**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-generational family 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](image1)

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 Fitch's 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

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**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.

![The David Fitch Jr. House](image2)
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.

“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.
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.

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

THANK YOU!

Renewals
George Epplp, Sharon McClatchey, Ann Seamans,
Margot Fleischman
Donations
Carol Amick & Bill Moonan,
Karen Frederick, Ann Seamans,
Emily Wade
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