**Presidents Message**

With Spring not too far around the corner (hopefully), it's time to get busy. Actually, some members have been busy all winter on a variety of Society activities.

The Historical Society has just completed major upgrades to our on-line virtual museum. The web host, PastPerfect, has improved its operating platform significantly, while Kara Kerwin, Sharon McDonald and Janet Collins have refined our own site and uploaded much more archival data. Stop by & visit! Just go to the Society's website – [www.bedfordmahistory.org](http://www.bedfordmahistory.org) - and click on the “Virtual Museum” link. The “Random Images” button will give you a sampling of the Society's collections.

We hope for continued progress in re-establishing a local historic museum for the community. The Town of Bedford recently submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission an application for a 50/50 matching grant to fund a Museum Feasibility Study, with an estimated total project cost of $50,000. The study will evaluate the preferred locations recommended by the Town Ad Hoc Museum Study Committee, including preliminary cost estimates for each.

Society member and Town Historian Sharon McDonald will be the speaker at the Bedford Lyceum on February 28 at 9:00 AM at the First Parish in Bedford. Her project, “When the First Peoples Lived Here Beside the Concord and Shawsheen”, is a study of the history of Native Americans in Bedford. Evidence shows they were here 10,000 years ago.

Finally, we note the passing of Evelyn Stickney. She was a lifetime member of the Society, and her husband Ed is a Past President of the Society. An article by Meredith McCulloch in the Bedford Citizen recalls her fondly.

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**A lecture not to be missed!**

**Sunday Feb. 28th at 2 pm**

**Congregational Church**

25 Great Road

“Building Route 128”

David Krugh

The Historical Society's February program will provide an opportunity to get out of the house on a winter afternoon and learn about a highway so critical to transportation in this region.

On Sunday afternoon, Feb. 28th in the First Church of Christ, Congregational's Upper Fellowship Hall, David Kruh will speak on “Building Route 128.”

The meeting will begin at 2 pm with a half-hour refreshment and social period. Kruh's talk, based on his book of the same name, will begin at about 2:30. This afternoon meeting is an opportunity to bring a friend to this free event. The program will appeal to those interested in “the road we love to hate” as well as to those curious about the history of the Boston suburbs and the important changes that Route 128 brought to the region.

Kruh will present the complete story of Route 128, from its beginning in the 1920s as an informal collection of two-lane roads that formed a rough arc 15 miles from Boston, through the 1950s construction of the divided highway. Using previously unpublished images from the archives of the MA Dept. of Public Works as well as over two dozen towns and cities through which the highway passes, he also will describe how one man's vision became the catalyst for the incredible growth around the highway.

Construction of Route 128 – now called Route 95 – began in 1926 and continued on various portions through 1958. Kruh will use a pictorial history to show how family homes were moved or burned down, farm land was divided and the road made numerous twists and turns to accommodate natural geologic features and trees – all in the name of progress.

Kruh is a graduate of the Univ. of Maryland and BU, where he received a Masters in Computer Engineering. He has worked full-time as a copywriter, computer programmer, radio producer, radio engineer and, for a few years in the mid-1990s, as a spokesman and web master for the Big Dig.

Besides writing about Route 128, he is the author of several other books, notably two on Boston's Scollay Square. He also has published plays, movie scripts and numerous articles in the Boston Globe and Herald.

His day job is Marketing Communications Manager at Analog Devices in Cambridge.
The Boston Tea Party Revised


Samuel Adams was a controversial figure. British Crown and Tory adversaries hated him. They routinely branded Adams as a traitor and rabble-rouser and made every effort to discredit him. Influenced by those claims, modern writers have asserted that Samuel Adams was behind the Stamp Act riots in August 1765 and the Boston Massacre as well as the Boston Tea Party. In fact there is nothing in historical records to support those allegations. He was a persuasive speaker, but above all he was a skilled politician. He was a member of the Boston Caucus, a founder of the Boston Committee of Correspondence, sometimes Moderator at Town Meetings, and Clerk of the House of Representatives. In later years he served on a committee to draft a Massachusetts Constitution, and served three terms as Massachusetts Governor in the 1790s.

The familiar version of the Boston Tea Party was fabricated 92 years after the event, and it portrayed Adams as an all-powerful figure in control of the Boston crowds. In this widely-accepted version, Samuel Adams announced to a crowd of angry patriots at the Old South Meeting House that “This meeting can do nothing more to save the country” as a signal, whereupon the crowd poured out of the Meeting House with cheers, yells and war whoops and headed for the tea ships.

There are two problems with this version of events. First, this author's research of the most authoritative records of that meeting showed that 10 or 15 minutes elapsed after Adams spoke to the crowd before shouts from the street actually caused many people to leave the meeting, while Samuel Adams called for them to stay because they were not quite done. Second, Thompson Maxwell's personal account of the event portrays a much different story.

Thompson Maxwell grew up on Old Billerica Road in Bedford; the Maxwell farm is now the site of Carleton-Willard Village. By the Revolution he was grown and living in New Hampshire, but as a teamster he made frequent trips to Boston. He sometimes stopped to visit his oldest brother William Maxwell (who inherited the farm) and to visit his brother-in-law Captain Jonathan Willson, who lived a short distance up the road (now 261 OBR). His account reads, “I went with my team to Boston, which was shut up (blockaded), with a load of provisions for the poor of the town. I had loaded at John Hancock's warehouse and was about to leave town, when Mr. Hancock requested me to drive my team up into his yard, and ordered his servants to take care of it, and requested me to be at Long Wharf at two o'clock P.M., and informed me what was to be done. I went accordingly, joined the band under Captain Hewes. We mounted the ships and made tea in a trice. This done I took my team and went home as an honest man should”.

Based on these accounts, it seems that not only was the Tea Party planned in advance but it was John Hancock, not Samuel Adams, who recruited the men that “made tea”. The crowd from the Old South Meeting House provided a useful diversionary distraction, but historical records fail to support Samuel Adams' leadership of the Boston Tea Party. So much for that myth.

Paul Revere’s Mother-in-Law to speak at the Society’s Annual Meeting

The Society was pleased to learn late in December that it is a recipient of a Bedford Cultural Council (BCC) grant.

The Society's Annual Meeting program in May will be a living history performance by Kate Carney as Mrs. Rachel Walker, Paul Revere's mother-in-law. Her accounts of her son-in-law's famous ride and other rousing adventure tales will portray Colonial life in the turmoil of pre-Revolutionary War Boston. This program is being supported by a grant from the Bedford Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Don Corey
**Tremont Hotel Menu**

This 'bill of fare' found in the Society archives appears to be a menu from the Tremont House Hotel in Boston. This menu, and the Tremont Hotel, represent many significant 'firsts', according to *The Robertson Book of Who Did What for the First Time* by Patrick Robertson (Bloomsbury, USA. 2011). The Tremont House Hotel was the first “grand hotel” to be built in the United States. At its opening in 1829, it was considered the largest hotel in the world. The Tremont was the first to have a hotel lobby, complete with desk clerks and bellboys, the first to offer single and double rooms, locking guest room doors, free soap for the guests, and the first to feature bathrooms and water closets (8 each, in the basement).

The Tremont was also the first U.S. hotel to offer French cuisine in the dining room, meant to impress even the most discerning traveler. The opening night gala dinner, held on October 16th, 1829, launched a new era of fine dining in Boston. Surviving menus from that evening are considered to be the earliest known examples of printed menus in the U.S. Even the manner in which they were printed is significant; these menus were produced by the renowned lithographer William S. Pendleton and are believed to be the first example of handwriting transferred by lithograph in this country. One can only imagine the value such a significant artifact would have today!

Unfortunately, we doubt that this menu from the Society's archives is an original. As a reproduction, however, it still also holds significance. Printed at the top, in blue, we find the name, “Fred F. Hassam, Hyde Park, MASS.” An article appearing in *The Bostonian* magazine from January, 1895 (Vol.1, No.4, p. 329) offers further explanation. Frederick Fitch Hassam was a child of four when his father, a tavern owner from New Hampshire, brought his family to Boston to attend the Tremont's opening night dinner. The older Hassam brought the 'Bill of Fare' home as a souvenir of what was certainly a memorable event. Sixty five years later, Frederick Hassam (incidentally, father of American painter, Childe Hassam) commissioned the well-known lithographer Louis Prang to reproduce the menu for the *Bostonian* article. We believe it is one of these Prang reproductions that now resides in the Society archives. No record of what member donated it has been found, but, even so, this document reveals a fascinating glimpse of Boston's transformation from a rustic colonial port to the cosmopolitan city it is today.

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**Thank You for Your Invaluable Support!**


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The Patriot...

...and the Postman are always on the Road..!

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