The Preservationist

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

May 2009 Volume 116, Number 7

The once-famous bog garden on the Pickman estate along Dudley Road and the Concord River. Next to this garden grew a large variety of berry-producing plants to attract birds. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Earl Sorensen.)

Potluck? What luck!

This month we finish our program year with a brief annual business meeting and election of officers, followed by the best potluck dinner in Bedford, and then an update on Bedford Depot Park by Jim Shea.

Congregational Church
25 The Great Road, Bedford
Wednesday, May 27, 6:30 PM
(<u>not</u> at 7:30 as usual)

Please bring the dish of your choice – appetizer, main dish, side dish, dessert, or what have you – with enough to serve eight. We'll supply coffee, tea, and punch. If you aren't sure what to bring, remember that it's always better to have too many main dishes than too many desserts. (We can all nip over to Bedford Farms for ice cream afterward if our sweet tooth isn't satisfied.) Come on over, and come hungry !

Dues are due

Once again it's time for our Annual members to renew their dues. The price of membership is very little, but means a lot to us. A membership renewal form appears on Page 7. Just clip it, fill it out, and send it with your check. Alternatively, you can bring a check to our potluck dinner on May 27.

No sure how you stand? Check the mailing label on this newsletter. It gives your membership category and, if you are not a Life member, the date when your membership expires. If in doubt please call our office at 781-275-7276 and we'll be happy to assist.

A big thank-you for supporting the Bedford Historical Society.

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, Editor
(781) 275-3294 (home)
(781) 275-7276 (BHS office)
Email: bedford-history@usa.net

Bedford Historical Society, 2008-2009

Officers

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

Directors

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

Committees

Activities: TBD
BOD Liaison to Executive Board: Doris Crowell, Julie Turner
Hospitality: Marietta Ellis
Membership Secretary: TBD
Merchandise/Ways & Means: TBD
Newsletter Editor: Alethea Yates
Nominating:
Wilma Johnson (appointed by Executive Board, '08)
Carol Amick (appointed by Membership, '09)
Julie Turner (appointed by President, '10)
Program: Cecile Walker
Sunshine: Sharon McDonald
Welcoming: Lois Jenkins
Finance Committee:
Doris Crowell, Julie Turner (Board Co-chairs)
Don Corey (Treasurer)
Neil Leary ('09)
Frank Gicca ('10)
Donald Jenkins ('11)
Jan van Steenwijk (BHS President)

In memoriam

Last month we were saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs. Olive French (Dutton) Nolin. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family. Mrs. Nolin and her late sister, Mrs. Elinor Johnston, were the last two children to be born and raised in the Job Lane House on North Road.

We remember Mrs. Nolin as a very kind and sweet lady who was always happy to share her memories of life in Bedford. Her involvement with the Friends of the Job Lane House was a marvelous asset to the group. We also appreciate her generosity in allowing the Bedford Historical Society to borrow some of her family photographs so that we could copy them for our collections.

A memorial service celebrating her life will be held on a future date at the First Parish in Bedford. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Mrs. Nolin's name may be made to the Friends of Job Lane House, Inc., P.O. Box 720, Bedford, MA 01730.

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.

Archives closed for vacation

Our office will be closed for vacation on Monday, June 23 and will reopen on Monday, July 6.

New members

We've gained a flock of new members in the last few weeks. Welcome, all!

Diana ("Yan") and Donald Thomas
Robert and Debra Parkhurst
Christine and Veronica Brown
Carolyn and Douglas Weaver
Maggie Debbie and Vito LaMura
Stanley Rowin and Nancy Riggotti

A special thank-you to Jan van Steenwijk for talking up the Bedford Historical Society among his friends. It's an excellent way to bring in members. Won't you please consider following his example?

Annual Giving

Donations continue to come in and are welcome at any time of the year. We thank the following people who have made contributions to help us carry out our mission:

Christopher Bryant
Stanley and Blanche Wentworth
Diana and Donald Thomas
Therese Bluhm
The Bedford Minuteman Company

The Reminisants perform on the steps of the Old Town Hall on a summer evening in 2004 as part of our celebrations for Bedford's 275th anniversary. This and other photos of the event were recently donated to us by photographer Holly Bloomfield.

New merchandise

We have several new Bedford history items to offer the public.

Bedford in the World War. With the permission of the Bedford Selectmen, we have reprinted a 1927 book on the Bedford men and women who served in World War I. Along with the service records of most of those whose names appear on the memorial boulder on the Town Common, plus several dozen photographs, this book presents stories of honor, courage and sacrifice that deserve to be remembered forever. (Our thanks to Mr. Al Fay for suggesting that the book be reprinted.)

***Patriots of Color* on DVD**. If you missed this excellent talk by George Quintal our February meeting, or if you'd like to share it with friends and family, you will want to buy your own copy on DVD. There's so much we wouldn't have known about Bedford men of color who served in the Revolution but for the many years of research by Mr. Quintal.

Historic Properties and Neighborhoods of Bedford. A long-awaited reprinting of this book by Kathleen Kelly Broomer will be coming out soon. Packed with a wealth of historical and architectural information, this book is an invaluable reference on the many noteworthy houses that enrich our community.

To purchase any of our merchandise, please call our office at 781-275-7276 or visit our web site at www.bedfordmahistory.org.

Cultural Council grant

We are excited to have been awarded a grant by the Bedford Cultural Council to help us post our collection of Lane Family Papers on our web site. This fascinating collection of dozens of documents, going back as far as the 1650s, is the crown jewel of our family history papers. The Lane family were among the earliest settlers of the town and their holdings covered one fifth of what is now Bedford.

Archives assistant Kara Kerwin has been hard at work scanning the documents, piecing together some that have long been broken into fragments, and deciphering a lot of very difficult 17th-century handwriting. We plan to post both scanned images of the documents, so you can see just how they look, plus transcriptions so you can read them easily.

We thank the Cultural Council for giving us the opportunity to share this invaluable collection with both Bedford folks and researchers far and wide.

Bedford dairies exhibit

Rodney Leskowski, who gave a talk about his collection of Bedford milk bottles at our Show and Tell meeting in March, has graciously loaned us a fine selection of his Bedford bottles and other memorabilia for display in the case outside our office door. We are in the process of photographing the collection so that we can continue the display after returning the collection. Our thanks to Rodney for sharing his treasures and his knowledge with us.

This commemorative bottle records the history of Bedford Farms. "Bedford Farms Ice Cream, originally the J.B. Prescott Co. began in 1880 as a bottling and wholesale dairy business. In the 1930's it became known as Bedford Farms Dairy and began wholesale delivery of milk. In the 1950's the Dairy began making ice cream and created Bedford Farms Ice Cream. To this day we continue serving homemade style gourmet ice cream. Thanks for making us one of Bedford's oldest continuing running businesses. 1880 – 2005…"

Complimentary copies of *The Preservationist*

This year we have sent complimentary copies of this newsletter to a good many folks who have shown an interest in Bedford and its history. Please check the mailing label on the back page. If you see the words "complimentary newsletter," and you have enjoyed reading our newsletter and hearing about the Society's doings, won't you please consider becoming a member? You're just the sort of person we'd like to have with us! There's a membership form on Page 7. Of course, there is no obligation, but we hope you'll give us a try. Thank you!

So different – yet so alike

Being away on a vacation always creates that wonderful relaxation we all deserve. Barbara and I visited my son, his wife and our almost-three-year-old grandson who live in the center of Copenhagen. Great! We don't see them enough because they live an ocean away in Denmark. We spent more than a week in their cozy country summer house, a small old, white-washed farm house with a thatched roof overlooking rolling fields and situated close to a royal forest and to the sea. Their rule is that there is no TV, telephone or computer in the house! Just all of us being able to communicate like in the "good old days."

Back in the big city, we decided to visit the oldest museum in town: the Copenhagen Town Museum. It's one of the tens of museums in town, but this one houses artifacts of Copenhagen's history from its founding 950 years to today's contemporary life. Here they keep and exhibit artifacts from more than 1000 years ago, reflecting the oldest kingdom in the world; Denmark.

Outside is a beautiful diorama--small houses, farms and a church--showing what the city looked like some 400 years ago. Inside the museum there are small girls' shoes, boys' caps, men's formal church dress, farm tools, paintings and embroideries, showing views of daily life, including weddings and family trees. Then there are some of the many products the inhabitants produced over the years for personal use or for commerce. Crafts were made from local, available materials. There is also a display with letters written to loved ones and invoices to be paid for tasks performed.

Suddenly, I realized that we – people from all over the world – are so alike. We, too, in Bedford have hundreds of artifacts that maybe have a slightly different look, but served the same purpose for the people who made them so many years ago. We, too, collect these treasures to learn about the past and to recover far-away memories: children's dresses, paintings, craft items, and *voila*, a diorama, too!!!

Our own Battle of Concord diorama was recently cleaned and it has a brand new cabinet that features better lighting. Please visit our office at 2 Mudge Way; look at the many objects we own and have a close-up look at our diorama that explains a part of our past.

Jan van Steenwijk

A calendar for 1936 from Bedford's Blue Ribbon Dairy. (Courtesy of Rodney Leskowski.)

Tweets and pix and the web, oh my!

We honor the past but live in the present. With so many ways to reach people via the internet nowadays, we recently decided to start taking advantage of Twitter and Flickr. In case you don't know – and we didn't, until fairly recently – here's what it's all about.

Twitter lets you send very short messages, called tweets, about what you're doing. It's a quick and easy way for us to connect with current and future friends who have an interest in Bedford's history. Please go to the Twitter page on our web site:

www.bedfordmahistory.org/twitter.htm

or to our page on the Twitter site:

www.twitter.com/HistoryByLee

Flickr is for sharing photographs over the internet. We've posted the many photographs (okay, we got carried away) that we took of the Pole Capping ceremony last month. To see them, go to www.flickr.com and search on **pole capping 2009**. We plan to post other photos as soon as we can.

Upcoming summer events

This is our last newsletter until September, but that doesn't mean that we plan to idle the summer away. We have a full calendar of upcoming activities.

Memorial Day, Monday, May 25. Once again we'll be taking part in the ceremonies, with Don Corey giving a talk in the Shawsheen Cemetery on Bedford's Civil War veterans, Bob Slechta speaking about our Revolutionary soldiers in the Old Burying Ground, and Lee Yates giving a brief talk on our World War I servicemen and women at the Town Common. The event begins 8:30 AM at the American Legion post, 357 The Great Road (near Shawsheen Cemetery) and concludes at Memorial Park (across the street from the Post Office).

Minuteman RHS, Sunday, June 7. This year we will host the Annual Meeting of the Minuteman Regional Historical Society. The keynote speaker will be George Quintal, Jr., the expert on African Americans and Native Americans who served as Revolutionary War soldiers. First Church of Christ, 25 The Great Road, 2 PM. Free and open to all.

Two Brothers Rocks history walking tour and dedication ceremony, Sunday, June 14. Walking tour and dedication of Bedford's newly reestablished historic site and interpretive sign on the Concord River, 1:00 - 3:00 PM. Meet at the entrance to trail on Dudley Rd. opposite Emery Lane. Free and open to all. This program is offered in conjunction with the Bedford Historical Preservation Commission and the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge, Sudbury.

Opening day, Bedford Farmers' Market, Monday, June 15. We'll help launch the second year of the Farmers' Market by setting up our sales tent. Stop by to peruse our Bedford history wares and traditional toys as you shop the best and freshest farm produce in the area. Open 2-6:30 across from Bedford Depot Park, at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and South Road.

Dedication of the Budd Car and Freight House, Monday, June 15. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the beautifully renovated Freight House and Budd car is planned. Watch the local paper for details or check our web site.

Concert (and strawberry shortcake?) on the Common, Friday, July 3. The town's Recreation Dept. plans to begin celebrating Independence Day with a concert on the Common. The Bedford Historical Society is considering offering strawberry shortcake at this event. Watch the local paper for details or check our web site.

July 4 at Springs Brook Park. Once again, the Town will offer July 4 festivities at Springs Brook Park on Springs Road, and we'll be there with our sales booth. For details check the town web site, www.town.bedford.ma.us; our web site; or the local paper.

History walking tours of Bedford Springs, the Shawsheen Cemetery, Bedford Center 1875, and other locales in Bedford are anticipated this summer and fall. Dates to be announced.

Job Lane Craft Faire, Saturday, Sept. 12. The Friends of JLH hold their 11th annual fair from 10-3 at the Job Lane House, 295 North Road. See colonial crafters demonstrating their skills, take a tour of the house, and visit our sales booth. Fun for all ages.

Email notices about coming events

Bedford Historical Society members who give us their email address will receive email notices about all our upcoming events. If you're a member but haven't given us your email, please send it to us at info@bedfordmahistory.org. And if you're not a member, this is one of many good reasons for you to join! Please see the membership form on Page 7.

Community outreach

We're always busy with a variety of activities to reach out to Bedford folks near and far.

Thanks to Society member Don Jenkins, a series of brief **history articles featuring our vintage photographs** is currently being published in the *Bedford Minuteman*.

Walk of Bedford. The Society has been one of the hosts for the town's third graders as they make their annual tour through historic Bedford Center.

March and April meetings on BCAT. Videos of our March "Show and Tell" meeting and our April talk by Diane Rapaport on "The Naked Quaker" are currently running on Bedford Community TV. For the schedule, see www.bedford.tv or check the local paper.

Memorial Day commemoration. Three Society members will be among the speakers at the town's ceremonies on Monday, May 25.

New exhibit. As part of the "One Book, One Bedford" program we've installed a photograph exhibit on Bedford during Depression, the era of the book *The Orchard*. Look for the two glass display cases just inside the main entrance the Bedford library.

Annual Meeting elections

Come to vote and volunteer to assist the Society!

The business portion of the May 27 Annual Meeting will include elections for the Society's Officers for the 2009-2010 season, with the Nominating Committee recommending candidates for President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as for new members of the Board of Directors.

The Nominating Committee, comprised of Wilma Johnson, Carol Amick and Julie Turner, is busy finding Society members willing to volunteer for these positions, and expects to have a full slate to bring to the membership for a vote.

The Committee also is helping next year's Society President by identifying members who will serve on standing committees of the Society's Executive Board (to be renamed standing *Subcommittees* of the *Executive Committee* if the by-laws changes are approved the same evening). The current by-laws provide that these volunteers be appointed by the President. The proposed new by-laws retain the President's appointment responsibility, but also provide that the Nominating Committee "at the request of the President, shall assist the President in identifying subcommittee members."

The Nominating Committee will circulate sign-up sheets at the Annual Meeting on May 27, and encourages Society members interested in volunteering a small amount of time during the Society's 2009-2010 season to sign up that night or contact a committee member: Wilma Johnson (781-275-6737 or wilmawjohnson@verizon.net), Carol Amick (781-275-5278 or carol.amick@verizon.net), or Julie Turner (781-275-0742 or jmcct@verizon.net).

All types of help are needed for the Society's program meetings and events, outreach to local business and community organizations, residents and schools, and assistance to the Society's staff on merchandising and sales. The Nominating Committee is looking for new faces to work with long-standing Society volunteers – an excellent way to grow and strengthen the Society.

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.
2 Mudge Way, Bedford MA 01730-2138
781-275-7276
info@bedfordmahistory.org

The Preservationist
Bedford Historical Society
2 Mudge Way
Bedford MA 01730

PRSRT STD
US Postage Paid
Bedford MA 01730
Non-Profit Org.
Permit No. 30

Are your dues up to date? Please check the mailing label for your membership status

Memorabilia of Bedford's dairy industry from the collections of Rodney Leskowski. Clockwise from upper left: Blue a Ribbon Dairy bottle, a Lexford Farms Dairy bottle and cap, and a Bedford Farms milk truck bank.