

Old Stone News

*The Newsletter of
The West Boylston
Historical Society
Fall 2018
Volume 21, Number 2*

MEMBERSHIP

The dues for the calendar year 2019 are now due. If you have received a due's envelope with this newsletter, it means that we have not received your dues. The Society needs and would very much appreciate your continued support.

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. We promise not to share them.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS



A used push mower was purchased in June due to the dangerous condition of the old one. The current ride-on mower, which is about 30 years old, works great for now but will eventually need replacing. Steve Quist loaned a piece of equipment to the Society to remove the gravel that was pushed up on the grass by the plow.

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 Presidents

The new year has gotten off to a great start and Dennis and I are looking forward to working with a new slate of officers and two new younger members, Andy Sontag and Heidi Roemmele, who represent a younger generation. It is really important that we reach out to multi-generations in order to keep the Society growing into the future. An important focus will always be how to grow our membership and offer a variety of events that are enjoyed across the generations. As always, our programs are open to the public, whether a member or not. If our regular Thursday mornings does not fit into your busy schedule, we will be open 3 Sundays in September from 2-4 p.m. to allow more people to enjoy this wonderful historic building and artifacts. We are open to the public, so please spread the word and bring a friend or neighbor. The Board is working very hard to make this coming year a success. Please check out the great programs we have planned.

In June, we had a successful yard sale thanks to many people who donated items. This is a major fund raiser for the Society. June also hosted the Major Edwards' third grade classes. The children enjoyed a tour of the Bigelow Tavern and barn, Holbrook Chapel and the commemorative bell. This is a great way to get our young children interested in West Boylston history. It is a hope that this will become a yearly event. Thanks to everyone who helped that day. We have to give out a special thank you to Don DeMarsh for his financial expertise as Treasurer for several years. He and Donna are wished success in their new life in New York.

A special thanks to Norman Goodale and Doc Barakian for their years of maintaining our properties as a new crew takes over. Keith Fancy and Whitney Barnard have joined the grass cutting crew.

Dennis & Carol Parker

Historical Happenings

Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2018 - 7:00 p.m. at the Bigelow Tavern

"Woman's Suffrage" - Barbara Berenson

Hear the story of Lucy Stone & other Mass abolitionists who opposed women's exclusion from political life.

Wednesday, Nov. 7, 2018 - 7:00 p.m. at the Bigelow Tavern

"Central Mass Railroad" - Ed Sterling - takes us from the beginning of the Central Mass Railroad until its last ride across the trestle over the Clinton Dam with stories and old photos.

Sunday, Dec. 2, 2018 - 3:00 pm - 5:00 p.m. Holiday Open House at the Bigelow Tavern - *The Ride of Their Lives "Across the Great Divide" - Robert Van Buren Story of Augusta & Adeline Van Buren, two sisters who rode cross country on motorcycles in 1916.*

Lighting of Christmas Tree on the Common immediately following open house

CURATORS CORNER

In June, the West Boylston Historical Society again hosted the 3rd graders from Major Edwards Elementary School. The students walked from the school with their teachers and chaperones, learning about the town history. On the way, they visited the 2008 Bicentennial Bell, the Mount Vernon Cemetery Chapel, the Cemetery with an emphasis on the Beaman Section, the Bigelow Tavern, and the Jacob Winn Barn. After a picnic lunch on the society grounds, they visited the Masonic Temple to learn the history of the Old Stone Church and its beautiful stained glass windows, and finally the Beaman Memorial Public Library before they walked back to school. It is a busy and fun day and the weather could not have been nicer. In the newsletter you will find a sampling of some of the thank you notes that we received.

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

www.wbhistory.org.



HISTORY BY THE INCH

The Common Churches

From an article in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette written by Mary Cook:



West Boylston, November 22, 1900 - At a business meeting of the Baptist society last evening, it was voted to purchase the W.R. Walker lot on the common, on which to build a new church. The lot is situated between the Waldo B. Howe property and the house owned by Stephen H. Spooner. It has a frontage of 250 feet, facing on the old common, within a few rods of the First Liberal Congregational church building. The

lot is 350 feet deep, and contains a little over two acres. The price is \$1000.00. Today the property was surveyed, preparatory to making out the deed of sale.

The society will probably build in the spring, as the spot where its present church is located will be then disturbed by the new state highway from West Boylston to Oakdale. The present road by the church will in some places be impassable. The Baptist society of West Boylston sold its property to the metropolitan water board in June 1897, for \$22,500.00. By the conditions of the sale the society has the privilege of retaining the pipe organ valued at \$1000.00, the gift of the late Joel Walker and his children. The cabinet organ, pews, carpets, settees and all other church furnishings and fixtures and the five memorial windows are also to be retained by the society.

West Boylston, December 4, 1900 - There was an adjourned parish meeting in Thomas Hall last night, but no quorum was present no business was transacted. There was a discussion regarding the future of the church.

As so many members of the Congregational and Baptist churches have moved out of West Boylston, it is the general opinion that a union should be formed between the two churches and one church built on the common.

The Congregational society has in the bank \$18,000.00, which was paid by the metropolitan water board for its property on East Main Street. It owns a site for a new church, containing between seven and eight acres of land, on the common.

This piece of property was given to it by the First Liberal Congregational society of West Boylston a year ago. It will also have all the wreckage of the present church building, including house and sheds.

The Baptist society has at its disposal \$27,500.00, it received for its church property, \$22,500.00 from the board. The society has \$5000.00 left by Mrs. Emily Harris and Joel Walker. It will have the wreckage of its building and the parsonage and horse sheds.

Within the past week this society has purchased a lot of land on the common, adjoining the property of the Congregational society, for which it paid \$1000.00. Both societies have voted to build, and their intention is to begin work in the spring of 1901. The attendance at both churches is small and grows less each month.

A union church could be formed and the society would have at its disposal \$45,000.00. A church could be built and a parsonage, with a bank account to pay for a pastor, choir and necessary running expenses, and the church would have a congregation.

L.H. Lesure, senior deacon of the Baptist church, has said that he hoped a union church could be built, and senior deacon E. Beaman Rice of the Congregational church is favorable to the plan.

No action has been taken. A union meeting has been suggested, at which Baptists and Congregationals can give public expression to their views.

It is certainly interesting to note as what was happening to West Boylston in this time period and how the construction of the Wachusett Reservoir brought about a change in every aspect of daily town life for everyone. We all know that a union church was never formed on the town common, but two independent churches built, one church has survived and became a mainstay popular thriving church and the other lasted about 70 years until it could no longer function with a declining attendance. That church building was purchased by the Boylston Masonic Lodge who maintains the building today in all its glory of the past Baptist Church.

CURATOR'S CORNER Con't from Page 2

We hope that they have gained an appreciation of their town. After all, as it has been said many times in one way or another, "You can't know where you are going, if you don't know where you have been".

In other news, Janet Buck is our new Registrar, replacing Barbara. She is currently working on perfecting our cataloguing system.

We also received a nice gift from the Whiting family, a set of original blueprints to the Alfred Whiting House. Thank you, Holt Whiting. We are extremely grateful for your gift. They will be on display at our open house three Sundays in September.

Bev Goodale, Curator

LOOKING BACK

Excerpts taken from the Mary Cook scrapbook collection

THE SHERIFF AND HIS RUN AWAY COW

Deputy Sheriff Frank Baldwin had made it known to one and all that he had gone out of the cattle business as of October 29, 1899 by nailing a sign on his barn door that read "No cows allowed on this place".

The story goes that some time ago he attended an auction sale of farm equipment and cows. Before he knew it, Mr. Baldwin was the new owner of a cow for the sum of \$47. He, still stupefied that he actually bought the animal, started to lead the cow home but the animal was not so willing to follow. The sheriff hired two men on the spot, one to push and the other to pull the cow.

Once the cow was home, they put her in a half acre lot behind Mr. Baldwin's barn. There was nothing on the lot except a haystack, a woodpile and plenty of green grass for grazing.

The next morning he went on errands and when he returned home, he noticed the haystack was gone and there was his new purchase contently chewing her cud completely unaware that his men had had stowed the hay in the barn that morning. He mumbled all afternoon about the eating capacity of that animal and headed back into town. Upon his return he saw a big hole in the woodpile and again mistakenly blamed the cow.

The next day the cow jumped over the fence and was found later grazing near the river at Intervale. The next day she ran away again and climbed the banks to

Thomas Harlow's farm then she sailed over four barbed wire fences and finally settled to grazing in Beaman cemetery. Mr. Baldwin brought her home once again but she stayed put for only two days and disappeared again but Mr. Baldwin had it and decided to look for her in the morning.

The next morning J.E. Pierce told him that he saw the cow heading toward Worcester but that was in vain. Upon his trip home Louis Cutting said the cow was on the bridge heading toward Oakdale but he really didn't care where the cow was. He then met two boys who had not seen the cow but volunteered to search for her for 25 cents so they could buy a pack of cigarettes. The boys told the owner that they had found the cow and her calf. The next morning the trio retrieved the cow and her calf; Mr. Baldwin was so pleased that he gave each of them 25 cents.

He was convinced that the runaway cow would never leave her calf but seven minutes later all he could see was her back side going over the fence almost at the same time that he was approached by a fellow townsman to buy the calf as well as her mother.

The deal was struck for \$50 which realized a \$3 profit and didn't have to deal with the wandering beast any longer but the greatest reward was when he heard

“Bossy” had chewed up four yards of garden hose and his new shirt.

Barbara Deschenes



The following pages are a sampling of thank you notes received after our third grade walk.
We wish we could have included them all.