The Stearns Building on Great Road houses the Bedford Historical Society's archives.

The Preservationist

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

Founded in 1893

April 2012 Volume 120, Number 3

We invite you all to enjoy another FREE and exciting lecture sponsored by the Society.

Wednesday, April 25, at 7:30pm
at the
Bedford Library's Meeting Room

Sachem Gil Solomon:
"The Time Before Now"

It has long been believed that Native Americans lived in Bedford during the Paleolithic Period of human development. Gill Solomon, Sachem ("chief") to the Massachuseuk-Ponkapoag people, will present stories of the creation of the earth, the Native people's relationship with nature, the traditional ways of life, and the concepts of spirituality.

Solomon, whose Native American name is Feather-on-the-Moon, will explain how Native people do not look at their place in the universe in linear time, but instead as a circle of time: the past, the present moment and what is to come. Many Native storytellers begin with the words, "In a time before the present…" indicating that the story could have happened 5,000 years ago or just a few years ago.

Feather-on-the-Moon is a member of the Massachuseuk-Ponkapoag Tribal Council and serves on the National Recreation Area Advisory Council for the Boston Harbor Islands. He is active with the Friends of the Massachusetts Archeological Society's Robbins Museum in Middleboro, which is dedicated to native cultures of New England. As Chairman of the Deer Island Memorial Committee, Chief Solomon is guiding the Committee to identify ways to honor the Native Americans who were kidnapped, confined, and in some instances sold as slaves by English settlers in the late 1600s.

Bedford in 1870

Last month we looked at interesting pieces of the town's history as it was around 1860. In this *Preservationist*, again combining several timelines by others, we recall some significant National events as well as some insights into Bedford in the decade following the Civil War.

- Bedford's population bottoms out at 820 in 1865 (State census), having lost 16 men in the war and many families having moved west to better farmland or elsewhere.

- Dr. William Hayden builds the Bedford Springs Hotel in 1867.
- Alaska is purchased from Russia in 1867 for $7.5 million (Seward's Folly).
- President Andrew Johnson is impeached in 1868.
- On March 4, 1869, Gen. U.S. Grant is inaugurated as President.
- In 1870 Bedford's population begins to recover to 849 (Federal census), with 199 families and 191 dwellings.
- Women are first elected to the Bedford School Committee in 1872, "and have proved wise and efficient workers" per A.E. Brown (1891).
- The Great Boston Fire occurs in November 1872
- The Middlesex Central Railroad begins service to Bedford and Concord Center on August 4, 1873, heralding a new transportation era. Stagecoach service ceases the following year.
- The Bedford Depot is built in 1874, replacing a temporary building erected by the railroad the prior year. The Depot is located west of South Road in the vicinity of present Commercial Avenue.
- The Civil War monument is dedicated in Shawsheen Cemetery on Memorial Day 1874 with imposing ceremonies.
- An atlas published in 1875 containing detailed maps of Bedford Center and the entire town shows the gradual regrowth of the community (copies are in the Society's collections).
- Bedford's population grows to 900 in 1875 (State census), back up to the level it had been back in the 1840s.

The 1870 Federal Census again provides some insights to Bedford's population. The vast majority of heads of household were Farmers, but 21 still listed their occupation as shoemaker or cordwainer (down from 40 in the 1860 census). Six now listed their occupation as House Carpenters, reflecting the town's gradual recovery and growth. Also in contrast to the earlier census, Bedford now had several Physicians, a number of Teachers, several Grocers, an Apothecary and a Druggist (?), a Dentist, several Cabinet Makers, and a Hotel Keeper and Bartender. These all reflected the growing diversification of the town's inhabitants.

A number of families were again recently arrived from other places, with

Continued on page 2

Bedford 1870, cont. fr. page 1

at least 15 from Maine and New Hampshire as well as immigrants from Ireland, England, Scotland and Canada. Finally, it's interesting to note that Bedford had at least 7 octogenarians living here at that time. Born in the 1780s, they had witnessed the country's growth almost from its birth.

In future newsletters, we'll continue to look at changes that occurred in later decades.

Don Corey

Arbor Day

On the morning of Arbor Day, Friday, April 27, 2012, there will be a tree planting at the Jenks Nature Trail, the corridor of trees, paths and stonewalls that extends along the front of the High School and Library honoring Charles Jenks' memory. The Bedford Arbor Resources Committee hopes to again have a variety of native species gradually replanted along the trail.

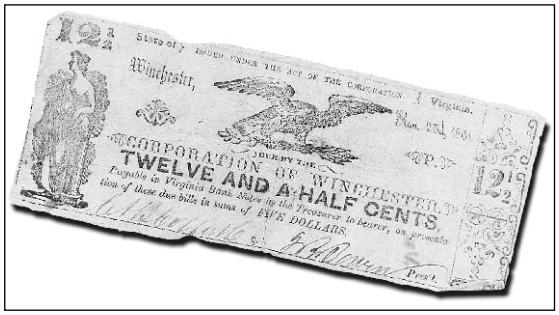
That evening Bedford's DPW and Arbor Resources Committee are sponsoring an Arbor Day program at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall Multipurpose Room. The program speaker this year will be the Society's Don Corey, telling tales of "Bedford's Shade Tree Legacy: Growing Our Small Town Charm". A number of photos from the Society's archives will help recall past years.

Every one is cordially invited to attend these events.

Not Worth a Confederate Dollar!

During the Civil War from 1861-1865, the Confederate States of America printed huge amounts of money to fund its war effort - most, if not all of it, with absolutely no reserve backing. The Colonies had followed the same policy during the Revolutionary War, but having won that war the United States eventually worked out its monetary obligations. Not so for the Confederates - their money was worthless after the war was lost. Most of it was thrown out, but a little (including that tucked away by your Bedford Historical Society) was saved. However, as anyone who ever watches Antiques Roadshow on Public Television is aware, that money is now worth many times its face value to collectors!

The Society's Confederate currency can be seen in the Civil War display case outside the Society's Office in the Police Station, and the currency was moved out with other temporary museum displays into the Training Room during Pole Capping Day. Some Union money printed by banks (this all predates the Federal Reserve system) is also included in the display. With inflation the four Confederate $5 bills shown here would theoretically each be worth about $400-500 in today's money. Except for the one on top, the bills are printed with black ink only. The twelve and a half cent note, printed by Winchester, VA, (probably to pay its soldiers) would theoretically now be equivalent to about $10. The Society's collection ranges from paper nickels (5 cent printed notes) to a $50 Confederate bill.



Please come by and see the Confederate bills displayed with many other items from the past next to the Society's Office in the Police Station. Call in advance to check our open hours.

By-law Amendments to be presented at Annual Meeting

Ever since the Society's bylaws underwent a complete review and revision in 2009, the Board of Directors has been monitoring the approved changes to be sure they are providing the appropriate structure for the Society. Several additional revisions were adopted in 2010 as well – to better relate the language in the bylaws to Society management.

Once again, the Board of Directors is proposing a few more bylaws changes. These will be published **in their entirety** in the upcoming May edition of the Preservationist, for discussion and a vote at the Annual Meeting on May 23, 2012.

Summary of Bylaw Changes

The proposed changes would affect the Nominating Committee (Article 8), the Executive Committee and its Subcommittees (Article 9), Directors (Article 10) and Elections (Article 11). They are summarized as follows:

Article 8 changes: Set a new four-week deadline for the Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of Officers and Directors for the annual meeting and require that the proposed new slate be sent to the membership at least 14 days before the annual meeting.

Article 9 changes: Change the descriptions of the duties of the Executive Committee's three standing subcommittees to reflect less laborious requirements; add language to ensure that subcommittee members are familiar with their roles and responsibilities; reduce the Executive Committee quorum from 5 to 3, and reduce the number of required meetings. (the final review comments allows for any action at our 4/8 Board meeting)

Article 10 changes: Adds the elected Officers as members of the Board of Directors (under final review)

Article 11 changes: Add language to ensure that newly-elected Officers and Directors receive information to familiarize them with their roles and responsibilities.

Vincent Caniello studies the square pew and the elegant clothing on display. Former Town Historian Ina Mansur's research suggest it was an original pew in the Congregational Church that was replaced during renovations in the late 1800s.

Never Too Young to Learn about History

Pole Capping Day in early April attracts hundreds of people to see the many Minutemen from surrounding communities as well as our own brave group carrying the Bedford Flag. The ceremony honors the only Bedford Minuteman, Captain Jonathan Wilson, who was killed in the battle against the British in 1775. There are speeches and a wreath is laid at the monument at Wilson Park. The visual highlight occurs when a Bedford Minuteman climbs the Liberty Pole to place a red cap on the top, symbolizing the Colonials' defiance against the British monarchy. Then a fierce group of British soldiers arrive to arrest those town officials who dare to rebel against the British Crown. Fortunately, the drama ends very peacefully, so afterwards many adults and children go to visit the original Bedford Flag at the Library and our own exhibition at the Police Station.

This year Kara Kerwin and Don Corey again created wonderful displays of a dazzling selection of historic items from our archives. It is one of those few times that we have an open house, so anyone can come by to get a close-up and hands-on experience. Among the many visitors were Vincent Caniello and his mother Virginia. Vincent, dressed appropriately in a Colonial outfit, showed great interest in some "old money" and the square pew shown above. Don Corey explained what is known about them.

From left: Visitors Virginia Caniello, Barbara Hitchcock and Vincent Caniello listen to Don Corey who explained about the "old Confederate money."

The Society enjoyed one more successful day showing the public what Bedford was like many years ago. We always welcome anyone interested in our history to come and visit us – just call in advance and we will be happy to show items and provide information about the lives of our forefathers.

Jan van Steenwijk

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We Don't Make History...
We Keep It Alive..!

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

Please come and enjoy our FREE 2012 Lectures

Wednesday, April 25, 2012 at ***7:30 pm***, Bedford Library:
Gill Solomon, Chief Sachem of the Mass.-Ponkapoag Tribal Council, *"The Time Before Now."*

Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at ***6:30 pm***, First Church of Christ, Congregational (Fellowship Hall): Potluck Dinner and Annual Meeting.

Officers
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Come and see us.
Visit our website.
Visit our FaceBook page.

www.bedfordmahistory.org

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Bedford Historical Society, Inc

We Don't Make History, We Preserve It!
Established 1893

We would like your support!

Your Membership:

- Supports the Society's ongoing effort to *collect artifacts* and ephemera about our town.
- Allows the Society to make sure that all material it acquires will be *protected for the future*.
- Means that anyone will have access to *conduct research* about the town's past.
- Helps the Society fulfill its important goal of having a *museum-like environment*.
- Gives you the opportunity to enjoy *free lectures*.
- Gives you *free newsletters* containing wonderful stories about the past and research results.
- Allows you *discounts on great merchandise*, including books, copies of old maps, t-shirts, Bedford Flags, etc.

Membership Application

Name:_____
Address:_____

City/Town:_____
State:_____Zip:_____
Phone:_____
Email:_____

Dues

_ Student:	$ 15.00
_ Single:	$ 25.00
_ Couple or Family:	$ 45.00
_ Life - Single:	$250.00
_ Life - Couple:	$450.00
Supporting or Business:	
_Contributing:	$100.00
_ Patron:	$175.00
_ Benefactor:	$300.00
_ Donation:	$

Amount enclosed: $_____

Please send check to:
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