

Old Stone News

*The Newsletter of
The West Boylston
Historical Society
Fall 2013
Volume 15, Number 2*

MEMBERSHIP

The dues for the calendar year 2014 are payable by January 1, 2014, but will be accepted any time prior to that date. An envelope is included for your convenience. We appreciate your continued support of the society and its programs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

www.wbhistory.org
Bigelow@wbhistory.org

We would very much like to have everyone's email address so as to notify you of changes when we need to reach you quickly and efficiently. It also saves us time and money. Please share. We promise not to pass them out.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Building and Grounds have kept the house looking great all summer. The Well House has been completely rehabbed under the guidance of Dwight Goodale and looks great. Thank you all.



**Town Hall, West Boylston
1903-1917**

MISSION STATEMENT

"The West Boylston Historical Society collects, preserves and honors the history of the Town through programs, exhibitions, publications and maintenance of the historic Bigelow Tavern as its headquarters and museum."

From the President

With the return of fall weather, life picks up at the Bigelow Tavern. After a relatively quiet summer at the society, it is time to begin our new year. October will be a very busy one. Our first program is just weeks away. We will again be taking part in the West Boylston Fall Fest. You will find more information on that event elsewhere in the newsletter. Our November program will take place the last Sunday in October on the 27th. This has to do with the fact that All Saint's Day is the first Sunday in November, typically our meeting day. This made it difficult for some members to attend.

At our September Board of Directors Meeting, the board elected two new members, Sandy Carlson and David Lindberg. Sandy has joined us as a regular on Thursday mornings and is assisting in entering information into our computer. David is a Civil War buff and will be doing a program for us in April. We welcome them both and thank them for their commitment to the society.

On a sad note, the society has lost a dedicated member of the board, Debra Parks. Debbie was a real asset to the society and very creative in making sure that the newsletter came together. She also helped me with the past calendars. We will miss her. I am very grateful that Sandy Carlson has volunteered to help with this job. Thank you Sandy. Don DeMarsh will be assisting in creating the calendars. Thank you Don. Hopefully, they will be ready for October 5th. I would be remiss if I did not thank the entire board for all their hard work in making sure that the society runs smoothly.

We hope to see many of you at our coming meetings. Neil Norum has put together some very interesting programs for the year. Remember too, that we are here Thursdays from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM. Stop by to say hello, do some research, or consider joining us as a volunteer. You are always most welcome.

Beverly K. Goodale

FALL FEST

OCTOBER 5, 2013 10 AM-4 PM

We will again be participating in the West Boylston Fall Fest. This year we will feature Antique and Classic Cars from 10 AM - 2 PM. Our Carriage and Buggy will be on display and, for a small donation, you will be able to put on some available props and take a family photo. These would make great Christmas cards. We will have a sales table of society wares including our new Hats and 2014 Calendar. The society will also sell Coffee, Cider, and Chocolate and Pumpkin Whoopie Pies. We are putting together a Money Tree for a raffle.

- Volunteers are needed. We are looking for Workers for Saturday, October 5th from 10 - 3.
- Bakers - We will provide recipes for the Whoopie Pies. If you don't bake, please consider donating a Gallon of Cider or Seed Money for the Raffle Tree, any amount will be appreciated.

The success of this day depends on you, our members. We would appreciate any amount of help that you can give us. Please call (508)735-8889, (508)835-3704, or (508)835-6628 for more information.

HISTORY BY THE INCH

CURATORS CORNER

WHAT'S IN YOUR ATTIC?

Spring and fall are typically clean up times. Do you have West Boylston memorabilia or related items pertaining to the town or it's families that no one really wants and you do not know what to do with them. Consider donating them to the society. Your gifts are always appreciated.

We have received the following items recently:

- Sesquicentennial Booklet and late 50's Map from Nancy Robinson
- West Boylston Cream Bottle from Dennis Parker
- Lantern, Bread Maker, Yarn Winder, Collapsible Drinking Cup, Wooden Tray and Clothing from Lue and Brad Hawley
- Photo of the Old Stone Church from Margaret Pisinski

Thank you all for your generosity.

Be sure to check the Historical Society website for up to date information at:

www.wbhistory.org.



The Clarendon Mills of West Boylston closed their doors for good on February 17th 1899, leaving 160 employees obliged to find work and homes somewhere else. The town lost most of the families whose members had worked in the mills. Some 40 to 50 families would soon leave town after the closing of the Clarendon Mills.

Since the first of January 1899 the mill had been gradually shutting down. The weaving shop closed on the first Saturday in February, followed by the bleachery, the last room in the mill to close. James Kershaw, overseer in the bleachery, was busy until late hours in the evening getting things in shape to close the mill permanently.

The veteran employee of the mills was Miss Parney Underwood, who worked in the Beaman and Clarendon mills for 63 years. Others had worked there 50, 40, 30 years and so on down the scale.

On the Clarendon Mill property Ezra Beaman built a grist and saw mill in 1796. In 1811, John Slater of Providence RI tried to buy the saw mill from Ezra Beaman. Ezra would not sell his mill, but sold John Slater and others some land below the grist mill. On this land the first cotton mill in West Boylston was built. There were two other mills built, one known as the red mill (150x30 feet), and the other the white mill (89x28 feet).

Up until 1819 yarn was produced by machinery and weaving was done by hand on looms worked by women in their homes. In 1819, thirteen weaving looms were installed in the mill.

On May 12, 1831 the mills were sold to Oliver Eldridge & Co., and renamed the Beaman Manufacturing Co. The goods manufactured by these mills were plain cloths. Between the years 1847 to 1853 many changes occurred and the building was enlarged to three stories and extended over 300 feet in length and 84 feet in width. The Beaman Manufacturing Co. sold its property at auction in 1875 to Samuel B. Rindge of Cambridge and on June 1, 1876 the Clarendon Mills Corporation was formed. Samuel Rindge was the first president of the mill, succeeded by Ezra Farnsworth and later by W.H. Sherman, who was president at the time of the 1899 closing. Benjamin Phipps of Boston was the first and only treasurer of the mill.

The mills contained 12,000 spindles, 58 broad looms and 72 narrow looms. Jeans and sail duck sheeting were made on the narrow looms. On the broad looms cotton quilts were made and known everywhere as Manchester quilts. Also crochet quilts known as Oriental, Clarendon and Berlin were made. All the goods manufactured by the Clarendon Mills were sold in the store of Parker Wilder & Co. of Boston.

The Clarendon Mills moved to West Peterborough, New Hampshire where a new mill was built and the machinery was then moved from West Boylston to West Peterborough. The new mill became known as the Union Manufacturing Co. Many of the Clarendon Mill employees moved with the company to West Peterborough and began a new life in New Hampshire.

Steven Carlson, Historian

IN MEMORIUM

Our sincere sympathy to the families and friends of the following members.

Erva G. Berg; Virginia M. Hager; Robert Keith; Frank A. Meanor; Deborah E. Parks; Priscilla Wilson

Coming Events

Johnny Appleseed & Frances Drake Featured on October 2

Many know something about Johnny Appleseed and the program on Oct. 2nd will complete the picture, and at the same time, you will learn about another local historic figure. Mark Bodaza, Leominster attorney, author, and historian will highlight Johnny's life. He will also talk about Leominster figure, Frances Drake, who participated in major ways during the anti-slavery movement.

Mark will be available afterwards to sign copies of his published books on football and basketball. He is the author of "A Game That Forged Rivals, 1933: Football at the Depths of the Great Depression" and "Make It Count: The life and Times of Basketball Great Jo-Jo White".

Trip to Lowell & The American Textile History Museum Set for Sunday, October 27

Come join us for a trip on **Sunday, Oct. 27th**, as we travel via bus to Lowell and a visit to the **American Textile History Museum**. We will depart the Bigelow Tavern at **3:00 p.m. sharp** and briefly see historic areas in Lowell before arriving at the museum. A docent will guide us through the museum and afterwards give us time to view exhibits on our own.

This is not your regular museum. You will experience your world in a whole new way as you spin, weave, recycle, and design your way through the innovation, creativity and passion of textiles.

There are two special exhibits while we are there. "Catch the Eye: Advertising and the Art of Business" showcases a century of textile advertising art and design. "Color Revolution: Style Meets Science in the 1960s" celebrates the artistic, cultural and technological explosion of color and design following WWII.

Following the museum visit we will dine at the **Olympia Restaurant** where we will enjoy a Greek buffet.

Please fill out the registration form below with a check for **\$45.00 per person, (\$50.00 for non members)**, made out to the West Boylston Historical Society and mail to the following address:

West Boylston Historical Society
PO Box 201, West Boylston, MA 01583

Checks must be received by October 17, 2013

Bus seating is limited to 55 people so please reserve your place as soon as possible.

Number of people _____ Amount Included _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email Address: _____