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

May 2013 Volume 122, Number 4

The Bedford Historical Society Presents:

May 22, 2013 at 6:30

at the

Congregational Church - Great Road

Annual Meeting

A brief business meeting to elect Society officers and directors for the 2013-2014 year will follow the potluck dinner.

Marion Bryan's memorable punch will accompany other appetizers when ***the doors to Fellowship Hall open at 6:30 pm*** (please note the earlier start time).

Society members are asked to bring a main dish, salad or dessert for up to eight people, for this, the final program of the Society's 2012-13 season.

Joe McKendry College teacher, illustrator and author Joe McKendry will be the guest speaker and will offer a fascinating glimpse into the history of America's first underground transit system. His lecture, *Beneath the Streets of Boston: Building America's First Subway*, is also his book's title.

A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, McKendry said his goal in writing *Beneath the Streets* was to present the story of how and why America's first subway came to be built. He conducted research from turn-of-the-twentieth-century transit commission reports that detailed every facet of the subway's construction. To learn about the public's reaction to the subway, he studied newspaper articles from important moments in the subway's development.

McKendry analyzes the traffic problems that plagued Boston's maze of streets during the late 1800s and prompted the creation of an alternative form of public transportation. After a lengthy battle, the famous "T" system was built. McKendry describes the city's subway system, highlighting both problem areas as well as accomplishments.

McKendry will illustrate his talk with slides of watercolor paintings based on photographs primarily from the collection of "Historic New England."

Fabulous Generosity...

The Bedford Historical Society has received thousands of photographs, family documents, books and other Bedford-related artifacts since its inception. Many years ago, we also received a substantial matching grant from a Bedford family who wished to remain anonymous. Recently, the BHS received its largest gift in the organization's 130-year history. *(See the article below for details.)*

We are extremely grateful to Lawrence and Wilhelmina Kimball for their generosity and we promise that we will honor the Kimball family in an appropriate manner when—in the not too distant future—we are able to open the doors to a new BHS museum. With this gift, the Society's 130-year existence has entered an important and exciting phase of its future—one of growth and more public accessibility to its collection and to research opportunities. We are forever in debt to the Kimballs and to all other individuals, past and present, who have supported the BHS. Additionally, we want to encourage everyone to continue donating their Bedford-related treasures to the Society, thus enabling it to create a mosaic that presents a comprehensive narrative of Bedford, decade after decade after decade.

Jan van Steenwijk

Historic Kimball Property Sold *by Carol Amick*

Consider, for a moment, being born and growing up in a pre-1740 farmhouse – the same home where your grandfather and father lived decades before. Think about returning to that house after marriage, and raising two sons in that home.

Lawrence Kimball and his wife, Wilhelmina, lived this life and loved the history of their house and the history of Bedford. Larry was born in the farmhouse that he and his family called the Red Feather Farm. He and "Mina" had two sons: Paul and Nathan. According to Nathan, "When you think about his growing up, what was not to love? When my Father was young, out the front door ran an electric trolley, which he could hop on and travel to Lexington to school or beyond into Boston. Furthermore, "city folks" made excursions out to the country on the trolley on weekends. The shop of Red Feather Candy was close to the end of the line, so these day trippers would buy some fresh candy as a prize to bring back to the city. What a perfect place for someone of a mechanical mind to grow up, seeing how new things worked."

Larry and Mina Kimball in their home in 2003

Larry and "Mina" Kimball were active members of the Bedford Historical Society for over 50 years. Said son Paul, "Our parents were passionate about the Bedford Historical Society and its work of preserving and explaining the Town's heritage. They also loved raising funds for the Society. One of their favorite projects was a commemorative plate with pictures of the town's historic buildings. Every week when I'd call home, they'd have a new story about the plate's design or the felt

continue next pg.

pouches they used for packaging. (Dad made those pouches with his own hands, believe it or not.) And then for years they'd talk about how many plates they'd sold and who had bought them."

Even in death, Larry and Mina Kimball accomplished something extraordinary and everlasting to help preserve the Bedford history they loved so dearly: in their will they left their historic 18th century home, as well as the adjacent 20th century barn where Larry's parents ran the Red Feather Candy Company, to the Bedford Historical Society. It was an important and generous gift, and probably was borne out of an idea about which so many Society members have dreamt for years – to establish a museum in Bedford for the protection and display of all the Town's precious historic artifacts.

The Kimball house, known officially as the "Farley-Hutchinson-Kimball house," ca. 1732, is associated with Bedford's "original" history: the era after the Town was incorporated in 1729 out of land donated from Billerica and Concord. The house reflects the evolution of farming activity in Bedford from the 18th through the 20th centuries, when poultry farming and shipping eggs by railroad to Boston came after haying and subsistence farming. From 1911 the farm was known as the Red Feather Farm; around 1920, candy was hand-made at the farm and sold to customers arriving on the nearby streetcar and by automobile.

The house is an architecturally-significant example of colonial-style architecture that illustrates with timber-frame construction the aesthetics of design and setting, and possesses integrity of materials and workmanship.

Since taking ownership of the Farley-Hutchinson-Kimball house in 2010, the Historical Society's Board of Directors considered numerous possible future uses for the house and adjacent barn. It concluded, as is the case with many other historic properties and homes, that the best future use is for the property to remain a private family home. "The Society is pleased that the property will remain a home for Larry and Mina's two sons and their families," explained Society Board Chair Frank Gicca.

The Kimball House

During the Society's possession of the house for the past three years, it worked to protect it in perpetuity by successfully placing an Historic Preservation Restriction on the exterior of the house. The Society also succeeded, working with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, to get the house listed by the National Park Service onto the National Register of Historic Places.

"Of the 16 homes in Bedford that pre-date 1750, the Kimball house is the 8th to be listed on the National Register," said Society President Jan van Steenwijk. "The Society is proud to have played an important role in making this happen," he added.

Commented Paul Kimball, "Growing up in Bedford, I got a real sense of the history of the place. Everywhere you turn, there's a building or an artifact that connects you with the people who first settled here and lived here over the last 300 or so years. And my grandparents, who moved to the Red Feather Farm on North Road in 1911, had personal memories of people who lived through most of the 19th and 20th centuries. Preserving the buildings and artifacts— and the memories — can help us understand who we are today and where we came from."

Plans for the bequest

The Historical Society now has funds from the sale of the Kimball house to establish an Endowment fund to support the Society. The Society's Board of Directors believes that Larry and Mina Kimball's dream of a museum to house Bedford's artifacts can now become a reality. "The income from the Endowment can help support the Society and a possible future museum," explained Gicca.

Because all the Bedford historic papers and thousands of artifacts protected by the Society tell the history of Bedford, not the Society, the Society's Board of Directors will be seeking a partnership with the Town for a permanent museum.

"My parents would be pleased that their bequest will help the Society fulfill its mission for generations to come," Paul Kimball added.

Carol Amick

Election of Officers, Directors at Annual Meeting

The Bedford Historical Society's Nominating Committee offers the following candidates for Officer and Directors during the 2013-2014 season:

President: Jan van Steenwijk
Vice President: Brown Pulliam
Secretary: Phyllis Cooke
Treasurer: Patricia Leiby

Three Directors for 4-year terms:
Bea Brown
Frank Gicca
Joan Gicca

Two Directors for 1-year terms:
Richard LeSchack
Sharon McDonald

These candidates will be put forward at the Society's Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 22, at the First Church of Christ, Congregational. The meeting will begin at 6:30 in Fellowship Hall with a Potluck Supper. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

After the election of officers and directors, guest speaker Joe McKendry will present: "Beneath the Streets of Boston: Building American's First Subway."

May Events

This spring historically related events that Society members may be interested in include the following:

* The Wilson Mill Park Ribbon Cutting and Dedication will be held on Saturday, May 18 at 2:00 PM. This mill site dates to 1676. After the Old Burlington Road Bridge failed several years ago and the milldam was condemned by the State, a new dam was constructed using Community Preservation funds. The dam was completed this winter, with new stonework tied into remaining historic mill foundations. Native species are presently being planted around the site to complete the project. The new bridge will be dedicated to late Selectman Gordon Feltman, and a park bench will be dedicated to late Society member and activist Mimi Adler.

A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held at the newly renovated Wilson Mill Park

* Memorial Day observances will be held on Monday, May 27. They will commence at the American Legion, followed by a ceremony at the Civil War monument in Shawsheen Cemetery and then at the Great Road Bridge over the Shawsheen River. Participants will then gather at the Old Burying Ground to remember Bedford's Revolutionary War soldiers. Finally, a parade starting at Mudge Way will proceed past the World War I Memorial on the Common to Veterans Memorial Park, where the main program will occur. As in recent years, Society members have been asked to participate and speak at Shawsheen Cemetery, Old Burying Ground and the World War I Memorial. Scheduled times of events will be provided by the town.

Old Burying Ground Ceremony on Springs Road

* The Historical Society will participate with others in the Walk of Bedford for all of Bedford's 3rd graders. This involves "show and tell" talks with pictures and historic items from the Society's museum collections shown to small groups of students and their teachers. Also, each 3rd grade class is given a tour of the Old Burying Ground, including a scavenger hunt of sorts. The Society is very grateful to volunteers who have stepped forward to assist and ensure the continuing success of the Walk of Bedford.

Don Corey

The Preservationist

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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.

Welcome to the Season's last Lecture:

Wednesday, May 22, 2013, 6:30 pm,
at the Congregational Church, Great Rd.

Potluck Dinner ,Annual Meeting.

Guest Speaker *Joe McKenry:*
"Beneath the Streets of Boston:
Building America's First Subway."

The picture is titled: *"Cow and Bridge"* Does anyone recognize the place?
We appreciate any suggestions.

Please feel free to visit our archives to browse
though the many volumes of genealogical resources.

Officers
Jan van Steenwijk, *President*
Brown Pulliam, *Vice President*
Phyllis Cooke, *Secretary*
Patricia Leiby, *Treasurer*

Directors
Frank Gicca - ('13) *Chairman*
Judie Toti - ('15) *Board Clerk*
Carol Amick ('16)
Lee Vorderer ('16)
Julie McCay Turner ('16)
Bea Brown ('13)
Joan Gicca - ('13)
Marion Bryan ('14)
Donald Jenkins ('14)
Don Corey ('15)
Atty. Paul Dick ('15)

Finance Committee
Frank Gicca - *Chairman*
Patricia Leiby - *Treasurer*
Don Corey
Donald Jenkins
Paul Dick
Jan van Steenwijk - *Pres.*

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

www.bedfordmahistory.org

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Membership Application

Name:_____
Address:_____

City/Town:_____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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