Don’t miss our next Lecture
Wednesday, October 24, at 7:15
Library Meeting Room - Mudge Way

The October lecture – to be held in the Bedford Library Meeting Room -- will begin a two-part series honoring Bedford's veterans of World War II. “Oral Histories from World War II Veterans” will be presented by the Society’s President; Jan van Steenwijk who was asked to put the oral histories into video form after a group of Carleton-Willard Village veterans decided they wanted to get their stories recorded for posterity.

A group of Carleton-Willard Village residents (sitting at the table) ready to be interview at the Bedford TV studio

BHS President van Steenwijk, always mindful of the historical aspects of such stories, donated his time to tape the veterans – some individually, and some in groups – and edit each documentary as well. “The stories they tell are so important for future audiences,” van Steenwijk said. “We can all learn from these brave and dedicated people; history must not be forgotten.”

Because not all of the oral histories can be presented, van Steenwijk will select one or two that can fit into the lecture series time frame. “It is going to be difficult to choose only a few of the videos,” he said, “because they all are so interesting.” Many of the stories reminded van Steenwijk of his own family’s war stories, which made him enjoy the project that much more. It is hoped that some of the veterans, or their spouses, will be on hand to answer questions.

Please come - our lectures are always free!

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Bedford in the Civil War  By: Don Corey

As we noted in the September Preservationist, the Historical Society will continue to remind people of the contributions and sacrifices made by Bedford people in the Civil War.

* The display case in the front lobby at the High School now contains a percussion cap musket, several swords and cutlasses, a cartridge case and other personal items that came from Bedford men who served in the Civil War. The display also includes other items drawn from the Historical Society's Civil War collection.

* September 17, 2012, marked the 150th anniversary of the bloody Battle of Antietam outside of Sharpsburg, MD. The battle was strategically important, because it stopped the Confederate campaign to advance into Maryland and Pennsylvania. However, the Union army lost over 12,000 men killed, wounded or taken prisoner, and the Confederates lost almost as many in the bloodiest single day's fighting in the entire Civil War. Bloody Lane and the Cornfield are permanently etched in history. Over 6,000 men died in that single day, about as many as have died in Iraq and Afghanistan during the last eleven years. The services of a few of the Bedford men who were engaged in the Battle of Antietam are described briefly here.

Four young men from Bedford who enlisted in May 1861 immediately after the outbreak of the Civil War were assigned to the 12th Massachusetts Voluntary Infantry. At Antietam the 12th Regiment lost 224
Students honored by Society for History Day performances

At its September program meeting, the BHS honored the six Bedford High School students whose National History Day (NHD) contest projects qualified them for national competition at the University of Maryland. NHD promotes the teaching and learning of history.

The students each received a check for their college fund, the book, A Revolutionary Town about Bedford's early history, and a small Bedford flag as tokens of the Society's support for their creative talents and innovative historical presentations.

(L to R): James Sunderland, Bedford High Social Studies teacher and Coordinator of the school's National History Day team, with BHS students Laurel Barkan, Lori Merlo, Alisa Granada, Sevan Dulgarian, Amanda Luniewicz and Leah Hamilton, who participated in this year's History Day contest.

Carol Amick

Civil War Continued from pg.1

men in the so-called "Bloody Cornfield". While none of the Bedford men were wounded in that battle, by the end of 1862 all 4 of them - two 18-year olds and two in their early 20s - had sustained battlefield wounds. By war's end, two (Joshua Atwood and Charles Cowdrey) were dead and only one (William Edwards - twice wounded) was able to serve his entire 3-year enlistment.

Two men who enlisted in July 1861 served in the 15th Regiment, and a third - Samuel W. Stearns (grandson of Bedford's 4th minister) - enlisted as soon as he turned 18. At Antietam in 27 minutes the 15th Regiment lost 318 officers and men, over half the regiment, with 98 killed or mortally wounded. Marcus Johnson was among those wounded. By year's end, Joseph Pierce also sustained battlefield wounds, and in the following year Samuel Stearns was killed. After being heavily engaged in many battles, by the summer of 1864 the 15th Regiment was reduced to only 5 officers and about 70 enlisted men, a tiny fraction of its original size. The state's official document detailing every Massachusetts Civil War military unit's history contains the unusual editorial comment, "Few Massachusetts units had as gallant a history as the 15th Infantry".

Future newsletters will include other insights about those who served in the Civil War.

Don Corey

Fabulous Gifts to the Society

We are very pleased to accept recent donations of books, photographs and other documents from the following individuals that further expand our wonderful collection of records that preserve Bedford's rich history.

Lorrie Dunham donated a number of Town Annual Reports and other town documents, old newspapers recalling events in town, old political ballots, and a variety of other papers by and about local residents. Many of you will recall her father's used bookstore, which was a fixture in Bedford Center for decades. These papers were a fraction of the material left after the bookstore closed, which Lorrie has slowly been working her way through (with her dad's assistance?).

Bea Brown has donated many of the papers of her late husband, Town Historian John Brown. Included are extensive records about the Old Burying Ground. An elaborate old photo album from the Bacon family was also included in this gift to the Historical Society.

George Lane donated family books from the Bedford Lane family, who is downsizing in anticipation of moving to a smaller residence. The Society recently received Lane family books and papers from Mr. Lane that have been preserved within the family for generations, including a large leather bound Lane scrapbook, an 1897 Memorial Album with Lane & Page genealogies folded in cover pockets, and published Volumes I, II and III of the Lane Family. The Society's earlier collection of Lane papers was already digitized and can be seen at the Society's website. These additional papers will enlarge the Lane Family Collection substantially.

Don Corey
**Exciting Programs**

**Sunday, Nov. 11, 2012, 2 pm**

The last of the two-part series on World War II veterans will be presented on Sunday, Nov. 11th – Veterans Day. Starting at 2 pm with a social period in the Fellowship Hall of the First Church of Christ, Congregational, the presentation will include more video oral history presented by Society President Jan van Steenwijk on his taping of veterans living at Carleton-Willard Village, as well as portions of a film about World War II cemeteries provided by Society Board Member Don Jenkins. “Hallowed Grounds” is a 2009 PBS documentary directed by Robert Uth and narrated by Peter Thomas.

Veterans organizations from Bedford and surrounding towns are invited to attend and participate in this moving program.

**Saturday, Dec. 15, 2012, 3-6 pm**

The Society’s annual Holiday Party will be held from 3-6 pm on Saturday, Dec. 15 at the home of Society Board Member Carol Amick and her husband, Society member and Selectman Bill Moonan, 18 Crescent Ave. This event is open to Society members and their guests, and has in previous years drawn large crowds, who enjoy the sociability of the event as well as various entertaining contests (like guessing the use for the hundreds of antique tools in Bill Moonan’s collection!)

**Want to attend but not a Society member?** It’s easy to join the Society and get more involved in Bedford's fascinating history! See the membership information on the next page!

**NOTE:** We previous wrote that the party was on Sunday, BUT THE CORRECT DAY IS SATURDAY, Dec. 15, 3-6 pm.

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**Lectures to come in 2013:**

**Sunday, Feb. 10, 2013, 2 pm:**
First Church of Christ, Christopher Daley: “Lincoln’s Assassination.”

**Wednesday, March 27, 2013, 7:30 pm:**
First Church of Christ, Robert Slechta: “Joshua Page: Builder of Bedford’s Center.”

**Wednesday, April 24, 2013, 7:15 pm:**

**Wednesday, May 22, 2013, 6:30 pm**
First Church of Christ, Pot Luck Dinner, Annual Meeting, and Guest Speaker Joe McKenney: “Beneath the Streets of Boston: Building America’s First Subway.”

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**Proud of the Bedford Flag**

Bedford Day 2012 was, again, a great success. The Society showed the large Bedford Flag in the parade. Don Corey drove the van, and “Ruhama” kept cutting the fringe again. We had 2 booths this time, one in the parking lot surrounded by numerous other vendors, and the other, displaying the ultra large flag and historic items, placed in front of the Police Station. At one point I asked a gentleman if he knew about the famous flag, and he responded, “I love it so much that I tattooed it on my leg…” The proof can be seen in this picture. Now, that’s promoting it!

An additional Thank You goes to all our volunteers who helped at the booth: Carol Amick, Bill Moonan, Bob Slechta, Bea Brown, Paul Dick, Lee Vorderer, Don and Peter Corey and Kara Kerwin

**A New Park is Being Created**

Three hundred and thirty-six years ago, John Wilson established a grist mill at the end of what is now Old Burlington Road in Bedford. Vine Brook, originating in Lexington, was dammed forming the 3 ½ acre Mill Pond from which the brook emerges as a rushing stream providing the power to turn the water wheel of the mill. The mill, put to many different uses, had a long series of owners over the years and finally ceased to exist in the first half of the 20th C.

While the mill is long gone, the dam continues to regulate water flow in Vine Brook as it passes through the vestiges of the old mill race, streaming through a culvert under Burlington Road (Rte 62), through the Millbrook Road residential area on the other side to empty into the Shawsheen River beyond that. It is an important element of Bedford’s flood control program.

Some months ago, after some severe damage from flooding waters, the dam was determined to be unsound and needing replacement. It is now being restored by New England Infrastructure under supervision of the Dept. of Public Works and is funded in good part by Bedford’s Community Preservation funds. In conjunction with the dam replacement, the areas of the pond and mill ruins will be relandscape as a park including a canoe ramp for recreational access to the pond. The Wilson Mill Park Advisory Committee, composed of nearby concerned residents, oversees the process.

Extensive excavations on the site have unearthed a number of interesting artifacts, some of which have been acquired by the Bedford Historical Society whose goal will be to identify and preserve them in its archives.

**Welcome to new members:**
Brandon C. Avery
William Deen,
Mark E. Erwich & Rooslindajatie Soetrisno
Laura & Gunnar Larsson,
Michael Macht-Greenberg,
Jan McGrath
Priscilla McGrath
William D. Warren

**Have you ever wondered what Bedford looked like in earlier days, how people lived, what tools they used, or what kind of work they performed to survive?**

The answer is available in our Society. Contact us any time to get information from our vast archives.
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. Please support your Heritage.

The Meadow Place in South Bedford was settled in the 1660s by Israel and Mary (Hall) Mead from Concord. However, it had been abandoned by the late 1800s when this picture was taken. Hanscom AFB now occupies the space where this house and wonderful tree once stood.

Please become a member or renew your membership

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:
Bedford Historical Society, Inc. - 2 Mudge Way - Bedford, MA 01730-2138

Come and see us.
Visit our Facebook page
Or visit our website:
www.bedfordmahistory.org
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