Not to be missed!

**Sunday, November 13, at 2 pm**

at the

**First Church of Christ, Congregational**

Veterans from the War for Independence to the Iraq/Afghanistan conflict: “A History of Bedford Veterans.”

A special tribute to Bedford veterans – their history and impact on the community – will be presented by the BHS. Veterans from the War for Independence to the Iraq/Afghanistan conflict will tell personal and poignant stories and relate their service to events in Bedford's history and the nation.

The first two speakers are well-known to Bedford residents for their volunteer work on numerous Town committees and organizations. Bob Slechta will describe Bedford’s veterans of the War for Independence and their impact on the Town at that time. Slechta served as a Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Army from 1953 – 1955, and was stationed in Denver, Colorado where he was assigned to the Pathology Department of the Army Medical Nutrition Lab at Fitzsimons Army Hospital.

Don Corey will discuss the role of Bedford's Civil War veterans. Corey entered the U.S. Navy as an Ensign in 1957 and served on a Destroyer Escort in the Pacific. His second tour of duty took him to London, England, where he completed his service in 1960 as a full Lieutenant.

Representing veterans of World War II will be Bedford's own Town Historian, John Brooks Dodge, who was drafted at the age of 19 and served as a Field Linesman in the infantry for the U.S. Army from 1943 through 1945. He will describe his experiences serving in the Third Army under General Patton in Europe, and later as a member of the occupation forces in Japan.

Presenting stories of the Korean War will be Raymond “Dewey” Steurgeon, who joined the U.S. Air Force as a private in 1946 and became a pilot and Second Lieutenant in 1949. Between 1952 and 1958 he flew F-80s -- the first Air Force jet to be used in combat, and F-100s -- the “Super Sabre” supersonic jet fighter bomber.

Stories of the Vietnam conflict will be recounted by Gerry Maker, who served as a Field Linesman in the U.S. Army from 1969 – 1971 and served as a Field Linesman in the U.S. Army from 1969 – 1971 and was stationed in Denver, Colorado where he was assigned to the Pathology Department of the Army Medical Nutrition Lab at Fitzsimons Army Hospital.

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Between 1998 and 2004, Jan van Steenwijk photographed a diverse group of 75 Bedford residents, many of them volunteers – people who make the community a better place, but who rarely receive the credit they deserve. At Jan’s request, subjects penned their own handwritten life story to complement the images.

The photographs and accompanying text panels have since been widely exhibited, from two venues in Bedford to Waltham and Cambridge, Mass., and from Lausanne, Switzerland to Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Several of the images have been published in books and periodicals. Complete portfolios have been donated to the Bedford Historical Society for future generations to enjoy.

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The Town of Bedford has just created a new Minuteman Bikeway map that is available for $2.00 at the Historical Society or the Freight House. It features a map of the entire bikeway (as shown on the Depot Park kiosk) PLUS an enlarged Old Bedford Center insert showing historic sites of interest and various amenities for visitors (public restrooms, ice cream shops, etc.).

The reverse side of the map shows Bedford town-wide historic properties and conservation areas for more adventurous visitors to explore. Jim Shea, Don Corey and DPW’s Rich Warrington and Chris Nelson worked to produce the map. Pick up a copy!

Veterans - continued fr. pg. 1

Sergeant in the U.S. Army’s infantry, Maker will describe his experiences “jumping out of helicopters” and fighting an enemy that was indistinguishable from the non-combatants.

The final speaker, still to be arranged, will represent the Iraq/Afghanistan conflict. The Society has invited the community’s veterans groups to attend and participate in this thought-provoking program.

CAROL AMICK

PARTY TIME! Sunday, Dec. 11

This year’s Holiday Party is graciously hosted at the home of Carol Amick and Bill Moonan, 18 Crescent Avenue, starting at 3 p.m. The annual event is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the company of other Society members in a relaxed holiday atmosphere.

Every Society member/family is asked to bring an appetizer; two types of punch and coffee will be provided by the Society.

Last year almost 60 Society members enjoyed the party and were entertained by a “guess-the-antique-tool” contest utilizing Bill Moonan’s large collection of tools. We’re also looking for volunteers to help telephone members as a reminder about the party and bringing hors d’oeuvres. Please email Carol Amick at carol.amick@verizon.net or call her at 781-275-5278, if you can make phone calls a week or so before this event.

Separation

Some separations come easily - others not so. That's the way it was in Bedford in 1833 when church and state were legally separated and Bedford's religious societies chose to separate. After the amendment of the state Constitution that legally severed the church and town, early in 1833 the Town of Bedford and First Religious Society separated. At the same time the Unitarians and Congregationalists parted, with the First Parish (Unitarian) retaining ownership of the meetinghouse and Rev. Samuel Stearns as their pastor, Voted to choose a committee to report next Town Meeting, also report the probable amount of funds now in the hands of the town which is considered as belonging to the First Religious Society.

At the next Town Meeting on 04/22/1833 it was decided that the amount due from the town to the First Parish was $652.38 (surplus pew money less cost of painting the meetinghouse plus interest). The town voted to raise the said amount, and in what appears to be a particularly charitable act also directed "the Treasurer to pay the same amount to the Unitarians and Congregationalists as their portion of said funds." The town hoped to "finish August 1833" a task that was not completed until 1834.

On the following Sabbath the arrival of the bride and groom at the village church created great consternation. The bride appeared in a cloak of scarlet, her bonnet gay with plumes of a matching red which contrasted becomingly with her dark eyes and hair. Her appearance was in grave contrast to the subdued dress of the members of the congregation. Then the people remembered an old tale, that at her birth it was predicted that Miriam Gray would turn out to be a witch. (ed., her mother had testified against one of the accused in the Salem witch trials of the 1690's) her strange appearance seemed to bear out the truth of this prediction.

Poor Miriam came to be called the "Witch of Shawshine" and was shunned by her neighbors. It was said that even the miller's horse shied away from her in her scarlet cloak. The miller started to suffer from a lack of business. This terrible prejudice continued through the years until a scourge of throat distemper (ed., diphtheria.) visited the village. It was then, with no thought of herself, that Miriam went to the aid of her neighbors and tormentors. (ed., among these neighbors were John and Mary Whitmore who lost three children in the scourge of 1843 and five more in 1850.) She nursed many a child through the illness and administered comfort to the parents. The disease was finally arrested and the grateful people no longer spoke of the "Witch of Shawshine".

As Miriam grew older, the ugly stories were forgotten and she came to be beloved by the villagers.

Bob Slechta

What is It?

This small box was hiding in one of the many archival boxes in the Archives. It's size is 1¾” in diameter x 1¾” high, made of cardboard and covered with a flowered pattern. It contains eight woven "coasters?" Inside the cover is the date of 1922.

If you know the answer please contact us.

Don Corey

What was it?

We asked this question in our last issue of the Preservationist. It is a tool that contained very fine sand that was used when quills and ink were still writing tools. Sand was sprinkled on the wet ink to dry it faster.
The Preservationist
Bedford Historical Society, Inc.
2 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730-1238

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.

Mark your calendar for our:

2012 Lectures

Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2012 at 7:30 pm, Bedford Library: Dr. Gary Hylander, “Masters of Enterprise: Henry Ford”
Sunday, April 1, 2012 at 2 pm, First Church of Christ, Congregational: Christopher Daley, “Lizzie Borden: The Mystery Continues”
Wednesday, April 25, 2012 at 7:30 pm, Bedford Library: Gill Solomon, Chief Sachem of the Mass.-Ponkapog 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

Transportation or Fitness?
This picture is from around 1904, long before Bedford had its great Bike Path. Now all of us can enjoy biking, walking or just strolling from the Bedford Depot to Concord or to Alewife. **Check out page two for the new Bikeway Map.** Does anyone know who the two gentlemen are?

Come and see us.
Visit our website.
www.bedfordmahistory.org
Visit our FaceBook page.
Kara Kerwin - Pres.
81-275-7276

Membership Application
Name:________________________
Address:____________________
City/Town:___________________
State:_______________________
Zip:________________________
Phone:______________________
Email:_______________________

Amount enclosed: $_______________

Please send check to:
Bedford Historical Society, Inc. - 2 Mudge Way - Bedford, MA 01730-2138

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Design, production & photography: Jan van Steenwijk
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