams was an educated gentleman (and would not have dressed in a tradesman's rolled-up sleeves and vest as depicted on a label of Sam Adams lager today). John Hancock, like Adams a Harvard man, was perhaps the wealthiest person in Massachusetts. The movement needed men of learning and experience, and neither Adams nor Hancock gave a thought to hiding their privileged backgrounds. We have no wish to return to such a stratified society. But at the same time, we might wish that our politicians (and debate moderators) would devote less attention to image and more to the substance of increasingly serious issues that we face.

We are happy to welcome many members back onto the active rolls. We sent letters to delinquent members, and got a gratifying response. To all of you: Please give us your feedback on the newsletter, or on any other aspect of your Association's activities.

Howard Lange