

De Olde Tavern News

*The Newsletter of
The West Boylston
Historical Society
Fall 2022
Volume 25, Number 2*

MEMBERSHIP

The dues for the calendar year 2023 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



Dennise Parker reported that Whit Barnard plans to square off and mark the driveway to prevent the snowplow from pushing up the gravel. Also, very little mowing due to the drought this past summer.

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 Board of Directors

Ready to do something fun? – West Boylston Historical Society is seeking active volunteers and new board members!

Board members meet monthly and work together to keep the place going. We work together on programs, keeping the building afloat (maintenance and finance wise), fundraising, managing the website, social media, newsletters, open houses, annual meeting and more. ***Are you interested in joining us? We'd love to have you!***

We are also seeking active volunteers who may have time and interest in helping the board! ***How? There are so many ways you can help and assist with your talents. Here are a few:***

- Program ideas and coordination.
- Fundraising ideas and coordination.
- Upkeep of our website.
- Social media upkeep and postings.
- Open Houses
- Semiannual cleaning of the house.
- Grounds and building maintenance.
- Annual yard sale.
- Writing historical articles for our bi-annual newsletter.
- Baking for our program events.

And more!

If you are interested in joining our board or becoming one of our active volunteers, ***please email us at bigelow@wbhistory.org. We look forward to chatting with you about the opportunities!***

Historical Happenings

Sunday October 9, 2022 - 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the Bigelow Tavern West Boylston - Kids at Play Photo Exhibit

Wednesday, November 2, 2022 - 7:00 p.m. at the Bigelow Tavern West Boylston - History of Christmas Carols
- Sari Bitticks from the Auburn Historical Society

Sunday December 4, 2022 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Holiday Open House at the Bigelow Tavern
- Cranes presenting their Christmas Music

CURATORS CORNER

The Lafayette Tour

Some of you may have noticed a new plaque on the lawn of the Bigelow Tavern. It is part of a plan to document, map, and mark General Marquis de Lafayette's Farewell Tour to the United States in 1824 and 1825. Lafayette visited West Boylston on his way from Sterling to Worcester on September 3, 1824. It is hoped that 175 of these markers will denote his footsteps through 24 states from Maine to Louisiana and help celebrate the 200th Anniversary of his return trip from France.

In January of 2022, the society, as well as the Town Administrator, was contacted by Julien P. Icher, president of the Lafayette Trail, a non profit organization with a mission to mark this trail in time to commemorate the visit. He is associated with the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. There is no cost to the society or the town. The DPW installed the sign.

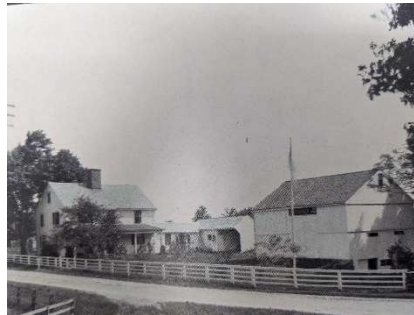


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HISTORY BY THE INCH

About a year ago, board member Janet Buck had put aside an article printed in the Worcester Telegram about the barn fire of the G. Bertram Shepard property on Worcester Street, now the headquarters of the West Boylston Historical Society. Janet had wanted to put the article in our newsletter because it was noteworthy news that happened a hundred years ago, but it also involves the property of our current society home. I have also found an additional article relating to the fire of April 29, 1922.

Fire Breaks Out at West Boylston's Fire Station, the Shepard Barn



West Boylston, April 29- Although a girl hung on the bell rope in the Congregational church, pulling for dear life, and a minister took off his collar long enough to squirt a hand fire extinguisher or two, and women formed a bucket brigade, the only fire station this town owned was destroyed this morning. The hook and ladder truck was pulled to safety.

The station is G. Bertram Shepard's barn, but the apparatus was kept there. Railroad sparks caught grass behind the barn. A wisp of grass was swept to the barn roof. Dry shingles ignited and dropped through the roof to the hay. Then the flames burst.

Rev. G. Edwin Woodman, pastor of the Congregational church was on the scene with two extinguishers belonging to Mr. Shepard. In his wake were selectmen Woods and fire Engineer Harry E. Lowe, with more extinguishers. They, with volunteers, got the fire truck out of the barn.



Rev. Woodman's daughter, Priscilla, 17 or 18 years old spoke for herself. She mounted the stairs of the church belfry four at a time, the bell there is the fire alarm. She leaned on the rope until the rafters creaked with the swing of the bell and summoned firemen after the blaze broke in the fire station.

Priscilla refuses to believe her deed was great and is silent about her part in the fire. However, she admits she was aroused by the shouting of Boy Scout Lawrence Shepard when he ran to Miss Woodman's home and told her father that shingles were burning on the fire station.

Instead of leaving the work of arousing the town to the men, Miss Woodman dashed to the church and mounted hurriedly the dark stairs to the belfry to swing the bell rope to sound the fire alarm.

The flames licked away at the barn and blistered the side of the Shepard house, very close. Volunteers called by the alarm flocked to the fire. Some carried shovels, some pitchforks, and some extinguishers.

About 20 members of the Boy Scout Troop 1 scattered through the neighborhood and returned with extinguishers, some as big as themselves.

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Fire Breaks Out at West Boylston's Fire Station, the Shepard Barn -Cont. from Page 2

The big-wheeled chemical of Albert H. Carroll was brought to the fire and was spread over the house and shed, saving them.

A bucket line was formed from the Shepard well to the fire. Four women handed buckets to the men at the end. They were Mrs. Shepard, Miss Florence Moody, Mrs. Myron Trotter, and Mrs. W.L. Hubbard.

The barn eventually burned completely down and was a loss of about \$500.00, but the house was saved.

April 30.- The barn of the G. Bertram Shepard place on Worcester Street which burned down yesterday morning was one of the landmarks of the town, over 150 years old. In the barn among other relics was a sign with the name "Emerson Spofford 1830." In revolutionary times Emerson Spofford kept an inn in the present Shepard house while his son, Oliver, lived in the present Harry V. Clayton house just opposite. Here on cold winter nights the travelers stopped to get their toddy and the inn did a flourishing business. The barn also contained many household articles belonging to the Shepard family.

M. Cleveland Potter, Walter V. Phelps and Henry Wentzell of Worcester were the first to arrive at the fire.

Rushing into the barn they took out everything that could be moved. The women of the town not only joined the bucket brigade but others took blankets and carrying them down to the brook, soaked them and brought them back to cover the roof of the piazza and sleeping porch. Among the many workers were Rev. G. Edwin Woodman, Rev. F.A. Robinson, Harry E. Lowe, W.B. Wood, Walter E. Boynton, Elbert H. Boynton, Herbert Holmes, R. Oswald Witcomb, George Merrill, Donald P. Reed, Arthur Scarlett, Charles E. Burbank, George Cheever and George Cheever Jr., Dwight M. Goodale and many others.

The Shepard family would have no home today were it not for the volunteers. The cows, which were in the special care of young Lawrence Shepard, have been taken to the Andrew J. Scarlett farm. All the neighbors and friends were ready to help in every way.

It was very fortunate indeed that the house was saved and today all enjoy the Shepard home as a museum of West Boylston's past, present and for future as the home of the West Boylston Historical Society.

Steven Carlson, Historian

LOOKING BACK

Excerpts taken from the Mary Cook scrapbook collection

TELEPHONE LINES INSTALLED

In September 1904 New England Telephone and Telegraph was busy installing poles and stringing wires for the West Boylston Exchange. The central station was located in the home of Edward Lovell on Prospect St.

Twenty-one persons had subscribed to the telephone service which cost \$18 per year plus any toll charges for calls made outside of a six mile radius. The public pay stations at Sawyer and Ward's and the one at E. A. Cowee's were eliminated and consolidated into one pay station at Mr. Lovell's house. Telephone service was

available from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. every day except Sundays. The residents who subscribed were Harry Lowe of Shrewsbury St.; Charles Potter and Andrew Scarlett of Worcester St.; Chester Brigham of Smith's Lane; Frank Baldwin,, Walter Sawyer and Sawyer & Ward all on Central St.; Charles Merrifield, Dr. Ernest Warren, George Reed, Albert Hinds and William Burns all of Prospect St.; John Lowe and David Adams on Crescent St.; Aaron Goodale, W. H. Lea and George DeLoria of Goodale St;; Henry Boynton on Malden St.; Thomas Lynch, Parker Banning and William Orcott on North Main St.; Albert Bond on High St; William Storms, Emory Bacon and Tony Francke all residents of May St.

Barbara Deschenes

The Lafayette

The Marquis de Lafayette is considered a "hero of two worlds". He was a wealthy French aristocrat and a military officer who believed in the American Revolution and came to find glory.

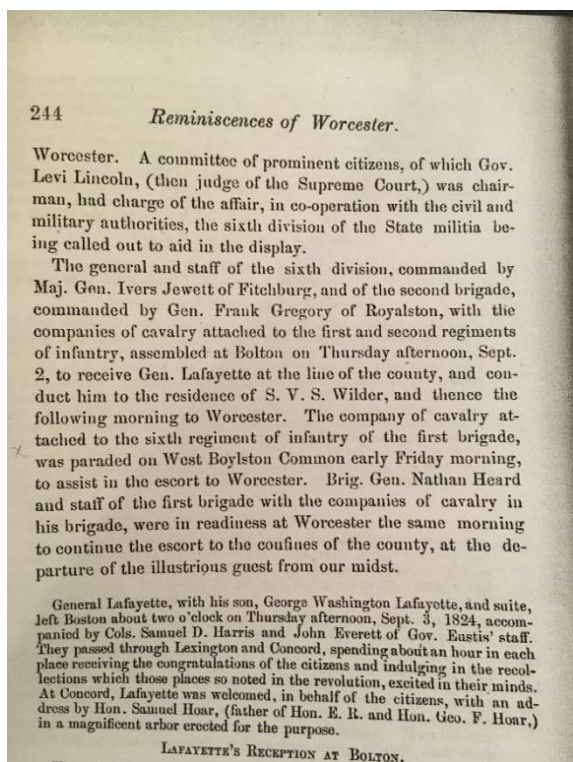
He fought in the American Revolution and led several battles including Yorktown. He was wounded at Brandywine. He shared a great relationship with and was a confidante of George Washington and when he learned of the need of more funds for the war effort, went back to France to persuade the French to support the war effort, which they did. Lafayette returned to America and held key positions in the Continental Army. He endured the winter of 1777-1778 at Washington's encampment in Valley Forge and was involved in several more military operations. After the war he returned to France and fought in the French Revolution.

In 1824, the President James Monroe and the Congress invited Lafayette to visit the United States as part of the nation's upcoming 50th anniversary. He, along with his son, George Washington, arrived in New York on August 15th and was greeted by a group of fellow Revolutionary War veterans. The party lasted for four days. For the next year he went from town to town and city to city and met enthusiastic crowds wherever he went. In June of 1825 he laid a cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument. He took some soil from Bunker Hill to be sprinkled on his grave. He died on May 20, 1834 in Paris and was buried under the soil from Bunker Hill per his wishes. In the United States he was given the same memorial honors bestowed on Washington.

There is so much more to learn of Lafayette's incredible life. The Beaman Library has a number of books available in both the adult and youth sections. Mike Duncan has a new book out as well, "Hero of Two Worlds". Wikipedia on your computer has a very good synopsis of his life. You can also "Follow" the Frenchman on U tube with Julien P. Icher.

As it gets closer to the 2024-2025 Anniversary, we will hopefully have a program relating to the Marquis de Lafayette. Stay tuned.

Bev Goodale, Curator



**Excerpt taken from:
"Reminiscences of Worcester" by Caleb A. Wall**



The Farmer's Almanac Corner 1794

Fun Facts: Robert Bailey Thomas, founder, and editor of the Farmer's Almanac, was a West Boylston resident for

most of his life. The Beaman Memorial Library owns the complete collection of The Farmer's/Old Farmer's Almanac from the first publishing in 1792 (for the 1793 edition) to the present. The library holds the honor of owning one of three complete collections; the others are located at the Almanac headquarters and the Library of Congress.

The word "old" was added to the name of the almanac in the 1830's to distinguish Thomas' almanac from other competing publications. It is the oldest continuously published periodical in the United States.

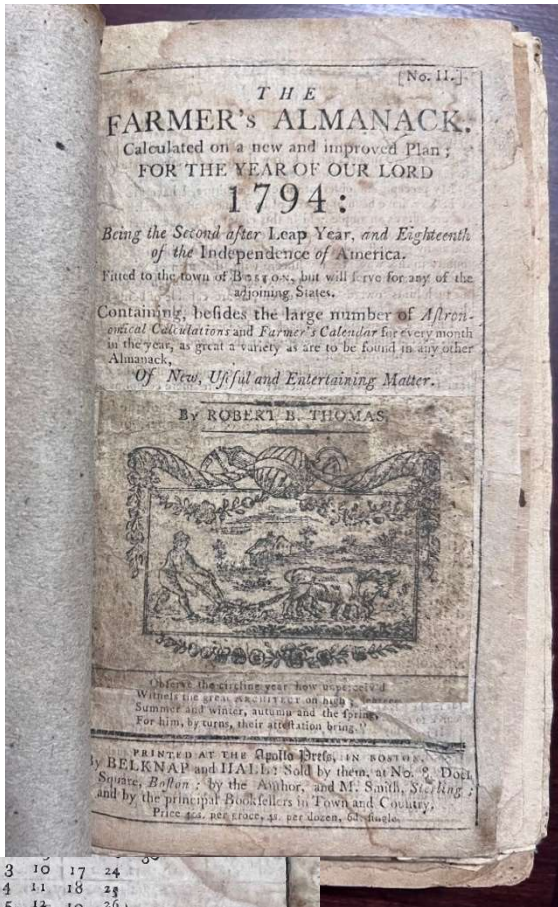
Let's peek at a few things The Farmer's Almanac offered in 1794!

Eclipses: There will be six eclipses this year, four of the sun and two of the moon.

To prevent sheep from all kinds of vermin: Apply an ointment made of equal quantity of brimstone, gunpowder, and common grease, behind the necks of lambs. It never fails. Sixpence worth is sufficient for two hundred lambs.

September, ninth month. 1794

See falling fruit bestrew the ground; see smiling plenty all around; the air is calm without alloy, and every sense, and heart is joy.



3	10	17	24
4	11	18	25
5	12	19	26
6	13	20	27
7	14	21	28

Aspects.	FARMER'S CALENDER.
Northamp.	Now the farmer beholds the fruit of his labour drawing near to perfection.
S. OS.	See to your corn stalks; cut them, and after they are wilted, bind and carry them into your cow linters, horse stables and sheds, as many as you can conveniently, and pike the remainder on the margin of the field.
Prov.	Put your cider mills in order and make cider.
for	It does very well to sow wheat and rye.
rain.	Gather apples as they fall.
□ 5 8	Thrash off your flax seed.
Good	Gather in white beans.
ther.	Get in your stalks before rains spoil them.
Valdob.	Hemp and flax should be now put a rotting.
Lenox.	Destroy drones and wasps, lest they rob your bees.
erigee.	Gather winter apples.
	Shut up your swine to fatten; give them plenty of antimony.
	Turn pigs out to gather acorns.
	Pick apples as they fall; lay them not on the ground, but on a floor, and as little exposed to the air as possible.
	Pull your seed hemp, and set it in order; cover it, that birds do not destroy it.
	See that your cider is made before cold weather comes on.
	Look to your flax often.

Farmer's Calendar

Now the farmer beholds the fruit of his labor drawing near to perfection. See to your corn stalks; cut them, and after they are wilted, bind and carry them into your cow linters, horse stables and sheds, as many as you can conveniently, and pike the remainder on the margin of the field.

Put your cider mills in order and make cider. It does very well to sow wheat and rye.

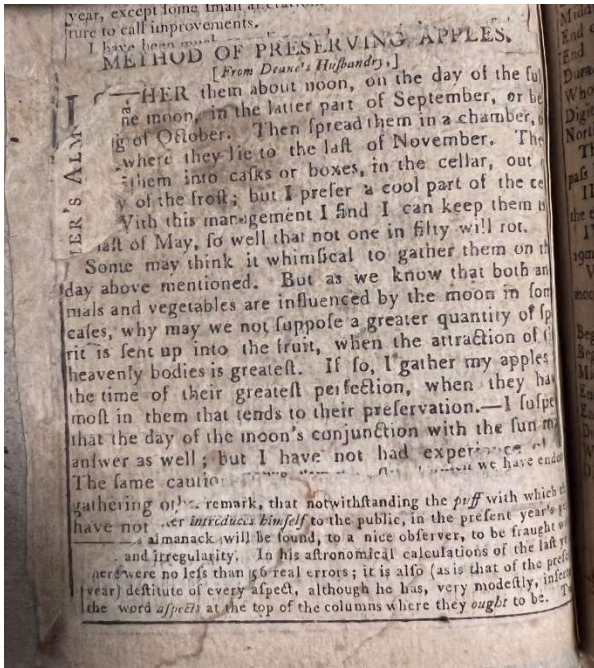
Gather apples as they fall. Thrash off your flax seed. Gather in white beans. Get in your stalks before rains spoil them. Hemp and flax should be now put a rotting.

Destroy drones and wasps, lest they rob your bees. Gather winter apples. Shut up your swine to fatten; give them plenty of antimony. Turn pigs out to gather acorns.

Pick apples as they fall; lay them not on the ground, but on a floor, and as little exposed to the air as possible. Pull your seed hemp and set it in order; cover it that birds do not destroy it.

See that your cider is made before cold weather comes on. Look to your flax often.

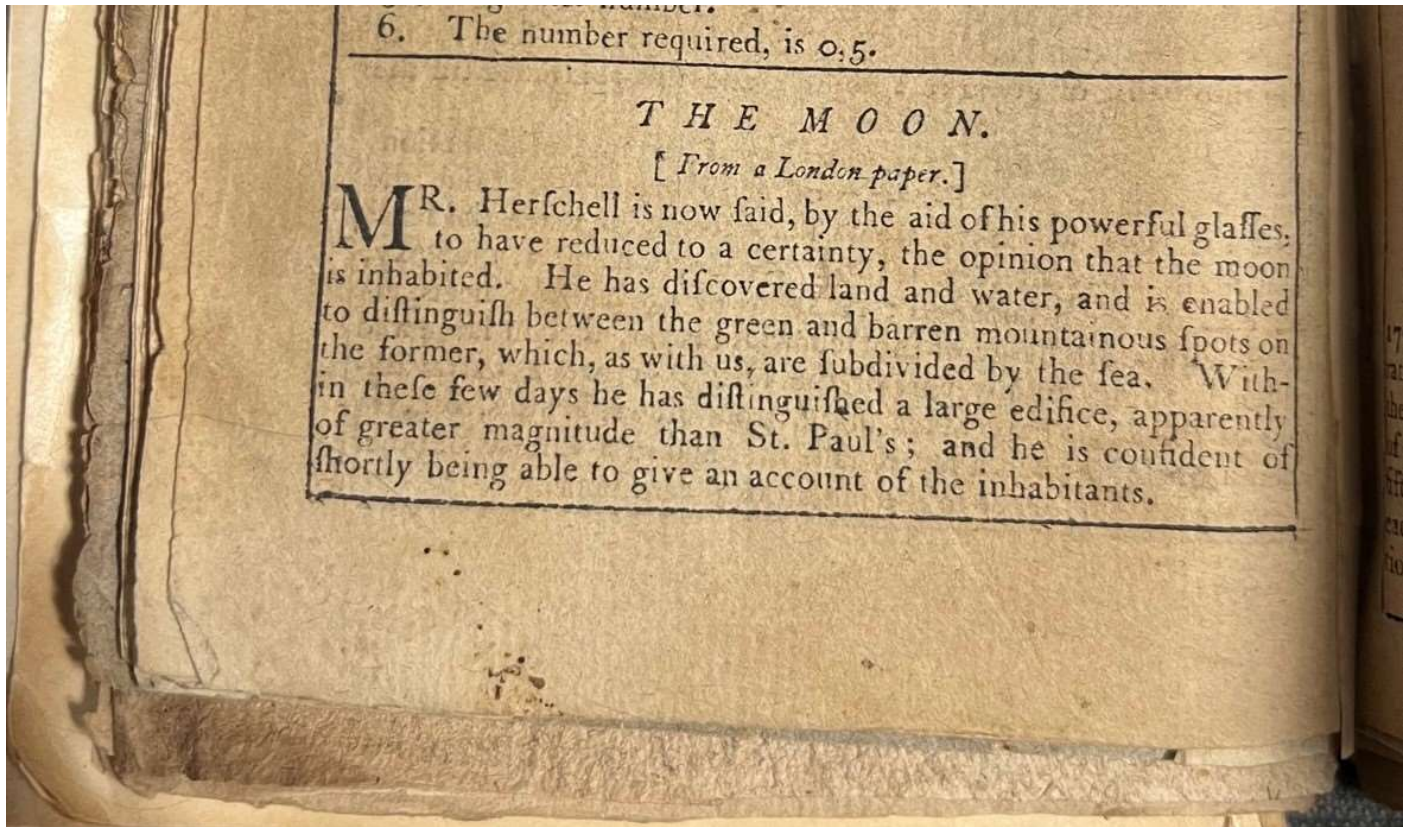
Method of Preserving Apples



While some of this page is unreadable, what I found delightful is the tip of gathering apples on the day of the full moon.

“Some may think it whimsical to gather them on the day above mentioned. But as we know that both animals and vegetables are influenced by the moon in some cases, why may we not suppose a greater quantity of spirit is sent up into the fruit, when the attraction of the heavenly bodies is greatest. If so, I gather my apples at the time of their greatest perfection, when they have most in them that tends to their preservation”

And speaking of the moon, here's a little bit about the moon "From a London paper." The moon is inhabited!



Stay tuned for a glimpse of 1795 in the next newsletter! Submitted by Kim Fisher



Oakdale

written by Joe O'Connor

Once a upon a time a small village called Oakdale
The mighty Nashua River runs through town
The Protestant and Catholic churches stand on high ground
But Boston needs water
This small village will have to go
Boston needs water
Dam Oakdale-little town nothing special
Or is it
Damn Oakdale-sore spot in urban planning
Whatever
Remember Boston needs water
Back in Oakdale
What is urban planning?
We are just a small village
We will be okay here
Meanwhile
Boston needs water
Where to build the dam
Big mills in Clinton
More power faster water and don't forget
Boston needs water
Build the dam and take some land
25% of land from Sterling
33% from Boylston and West Boylston and Oakdale?
Just take it-All of it!
Remember Boston needs water
That was more than 100 years ago
Oakdale is gone save the Old Stone Church
The streets and houses are gone
The fields where farming
A whole town gone but remember
Boston needs water