The Preservationist

Newsletter of the Bedford (Mass.) Historical Society
Founded in 1893

April 2009 Volume 116, Number 6

Did the first Job Lane build "our" Job Lane House at 295 North Rd. (the house on the left), or did he build it near 130 North Rd. (right), the Habitat for Humanity site? We believe the mystery has been solved. Page 3

This month: Michael Bacon, the Naked Quaker, Rascals and Rapscallions

We have a very special program planned for this month. Diane Rapaport, author of *The Naked Quaker: True Crimes and Controversies from the Courts of Colonial New England*, presents a cast of colorful and questionable characters including Bedford's home-grown rascal, Michael Bacon, and his purloined pig.

Congregational Church
25 The Great Road, Bedford
Sunday, April 26, 2:00 PM (not Wednesday at 7:30 as usual)

Free and open to all. The building is accessible to the handicapped. Our meetings begin with coffee and a chat. Please bring a friend or two!

It's almost Opening Day for the Job Lane House. Beginning on Mother's Day, May 10, the house will be open for the season on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, from 2-4 in the afternoon. Guides in period costume will give you a tour of Job and Martha's house. See www.joblane.org for details.

About our newsletter

The Preservationist is published seven times yearly for the purpose of sharing topics of interest for the education and enjoyment of the Society's members and the community in general. Comments, suggestions and contributions of relevant articles are welcome and should be addressed to: Editor, ***The Preservationist,*** 2 Mudge Way, Bedford MA 01730.

Alethea "Lee" Yates, Executive Director
(781) 275-3294 (home)
(781) 275-7276 (BHS office)
Email: info@bedfordmahistory.org

Archives hours

Our room in the Stearns building (a.k.a. the Police Station building) at 2 Mudge Way is *usually* open at the following times:

Monday, 9 to 12 and 1 to 5
Tuesday, 9 to 1
Wednesday, 9 to 1

Other times by appointment. It's best to phone ahead before you stop by because we do step out for errands now and then. Please call our NEW PHONE NUMBER, 781-275-7276.

Bedford Historical Society organization, 2008-2009

Directors

Responsible for long-range planning and for large or long-term expenditures. (Proposed by the Nominating Committee, voted by the membership)

Miriam Brown (term expires in '09)
Don Corey (term expires in '09)
Jan van Steenwijk (term expires in '09)
Marion Bryan (term expires in '10)
Marietta Ellis (term expires in '10)
Donald Jenkins (term expires in '10)
Doris Crowell (term expires in '11) - Board Co-chair
Neil Leary (term expires in '11)
Judie Toti (term expires in '11) - Board Secretary
Carol Amick (term expires in '12)
Norman Toti (term expires in '12)
Julie Turner (term expires in '12) - Board Co-chair

Executive Committee Liaison to the Directors: Jan van Steenwijk, President (*ex officio*; no vote)

Executive Committee

Responsible for the day-to-day running of the Society.

Officers. **(Proposed by the Nominating Committee, voted by the membership)**

Jan van Steenwijk, President
(vacant) Vice President
Phyllis Cooke, Secretary
Don Corey, Treasurer

Committee chairs. **(Appointed by the President)**

Activities: TBD
Hospitality: Marietta Ellis
Sales Manager: TBD
Newsletter Editor: Alethea Yates
Program: Cecile Walker
Publicity: Bea Brown, Cecile Walker
Sunshine: Sharon McDonald
Welcoming: Lois Jenkins

Board of Director Liaison to the Executive Committee: Doris Crowell and Julie Turner, Board Co-Chairs (*ex officio*; no vote)

Nominating Committee

Responsible for finding candidates to serve as Officers and Directors

Wilma Johnson (appointed by Executive Board, term expires in '08)
Carol Amick (appointed by Membership, term expires in '09)
Julie Turner (appointed by President, term expires in '10)

Finance Committee

Responsible for the Society's investments. (Appointed jointly by the President and Board Chair)

Doris Crowell, Julie Turner (Board Co-chairs)
Don Corey (Treasurer)
Neil Leary (term expires in '09)
Frank Gicca (term expires in '10)
Don Jenkins (term expires in '11)
Jan van Steenwijk (President)

Where did the first Job Lane build his house?

A long-standing Bedford mystery may have been solved at last.

The mystery concerns the first Job Lane, who emigrated from Rickmansworth, England, and settled in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. A housewright (house builder) by trade, he acquired some 1500 acres of land in what is now Bedford by building a house for the grandson of Governor John Winthrop. He then built a homestead on this land. *Where, exactly, did he build his homestead?*

For many years it was believed that the Job Lane House at 295 North Road, still standing today, was the original homestead; however, architectural evidence strongly suggests that the house is much younger. It is now believed that this house was built by Job Lane 1's grandson, Job Lane 3, at about the time of his marriage in 1713.

(A word about naming. Because so many members of the Lane family shared the same first names, we designate them by the number of their generation. The Job Lane who came over from England is called Job Lane 1; his son is called John Lane 2; the grandson who built the house at 295 North Road is Job Lane 3; and so forth.)

At the March meeting of the Bedford Historical Society, Don Corey presented the research he has done to solve the mystery of Job Lane 1's house. **There are strong reasons to believe that Job Lane 1 built his homestead on the property now known as 130 North Road – the same property where Habitat for Humanity is constructing several housing units.**

A summary of Don's research is presented here in step-by-step fashion.

1. When Job Lane 1 died, he left half of his Bedford land, plus the homestead he built on it, to his son John Lane 2. The rest of his land was divided between two of his grandsons. There are plot plans that show just how the land was divided.

This narrows the possible location of Job 1's homestead to half of the original 1500 acres.

2. John Lane 2 left his property to be divided among his three sons, Job 3, John 3, and James 3.

Which of them inherited Job 1's homestead? We know it probably wasn't Job 3 because he had already built his own house – the one still standing at 295 North Road. It almost certainly had to have been either John 3 or James 3.

3. In his 1891 *History of the Town of Bedford,* Abram English Brown states, "James Lane 4 divided his lands between three sons who lived in Bedford… Solomon 5 had the homestead and dwelling where five generations were born (Coolidge place) [emphasis added].

This statement is the key to solving the mystery. It indicates that James 3 rather than his brother John 3 inherited the homestead; he passed it along to his son, James 4, who left it to his son Solomon 5. How do we know this is true ? Because a study of the Lane genealogy shows that the place that Solomon inherited, "the homestead and dwelling where five generations were born," can only have been Job 1's homestead. There is no other way to way to have five generations of Lanes born in the same house by 1891.

This statement also indicates that the homestead had, by 1891, been sold out of the Lane family and was then known as the Coolidge place. Atlases show Charles Coolidge owning the 130 North Road property by 1875.

4. A plan made by Stephen Davis in 1773 shows how James 3 divided his property between his sons, James 4 and Samuel 4. James 4's house is shown on the west side of what is now called North Road at the approximate location of 130 North Road. This map is further evidence that Job 1's homestead, which James 4 inherited, stood at or near the house now standing at 130 North Road.

5. Job 1 would have built his house near a site where a mill could be placed. A mill was a necessity of life. Homes of that ea were all located near streams where a sawmill and/or gristmill could be built. The only substantial stream on Job 1's tract of land was Peppergrass Brook, which flows directly behind 130 North Road. Job 1's homestead was so isolated when he built it that he would almost certainly would have had to build himself a mill near his house.

All this evidence supports the conclusion that Job 1 built his house near 130 North Road, now known as the Habitat for Humanity site. ***We declare the mystery solved.***

Copies of maps, deeds, and other research materials garnered by Don Corey to support this conclusion can be seen at the Bedford Historical Society's office.

With gratitude to our sleuth, Don Corey

Bedford's Old Town Line

In 2004, when Mike Seibert was President of the Bedford Historical Society, signs were ordered to post at intervals along Bedford's original borders with Concord and Billerica. At about the same time, the new DPW building came into being, and shortly thereafter Mike's term concluded.

Fast forward five years: Don Corey recalled that the signs had been ordered, Rich Warrington knew where they were stored and agreed to work with Mike and a committee to site them throughout Bedford, and to install them so that they would reflect which side of the sign would've been Concord and which would've been Billerica, even if the signs would have to be posted at odd angles to the road. The signs were installed by the Bedford DPW in time for this year's Pole Capping ceremony.

In addition to the dedication, Bedford's Conservation Administrator Elizabeth Bagdonas led a nature walk along a conservation area trail off of Davis Road to the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge near Winterberry Way, where the hikers viewed remnants of a stone wall, berm and ditch that may represent the location of the old boundary.

Members of the Old Town Line Task Force included Bea Brown, Donald Marshall, Julie McCay Turner, Mike Seibert, Jan van Steenwijk, Rich Warrington and Elizabeth Bagdonas (not shown). Below, the sign on Pine Street at the intersection of Bridge St.

Thank you!

VOLUNTEER – *(võl'an-tir'), "A person who performs or offers to perform a service voluntarily." From the old Latin word: voluntãrius.*

As is customary in this country, every non-profit organization relies heavily on people whose unselfishness keep the wheels turning. So, too, it is with the Bedford Historical Society. Therefore, it is with great admiration for me to extend my THANK YOU to all the excellent people who have performed the many tasks we need in order to sustain our existence. It is an impressive group that meets tirelessly as elected Officers and Directors or as committee members for Activities, Hospitality, Sunshine, Welcoming, Publicity, Bylaws, Programs, Finances, Nominating, Whether it is those who provide the wonderful cakes, brownies and coffee at our meetings, or those who keep a close eye on the Society's finances, they keep us on track preventing us from grinding to a halt.

Many of our volunteers have served on their committees for many years, and I, on behalf of all our members, hope they will continue to do so for many more years to come, thus solidifying our unique organization's invaluable place in Bedford. I hope that if for whatever reason some of you cannot continue to serve on your committee, that you might find someone to replace you. But, of course, if that's not possible, please let me or the Board of Directors know of your decision, so we together can search for someone to carry on your expert and good work.

To the rest of our membership, I would like you to attend as many of our monthly membership meetings as possible. As you know, we always have terrific presentations that inform you about the ever-changing landscape of our town. With each lecture, I am amazed to learn more about what this town was and is about, whether it references stories about the time of slavery in this area, about milk bottles used in the past, or to attend a walking tour of the rich historic places in our neighborhood.

The good news is that all these lectures are FREE; what more can one expect? Look in this newsletter for when the lectures are scheduled and what they are about. Feel free to call Lee Yates, the society's Executive Director or any of us, for more information, and maybe tell us how you might be able to "volunteer." You will be rewarded by meeting other terrific members and learn about the past of this town. We would certainly welcome your involvement and perspective! *Jan van Steenwijk*

Status Update – Revision of the Society's Bylaws

As reported in the February 2009 issue of "The Preservationist," the Bedford Historical Society's Board of Directors formed a Bylaws Committee in January to review and update the Bylaws, Policies, and Mission Statement and bring them into compliance with present-day Society operations, including the fact that we are now a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The Committee completed this task, and is recommending revisions that primarily provide clarification, consistency, and editorial corrections, and in a few instances change their substance.

The Committee submitted its recommended revisions to the Board of Directors, and received approval after incorporation of their comments. The Committee is submitting the recommended revisions to all Society members so that any remaining comments can be incorporated prior to bringing them to a vote at the May 27 annual meeting.

All Society members will be receiving a separate mailing that summarizes the recommended revisions, along with a draft copy of the revised Bylaws, Policies, and Mission Statement.

In order to maximize the opportunities for the Society members to provide comments on the recommended revisions, all Society members are invited to provide feedback in one of the following ways:

(1) attend the "Bylaws Comments" session at the end of the Sunday April 26 general membership meeting, or

(2) attend a special "Bylaws Comments" meeting on Monday May 4 at 7:30 pm at the Bedford Police Station training room, or

(3) submit your comments to the clerk of the Bylaws Committee prior to May 4 (email: jntot@verizon.net or mail: Judie Toti, 38 Washington St., Bedford MA 01730).

The Bylaws Committee

Carol Amick, Bea Brown, Don Corey,
Judie Toti, Julie Turner, Jan van Steenwijk

Membership Application and Renewal Form

Dues (please check one):

__ Student:	$3.00
__ Individual:	$10.00
__ Couple or Family:	$15.00
__ **Supporting or Business:**	**$50.00**
__ **Patron:**	**$250.00**
__ Life – Individual:	$150.00
__ Life – Couple:	$200.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Donation

I would like to contribute the following amount to aid the Society: $ _____

Total enclosed: $ _____

Bedford Historical Society, Inc.
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Are your dues up to date? Please check the mailing label for your membership status

Peter Secor, Commander of Bedford's Minuteman Company, invited the Billerica and Concord troops to gather at the Old Town Line sign along the Jenks Trail after Pole Capping. Each troop is shown on their respective side of the town line. They were joined by State Senator Susan Fargo who represents both Bedford and Concord; Mike Seibert, the project's instigator; and Historical Society President Jan van Steenwijk. (Article, page 4.)