The Bedford Flag, the oldest existing flag in the United States, ca. 1704. On view at the Bedford Library.

The Preservationist

Bedford Historical Society, Inc. - Bedford - Massachusetts

Founded in 1893

February 2021 | *Published for anyone interested in our history* | Volume 131, Number 1

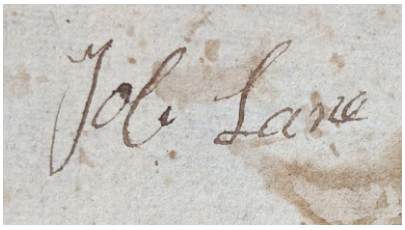
Enjoy Our Next Virtual Program
Sunday, February 28, 2021 - 2:00 PM
"A Cast of (Historic) Characters" with Sharon McDonald
(see page 3 for details)

The Lane Bible on Display

Sharon McDonald: Town Historian & Curator of the Job Lane House

A Bible long held by the Society has found a place in a fine new display case bought especially for it. The Lane Bible is a large (10" x 18") edition given to us by Mrs. P.C. Corey in the early 20th century. Bedford's stagecoach operator, Charles C. Corey, and his son, Town Clerk Charles A. Corey, both married Lane descendants, which could have been a factor in the return of the Bible to its original home in Bedford. It has a plain brown cover and has been heavily used; many of its pages are falling out. But this is a unique copy of the Great Book. It was published in London in 1723. Written inside the front cover is the name "Job Lane," and on a page in the center of the book between the Old and New Testament are the names of the Lane family: Job and Susannah, and ten children including Bethiah, Almatia, Lydia, and another Job.

And yet wait - these are not the family we are most familiar with; the family of Job (1686-1762) who built the museum house at 295 North Road. Grab your copy of AE Brown's "History of Bedford" and turn to the genealogical section. This is Job Jr. (1718-1796). He was the son of Deacon Job about whom we know so much. It was he who went to Concord Bridge at the age of 60, and at the Battle Road was wounded so severely that his leg had to be amputated. That wife who had nursed him so well that he lived another twenty years was Susannah neé Fassett. Her name is also written very faintly on the inside of the Bible's cover.



Enlargement of Job Lane's signature on the inside cover.

This fragile treasure that was given to the town has been stored carefully at the Job Lane House since the Selectmen closed the Historical Society museum in 1996. Its handsome new case bought by the Historical Society allows it to be displayed again and reminds us that the Lane history is wide and deep. As the Bible has such close ties with the Job Lane Museum, it resides there in the Great Hall Chamber. Visit it when the Job Lane House opens again after the pandemic! You'll be very welcome.

See display case on page 6

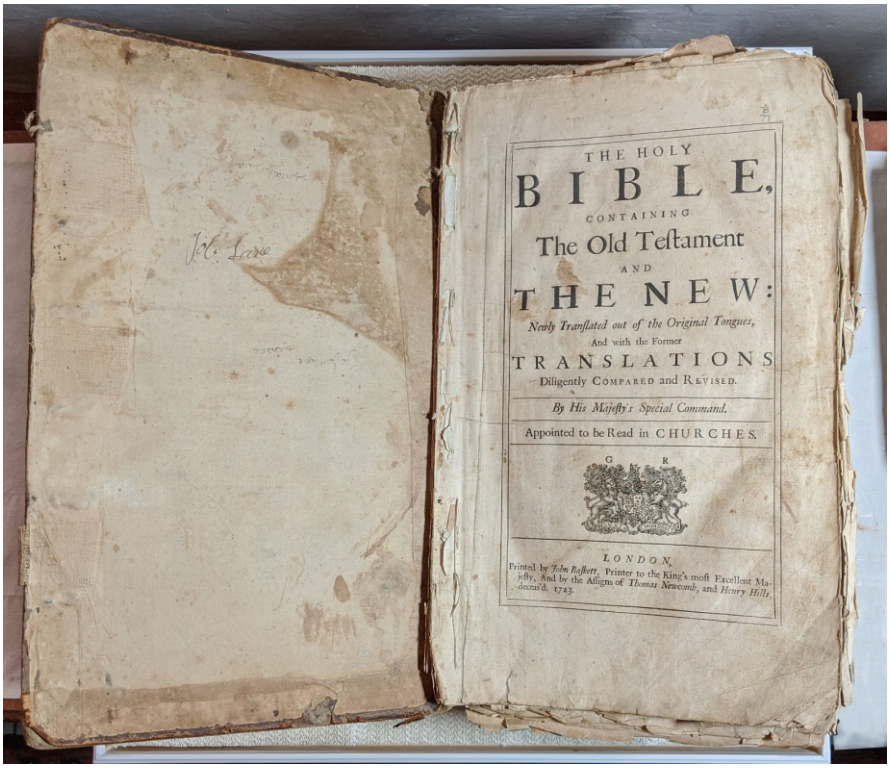


Photo: Jan van Steenwijk

This unique Bible printed in 1723, is part of the Societies large collection.

Bedford's Historic Districts By: Don Corey

Bedford has a number of historic districts, but they exist in two different formats which has caused endless confusion. This article will hopefully provide clarification for our readers.

National Register Historic Districts – The National Register of Historic Places, begun in 1966 and maintained by the National Park Service, promotes an appreciation of our diverse cultural heritage. Places listed on the Register include National Register Historic Districts, individual buildings, sites, and other objects deemed important in American history, culture, architecture, or archaeology. National Register listing recognizes the historic importance of the site, provides some tax incentives for rehabilitation of income-producing properties, and provides some protection from adverse effects of Federal and State projects. It places no limits on an owner's use of the property and places no financial obligation upon the owner.

The Historical Society's archives have been the primary information source for preparation of nomination applications. Bedford's National Register Districts presently include the following:

Old Bedford Center – The red outline on the map shows the area of that district. It includes the entire Town Center during the late 19th Century plus Fletcher Road and Crescent Avenue that were developed around the turn of the 20th Century.

Bedford Depot Park

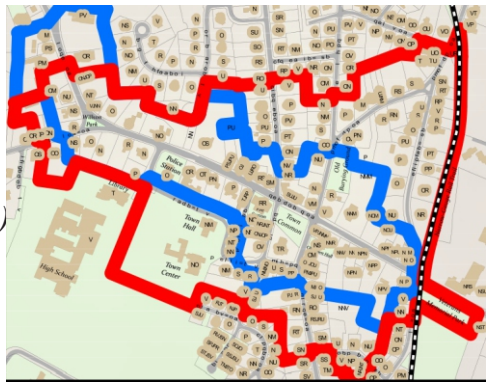
Historic Wilson Mill-Old Burlington Road

Old Billerica Road – This district (229-301 OBR) includes the Michael Bacon House (ca.1671) and Minuteman

Captain Jonathan Willson's House (ca.1760).

Bedford Veterans Administration Hospital.

Two Brothers Rocks-Dudley Road



Individual buildings and other sites on the National Register presently include:

Bacon-Gleason-Blodgett Homestead - 118 Wilson Road (ca.1740)

Farley-Hutchinson-Kimball House – 461A & 463 North Road (ca.1725)

David Lane House- 137 North Road (ca.1781)

Job Lane House-295 North Road (ca.1713)

Christopher Page House-2 Myers Lane (ca.1735)

Nathaniel Page House-89 Page Road (ca.1710)

Shawsheen Cemetery

A nomination application to list the Col. Timothy Jones House, 231 Concord Road (ca.1775), is currently pending with the Mass. Historical Commission.

Local Historic Districts

The Old Bedford Center Historic District, outlined in blue on the map, is Bedford's only local historic district. The Local Historic District and the Historic District Commission (HDC) were established by vote of Town Meeting and Massachusetts State Law, Acts of 1964. Subsequently, Mass. General Laws, Chapter 40C, now allows such districts to be established by a two-thirds majority city council or town meeting vote. By establishing a local historic district, a community recognizes the importance of its architectural heritage and how vulnerable it is to inappropriate alterations without this local regulation. In Bedford's Local Historic District, an application for review at a public hearing is made to the HDC before any external changes are made to properties. Bedford's Bylaw defines features that are subject to review and features that are exempt. If proposed changes are considered to be appropriate, a Certificate is issued allowing the work to proceed. Local Historic Districts have been highly effective at saving historic structures, neighborhoods and villages from inappropriate alteration and demolition.

Bedford's Historic District Commission currently has 2 vacancies. Anyone with an interest in participating in this activity to help preserve some of Bedford's most important historic and cultural properties is encouraged to contact the Volunteer Coordinating Committee via the Town's website – *www.bedfordma.gov*.

Bedford Historical Society Program Series - 2021 Season

These program meetings with be virtual. They will begin at 2 PM via ZOOM. Should you login early, you will be directed to our waiting room and once the host is ready, you will be invited into the meeting. If you would like to receive the login information, please email the Historical Society at: bedfordmahistory@gmail.com

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Sunday, Feb. 28, 2021, 2:00 PM

Town Historian and author Sharon McDonald has been researching a number of 18th and 19th Century historical Bedford residents for her virtual talk entitled, "A Cast of (Historic) Characters." Ms. McDonald's presentations are popular among Society members and the public at large, who have filled the venues to overflowing in past years. Curator of the Job Lane Farm Museum, she is always entertaining and precise with her facts.

The meeting will begin at 2 PM via ZOOM. Should you login early, you will be directed to our waiting room and once the host is ready, you will be invited into the meeting.
If you would like to receive the login information, please email the Historical Society at: bedfordmahistory@gmail.com

MARCH PROGRAM

Sunday, March 21, 2021, 2:00 PM

In 1623, Myles Standish and eight other men, including a native American from the Wampanoag tribe, entered the Wessagusset Colony (now known as the Town of Weymouth), and brutally murdered two Massachusett tribal leaders and a young boy.

The factors that led to this action, and the after effect of this incident on Native-English relations, will be examined by history teacher, author and lecturer Christopher Daley in "The Wessagusset Incident." He also will challenge the audience to consider the similarity of these incidents to the current demonstrations throughout the country over racial inequality. This presentation will be virtual, unless a vaccine to treat the coronavirus is widely available.

The meeting will begin at 2 PM via ZOOM. Should you login early, you will be directed to our waiting room and o

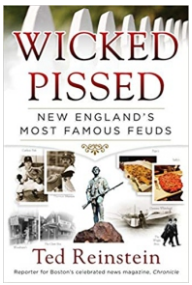
Photo of Chris Daley on his website, www.daleyhistory.com.nce the host is ready, you will be invited into the meeting.

If you would like to receive the login information, please email the Historical Society at: bedfordmahistory@gmail.com

APRIL PROGRAM

Sunday, April 25, 2021, 2:00 PM

Ted Reinstein, popular journalist and reporter for *Cronicle*, Boston's celebrated TV news-magazine, has found the offbeat, the unique, the moving, and the memorable in his reporting travels.



He will recount some of those stories from his book of the same tile. "Wicket Pissed: New England's most Famous Feuds." From sports to politics, food to finance, to bitter disputes over simple boundaries themselves, New England's feuds have peppered the rgion's life for centuries. They've been raw and rowdy, sometimes high minded and humorous, and in a place renowned for its deep sense of history, often long-running and legendary.

Mass Cultural Council

The Preservationist newsletter is supported in part by a grant from The Bedford Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Executive Director's Report

Kristine L. Moore

Social Media has been vital to keep people engaged. Thanks to our email mailing list, those not on Facebook have the chance to experience the Society's social media posts. Historic House Sunday, (a virtual tour around Bedford's historic properties) has been very popular and a good way to get people virtually out of the house.

What is it Wednesday (an artifact from the collection is cropped and shared with clues as to what it is) has been well received on social media and has provided some very entertaining guesses. We still have Tri Cornered Thursday (a photo pertaining to the iconic Tri-Corner Hat is posted), Flashback Friday (photos from the Historical Society's various collections are shared.). And finally Town Center Saturday (images from Bedford Center's history is shared).

We are still documenting the COVID-19 Pandemic to help build a collection to document it for future generations.

We are looking for photos from the quarantine, journal entries, memes, schoolwork, etc. to tell Bedford's story regarding the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic. For more information please visit our website or email us at info@bedfordmahistory.org or bedfordmahistory@gmail.com.

We are grateful for our members & donors continued support. Thank you!

Africa, Dorothy
Allen Marshall & Anne Bickford
Allen, Eileen
Austin, Claire
Axtell, Richard & June
Bartovics, Al
Bass, Bob & Lee Vorderer
Beauchesne, Ruth
Bergin, Dot
Blasi, Jane
Bottum, Carolyn
Bryan, Marion
Burton, James
Bushnell, Robert
Button, Margaret Jane
Carlton & Duran, CPAs PC
Chester, Veronica
Chris Gittins & Stacy Chandler
Cierpial, Leon & Aline
Clifford, Barbara
Collins, Janet
Cooke, Phyllis
Cooper, John
Corey, Donald L.
Couvee, Paul & Andrea
Craven, Kelly
Crowell, Doris
Damery, Joseph C.
Davidson, Stephanie
Deen, William
Denaro, Lois
Dietrich, Melinda
Dorer, Robert & Sarah
Doyle, Barbara C-W-V
Dunham, Lorrie
Echols, Jr., H. Gary
Egan, Susan
Epple, George
Feehrer, Barbara
Fitch, David
Frans van Berkhout
French, Claude
Gene Kalb & Linda Pollitz
Gevorkian, Allen
Gibbons, John
Gicca, Frank & Joan
Goldenberg, Lora
Gottlieb, Lloyd and Ilsa
Graff, Katherine
Grainger, Clive
Granitto, Luisa & Wendell Smith
Hafer, Mary
Haugen, Eric
Hayford, Michael
Hennessey, David & Francine
Hill, Paul
Howe, Cindy
Humphrey, Janet & Ellen
Hutchinson, David
Kinzer, Tom
Kring, Roy & Shirley
Leavell, Heather
LeShack, Richard & Meg
Levine, Mark
Linz, John & Marie
Little, Donna
Mason, Sean
McClatchey, Sharon
McGovern, Christine
Meyers, Peter
Morin, Ashley Ann
O'Hara, Emily
Orlando, Vincent & Joanne
Oulighan, Brian
Parkhurst, Bob & Debra
Perry, Barbara
Prugnarola, Larry
Pullen, Heather & David
Pulliam, Brown & Lois
Puzzo, Eunice
Reyling, Maureen & Robert
Ringwood, Ann
Rosen, Michele
Rosenberg, Michael & Dawn
Seamans, Ann
Shutkin, Katherine
Slechta, Betty
Smith, Doris
Spencer, Virgina & David
St. John, Adrienne
Steele, Virginia
Stephan, Judith
Turner, Julie McCay
van Steenwijk, Jan & Barbara Hitchcock
Wade, Jeptha
Wentworth, Stanley
Wittman, Leslie & Paul
Young, Linda
Zuckerman, Phil

With your support the Society can preserve the past for the future

Artifact & Document Donations

By: Don Corey

At about 29 inches high, it is slightly larger than a modern mobile phone, but it does not run out on batteries!

Despite, or perhaps because of the pandemic, the Historical Society has continued to receive donations of artifacts and documents relevant to Bedford's history from generous residents and friends. Late in 2020 the Society's Collections Committee, which approves accessioning of items that supplement the objects already in its collections, reviewed several dozen items that had been offered since last fall. A glimpse at a few of those items follows.

- Bedford Springs. The hitching posts recovered by DPW after dredging of Fawn Lake were featured in the November Preservationist. They are an important addition to the Bedford Springs collection.
- Singer Treadle Sewing Machine. These machines were found and heavily used in many Bedford homes before electric machines were invented. Due to lack of storage space, the Bedford owner will keep this machine temporarily.
- Vintage Crank Telephone (see photo). Another wonderful donation by a Bedford family is a reminder of communications within Bedford and with the outside world a century ago.
- Lexington Park mirror. A vintage souvenir mirror with an image of one of John Benson's bears on it is an attractive addition to the Society's Lexington Park collection.
- A kindergarten-sized desk and chair (see photo). The late Riff Mildram saved this from the Union School during one of its overhauls. This is another great addition to the Society's several other standard-size desks, many photos, and other memorabilia from Bedford's schools.
- Dairy Industry. An embossed milk bottle was found in sediments during reconstruction of the Fawn Lake dam, probably left a century ago during a family outing at Bedford Springs. A framed receipt from Lexford Dairy (an Old Billerica Road dairy farmer that sold his own milk) was also given to the Society. Both items are great additions to its Dairy Industry collection.

Numerous letters, deeds, photos, plans and other documents that were received cover a wide range of subjects:

Fire Dept. history, photos & papers from a relative of John Dodge (his father was Chief)
1941 Airport Land Taking Wall-sized Plan
Portfolio of 25 Bedford families with their remembrances
Copies of WW1 letters home from the relative of a Bedford resident
Bedford school newsletters, Class Book, Commencement program
WW2 dance photos
Photo postcards of places in Bedford

There is a lot more, but space here is limited. The Historical Society is deeply grateful for the support it receives from so many generous people. We hope that Town Meeting will support the museum article so that many of these treasures can be exhibited and enjoyed by others.

Kindergarten desk and chair from ca.1900, with castiron frame which could be screwed to the floor.

Visit our website:
www.bedfordmahistory.org
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Send us an email:
info@bedfordmahistory.org

The Preservationist.
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Contributing writers;
Carol Amick, Don Corey, Brian Oulighan & Sharon McDonald

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Museum Planning Moving Foreward By: Don Corey

The Society will need to vacate its space at the Police Station due to planned renovations there. Funding was approved at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting to rehabilitate Old Town Hall's (OTH's) ground floor for museum support purposes. Upon relocation to that space, the Society's office, small research area, archives, stored artifacts, and merchandise will occupy the entire usable space on that floor. It is less than half of the minimum recommended by the Select Board's study committee and about one-third of the size recommended by the Select Board's consultant for a Town museum.

The Select Board's consultant had recommended use of OTH's middle floor for the museum's exhibit space to display Bedford's historic cultural documents and artifacts. However, that space is currently occupied by Bedford TV. An article on the 2020 Annual Town Meeting warrant proposed use of Community Preservation funds for rehabilitation of OTH's middle floor to provide a small Town museum on that floor while ensuring that Bedford TV could also continue operating there until a suitable new location is identified. The Community Preservation Committee and Select Board both recommended approval of the article. However, the pandemic resulted in all capital projects being deferred, and the article has been resubmitted for this year's Annual Town Meeting.

Bedford's historic cultural documents and artifacts have remained in storage since 1996, when the Select Board closed the existing museum in the Stearns Memorial Building (now Police Station) without making provision for an alternate location. We hope that more of Bedford's history can finally come out of storage for public display.

The Job Lane Bible in its new display case (story on page 1)