The Bedford Flag, the oldest existing flag in the United States. On view at the Bedford Library.

The Preservationist

Bedford Historical Society, Inc. - Bedford - Massachusetts
Founded in 1893

October 2015 *Published for anyone interested in our history* Volume 125, Number 6

Enjoy our next lecture

Lowell Power Canals & the Industrial Revolution

Wednesday October 28

Congregational Church,
25 Great Road
7:15 PM

Our lectures are always free for all!

Come and listen to the fascinating account of Lowell's water-powered textile mills, and their role in creating new opportunities for immigrants and female factory workers while helping to spark the U.S. Industrial Revolution.

Dave Byers, an Interpretive Park Ranger from the Lowell National Historical Park, will be the Society's guest speaker for the evening.

As always, Society members are invited to attend this interesting program; guests are always welcomed.

Ranger Byers will describe the history of Lowell, which was first settled in the 1600s under the name East Chelmsford, but was later renamed in honor of the founders' dead business partner, Francis Cabot Lowell. He will relate how Lowell became a key center for manufacturing in the early 1820s due to the construction of a planned industrial city. This planned community was designed initially with green spaces and clean dormitories for the factory workers – a reaction to the cramped and inhumane factories of England.

Locating industry in Lowell was a successful enterprise because Lowell had the Pawtucket Falls and the Pawtucket Canal, which became the feeder canal for a 5.6-mile system of power canals established around the powerful 32-foot Pawtucket Falls. The Pawtucket Canal was built in the 1790s to bring logs from New Hampshire down the Merrimack River to shipbuilders in Newburyport, bypassing the Pawtucket Falls. Lowell also was linked to the Middlesex Canal that connected the Merrimack River to the Charles River and enabled goods to be moved from Lowell to Boston.

Lowell's power canal system is the largest power canal system in the U.S., with an estimated output of 10,000 horsepower, operating six major canals on two levels, and controlled by numerous gates.

According to the National Park's website, "nearly 200 years later, the changes that began in Lowell still reverberate in our shifting global economy." Information will be provided at the meeting about tours of historic Lowell as well as the Lowell National Historical Park, established by Congress in 1978 through the efforts of Lowell native and U.S. Senator Paul Tsongas.

Dave Byers worked at the Boston National Historical Park (Charlestown Navy Yard, Bunker Hill, Freedom Trail sites), the Mark Twain House in CT and the Old York Historical Society in York, ME before becoming a Park Ranger at the Lowell National Historical Park 4 ½ years ago. A south shore native, he moved to Connecticut in 2001 to pursue a graduate degree in history from the Univ. of Connecticut.

As an Interpretive Park Ranger, Mr. Byers staffs various locations in the park, including the Visitor Center, Boott Cotton Mills, and the Mill Girls & Immigrants Exhibit, orienting visitors to the park, answering historical questions, offering short interpretive talks about a variety of subjects, and helping visitors connect their modern-day visit to Lowell with Lowell's historical experience. He also conducts canal boat, trolley car and walking tours, and manages the park's digital media team, which produces most of the content for the park's Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram accounts.

Carol Amick

President's Message

Progress is often slower than we would wish, but in this case we are very pleased that the Selectmen have moved to insert an article in the Special Town Meeting warrant to fund a ***Historical Museum Feasibility Study***. Town Meeting will be on Monday evening, November 2, 2015, in the High School Auditorium. Article 10 proposes the appropriation of $50,000 to examine the feasibility of establishing a Bedford historical museum in one of the five municipal buildings recommended by the Town's Museum Study Committee. Highlights of the Committee's report were included in the Sept 2015 Preservationist, and the entire report can be found on the Town's website.

The support of you and your family and friends is important to ensure passage of this article. Please try to attend Town Meeting to support this next critical step in re-establishing a museum.

And don't forget the Society's Charity Antiques Appraisal Event on Thursday, November 5, 2015, from 10AM to 4PM. More information on this event is provided in this Preservationist.

Don Corey, president

1847 School Committee Report – Part 2

This is the remaining part of the 1847 Annual Report of Bedford's School Committee to the Town. Part 1 appeared in the September 2015 Preservationist The frankness of the report, with the Committee's philosophical thoughts interspersed, make for interesting reading.

Your committee would now invite your attention to the condition and progress of several schools. All of the summer and one of the winter, schools were taught by females - they were well governed and well taught, with one exception. Fidelity to the trust reposed in us by the town compels us to say, and plainly too, that this exception refers to the West school, while under the care of Miss Foster. The instructress employed at the commencement, (Miss Colburn,) gave perfect satisfaction, till ill-health compelled her to resign. We think the district was unfortunate in the choice of her successor - whose chief fault was inexperience. She seldom dared venture beyond the language of the textbooks, and consequently her instructions were narrow and unprofitable. There was too much shallowness - too much word-learning, without ideas. She would help along her scholars with their reading and answering questions, without allowing them sufficient time to do the work themselves - why, she might as well eat and drink for them, as to recite their lessons.

Of the winter schools, we can say that, with much pleasure and satisfaction, we have noticed great progress in three of them. The government was a government of kindness and not of fear - only one law, and that the law of love - for those teachers know that an impression made upon the body is not so profitable as upon the mind and the affection. We would here remark, that we have advised the substitution of kindness for the rod, in all of our schools. We would not be wiser than Solomon, who said, "he that spareth the rod, spoileth the child" - but had he lived at this day, probably he would have said, "he that useth the rod, spoileth the child." It is possible that, in Solomon's time, they had two masters in each school - one to flog and one to teach. Fortunately for us, we can dispense with the former. Let not your committee be misunderstood in this matter; for, while we prefer expulsion to corporeal punishment, we would not wholly disarm the teacher - by no means - when occasion calls, let the offender meet the warm hug of the birch.

We could wish to see more attention paid to the study of book-keeping, out of regard to your entry, closet and shop doors, which have been both day-book and ledger for many generations.

Of the East school, although taught by a gentleman highly educated, Mr. Bartlett, we should not feel justified in speaking in the highest terms. When a teacher makes his employment a stepping-place to some other station, he is apt to lack the interest in his school; for he cannot have his eye upon the pulpit and at the same time upon his scholars - he cannot serve God and mammon.

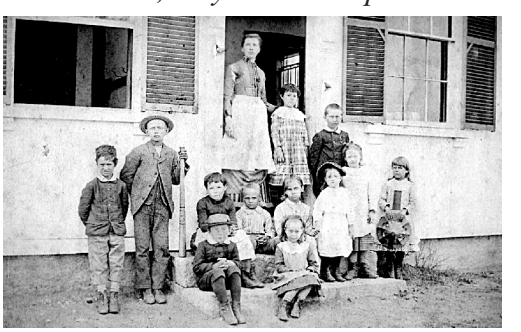
In the North school, taught by Mr. Neal, nothing wonderful occurred, except one expulsion. The teacher's energy was not equal to his literary qualifications, and therefore the progress was not great. A case of insubordination happened in a large boy, who was so insolent to his instructor, that it became our unpleasant duty to order his expulsion from the school.

The South school was under the charge of that experienced and faithful teacher, Mr. Sterns. While we bear out united testimony to his ability and eminent qualifications, we feel bound to say, that in the case of the Lilliputian rebellion in his school both teacher and scholar deserved a gentle reproof.

We have listened, with peculiar pleasure, to the vocal music now practiced in our public schools - and would recommend this healthful and delightful exercise at the opening and close of the schools, and at no other time.

In bringing our remarks to a close, let us say to parents, that duty and policy prompt you to be liberal in your appropriations for the cause of education - and to our fellow-townsmen, of whatever religious or political party, we again say, if you would have your public schools answer the great end of their institution, let your votes speak in their behalf this afternoon.

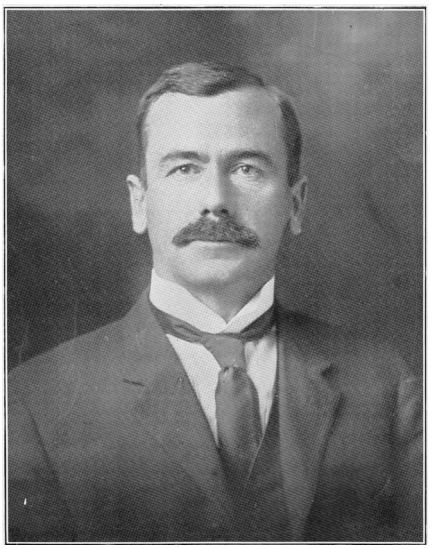
All of which is respectfully submitted.
Francis Coggswell
John P. Reed, School Committee
A.B. Adams



For a complete transcription of this report, feel free to contact the Society, or download it from our web page at: http://www.bedfordmahistory.org/resources.htm .

Arthur Parker and his Shawsheen River Stock Farm

During the 19th century, horse races that featured trotters in harness became increasingly popular in the United States. Unlike thoroughbred racing, known as "The Sport of Kings," harness racing was a sport for the middle classes and gave rise to a new breed of horse, the Standardbreds. These animals were bred to work in harness, like the carriage horse so many owned. Standardbreds were considered sturdier than thoroughbreds and generally less high-strung. Everyone followed the races and the horses became celebrities. One of these early superstars was a horse named Uhlan. He was one of the first trotters to break the 2:00 minute mile and, most remarkable, this amazing horse began his life here in Bedford.



Arthur Parker

The story of Uhlan's career is recounted in a 1914 publication, recently acquired by the Society, called *The Driving Clubs of Greater Boston (*edited and compiled by John H. Linnehan and Edward E. Cogswell). At the turn of the twentieth century, wealthy industrialist (and Bedford Selectman) Arthur H. Parker established stables on Old Billerica Road, calling them the Shawsheen River Stock Farm. In the fall of 1900, Parker purchased a mare named Blonde from a Dr. Alderman of Lexington, MA, paying less than $300 for her. The following year, Parker added a stallion named Bingen to his stables, purchasing him from J. Malcolm Forbes for a price of $32,000. Bingen was a well known stallion and is now considered one of the most important sires of the Standardbred line. Parker bred his new acquisitions and in 1904, the foal Uhlan was born. Early on, Parker recognized Uhlan's potential, and ordered his trainer, Ed McGrath to begin developing the colt. Uhlan proved so promising that Parker was soon racing him at Readville and Charles River Speedway. In 1907, Parker offered his three year old to Charles Sanders of Salem, Mass for $2,500 and Sanders purchased him immediately. Sanders enlisted Robert Proctor of the Readville Track to train his new horse, and Uhlan's career as a champion began in earnest.

In 1909, after defeating the reigning world record holder, Hamburg Belle, at the Readville track, Uhlan attracted the attention of Chicago multi-millionaire, C.K.G. Billings, who purchased him for $35,000. Billings put him under the care of a new trainer, Charles Tanner. Under Tanner, Uhlan set a world record of 1:58 for the mile in 1912. From then on, and often with Billing's, himself, driving, Uhlan raced to international fame. He was exhibited throughout Europe and Russia; royalty and heads of state flocked to see him. Uhlan's trainer, Tanner, had a special fondness for the horse, "He is not only high-strung, with a decided will of his own, but he is also a very wise horse - I have come in contact with few as brainy, and that had that much true individuality." Billings retired Uhlan in 1916, bringing him to live on his estate, and often using him as a saddle horse. Uhlan died in 1935, and was buried on the Billings farm next to another champion trotter, the famous mare, Lou Dillon.

Uhlan, holder of the World's Trotting Record

John Hervey, an early 20th century American writer and authority on horses, considered Uhlan one of the greatest trotters of all time. He wrote, "Of all trotting champions he was the one that most filled the eye and satisfied the ideals of those who cherish high ones... As he kept increasing his pace, instead, as most horses do under such circumstances, of dropping his head, he kept lifting it higher and higher. With his expanded, scarlet nostrils, his *black* fore-top flying in the breeze, his eyes seeming literally to flash fire, and the hurricane rhythm which his flying feet were beating out, it was indeed a glorious spectacle...Everything he did, he did as if it was a joy, a play-spell or a frolic. All this in harness—while under saddle he was equally ideal and perfect." (*The Harness Horse* magazine, Feb 22, 1939)

And to think, this great horse began as his life running through the pastures of Bedford!

Kara Kerwin

THANK YOU!

Donations: Doris Webber **Renewals:** Irma Carter

New Members: MacKerron Family, Joan Clemente, Barbara Clafin, Mervi Fantasia

ANTIQUE APPRAISAL EVENT

► *DON'T MISS THIS...!!!* ◄

- **The Bedford Historical Society is pleased to host this charity event.**
- **Thursday, Nov. 5th, 10 AM – 4 PM**
- **at the *First Parish Church on the Common,* 75 The Great Road**

Kaminski Auctions will be sending a team of experts to provide information on the age and history of pieces brought to the event and will give verbal appraisals of what the pieces might fetch at auction. Kaminski is providing their services for free, so 100% of the proceeds will benefit the Society and its work with the town to re-establish an historic museum.

Appraisal fees are $10 for one item, $25 for 3 items, and $50 for house calls (by appointment). House calls are tentatively planned for the same day, but are subject to change if the number of requests so requires.

What's it worth...?

$50.00 or $50,000.00?

To make house call appointments and/or for more information, email or call the Society's office:

info@bedfordmahistory.org or 781-275-7276

Bring in your fine art, antiques, jewelry, silver, porcelain, glass, etc., for an appraisal by experts from:

KAMINSKY AUCTIONS!

Visit our website:
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"We Don't Make History...
We Keep It Alive..!"

The Preservationist.
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The Bedford Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Support your Heritage.