A joint Program

Wednesday, October 22nd
Congregational Church, 25 Great Road - at 6:00PM

“Historic Landscapes” by John Forti

The October meeting will provide a unique opportunity for members of the Society and the Bedford Garden Club to join together in an evening of socializing, enjoying a good meal and hearing a nationally-recognized speaker of interest to both organizations.

These two Bedford groups will host a dinner with lasagna made by Luigi's Restaurant, provided by the Society and Garden Club.

This event begins with appetizers and punch at 6 pm, and dinner at 6:30 pm.

Society members interested in attending this dinner event, must make a reservation by contacting the Society office (info@bedfordmahistory.org or 781-275-7276). Because food will be ordered before the event, a head count is needed to ensure there is enough lasagna for everyone; members who show up without reserving their spaces may not get dinner.

Society members are asked to bring an appetizer, salad or dessert to share that evening. Please contact the Society office or Carol Amick (carol.amick@verizon.net or 781-275-5278) to indicate what you might be able to bring. While Garden Club members already have volunteered to bring salads and desserts, more of those food types as well as appetizers are still needed for this event.

After dinner and brief announcements by the Presidents of the Garden Club and the Historical Society, the guest speaker will be John Forti, a nationally-recognized lecturer, garden historian, ethnobotanist and garden writer.

Mr. Forti, Curator of Historic Landscapes at the Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, NH, will present “Historic Landscapes – Creating a Sense of Time and Place.” His illustrated talk will bring to life the unique and living history of plants that have a defining presence in New England, to foster a better understanding of the most tried and true plants and our role in preservation.

The importance of a Bedford Museum

Almost 20 years ago, shortly after the Society’s museum was closed in order to convert the Stearns Memorial Building for the Bedford Police Department's new home (and before I had any involvement with the town's historic resources), the Society established a planning group. I was recently reminded of that group's report, which envisioned a Bedford Heritage Center, “as a building in which we can keep the physical records of our pasts safe for our children's children and beyond, as a secure and clean workspace for professional staff and town volunteers alike, as a place where we can display the evocative objects that tell our histories, as a place to share, record and preserve our stories and our memories, those from long ago and perhaps not so long ago.”

Some of those who worked to create that vision included Bob Slechta, Mary Hafer, and Mina and Larry Kimball. Larry, Bob and Mary had the distinction of each being Bedford's Citizen of the Year, and the Society is deeply indebted both to Mary and to the Kimballs for their generosity.

As the town's Museum Study Committee continues its work considering options for a new museum, this vision of a museum as an integral part of a larger local historical entity is an important one. A Center with its combined museum, archives, meeting room and other Society assets could become a much greater educational resource for the schools than the Society currently is, it could become a destination for visits by residents of nearby assisted living facilities, it could be a more publicly accessible location for the frequent visitors to the Society's office, a permanent home for the meetings of the Society and other groups, and much more.

After a long delay, the vision may hopefully become a reality.

Don Corey, president

Mr. Forti previously served as the Director of Horticulture at Plimoth Plantation Museum where the gardens and seed program he created brought international attention to the preservation of Pilgrim and Wampanoag heirloom crops.

He founded and serves as board chair for Slow Food Seacoast, part of an international “slow food” movement designed to offset “fast food” by promoting the preservation of traditional and regional cuisine and encouraging the farming of plants, seeds and livestock characteristic of local ecosystems. He serves on the board of the New England Unit of the Herb Society of America, and won the 2014 Award for Excellence in Horticulture from that national organization.
Bedford in the Civil War

(This is one of a series of articles that have appeared in the Preservationist during the 150th anniversary observances of our nation's 1861-1865 Civil War)

This year marks the 150th anniversary of some of the most intense fighting in this nation's Civil War. This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I - the "War to End All Wars"; we all know now how that turned out.

On July 4, 1863, the Confederacy had surrendered Vicksburg to General Ulysses Grant after a long siege, splitting the Confederacy in two and opening the entire Mississippi River to Union forces. In March 1864 President Lincoln promoted General Grant to commander of all Union armies, and Grant immediately took personal control of the campaign to defeat General Lee in a grinding war of attrition. Beginning in early May 1864-150 years ago this year - in the course of about 6 weeks Grant's Army of the Potomac engaged Lee's Confederate Army in a series of major battles - at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna River, Cold Harbor, Bethesda Church, and Petersburg VA - before Grant settled into a 10-month siege of Petersburg. Although greatly outnumbered, the Confederates caused appalling casualties to the Union army. On June 3 at Cold Harbor, 7000 of Grant's men fell in just half an hour. By mid-June in those few weeks Grant had lost over half his forces - about 60,000 men - that had to be replaced. The South lost perhaps half as many men, but their reserves were almost completely depleted.

Almost all of Bedford's soldiers serving with Massachusetts' regiments in the Army of the Potomac died or were wounded, several in earlier battles but most in this campaign. Joshua Atwood died at the Wilderness; Edward Kippler, an out-of-towner who enlisted here and was credited to Bedford, was wounded and taken prisoner at the Wilderness and died of his wounds weeks later. Charles Lunt died at Spotsylvania, and William Edwards was wounded (for a second time) there. William Houghton, serving with the 1st Mass. Regiment, Heavy Artillery, was killed at North Anna River. Charles Cowdrey was taken prisoner at North Anna River in May - a month before his 3-year enlistment would have been up; he never got home. Warren Holbrook enlisted in August, right after turning 18. One of the reinforcements for the 36th Massachusetts Infantry at Petersburg, he was taken prisoner in September during an engagement with the Confederates. He died in a prison camp in November 1864, 3 months after his enlistment and 18th birthday.

Of 18 Bedford men who served with Massachusetts Regiments in the Union's Army of the Potomac, 7 died and 9 were wounded, several receiving multiple wounds. Only two of the 18 survived without physical injury. However, we can only imagine the emotional scars on all of those who survived. The names of those who died are among the names engraved on Bedford's Civil War monument in Shawsheen Cemetery. The names of the other men who served with those units can only be found by searching Civil War records.

Don Corey
Bylaw Amendments
The Board of Directors has recommended several amendments to the Society's Bylaws that would formalize recognition and continuing involvement of the Immediate Past President in the work of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors and Finance Committee. The desirability of such changes has long been recognized by some of us. The specific language was printed in the September Preservationist, and notice was given at the September meeting that the vote on the proposed amendments will occur at the October meeting.

The Society honors Bedford High School students
Bedford High students were honored recently by the Bedford Historical Society for their achievements in National History Day. The students, all BHS Seniors, were members of three “group” projects and one “individual” exhibit that qualified for the National competition. The students and their projects are:

- Maddy Allen, Mary Kalb, Lea Kriesberg and Keara Russell did a group documentary on Horace Mann by. The documentary made it to the final round at the National competition in Maryland, and ultimately placed 13th in the country.
- Nicole Doherty, Gina Han, Sophie Zacharakis and Jen Zhang produced a group website on the Nuremberg Trials.
- Alex Chen, Eric Chen, Victor Chen and Andrew Shpyrko did another group website on the Chernobyl Disaster.
- Shelby Wang produced an individual exhibit on the Chinese Exclusion. Her exhibit was put on display for a day at the National Museum of American History.

Designed to promote the teaching and learning of history, Bedford High School students have competed in National History Day for 11 years. Students conduct historical research in groups or as individuals and present their work in original papers, websites, exhibits, performances and documentaries.

Another great addition to our archives
A replica of the Bedford Flag being mounted in the meeting room at the Police Station. The replica was donated by the Santander Bank.

Thank you for your continued support.
New Members/renewals for Sept/Oct
Pothier, Jeannette and Richard Manley
Gerdes, John
Purvis, James and Adele
Lockhart, Joan
LeSchack, Richard and Meg
Moll, Gloria
Witte, Lisa & Mark

Recent Donors
Wentworth, Stanley
Gerdes, John
Willson, Jennifer

We also received anonymous donations in our “JAR” on Bedford Day - THANK YOU!

Recent Donors

Pleas mark your calendar for these upcoming events.
December, 2014 Holiday Party: Date TBD.
Wednesday evening, Feb. 25, 2015
Wednesday evening, March 25, 2015:
Sunday afternoon, April 26, 2015:
Tuesday evening, May 26, 6 pm:
A memorable Bedford Day 2014

Thanks to our volunteers: Frank & Joan Gicca, Carol Amick, Kara Kerwin, Barbara Hitchcock, Jan van Steenwijk, Laura Larsson, Brown Pulliam, Paul Purchia and Charles Huxsaw, our Bedford Day was a great success.

Making cream as in the old days, with “Bridget” the cow looking on, and a display of artifacts found at the Job Lane House, were this year’s highlights of our booth.

Yearbook
The Society's 2014-2015 Yearbook recently arrived from the printers. Members should have received copies in the mail. Copies will be available for others in the Society’s office and at the October meeting.

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“We Don't Make History...
We Keep It Alive...!”

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