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

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Enjoy our Next Program

Wednesday, April 25 - 7:15 PM

Old Town Hall - Great Room
16 South Road

A refreshment period from 7.15 - 7:45 will kick-off this event.

What does a house built in the 1800s and Carleton Willard Village have in common? How about a miller and a candy maker doing business in Bedford?

Your opportunity to find out will be at the next Bedford Historical Society Meeting at **OLD TOWN HALL**.

Our presenters in the continuing series of **"If My Walls Could Talk"** includes a presentation by the family of the early 1700s Red Feather Farm, also known as the Farley-Hutchinson-Kimball house on North Road. This is a multi-generationalfamily home passed down through time from grandfather to father to sons and we will have Nathan Kimball tell about the history behind it all. The trolley ran just in front of the house to Lexington or Boston. Farming activity evolved in Bedford from the 18th through the 20th centuries. What kind of impact did this have on the house? And of course the history of the candy maker in the family and how that business evolved.

The Farley-Hutchinson-Kimball House

On Old Billerica Road, there are remnants of a grist mill. One of the millers at the grist mill was part of the Fitch family. The David Fitch House, currently used by Carleton Willard Village for their guests, belonged to the Fitch family. David was third of four generations of Fitches to run the nearby gristmill on the Shawsheen River. What came after that miller is very interesting. Stephanie Smith, Director of Public Relations at CWV, will be our history teller for this house and surroundings.

Merri Lee Johnson

The David Fitch Jr. House

NOTE! → Annual Meeting, May 22 ← NOTE!
to Elect Officers and Directors

This year's Annual Meeting, to be held on Tuesday, May 22 at the First Church of Christ, Congregational, will feature the election of Bedford Historical Society Officers and Directors.

The Nominating Committee (Carol Amick, Marion Bryan and Julie Turner) has announced that its slate of officers, all to serve one-year terms, will include three incumbents and one first-time candidate:

President:	Don Corey
Vice President:	Merri Lee Johnson
Secretary:	Jane Puffer
Treasurer:	Pat Leiby

Society member and former Bedford School Committee woman Jane Puffer is the first-time candidate who will join the other officers, all incumbents, if elected by the Society membership.

The Nominating Committee's slate of Directors to serve on the Board, all for four-year terms, includes:

- **Incumbents,** Richard LeSchack, Sharon McDonald and newcomer Kara Kerwin.

Kerwin, if elected, will be a new member of the Board of Directors, but she is no stranger to the Board or the work of the Society. She has served for many years as the Society's Executive Administrator, a part-time position she has held while also working as a Special Education teacher for the Burlington School System.

The Annual Meeting will be preceded by a potluck dinner at 6 pm in Upper Fellowship Hall of the First Church of Christ, Congregational. After dinner (around 7:30 pm), the election of officers will be held, followed by entertainment by the Musical PASTimes, who interpret history using music and interactive storytelling.

What's in Bedford's Attic: 1845 Farmer's Almanac

By Matthew Leece

The Farmers Almanac from 1845, one of the treasures from the Bedford Historical Society's archives

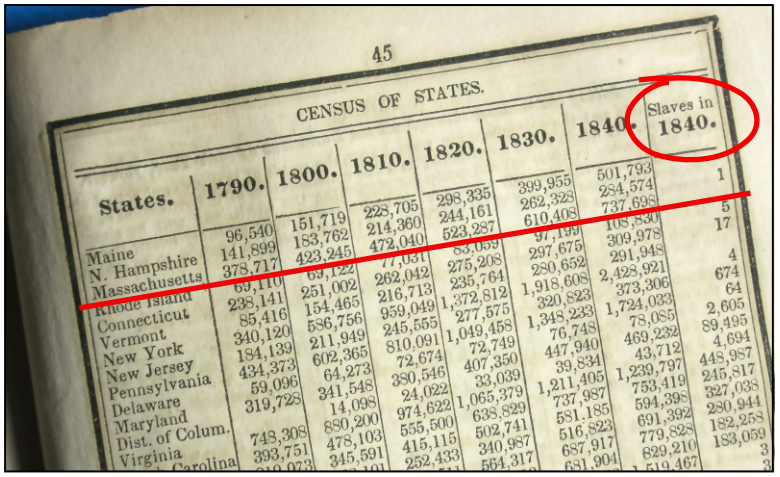
How did farmers get information about the weather in the 1840s, when they couldn't rely on an army of meteorologists making guesses? They used the *Farmer's Almanac*!

The Bedford Historical Society archives includes an 1845 edition of *Farmer's Almanac*. In many ways our antique issue is similar to those published today, but with additional unique information that would have been useful to an 19th century Bedford farmer. Like the publication's modern incarnation, the 19th-century version is mostly concerned with the meteorological phenomena such as temperature and rainfall and accurate predictions of sunrises and sunsets and the lunar cycles. This is rather amazing since today we often need computers to do the same.

Other information includes the populations of towns in Massachusetts, taken from the 1840 census, and each town's distance from Boston. Bedford's population was revealed to be 901 residents. At a time long before the Internet had been invented, the *Almanac* was a valued resource, so it is amazing that, despite some wear and tear, our copy remains surprisingly readable!

What makes this particular *Almanac* of interest is that it was edited by the original editor, Robert B. Thomas, who prepared it not long before his death in 1848. The *Farmer's Almanac* is proud of its history—first published in Boston in 1792 and still published today in Dublin, New Hampshire. Thomas created a formula to predict the weather in the early 1790s and created the *Almanac* to disseminate that information, and his formula is a closely guarded secret to this day. Also of significance, this copy was published in Boston by the original publishers, Jenks & Palmer.

Other interesting information in the almanac is a list of known planets, including the planet considered the farthest from the Sun at that time, Herschel. Herschel, now known as Neptune, was named for the astronomer who predicted where it would be found in the night sky. All the information in *The Farmer's Almanac* would have been useful and some of it even cutting edge.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CENSUS OF STATES.

States.	1790.	1800.	1810.	1820.	1830.	1840.	Slaves in 1840.
Maine	96,540	151,719	228,705	298,335	399,955	501,793	1
N. Hampshire	141,899	183,762	214,360	244,161	262,328	284,574	5
Massachusetts	378,717	423,245	472,040	523,287	610,408	737,699	17
Rhode Island	69,110	69,122	77,031	83,059	97,199	108,830	
Connecticut	238,141	251,002	262,042	275,208	297,675	309,978	4
Vermont	85,416	154,465	216,713	235,764	280,652	291,948	674
New York	340,120	586,756	959,049	1,372,812	1,918,608	2,428,921	64
New Jersey	184,139	211,949	245,555	277,575	320,823	373,306	2,605
Pennsylvania	434,373	602,365	810,091	1,049,458	1,348,233	1,724,033	89,495
Delaware	59,096	64,273	72,674	72,749	76,748	78,085	4,694
Maryland	319,728	341,548	380,546	407,350	447,940	469,232	448,987
Dist. of Colum.		14,098	24,022	33,039	39,834	43,712	245,817
Virginia	748,308	880,200	974,622	1,065,379	1,211,405	1,239,797	327,038
Carolina	393,751	478,103	555,500	638,829	737,987	753,419	280,944
		345,591	415,115	502,741	581,185	594,398	182,258
			252,433	340,987	516,823	691,392	183,059
				564,317	687,917	779,828	3
					681,904	829,210	
						1,519,467	

The population in Massachusetts doubled in 50 years - and note - No Slaves! While Virginia had almost a half million!

"What's in Bedford's Attic?' highlights some of the fascinating artifacts held in the archives of the Bedford Historical Society, kept on behalf of the town of Bedford. What's in your attic? Visit us at 2 Mudge Way, Bedford, MA or call 781-275-7276.

High School Lobby Display

The Historical Society has been exhibiting some of its collections in the High School lobby display cases since their installation during the high school expansion project. However, the absence of any lighting in these large and very deep cases has been challenging.

This winter the Facilities Department ran an electrical outlet to each case, and the Society has since installed LED light fixtures that have greatly improved visibility of the displays. LED lights operate at different wavelengths than incandescent or fluorescent lights, and they are vastly less damaging to paper and cloth objects that are exposed to them for extended time periods.

The new display features Jonathan Bacon, an early Bedford STEM entrepreneur. He and John Hosmer are credited with starting Bedford's cottage industry in the early 1800s making handmade shoes. At its peak, over 90,000 pairs of shoes were being made annually in Bedford for the Boston market. This provided a source of income for many Bedford families for decades before large steam-powered mills elsewhere took over around the Civil War..

Jonathan Bacon also used his technical and engineering skills to invent a number of useful mechanical devices that he patented. During that era, patents were signed by several high Federal officials including the President of the United States. An original Bacon patent with President Andrew Jackson's signature is included in the display.

Don Corey

Henry Senften Farm - Main Street (now the Great Road), Bedford.
Watercolor by John Dodge.
(see related Then & Now article on page 4)

THANK YOU!

Renewals
George Epple, Sharon McClathey, Ann Seamans,
Margot Fleischman

Donations
Carol Amick & Bill Moonan, Karen Frederick, Ann Seamans, Emily Wade

With your support Bedford's past can be accessed in the future!

WANTED
Bedford Memorabilia

www.bedfordmahistory.org
Executive Administrator: Kara Kerwin
781-275-7276
info@bedfordmahistory.org

The Preservationist.
Design, production & photography: Jan van Steenwijk
Contributing writers ; Carol Amick, Don Corey, Kara Kerwin, Brian Oulighan, Sharon McDonald, Richard LeSchack

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Bedford Historical Society, Inc.
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"We Don't Make History...
We Keep It Alive..!"

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

Then & Now

Main Street (Great Road), 1857

Former Farmhouse site, Great Road, April 2018

Henry Wood owned a farm on Main Street (Great Road) that extended north up to Page Road, and he built this farmhouse on Main Street by 1857. His son Charles Wood continued to run the farm until early in the 20th Century, when it was acquired by Henry Senften. Mr. Senften continued to farm there for decades. A few of you may recall his daughter Frances, John Dodge's first wife.

Following World War II, the land was sold, and in the late 1950s Bedford Shopping Center and the Post Office replaced the farmhouse on Great Road. Bedford Village and a portion of Dunster Road were built on the northern portion of the farm.

Much more recently the Bedford Marketplace has replaced the Post Office and Bedford Shopping Center on the former farmhouse site. This property abuts the east side of the Old Bedford Center Historic District, and not everyone necessarily sees the recent redevelopment as an enhancement of the Great Road.

Don Corey