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

May, 2022 *Published for everyone interested in our history* Volume 132, Number 2

Attend Our Annual Meeting & Next Program

Sunday, May 22, 2022 – 2:00 PM - Old Town Hall, 16 South Road

"The Society's Collections Years Ago in the Former Museum"

See page 6 for details

The Impact of the Cold War on Bedford

E. Ashley Rooney

In 1950, Bedford's population was 5,234. By 1960,there was a marked increase in the building permits requested, and its population had jumped 109.6% to 10,969. Ironically, the pressures and anxiety of the Cold War (1945-1991) transformed Bedford from a small, politically conservative community to a major contributor to the nation's defense effort.

The United States in the 1950s

Throughout the decade, the world continued its recovery from World War II to spend money—and factories made the switch from war- to peace-time production. Post-war wages were high; people were moving into those grassy green suburbs; and the baby boomer generation was emerging. Couples sought a happy, serene family life seen on TV shows such as "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet."

Still, there was the continuing tension known as the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the Western powers, as seen in the Korean War, the Cuban Revolution, the initial conflict in Vietnam, the launch of Sputnik 1, and the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation. And here at home, the McCarthy hearings led to unfounded accusations of communist activity and widespread fear. Western leaders believed that communism threatened democracy, and communism had to be contained.

In 1951, a new Federal Civil Defense Administration was established to educate – and reassure – the country that there were ways to survive an atomic attack. Teachers in selected cities were encouraged to conduct air raid drills where they would suddenly yell, "Drop!" and students were expected to kneel down under their desks with their hands clutched around their heads and necks. Many of us still know how to "duck and cover!"

Post-War Bedford

In 1945, the Army Air Forces aimed to continue some programs in radar, radio, and electronic research. It recruited scientists and engineers from leading laboratories, and its new Air Force Cambridge Research Laboratories (AFCRL) took over MIT's test site at Hanscom Field Airport. By 1950, the Air Force was working closely with MIT to develop a new air defense system for the continental United States. The base expanded, and Hanscom personnel developed critical skills creating the national early detection radar network, SAGE, which revolutionized air defense and also contributed to advances in air traffic control systems. Over the years, the base's technical staff grew to include increasingly common electronics aviation systems, beginning with the Electronic Systems Division in 1961.

Triggered by federal defense spending and technological advances, industrial development escalated along Route 128, attracting an influx of highly educated engineers and managers involved with local universities and corporations such as Raytheon and Polaroid. Many of those professionals moved to Bedford. With its accessibility and rural location, it became a prime location for the young home buyer who wanted that newfangled "family room" and backyard. Those professionals found the housing prices reasonable at that time and Bedford's proximity to Cambridge and Route 128 firms most appealing. From 1950-1960, Bedford's population increased substantially, and those fields of crops began to disappear.

But even in Bedford's lovely green fields, there was worry about the bomb. By 1961, Bedford residents were quite interested in fall-out shelters and family preparedness according to the Bedford Town Report. The town surveyed all buildings in the Town capable of sheltering more than 50 persons, for possible use as fall-out shelters. By 1963, the town had six shelters at the VA Hospital and the High School and designated four radiological monitoring stations.

Throughout the 50s, the world continued its recovery from World War II. Post-war wages were high; the baby

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Cont. fr. page1

boomer generation was emerging; and people envied Ozzie and Harriet. Bedford not only appealed to prospective residents because of the easy commute but because it was a quiet town with available land compared to the more crowded suburbs such as Newton or Arlington. And the developers seized on that opportunity.

Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant- Bedford

The Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) Bedford, which covered 46 acres in eastern Massachusetts, was established to design, fabricate, and test prototype equipment for missile guidance and control systems.

In 1950, Harry S Truman was president. The Korean War began. The American economy was booming as was the birth rate. Just off Hartwell Rd, the US Navy began to construct a $2 million dollar R&D electronics laboratory for Raytheon in 1952. Raytheon had already leased the north hangar and several smaller buildings.

Known as the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) Bedford, it was established to design, fabricate, and test prototype equipment for missile guidance and control systems. Long-time Raytheon manager, Thomas Phillips commented in a 1988 interview, "In 1958, when we went into production, Eisenhower was president, and the NATO countries were afraid that the Russians had the atomic bomb. The United States had the atomic bomb, but NATO didn't. ... And Eisenhower said no, saying, "What we want, instead, is for you to make a big contribution in conventional forces so we can put up a shield here, and then we'll have a strong NATO. And we'll provide the nuclear umbrella if you make a contribution in conventional forces. Furthermore, we, the United States, will open up our entire arsenal of conventional weapons to you, to help you co-produce and whatever you want, we'll give you.… A five-nation team ... came over and saw me, I was in Bedford at the time, and I went through a couple of sessions with them. It became very clear that Hawk was just what they were looking for in terms of their defense." (Oral interview, Sharon Mercer, December 1988)

NWIRP was decommissioned in the late 1990s. The Southern Flight Test Area has since been sold to a private developer.

Project Nike

In 1944, the War Department had demanded a new air defense system to combat the new jet aircraft. Bell Laboratories' Project Nike was one of the winning proposals. The deployment was designed to initially supplement and then replace gun batteries deployed around major cities and selected military installations. In the early 1950s, a Nike Missile site, one of 40 sites in the Boston area, was built where Harvard's Field Station on Old Causeway Road is today. By the late 1950s, the Soviet Union had changed their military strategy from bomber force to Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), which reduced the need for the Nike missile sites and they were closed down in the early 1960s.

Deactivated Nike Launch site (B85L). Today the site is owned by Harvard.

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we report that Richard LeSchack, long-time Society member and one of its Directors, has died. Richard always had a smile for everyone; he took his role and the Board seriously, but joyfully. We will miss him.

President's Letter Tom Kinzer

The Society's new movable file cabinets save space and create easier access to our archives.

A lot has happened since the January *Preservationist*! Kristine Moore, our Executive Director for the last 2.5 years, left us for another job, and we hired Sandra ("Sandy") Duffy to replace her. A committee of the Board of Directors concluded it was appropriate to replace our bylaws to allow for more straightforward corporate governance and our move into vastly more accessible quarters. A letter on that subject and the new bylaws themselves are posted on our website for your perusal and, hopefully, your approval at our annual business meeting on May 22.

The arrival and installation of our new movable file cabinets added a new dimension to the accessibility of our files and artifacts. Our new location in Old Town Hall provided us with the ability to participate effectively in the launch of Bedford's new Cultural District later this spring, probably in June. The overall improved pandemic situation allowed us to decide to try do our April and May meetings in person once again, instead of relying on Zoom. We realize that there may be some pushback on that decision because Zoom allows a level of remote participation that some enjoyed for reasons unrelated to the pandemic. Let us know what you think.

BHS Honors Our Heroes on Memorial Day! Paul Purchia

Over the years, BHS has been actively involved in Memorial Day ceremonies and events which take place throughout Bedford. On Monday, May 30, the Society will participate once again in Memorial Day events to honor our men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to keep us free.

Ceremonies will begin with an 8:45 AM talk by Don Corey at the Civil War monument in Shawsheen Cemetery. Don will briefly discuss the creation of Shawsheen Cemetery and highlight the sacrifices made during the war by Bedford troops who are buried nearby. Later at 10:00 AM at the Old Burying Ground, Lee Yates will join the Bedford Minuteman Company to talk about Bedford's early patriots, including former slaves who fought in the Revolution and who were laid to rest there.

The Memorial Day parade will step off from the high school at 11:00 AM. On its way to Veterans Memorial Park ,the parade will stop at the WWI memorial on the Town Common. Lee Yates will talk briefly about the history of Bedford veterans who fought and died during the Great War. The parade will then continue along the Great Road to Veterans Memorial Park for the main town ceremony which begins around 11:15 AM. Please join us on May 30.

We appreciate our members & donors. With your support, we can save our heritage

Emily O'Hara
Janet Collins
John and Marie Linz
Ashley Ann Morin
Mark Levine
Sean Mason
Eric Haugen
Christine Anderson
Sharon and Thomas McDonald
Barbara Perry
Karen Frederick
Donald L. Corey
Eunice Puzzo
Susan Egan
Joan DiClemente
Linda Young
Deborah & Ronald Smith
Claude French
David Goldbaum
Paul and Andrea Couvee
Peter Meyers
Brown and Lois Pulliam

Allen Marshall & Anne Bickford Marshall
Frans van Berkhout
Michael and Dawn Rosenberg
Kelly Craven
Stephanie Davidson
Carol and Steve Jamison
Margaret Button
Sharon McClatchey
Joseph C. Damery
Eileen & Nick Allen
Linda Rudd
Virginia and David Spencer
Nathaniel Brown Sr.
John Stewart
Janet and Eric Humphrey
Joanne Glover
Dot Bergin
Cindy Walsh
Phyllis Cooke
Paul Hill
Allen Gevorkian

Carl and Signe Hanson
Nancy Asbedian
Larry Prugnarola
Helen Litchfield
Richard Reed
Carol Amick and Bill Moonan
Carol Grof
Shawn Hanegan
Tom Kinzer
Bob Bass and Lee Vorderer
Donna Little
Fay Russo
Robert and Anne Schmalz
Bob & Debra Parkhurst
Jean Dirks
Al Bartovics
Cindy Howe & Daniel T. McBride
Dorothy Africa & Guy Fedorkow
Richard and Meg LeSchack
Zoe and Edward Pierce
Vincent & Joanne Orlando
Leslie & Paul Wittman

Ruth Beauchesne
Susan and Michael Wingfield
Adrienne St. John
Norma Warner
Jessie McAleer
John R. Comley III
Allen Buswell
Judith and James S. Brunner
Merri Lee Johnson
Erin Dorr
Mayada Najim
Karen & Timothy Brown
Leon and Aline Cierpial
Mary Hafer
Stephanie Keep
Barbara Hitchcock & Jan van Steenwijk
Cynthia Schweppe
George and Carol Epple
Adele Germain
Nancy Willett
Bernard Fuller

An Invite to Our Annual Meeting

Lee Vorderer

You are invited to Bedford Historic Society's annual meeting - in person! - on May 22 at 2 PM, third floor, Old Town Hall. This year, COVID precautions are getting in the way of our sharing a meal, but we hope you'll come anyway…to take part in the Society's elections, to hear Tom Kinzer's report on the Society's activities over the past year, and then to enjoy a wonderful film about Bedford's *first* museum, in the Stearns building, with Mary Hafer talking about the place and Mimi Adler jumping in.

We've spent a lot of time re-drafting our by-laws, to fix inconsistencies, and make them simpler. You can read Tom's letter about the by-laws and read the new by-laws on the Society's website, www.https://www.bedfordmahistory.org/

The membership must vote to accept these new by-laws, which will happen at the annual meeting. We'll begin with approval of the new by-laws. Then elections will follow for members to be re-elected to the Board of Directors. We plan to increase the total number of directors, including those directorships held by officers, from 16 to 18 so that we can further grow the capacity and capabilities of the board. If you are interested in serving on the board or committees, please let us know.

There are changes in the Society's proposed slate of officers to be appointed by the newly constituted board. Don Corey, who has been our committed leader, able manager, and visionary thinker for decades, is stepping off the board. Although he no longer has time to take a leadership role, he will remain a BHS member and will be intimately involved in our transition. Some members are moving around, some picking up new roles as board officers:

Tom Kinzer, President
David Spencer, Treasurer
Janet Humphrey, Bookkeeper
Paul Purchia, Vice President
Lee Vorderer, Clerk

Tom and David have terms on the board that have expired, so they must be reelected to the board by the membership before they can be appointed to serve in these offices by the newly constituted Board of Directors. Paul and Lee are still on the board, and so they can be elected by the newly formed Board of Directors to serve as Officers.
Two long-time members of the Board would like to continue to serve in this capacity: Sharon McDonald and Kara Kerwin. We will elect them to new four-year terms on the board. Other board members serving multiple-year terms do not need to be voted in this year. They include: Frank Gicca, Joan Gicca, Jane Puffer, Carol Amick, Jan van Steenwijk, and Julie Turner.

And after all this voting is complete, we'll see what Bedford's first museum was like. All society members are encouraged to participate in this year's in-person meeting. I look forward to seeing you there, as does the rest of your leadership team.

How Should Bedford Historical Society (BHS) Use Its Resources in the Future?

Sharon McDonald & Lee Vorderer

You may recall that in the last *Preservationist* we asked you to think about how you foresaw BHS in the future. We've put together a short, six-question survey. You can complete the survey and send it to the Society at 16 South Road, Bedford, MA 01730; complete it online at https://tiny.one/sharonLee; or call the Society Office (781-275-7276) or Lee Vorderer (781-275-5230) and dictate your responses. We won't be collecting your name, and we'll be looking at the compiled data, not individual surveys. But if you'd like to know more, or would be interested in being involved, let Sharon or Lee know.

Thank you for taking the time to help BHS learn more about the kinds of programs and events that you would enjoy.

BHS SPRING SURVEY 2022

I am a BHS member_____ I am not a BHS member_____

1. The Bedford Historical Society Board is considering including some new activities in its roster of offerings over the next several years. Is this something that is of interest to you? Y/N (If your response is no, thank you for letting us know and you're finished!)
   If yes, might you be a potential participant? Y/N
   If yes, might you be an organizer of an activity? Y/N

2. Should the Bedford Historical Society focus on activities for (mark all that apply)
   Children grades 1-5 _____
   Middle schoolers _____
   High school students_____
   Adults_____
   Senior citizens _____

3. What type of event/program would you be interested in? (Mark all that apply)
   Lecture_____
   Tour_____
   Hands-on type of activity _____
   Other - Please specify_____

4. When might you participate in a Bedford Historical Society event/program? (mark all that apply)
   During the morning or afternoon_____
   During the evening_____
   On a weekday_____
   On a weekend day_____

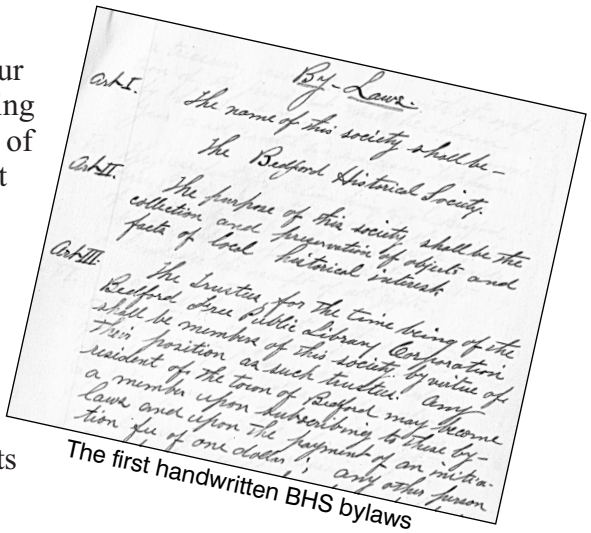
5. When/where would you prefer that events organized by the Bedford Historical Society be held? (mark all that apply)
   For youth: During school hours in cooperation with the schools_____
   After school_____
   On Saturdays_____
   For anyone: In Society space at Old Town Hall_____
   In other space in town (a local church, Job Lane, etc.)_____

6. Should The Bedford Historical Society consider offering activities in collaboration with other Town groups, like the Garden Club, the Library, Job Lane, etc. Y/N

You're done!! And thanks!!

Rewriting Our Society's Bylaws

Tom Kinzer


By-Laws.

Art I. The name of this society shall be — The Bedford Historical Society.

Art II. The purpose of this society shall be the collection and preservation of objects and facts of local historical interest.

Art III. The trustees for the time being of the Bedford Free Public Library Corporation shall be members of this society by virtue of their position as such trustees. Any resident of the town of Bedford may become a member upon subscribing to these by-laws and upon the payment of an initiation fee of one dollar [illegible] any other person

The first handwritten BHS bylaws

In late February and early March of this year, a committee of your Society's Officers and Board Members devoted many hours to the exciting (well, not really!) task of rewriting the Society's bylaws. We have them, of course, as part of being a non-profit corporation, not merely a non-profit organization, as the Society was from its founding in 1893 until its incorporation in November of 1972.

Our existing bylaws, written in 1972 and since then amended, attempted to meld a pre-existing form of governance based on an Executive Committee with a Board of Directors. In the 2lst century, we need to clarify and simplify governance, make the bylaws better match what we now actually do, tighten them up in legal terms to match our present more litigious world, and add ways to deal with modern concepts like virtual (or partially virtual) meetings.

Our bylaws are essentially a legal document, one, which in conjunction with the Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth, define us legally. In that context, innocent words like "member," "officer," "meeting," and more take on legal overtones defined in law and honed in court cases. Our bylaws need to use language carefully and accurately. The new bylaws have largely met with the approval of the Board of Directors, and detailed issues are still being worked out. They will be put to a vote by the members assembled in May's Annual Meeting on May 22. Your support and your involvement are sought!

Upcoming BHS Programs and Meetings

The Board of Directors is encouraged by the very low COVID numbers and has decided that the 2 PM April 24th program and the annual meeting on May 22 will be in-person meetings. There will be no ZOOM participation available.

Throughout the pandemic, the Society has tried to hold ZOOM and some hybrid meetings to ensure that we were offering safe ways for our members and guests to participate. At our last meeting, the Board decided that the risk of COVID transmission currently is low enough that we would hold only in- person programs in the future We will revisit this decision as necessary, but we hope that face to face will be BHS's plan for the foreseeable future.

We encourage you to come and join us at our new home on 16 South Road.

The Past becomes the Future

Thanks to people with great vision, the Bedford Historical Society was founded in 1893 and has continued its ultimate goal of collecting historic material, which can be shown to anyone interested in our history, whether mechanical objects, photographs, diaries or official documents. This picture shows Larry Kimball and Mary Hafer at our first, very small, museum, then housed in the basement of the Stearns building.

Picture from ca. 1951

All Together Now

Lee Vorderer

Remember when you were in grade school and somehow all the clocks ran throughout the school in perfect time? A Master Clock, located somewhere prominent in the building, controlled all these clocks, which were known as secondary clocks. BHS has such a clock, a Howard Clock from around the turn of the 20th century. It comes from Bedford Union School, and from the front it looks like a regular wall clock. From the back, though, its bars and wires tell a different story.

The Howard Electric Clock Company in Waltham, Massachusetts, saw a need (and a market) for coordinated clocks. Its first such clock was advertised as "Watch Clocks, for Detection of Delinquent Watchmen on Night Duty in Factories, Railroad Stations and Public Buildings." Its use is described as follows:

> *The clock should be placed in a room convenient for the exhibition of time, and cords and pulleys run from the clock to clocks in such rooms or places on the premises as you wish the watchman to visit each half hour….The clock is so constructed that fifteen or twenty minutes (according to the number of rooms that have to be visited) is allowed the watchman to go over the building. The watchman cannot fail in his duty without detection. E. Howard Electric Clocks from Clockhistory.com*

The coordination of time in the building is handled through dedicated wiring from the building's Master Clock. At each station throughout the building where a secondary clock was located, the watchman had to turn a key in the local clock ,which would cause an electric current to pass and "do its work upon the magnet at the clock and cause a penciled record of the time of each visit at each station." The penciled records provided written evidence of the work of the watchmen.

The coming of electricity brought electrification to these clock systems: by the 1900s, they were installed in government buildings on the East Coast and south to New Orleans. Their coordinated time keeping allowed for classes to run contemporaneously, and companies and businesses to open and close on time throughout the building. Although Standard Electric Time Company's electric clocks proved superior to Howard's, Howard Clocks achieved a greater longevity because of the high quality of its machined parts.

PLEASE NOTE:
Our new address is:
16 South Road,
Bedford, MA 01730

www.bedfordmahistory.org

Office Administrator: Sandra (Sandy) Duffy
781-275-7276
info@bedfordmahistory.org

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Editor: E. Ashley Rooney
Contributing writers: Don Corey, Sandy Duffy, Kara Kerwin, Brian Oulighan, Sharon McDonald

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Bedford, MA 01730

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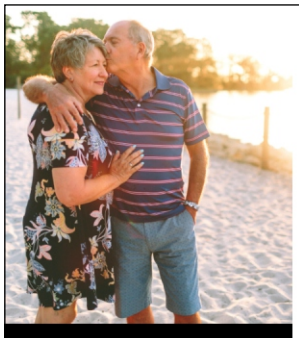
Honoring our Heroes

See article on page 3

These pictures were taken at a previous ceremony. This service has not been held since 2019 because of COVID-19.

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.



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90 Great Road
Bedford, MA 01730
(781) 275-2156
suzanneandcompanyre.com
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