The Preservationist

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

October 2009 Volume 117, Number 2

Postcard of Llewsac Lodge, Old Billerica Road, postmarked August 1945. The sender wrote, "Spending one grand holiday in this wonderful country land... In my walks an alluring path beckons to me from the roadside and I can't but yield to the call. Business women come here seeking a quiet, restful vacation. This also makes a permanent house for those wishing to come on retirement... This card is a winter scene but shows the entrance and drive to the Lodge." Page 4.

'Cherry Dawson, Milliner, at the Sign of the 2 Cats' comes to town

How 18th-century women live, and how did they dress? Carrie Midura will share the wealth of knowledge employed by her colonial alter ego, "Cherry Dawson, Milliner." A local resident, Ms. Midura does historical clothing studies and reproductions. Her talk will cover some of the pieces within our collections, including the bright-red garment we cherish as "the cloak of the Witch of the Shawsheen."

Congregational Church
25 The Great Road, Bedford
Wednesday, October 2
Coffee time 7:30, meeting begins 8:00 PM

Free and open to all. Please bring your friends!

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.

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Bedford Historical Society, 2009-2010

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Neil Leary ('09)
Frank Gicca ('10)
Donald Jenkins ('11)
Jan van Steenwijk (BHS President)

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 and 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 781-275-7276.

VACATION: Our office will close for vacation on Monday, October 26 and will reopen on Wednesday, November 4.

In memoriam

We have received word of the passing of Tom Hill, a long-time Bedford Historical Society member. Our condolences go to the family of Tom and his late wife, Diane "Dee" Hill.

Kimball memorial service

As you know, we recently lost two of our longest term members with the deaths of Larry and Mina Kimball. They made extraordinary contributions to the success of the Society over many years.

There will be a memorial service for Larry and Mina at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 100 Pine Hill Road, Bedford, on Saturday, November 21, 2009, at 10 AM. It will be followed immediately by a reception at The First Parish in Bedford, 75 The Great Road.

New member

We've just gained another new member since Bedford Day:

Joanne Glover

Welcome, Joanne!

Dennis Warner greets Governor John Winthrop (Ryan Kring, center) and Deputy Governor Thomas Dudley (Roy Kring, right) on their return to the Two Brothers Rocks, 371 years after they discovered the boulders on the shore of the Concord River. (Photo courtesy of Jack Fisher.)

From the President

Space needed.

Please have a good look at the picture – no, it's not from your attic but rather the office interior and storage space for the Bedford Historical Society. It is a cramped room with not many square inches to move around in. And for every day that goes by, it is getting filled with more and more important memorabilia.

It is in this space that Lee Yates, our Executive Director, spends several days a week archiving new acquisitions, scanning photographs, filing documents, talking to visitors, maintaining our website and attending a myriad other activities. Kara Kerwin, Lee's archives assistant, helps her for a few hours a week. That means there are two people competing for the few square inches of space. The biggest problem is that there is not much room left to accept many of the invaluable items and boxes filled with photographs that people may (and hopefully so!) want to donate to the society. "Don't worry," Lee says, "I will find a space for it, just bring it in."

She is right, of course, as there is always an empty corner or top shelf where we can squeeze in items from the past. But eventually we will need more space, not only to store objects, but also to have the possibility of exhibiting them and letting interested people to do research. Consequently – and you have heard me say this many times – we need more space. The archives space, currently in the Police station, is a perfectly safe space which we hope to be able to keep for many more years, but it would be nice if we could obtain additional space for a proper office – ideally connected to the archives for practical reasons – as well as to locate space for selling our wonderful products and showing off the many great artifacts we have in the collection. Maybe one day….

On another note: Our space might be cramped, but we are never overbooked with volunteers for our events. So this is, again, a call to anyone who can spare an hour or two to help at our events. One big opportunity coming up in December is – the Holidays!!! The Freight House will again open its doors to the public, where one can buy real gifts or just a stocking item for those special days at the end of the month. This is an occasion that shouts *"WE ARE HERE!"* showing that we *are-in-town* and have some wonderful products to offer. However, we need volunteers to be at the shop for a couple of hours, either in the morning or in the afternoon. Jim Shea says it takes only 15 minutes to learn the system, and then you are up and running. Easy! I feel we need to be present, not only to sell our goods, but also to have the exposure that creates necessary awareness.

I have signed up already – so please join me. It's fun to meet new people and to serve the Society. Call me at 781-275-7488 or email me at jansteenwijk@gmail.com. We will get back to you with dates and times, but please mark your calendars for the weekends of Nov-28/29, Dec-5/6. Dec-12/13 and Dec-19/20.

THANK YOU

Jan van Steenwijk

(Photo courtesy of Jan van Steenwijk.)

A Bedford haven for working women

It all began with the temperance movement and a strong-minded, crusading woman. Frances E. Willard, raised to consider alcohol abuse one of society's greatest evils, became the first national president of the Women's Christian Temperance Movement. In time she also became a powerful voice for women's right to vote. And in her travels on behalf of the WCTU she was introduced to a new concept which, through her, found its way to Bedford – the settlement house.

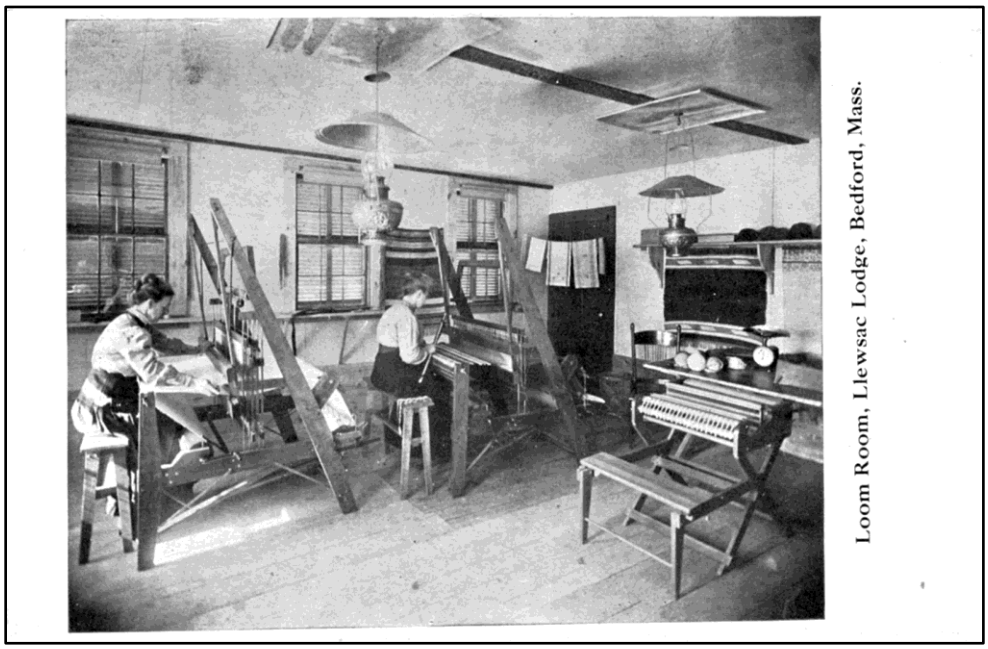
Caroline Caswell was the one who brought it here. A resident of Charlestown, Mass., she heard a speech by Frances Willard, who by then had become a well-known activist, and was so inspired that she decided to turn her own considerable talents toward the goal of helping people in need. The result was the founding in 1901 of the Frances E. Willard settlement in Boston. It served as a home for young or poor working women, as a place where job training could be obtained by those who had to become self-supporting, and as a source of 'social, educational, and moral enlightenment' for many city dwellers in need of such.

After many successful years, Miss Caswell began to turn her attention toward the plight of older working women, particularly those who might be in need of a rest, or recovering from an illness, or out of work and in need of training. She began raising funds, and in 1909 the directors of the settlement bought a 185-acre property on Old Billerica Road in Bedford to serve both as a home for needy older women as well as a vacation spot for younger working women from the settlement in Boston. Included on the property were a farm with house, barn, and livestock; a mansion that had formerly been a hospital for alcoholics and drug addicts; and a tract of woodland. So was born Llewsac Lodge, the Bedford branch of the Frances E. Willard settlement.

The establishment grew rapidly. Nellie Evelyn Cook Hall was built in 1913 to provide additional lodging and work space. Guests became so numerous that in summer their visits had to be limited to two weeks.

Because some of the guests needed a way to pay for their room and board, they began to help with harvesting, canning, and selling the farm produce. Through a venture called Llewsac Industries, they could also earn money through weaving and other work with textiles.

A further venture was a summer camp for young people from the Boston settlement and for this purpose a poultry farm on the opposite side of the road was purchased. A dozen years later the farmhouse on the property (now 109 Old Billerica Road) became the Worthen Memorial Home for women who needed some care but not enough to require a nursing home.



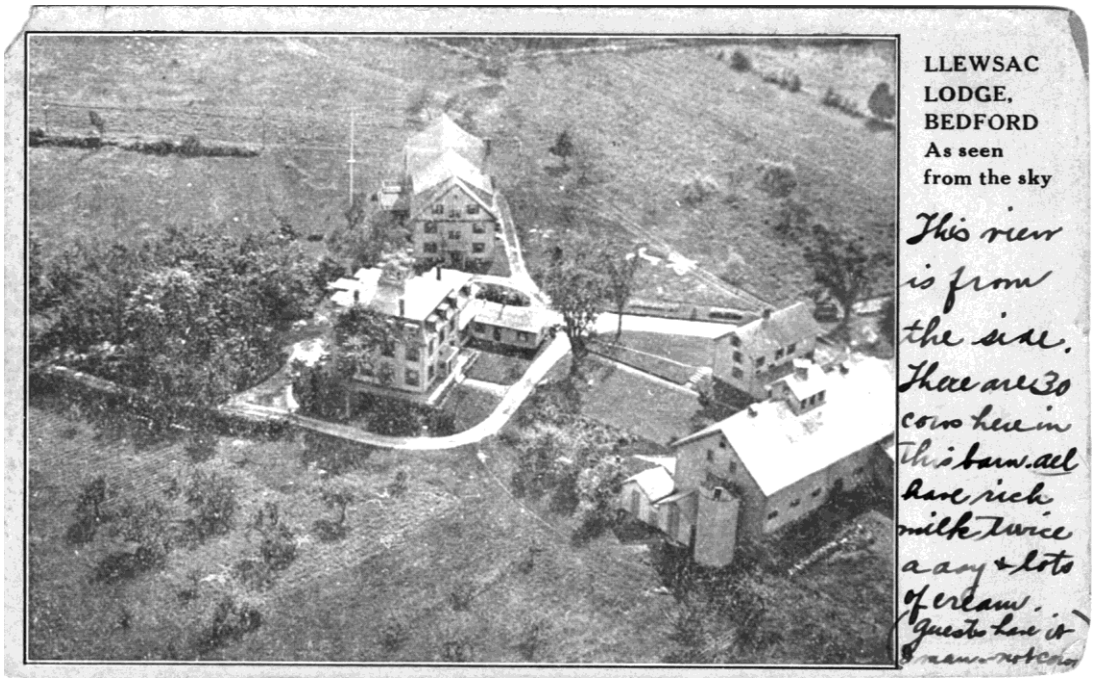
Weaving was one way for guests to pay for their stay at Llewsac Lodge.

For about four decades, until a labor shortage made the farm unprofitable after World War II, Llewsac Lodge was a Bedford haven for working women, young and old, well or ill, active or retired.

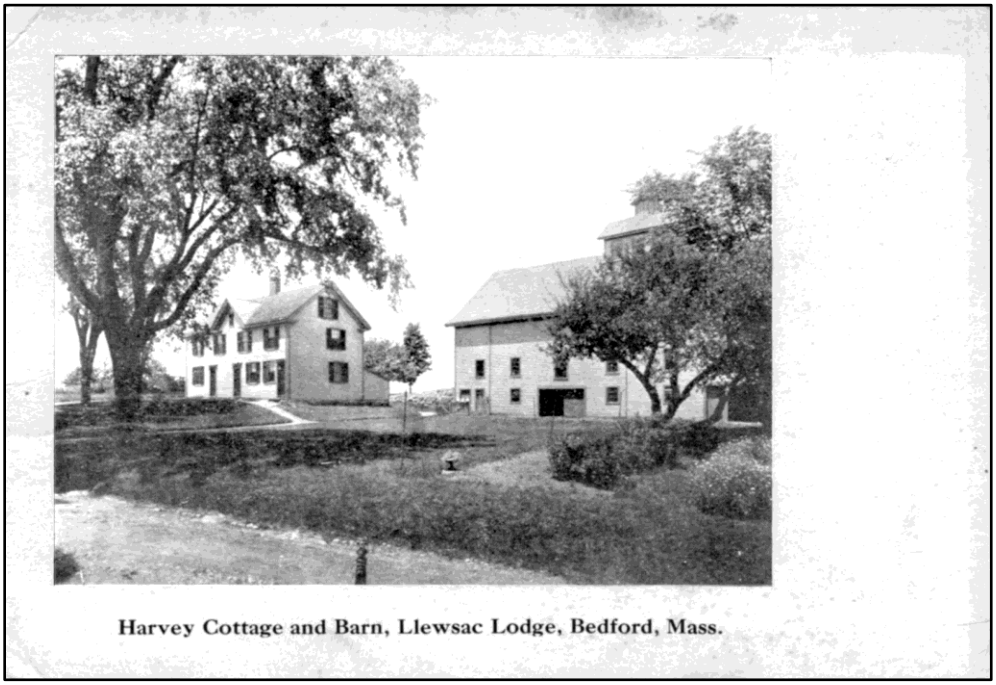
The postcards shown throughout this newsletter give a glimpse into the lives of the women of Llewsac Lodge.

Reference used for this article: Ruth Drinker, *A Splendid Pine Grove*. Bedford: Carleton-Willard Village, 2002. (With our thanks for Rev. Louis Pitt for visiting the Archives to present a copy for our collections.)

A postcard history of Llewsac Lodge



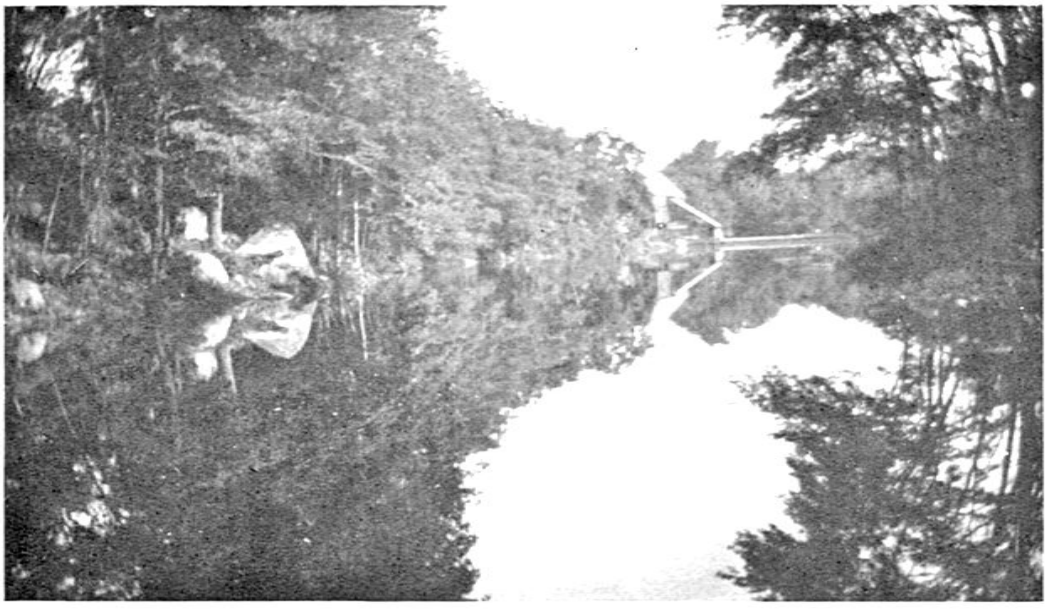
The sender of this postcard wrote, "This view is from the side. There are 30 cows in the barn. All [guests] have rich milk twice a day and lots of cream… This place has about 185 acres, in cultivated lands - gardens, fields, woodlands, and a beautiful river down across the road runs right thro' the property. It is farming on an immense, as well as scientific scale, and they plan to raise 50% of table expenses right here. The acres of gardens are a sight to behold! The place is becoming quite dear to me as well as to hundreds of other women, who come here year after year and several times a year, I find."



Harvey Cottage and its barn were both on the property when it was purchased for Llewsac Lodge. Both structures have since been demolished.

Nellie Cook Hall, Llewsac Lodge, Bedford, Massachusetts

Nellie Evelyn Cook Hall, later called Main House, was built in 1913 and named after a benefactor and friend of Miss Caroline Caswell.



Seven River Gods of the Shawsheen
Llewsac Lodge Bedford, Mass

This scene, the mill pond on the Shawsheen River as seen from Burlington Road, was beloved by guests of Llewsac Lodge. The building beside the dam in the distance was the Clark sawmill.

History scavenger hunt!

Looking for some good family fun? As part of the Bedford Families Unplugged program, we're sponsoring a History Scavenger Hunt. **Visit some of Bedford's historic sites and you can enter a drawing for a prize.** *Contest runs for the entire month of November.*

For KIDS: How you and your family can enter the contest

Get the map and rules from our web site (www.bedfordmahistoryorg) or call our office at 781-275-7276. During the entire month of November, you and your family can work together and use the map to visit historic sites all over Bedford. When you visit a site, hunt around for a small sign; the outdoor ones will be mounted on wooden stakes. Read the sign to learn a little about the history of the site, and then get the SECRET CODE from the sign and write it on the contest entry form. When you have done this for at least 9 of the sites, have one of your parents sign the form and send it to the Bedford Historical Society, 2 Mudge Way, Bedford MA 01730.

Contest ends December 1, 2009. Then we'll draw one of the entry forms to win a PRIZE, a $25 gift certificate that you can use to buy any of **KID STUFF** in our store – traditional wooden toys, kids' books on early American life and crafts, and more! Or you can use it to for any of the Bedford books, gifts, maps or other great Bedford things listed on our Store page (www.bedfordmahistory.org/store.htm). We have lots of things for the whole family.

If you have questions or need more information, email us at info@bedfordmahistory.org or call us at 781-275-7276. Happy hunting!

Bedford Family Connection Fair, Saturday, November 14, 10-2

Join us for this BFC fundraiser in the Common Room of First Parish Church, Bedford, on Saturday, November 14, 2009, 10 AM - 2 PM. This will be an excellent opportunity for you to assist Bedford community groups and vendors as you get a head start on your Christmas shopping. Don't forget, our Bedford Flag postage stamps are a vibrant red that look especially good on Christmas cards.

Do you have a little spare time that day? We could use a helping hand or two. Call us at 781-275-7276.

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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781-275-7276
info@bedfordmahistory.org

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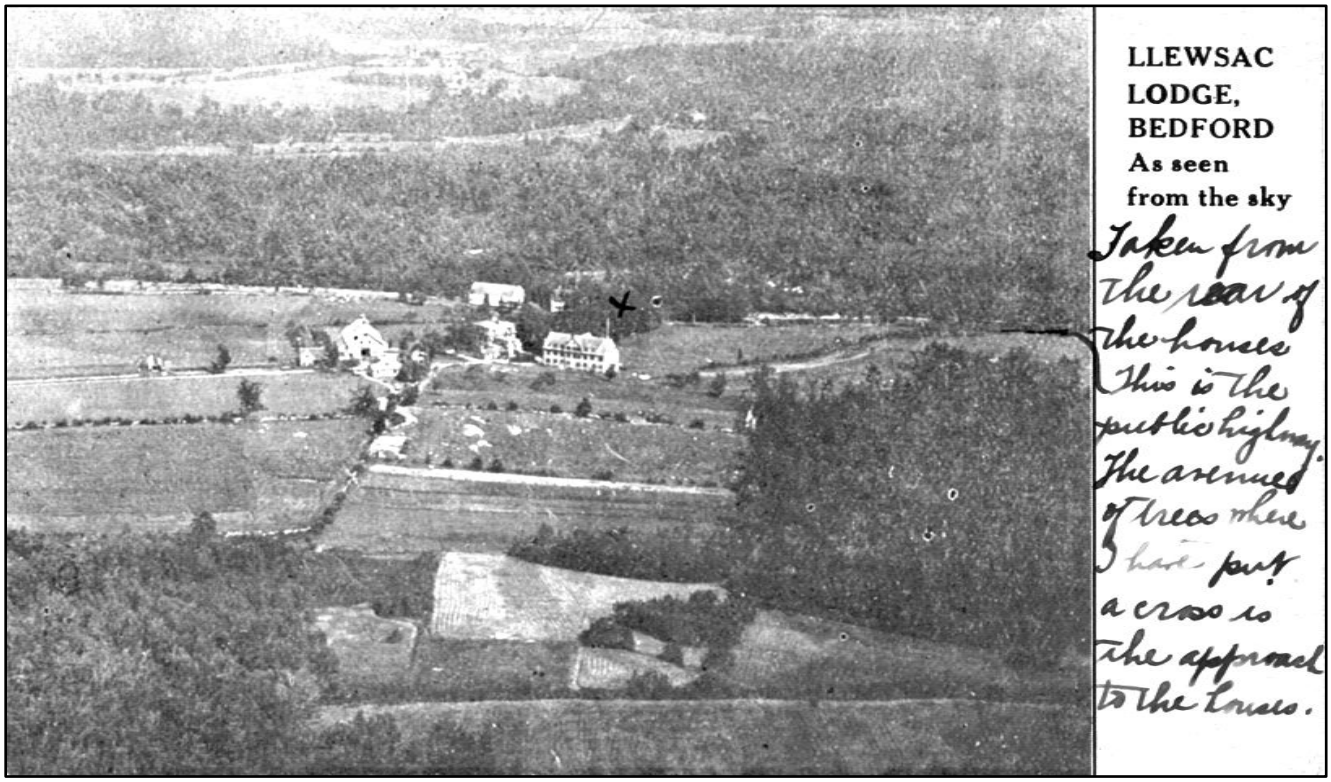
Are your dues up to date? Please check the mailing label for your membership status



Postcard showing an aerial view of Llewsac Lodge, set on an 185-acre tract of farmland and forest on the west side of Old Billerica Road. Story, page 4.