The Preservationist

Newsletter of the Bedford Historical Society, Inc.
Bedford - Massachusetts

Founded in 1893

The Michael Beacon House
Built approx. 1670

September 2010 Volume 118, Number 1

David Scollay's Lecture:
Boston's Infamous Scolly Square

Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2010 – 7:30 p.m.

Author, writer, and actor David Kruh of Reading will lead off the Historical Society's 2010-11 Lecture Series with a slide show based on his book, Always Something Doing: Boston's Infamous Scollay Square. Mr. Kruh will describe the part of Boston that everyone visited, although few admitted it!

His presentation will bring to life such figures who went to the Square such as Governor John Winthrop, who settled there in 1630, and Sally Keith, who entertained there in the 1940s and 50s. He will weave through his slide show tales of Revolutionary War heroism, scientific breakthroughs, and Civil War courage – all in a place where a hot dog stand and a burlesque theatre made truants of all New Englanders!

Mr. Kruh has presented his lively Scollay Square story since 1985 to countless historical societies, libraries and civic groups. As an actor, he has performed in a number of local productions including "Curley: The Musical," "The Dining Room," and "Late Night Catechism."

Mr. Kruh's published work includes The Trial of William Shakespeare, a stage drama; Be Careful What You Wish For…, a screenplay, and Presidential Landmarks, a book co-authored with his father, Louis Kruh. His first publication about Scollay Square has just had a second edition published by Northeastern University Press. Mr. Kruh's columns have appeared in numerous publications, including The Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Boston Magazine and Yankee Magazine. He is currently a writer for the "Movie Loft, a television show that airs most Saturday and Sunday nights on Channel 38.

Note: All programs will begin with refreshments at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the First Church of Christ, Congregational, 25 The Great Road, Bedford, unless otherwise noted.

Bedford Day is here!

We celebrate Bedford Day this year on Saturday, September 25, 2010.

Following the parade at 10 AM including recognition of this year's Citizen of the Year, the area between the Police Station and Town Hall will again be filled with booths - including the Bedford Historical Society's. The Society's Museum-for-a-day will also again appear in the Police Station meeting room, with some new displays as always to interest its many visitors.

Helpers are always needed to set up and/or man the booth for a few hours.

PLEASE contact Jan van Steenwijk, email the office (info@bedfordmahistory.org), or leave a message on the Society's office telephone (781-275-7276) if you can spare some time. Thank you!

Other Fabulous Lectures.

A Trip on the Shawsheen River
Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2010 – 7:30 p.m.

Bob Rauseo, President of the Shawsheen River Watershed Association, will present a show about the Shawsheen River and its watershed.

Holiday Party
December, 2010 -- Date and location to be determined

The Holiday Party is always a delightful social occasion, where Society members and prospective members can enjoy the holiday season, good food and excellent conversation.

Many Faces of Early Colonial Slavery
Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.

Historian and attorney Diane Rapaport will give an illustrated presentation about "The Many Faces of Early Colonial Slavery."

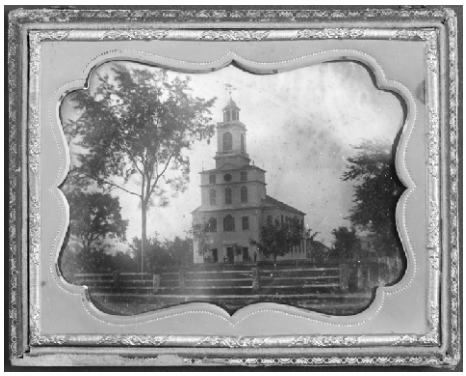
Moving the Fitch Homestead from Bedford to Harvard
Wednesday, March 23, 2011 – 7:30 p.m.

Friends!

The Society gratefully acknowledges recent contributions received from members and friends:

- an upgraded computer from Frank Gicca to replace the tired and overloaded one in the Society's office. The hard drive on the old one crashed several days after it learned it was being replaced, but all files had been backed up and nothing was lost.

- a donation from Carol Amick and Jan van Steenwijk for a flat screen monitor to go with the new computer, freeing up substantial desk space now occupied by the old monitor.



The process of an Ambrotype, invented in 1851, is a negative on a glass plate, and can only be viewed positive when mounted on a black background - usually on velvet.

- loan of an Ambrotype photograph of the Common and Second Meetinghouse (First Parish- see above) by Kevin Duffy. The photo is very fragile and was taken shortly after daguerreotypes were invented in 1837. This makes it one of the oldest photographic images in the Society's collections.

- a cash donation from the Bedford Elementary Schools Together (BEST) PTO for the Society's regular participation in the School Department's annual Walk of Bedford for all third graders.

- a cash donation from the Bedford Garden Club for Bob Slechta's guiding tour of the Old Burying Ground.

- recent donations from Gordon Bishop, Emily (Paddy) Wade, Don & Lois Brown, Cynthia Rider, Aldie & Wilma Johnson, Brown & Lois Pulliam, Louise Maglione, Stan & Blanche Wentworth, David & Francine Hennessey, Art & Marietta Ellis, William Stern, Richard LeShack. (Our sincere apologies for any names we may have missed!).

- recent business contributions from Chip-In Farm, Bedford Funeral Home, Bedford Motel and Carleton-Willard Homes.

- many renewed memberships at lifetime or annual supporting and patron levels!

And welcome to new members Check Lee and family

Welcome!

Welcome to a new season of the Society.

Now that we have left the incredible heat of this summer behind us and are entering New England's beautiful fall season, we are ready to take on a new load of work for the society. As you can see from the lecture series that has been arranged by Cecile Walker, there are again plenty of opportunities this fall to join us for some great evenings. The first lecture with David Kruh will bring back good old memories of the not famous but infamous Scolly Square. Tell others about it and, don't miss it yourself!

Bedford Day is just around the corner and I hope that you will visit our booth – and support the society by purchasing a few items. As you know, the Friends of the Bedford Flag have merged with our society and brought in some great new merchandise. We now sell high quality, beautiful T-shirts, sweatshirts, small Bedford Flags – with fringe! – large outdoor Bedford Flags, and other items. Of course, we still have tens of our own well-known products, many of them making great gifts. Remember, Christmas is almost around the corner.

As you can see, we also have a few changes in the composition of the Society's Board of Directors. We welcome our dedicated new members and we hope that you will support them as you have done in the past with others. As you know, we are all volunteers and will need help from our members to sustain all the good work we offer to the public. Please call any of us with ideas you want to share or to volunteer at any of our events. Only with your help can we make it all happen and grow the Bedford Historical Society.

Jan van Steenwijk

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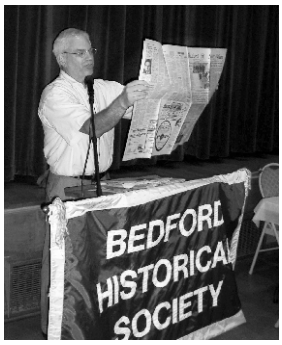
What is It?

We love to be the recipient of all kind of relics which can tell us about Bedford's past. Human memories sometimes fade away, oral histories will, eventually, be distorted by time into something slightly different from the original story. But artifacts, whether an old letter, diary or tools from years ago, are the evidence which give us a hint of what life was like before TV and blogs.

The items in this picture were given to the Bedford Historical Society by Ned and Susan Leeming. They were the couple who moved the old house on Carlisle Road to Harvard. (see article in our newsletter of Nov. 2009). We already received numerous items they found in walls and the chimney. We are still working on determining the exact age of these wonderful pieces.

Some of the items are easily recognized, like the knife, with a wooden handle, and fork with a bone handle, and probably the peg, too. But why does the peg have black paint on it (peeling and maybe not visible in this b/w image), and what was the wooden arrow with two notches at the bottom used for? The spatula (?) has a large X carved into it – what does that mean? The oval piece with the etched groove on one end is made from black granite. What are they and how were they used? We'd like your input.

If you think you have the answers, we would love to hear from you. The more we know about these tools, the better we can tell the world about them. We hope that our members will participate in making our Society as complete as possible, so please send us a note.



Mike Rosenberg

"...I remember it well..."

Former "Bedford Minuteman" editor Michael Rosenberg entertained participants at the Society's Annual Meeting in May with a presentation on the development of local newpapers in Bedford. He traced the history of the "Minuteman" from its beginnings as a small-town paper with strong roots in the community to its current version – part of a business conglomerate that publishes more regionally-based articles and columns.

Angelo Colao looks for a good story.

Full house.

Julie Turner going through the yellowed pages

Marion Bryan: "I remember that story..."

Mr. Rosenberg, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, also spoke about growth and change in Bedford during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Society's Big 2010 Event

Gorgeous weather, fantastic food, and a wonderful historic location made the Society's June fund-raiser a tremendous success. The beautiful grounds of the300-year-old Fitch Tavern were transformed for the gala, with music supplied by a quartet from the Lexington Symphony Orchestra and party guests dressed in glamorous evening attire. Fitch Tavern homeowners Lea Ann and Michael Knight, who donated the use of their beautiful home for this event, worked alongside the Fund-raising Committee to make the party especially memorable. Michael Knight planned all the fabulous gourmet dining selections, and Lea Ann Knight gave informative tours of the Tavern's first floor throughout the evening.

Guests, who were greeted by two members of the Bedford Minuteman Company – in full Colonial uniform, received copies of Louise K. Brown's A Wilderness Town as a gift from the Society.

As the gala came to an end, Society President Jan van Steenwijk oversaw several drawings of lovely gifts donated for the party, and Bedford Town Historian John Dodge regaled the guests with stories about Bedford's history and some of the residents that made our community special.

The party raised over $7,100 for the Society with the help of generous donations from numerous businesses and individuals:

Bedford Minuteman Company
Bedford Farms
Bedford Jewelers
Bedford Stop & Shop
Herb & Mary Bell
Beverly Yacht Club
Busa Wine & Spirits
Chip-In Farm
Citizens Bank Bedford
Chris and Doris Crowell
DeMoulas Market Basket
Design Photo
Double Tree Bedford Glen Hotel
Friends of the Bedford Flag
Frank and Joan Gicca
Great Road Gallery & Framing
Barbara Hitchcock
Doug Holmes
Donald & Lois Jenkins
Michael & Lea Ann Knight
Lexington Symphony Orchestra
Mead Brothers Tree Service
New England Nurseries
TD Bank Bedford
William Waite, Jr., Inc.
Julia Whiteneck
Whole Foods Market

The Fundraising Committee included Carol Amick, Doris Crowell, Frank Gicca, Jan van Steenwijk, Julie Turner and Julia Whiteneck.

A Gift from the Archives of Earl & Eleanor (Clark) Towne

This summer the Society was the recipient of papers, photographs, books and other materials that were contributed by Earl and Eleanor (Clark) Towne. Mrs. Towne is a daughter of Herbert L. Clark, the last operator of the Bacon-Fitch-Ashby-Clark mill on the Shawsheen River. The town acquired the mill and

demolished it in 1947.
Mrs. Towne grew up on the former Eleazer Davis Homestead (ca.1705) on Davis Road. Her grandfather, Charles H. Clark, had married Abby Caroline Davis, a descendamt of the original owner. Mrs. Towne also traces her ancestry to a number of other Bedford families including the Webbers, Gleasons and Pierces. The donated photographs include family gatherings, various family homes in Bedford, Bedford celebrations and more. The books include a 5-volume history of Middlesex County, with biographical information on prominent citizens including Charles Jenks of Bedford, and a Civil War history from the 1890s that contains much information on the war that has been lost in modern history books. Included in the donated papers are an original copy of an 1891 report to the town regarding ownership of the Town Common (a subject of dispute for about 150 years), Bedford's Sesquicentennial Celebration program (1879), and many scrapbook type documents covering much of the 20th century.

The Society is grateful for this wonderful addition to its

What's in your attic?

The Preservationist
Bedford Historical Society
2 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730-1238

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US Postage Paid
Bedford, MA 01730
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Permit No. 30

Have you paid your dues, yet?

The Bedford Historical Society was founded in 1893 - Our Website: www.bedfordmahistory.org

Officers
Jan van Steenwijk, *President*
Julia Whiteneck, *Vice President*
Phyllis Cooke, *Secretary*
Don Corey, *Treasurer*

Directors
Frank Gicca - *Chair, Board of Directors*
Judie Toti - *Clerk*
Carol Amick
Joan Bowen
Bea Brown
Marion Bryan
Joan Gicca
Donald Jenkins
Neil Leary
Julie McCay Turner

Finance Committee
Frank Gicca - *Chair, Board of Directors*
Don Corey - *Treasurer*
Donald Jenkins
Neil Leary
Bob Schlechta
Jan van Steenwijk - *President*

New Administrative Assistant

Please welcome Kara Kerwin as the Society's Administrative Assistant. Kara has been working in the office for some time, first as a volunteer and then as paid assistant transcribing the Lane Family Papers under grants that the Society received from the Bedford Cultural Council and Greater Lowell Community Foundation.

She has accepted the position of Administrative Assistant and will now be handling the Society's business functions.

As many of you know, Lee Yates decided to step down as Executive Director at the end of last spring's program year, as the business that she had started previously ramps up. Lee remains an active member of the Society, as well as serving on the town's Historic Preservation Commission and as a Director of the Friends of the Job Lane House. We wish her well on her new venture.

Web site: www.bedfordmahistory.org
email: infor@bedfordmahistory.org
781-275-7276

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

Did you know...
If you are interested in Bedford images, maps or photographs from our vast archive, please contact us, and for a small fee, we can provide you with copies.

Membership Application

Please join us - and support our heritage!

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

Amount enclosed: $_____

Please send check to:

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