



Home of Sgt. James Wright, 1775
it stood where Bedford Auto Parts is now.

The Preservationist

Newsletter of the Bedford Historical Society, Inc.
Bedford - Massachusetts

Founded in 1893

November 2010

Volume 118, Number 3

Holiday Party to feature Silent & Live Auctions

*Sunday,
December 5, 2010 - 2 p.m.*



The Society's annual Holiday Party, scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 5 at the home of Society members Carol Amick and Selectman Bill Moonan, 18 Crescent Avenue, will feature some exciting entertainment. In addition to a "guess the tool" contest utilizing host Bill Moonan's extensive antique tool collection, both "silent" and "live" auctions of some very nice items will be offered.

Society members and their guests are invited to attend this annual gathering, which provides an opportunity to enjoy a wide

range of tasty appetizers and socialize with friends at a circa 1860s Victorian/Farmhouse-style home decorated for the holiday season. Two types of punch will be available, one "regular" and one "high-test."

Everyone coming is encouraged to bring hot or cold hors d'oeuvres; expect a phone call from a Society volunteer with a reminder about the party and an appetizer donation.

Auction items are still being collected by Society President Jan van Steenwijk and his Fundraising Subcommittee: Doris Crowell and Julia Whiteneck.

Among the items, being donated by the Society and local businesses, are a gift certificate for two to Dalya's Restaurant, Cafe Luigi, a framed Bedford Flag print and a Bedford Flag watch, a set of Tiffany wine glasses, and other exiting items. All funds raised from the auctions will be donated to the Society.

The antique tool-guessing contest will offer prizes for the winner of the most correct answers as well as the person who writes the most creative, wrong answers.

Goodbye 2010 - Welcome 2011

Another year has gone by quickly. One more calendar soon to be put in a drawer. I think that all our members received a bundle of stimulating programs for the few dollars we pay for our memberships. Just look at the fabulous lectures that were offered and this newsletter which arrives on a regular basis. It keeps us up-to-date with what is going on in our community and makes it possible to keep history alive!

Of course, your society is not just about the things you see and hear several times a year. It is also about the enormous input from all our volunteers who organize and execute every event. The Board of Directors, our many committees -- Finance, Publicity, Hospitality, Program Development, Outreach, and Merchandise -- are all working year round to keep the society vital, relevant and an exciting place in which to be a member.

As one can see in this and previous newsletters, we have, again, received wonderful artifacts to be added to the thousands of items accumulating on our shelves. This is what we are all about: great people helping us on a regular basis and during time-crunch

activities. Other members bring special family heirlooms so that future generations can enjoy them.

Of course, you have heard me saying this time and again: we hope to display much of our collection in a permanent place. Who knows when, but we are getting a little bit closer to our goal. We are at a point where the Board of Directors has begun the process of seriously looking toward the future -- what can we do? What is our strategy? Should we build a museum or renovate an existing space? There are lots of questions that need to be answered thoughtfully. By the time we raise enough funds to begin a new future, we will have concrete ideas that should result one day in our saying, "Welcome to the grand opening of our new museum." Wouldn't that be thrilling?

In the meantime, on behalf of all of us to all of you, I thank you for your continuing support throughout the year. We wish you happy holidays and a healthy and prosperous 2011. I hope to see many of you at our Holiday party, and in February at our first lecture of the new year.

Jan van Steenwijk



From the archives.

What's it?

While Don Corey was going through the vast number of items in our archives, he stumbled on these two interesting objects.

We think that we know what each item is and when it might have been used, but we are not positive. If you can help us identify them, please let us know.

The first object at the top of the photograph has a handle that can be rotated, thus extending or retracting the string.

The second object has a wooden handle with fork-like bent tines and slots that are closed at the end. An early slotted spaghetti spoon, perhaps???

Thank you!



Larry Prugnarola with his gift to the society

At one of our lectures, long-time member of our society, Larry Prugnarola, brought this black board and asked if we were interested in receiving it. As we have seen so many times before, the story of how people sometimes acquire old treasures, is fascinating.

"I was working at a renovation site at the Middlesex Community College about ten years ago, and saw this "board" sitting on a pile of rubble to be thrown out. It was covered in dust, but my instinct told me that it should not be discarded. It might have been used in classes to teach young men studying for the priesthood, but I am not sure. So, I took it home to store it. Now I hope that the society can use it in their collection."

Thank you Larry; we appreciate gifts like yours.

The "black board" (two feet by twenty inches) is actually green, a sheet of pine that is painted, and the frame is made of oak. One can still see that there has been writing on the board, but, unfortunately it is no longer legible.

As always, if you have an object, photograph(s) or documents, you think might be of interest to us, please bring it in and we will happy to evaluate it.

Mark your calendar - February 23

A Thought-Provoking Program

Using photographs gathered in her research on colonial family histories, attorney and historian Diane Rapaport will present an illustrated lecture about "The Many Faces of Early Colonial Slavery" for the Society's February, 2011 program.

Mark your 2011 calendars for this interesting talk, scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2011 in Fellowship Hall of the First Church of Christ, Congregational, 25 The Great Road. Refreshments will be available starting at 7:30 p.m., with the lecture to follow around 8 p.m.

Other Fabulous Lectures.

Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2011. 7:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall, First Congregational Church:

Historian and attorney Diane Rapaport will give an illustrated presentation about "The Many Faces of Early Colonial Slavery."

Wednesday, March 23, 2011. 7:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall, First Congregational Church:

"Moving the Fitch Homestead from Bedford to Harvard."

Sunday, April 17, 2011. 2 p.m., Fellowship Hall, First Congregational Church:

"The Finest Hours: U.S. Coast Guard's Most Daring Sea Rescue."

Wednesday, May 25, 2011. 6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall, First Congregational Church:

Annual Meeting and Potluck Supper and "The Career of Rufus Porter, Artisan-Entrepreneur."

Officers

Jan van Steenwijk, *President*
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Phyllis Cooke, *Secretary*
Don Corey, *Treasurer*

Please feel free to contact any of our board members if you have a question or suggestion, we always appreciate your input.

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Web site:
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email:
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781-275-7276

The Preservationist is now offering a few advertising spaces, call our office for more info.

The Soap Factory

Historic 19th century Castile soaps.

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www.alcasoft.com/soapfact/

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New Society Publications

The Society's 2010-2011 Yearbook and By-Laws are now available, both in booklet form.

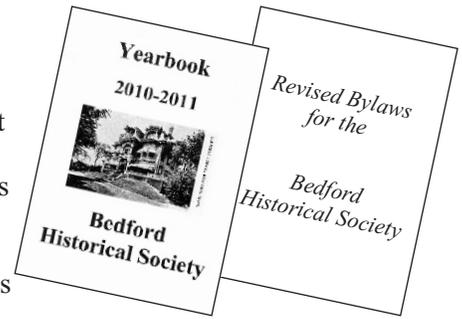
The 2010-2011 Yearbook which describes Society programs for this season and lists Society members' contact information is available in the Society's office, 2 Mudge Way (the Police Station), and at program meetings. To conserve distribution costs, the Yearbook will not be mailed to all members as a group, but will be mailed to individuals upon request by calling Kara Kerwin at the office at 781-275-7276 or emailing her at info@bedfordmahistory.org. An addendum sheet listing members that were inadvertently omitted from the book due to a computer error also is available from the office or will be emailed upon request.

The second new Society publication is the new By-Laws, Policies and Mission Statement -- also available from the office and at upcoming program meetings. This booklet incorporates the major changes approved to the by-laws in May, 2009 as well as a few minor changes adopted at the Society's Annual Meeting last May.

The process of revising the Society's by-laws was a lengthy one. In 2009, after numerous meetings were held by the Society's By-Laws Committee, the new draft by-laws were made available for Society member review and comment at two public review sessions. Comments led to improvements in the draft, and the new by-laws were unanimously adopted at the Society's May, 2009 Annual Meeting. This year, as the Society's Officers, Board of Directors and Executive Committee began working with the new by-laws, they became aware of a few additional changes that should be considered. The By-Laws Committee, comprised of Carol Amick, Bea Brown, Don Corey, Judie Toti, Julie Turner and Jan van Steenwijk, once again convened and produced the minor by-laws changes that were approved at the Society's Annual Meeting in May, 2010.

The By-Laws Committee thanks all Society members who took the time to review the Committee's work and make thoughtful suggestions for improvement. Such a major update of the by-laws had not been undertaken for eight years.

Carol Amick



The Quincy Cole Cane Mystery

Quincy Cole was a life-long Bedford resident who passed away in 1942 at age 86. He lived on Fletcher Road where Bob Bass and Lee Vorderer now live, was a tinsmith by trade, and for many years ran the hardware store on The Great Road. This summer his granddaughter, Jane Sutcliffe, returned to Bedford and presented the Historical Society with an ornate cane that had belonged to Mr.

Cole. At first we thought that it might be Bedford's Boston Post cane, traditionally presented to the town's most elderly resident, as Mrs. Sutcliffe knew that her grandfather held that cane for several years prior to his death. However, it was quickly found that Bedford's Boston Post cane was retired and is now on display at the Council on Aging.

A question that Bob Slechta and Don Corey have pursued since is Quincy Cole's connection with this cane. A Sterling silver band on the cane has the inscription "This Handle made from Tree Planted by - GENL GRANT - April 19, 1875 - at Lexington Mass", and the polished metal plate on the head of the cane is inscribed "Louis Joseph Sandys 1907". We established that General Grant in fact came to Lexington on the 100th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord and planted a tree, which died early in the 20th century.

A review of Bedford's and Lexington's Vital Records and other readily accessible genealogical sources for "Louis Joseph Sandys" came up empty. However, a lead came from a Passenger List on a vessel from Liverpool to Boston in 1883. It included a "Louis Sandys, age 47, US citizen, occupation - Artist". Subsequent research in Ancestry.com provided information on a Louis Joseph Sands, born 1836 in New York City. The birth year for both men matched, so it seems likely that they were one and the same person. The ancient family name was Sandys or Sandes, and Mr. Sands' ancestors were prominent citizens of New York.

Despite lengthy research, no other relevant references have been found for this person. He would have been in his 20s during the Civil War, so Civil War military records were searched. His name does not appear, so he probably paid someone to serve for him, a fairly common practice among wealthy individuals. We envision Mr. Louis Joseph Sands as a wealthy New York gentleman, whose occupation of "Artist" was certainly respectable. In middle age, he apparently chose to revert to the historic spelling of his family name, Louis Joseph Sandys. By 1907 at age 71 he had the cane made from some of the most famous wood then available.

After Mr. Sandys' death, we can only speculate how Quincy Cole obtained the cane - perhaps picked up at a garage sale? But now the Historical Society has a cane from the tree planted in Lexington by General Grant on the 100th Anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord!



The text engraved on Sterling Silver wrapped around the cane

The Preservationist

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*We look forward to seeing you in 2011
when we are 118 years young!*

The Bedford Historical Society was founded in 1893 - Our Website: www.bedfordmahistory.org

The key to any non-profit organization is to have satisfied members.

We believe that our society has many good things to offer its members, including:

- Seven issues of our newsletter, "The Preservationist," a year.
- Free lectures by renowned speakers.
- High-quality merchandise.
- Tours and demos for 3rd graders.
- Exhibitions throughout Bedford.
- Promoting the Bedford Flag.
- A Holiday Party for members.
- Participation on Bedford Day.
- Old Bedford photos: Copies are for sale.
- Help with research.
- A professional website.
- Reach us on our website or FaceBook.
- Ongoing research about our past.

We take care of Bedford's past - for future generations.

Web site: www.bedfordmahistory.org
email: info@bedfordmahistory.org

*The Bedford Historical Society, Inc.
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization*

Did you know...

If you are interested in Bedford images, maps or photographs from our vast archive, please contact us, and for a small fee, we can provide you with copies.

Membership Application/Renewal

Please join us - and support our heritage!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

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Dues

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Amount enclosed: \$ _____

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