Bedford’s Own Antique Roadshow

The Society is pleased to announce that it is working on plans to bring an antique appraisal event back to Bedford this fall. For a number of years the Library hosted these popular events, but they were discontinued several years ago. In response to subsequent inquiries, the Society contacted several organizations that conduct these appraisal events and has worked out an agreement with Kaminski Fine Art. They will provide a team of appraisers for a day, which will provide verbal appraisals to attendees as to what they believe the items will fetch at auction and some information on the age and history of the pieces. Kaminski will waive any fee for their services, so 100% of the proceeds of this charity event will benefit the Society and its continuing efforts to reestablish a Bedford historical museum.

Many details remain to be worked out, but we're on our way! Stay tuned.

Don Corey, president

Strengthening the Society’s Collections

Last year the Board of Directors voted to adopt a Targeted Accession Plan to strengthen the Society's collections. Until then the Society had been entirely dependent on the generosity of individuals for donations of archival or museum items. We continue to receive such important donations, but are also now able to acquire objects of historic relevance to Bedford that are offered on EBay and other Internet sites.

This month, the Society wishes to acknowledge the recent donation by John Dodge of a number of documents, photographs and other materials from his personal collection. John has been an important and loyal promoter of the town's history for years (including his years as Town Historian), and we are grateful for his contributions. Included are a number of school class and other group photos, and John quickly recalled the names of many individuals shown in the photos. The trick now is to get back to John and write down all the names as we go!

The Society also received from the Cimino family 2 framed tutor, and taphophile. An active Society member, she is also a member of the Town's Conservation Commission. She has explored scores of burial grounds all over New England. She hosts the Bedford 3rd graders when they visit Bedford's Old Burial Ground as part of the annual Third Grade Tour of Bedford History, and she looks forward to sharing her appreciation of 18th and 19th century gravestones.
Once Upon a Time

If you have been a member of the Bedford Historical Society long enough, you will remember that old house on the corner of North Road and Carlisle Road which was built ca.1731. It was occupied until the 1970s when it became empty and was boarded up. Years went by and the house deteriorated and slowly became a postal address for creatures other than humans.

Then Ned and Susan Leeming fell in love with it, bought it, dismantled it brick-by-brick, board by board, and moved it all to their property in Harvard, were it was meticulously put together again. During construction they found many interesting things “hidden” in the walls, under floorboards, etc. One of the first wonderful items they found were a pair of primitive shoes left in the far end of the chimney’s “ashtray,” believed to be left by the bricklayers at the time of the construction of the house. The Leemings donated them to the BHS. The shoes, simple folded leather, were probably made during the era when the shoe industry in Bedford flourished in the early 1800s. Many more artifacts found their way to our archives thanks to the generosity of Susan and Ned.

At our last month’s lecture, Ned asked me if we would be interested in some more “old stuff.” Just in case, he had brought it in his car's trunk. The results were 2 large boxes with remnants of many different pieces of wallpaper, some chimney tools, and the items in the pictures on this page. The poster in the box turned out to consist of two identical posters folded together, but were in so many pieces and extremely fragile that it took a long time to try to make it look like a poster again. Unfortunately a lot has been lost, but one can still see its purpose or, what's left of it. The poster was printed on February 23, 1906 for an auction of farm inventory of Edward W. Farrell on March 3rd, 1906. The other photograph shows remnants of a porcelain plate, a knife with a wooden handle, a handful of buttons, and a needle holder.

Again, we thank Susan and Ned Leeming for their thoughtfulness, their support and donations. These items tell a story and make a wonderful link to Bedford’s past. One day in the future, we hope to be able to display all of them in our own Museum!

Jan van Steenwijk
Officers, Directors and Bylaw proposal at Annual Meeting

The Bedford Historical Society's Nominating Committee has completed its work to identify candidates for Society Officers and Directors for approval by a vote of the membership in attendance at the May 26th Annual Meeting and Polluck Supper.

The Nominating Committee recommends the following slate for Society Officers for the 2015-16 season:

President: Don Corey
Vice President: Open
Secretary: Brown Pulliam
Treasurer: Pat Leiby

The Nominating Committee recommends that the following Directors, whose terms are up this year, be re-elected to the Board of Directors for four-year terms:

Atty. Paul Dick
Paul Purchia
Judie Toti

Bylaw proposal

In addition to the election of Officers and Directors, Society members attending this May's Annual Meeting will be asked to approve a bylaw proposal recommended by the Board of Directors. This bylaw change would modify the membership categories listed in the Society's Bylaws by discontinuing Individual and Couple/Family Life memberships, but retaining the Life membership category for Society members who already have purchased it.

The Society's Board of Directors voted unanimously on Feb. 11, 2015 to cease Individual and Couple/Family Life memberships after getting feedback on the “Life Membership” issue from numerous other Historical Societies. The survey of other historical societies revealed that many had discontinued new Life memberships or had never established them because they felt that Lifetime memberships neither help to sustain the financial stability of the organization nor build membership that will be engaged in the organization's activities over the long term.

The Board of Directors also analyzed data on donations made to the Bedford Society between 2006 and 2014 from Life members and discovered that a large percentage of Life members make only a small donation to the Society, or make no annual donation at all. Directors felt that, with the prospects of a Town of Bedford History Museum in the offing, the ability of the Society to collect annual contributions was of the utmost importance.

The Board of Directors agreed with these rationales and voted to end Individual and Family Lifetime memberships, subject to the approval of Society members attending the May 26, 2015 Annual Meeting.

Existing language

Article 3 of the Bedford Historical Society's bylaws currently identifies seven categories of membership, as follows:

a. Student annual membership (high school or college).

b. Individual annual membership (one person).

c. Couple (or Family) annual membership (members of one household).

d. Supporting annual membership.

e. Individual lifetime membership (one person).

f. Couple (or family) lifetime membership (members of one household).

g. Honorary lifetime membership (may be granted by a majority vote of the Executive Committee with no dues required to any person who has shown extraordinary interest and effort in promoting the programs and welfare of the Society).

Proposed language

a. Article 3, “Membership” is hereby amended by striking subparagraphs “e” and “f,” re-lettering subparagraph “g” as new subparagraph “e” and by inserting a new subparagraph “f” as follows:

   f. Members who purchased individual or couple/family lifetime memberships as of March 31, 2015 shall retain those memberships and all the rights and privileges of Society membership.

b. This amendment shall take effect upon an affirmative vote of the majority of the members in attendance at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

The Board of Directors recommends this bylaw change. All Society members who purchased Lifetime memberships as of March 31, 2015 will retain those memberships, and the “honorary” Lifetime category would remain.
large-format sepia photographs of Bedford’s 1929 Bicentennial celebration, one of which is a new image for our collections (see image on page 6. We also acquired from the Hurd family an original watercolor painting of the Job Lane house that was done in the 1970s by Anne MacLeod, then a prominent local artist.

One of the 2 large photo prints(10"x43") of the Bedford’s 1929 Bicentennial, donated by the Camino family.

Watercolor of the Job Lane House - 1970, donated by the Hurd Family

Veterinarian Emanuel Pfeiffer ca. 1920s, donated by John Dodge

Class photo 1950s?
Donated by John Dodge

Donated by John Dodge

RESERVE THE DATE!

Potluck Supper and Annual Meeting May 26th.

Following a Potluck feast, the Society’s 2015 Annual Meeting will begin around 7:30 pm.

Fabulous lecture!
“Stealing Rembrandts”

Guest speaker Anthony Amore will follow with a presentation entitled “Stealing Rembrandts: The Story of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Theft.”

More in our May Preservationist
Historic Properties Book Republished

The 3rd Edition of Historic Properties and Neighborhoods of Bedford, Mass has just arrived from the printer and is available for sale through the Historical Society.

By way of background, the town's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) contracted in 1998 to survey all of Bedford's historic properties outside of the Old Bedford Center Historic District. That was the town's first effort ever to collect all the information on these properties in one place. There was so much interesting and useful historical and architectural information gathered that the Bedford Historical Society published it and offered it for sale to the public.

The first edition sold out, and in 2005 a second edition was printed. That edition was reformatted to make the text flow more easily, an index was added for ready reference, and a new chapter on the Bedford Center Historic District was included. That edition also sold out.

In 2012 the HPC contracted to have an Update & Expansion Survey done of the Old Bedford Center National Register Historic District. Based on that work, the National Park Service in June 2014 listed an expanded district on the National Register. It included pre-Civil War houses in the Center that were inadvertently omitted from the original 1977 National Register application, neighborhoods that were built at the turn of the last century (Fletcher Road and Crescent Avenue), the narrow-gauge railroad, and Veterans Memorial Park (dedicated after World War II). The survey provided a greatly expanded amount of information on Old Bedford Center that is now included in the new 3rd Edition.

The Historic Properties book is almost 500 pages and at $40 is priced at cost. It can be obtained by contacting the Society (781-275-7276 or info@bedfordmahistory.org). It will also be carried at the Freight House store when it reopens this spring.

Don Corey

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Thank you to recent donors and renewals

**Member Renewals:**
Molly Brown, Emily O'Hara, Jeannette Pothier, Gloria Moll, Dr. Mayada Najim, DDM, Amy Lloyd and John Wiedey, Joanne Glover, Bud Koor (Great Road Gallery), Charles Huxsaw and Susan Sjostrom, Roberta Ennis, Ned and Susan Leeming, Kimberlie Sweet, Cynthia and Charles Schwegge

**Donations:** Cecile Walker

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Adding to our archives through modern technologies

The Society has made a few interesting Ebay purchases over the past few months. These include several postcards, including a photo of the Bedford Minutemen erecting the Liberty Pole in 1975, an Anne MacLeod painting of the First Parish Church, a P-40 Curtiss Hawk fighter plane, a view of the main house at Llewesac Lodge and an aerial view of Bedford from 1966. An envelope from Stall's Wood Bicycle Rim Co was an exciting find because the reverse shows of a large aerial image of their Loomis Street Factory. We also were able to acquire a cookbook written by Carolyn Putnam Webber, a member of the Bedford Webbers, as well as a cookery teacher and lecturer.

We often look for things that may seem obscure today, but would have been common in Bedford past. Tools from the wheelwright's shop were very familiar to carriage owners in the 19th century. We found a cast iron spoke pointer auger bit and a "Traveler" tool (wheel on a handle), used to measure the circumference of the wagon wheels. We also found a pair of wrought iron carriage wrenches that had a dual purpose; they could be used to turn the big nuts on wagon axles that held the wheels in place, but were also used for pinning the Doubletree to the wagon Tongue, an added safety feature because the horses were automatically disconnected from the wagon in order to use the wrench to remove the wheel.

We also added to our collection of Hayden Viburnum Compound artifacts. A group of three antique medicine bottles, including an HVC, was too much of a bargain to pass up. Another, older HVC bottle, still bearing fairly legible remnants of a paper label, was also added to our collection. And most recently we found an HVC advertising blotter (1940s or 50s), bearing an aerial photo of the Fawn Lake factory complex, and providing a view of how the landscape around Fawn Lake changed during the mid-part of the century.

Kara Kerwin

Visit our website:
www.bedfordmahistory.org
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781-275-7276
Send us an email:
info@bedfordmahistory.org

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"We Don't Make History...
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