



THE STONE HOUSE MUSEUM MOURNS THE PASSING OF DORIS DICKINSON—PHOTO COURTESY OF BELCHERTOWN SENTINEL AND AIMEE HENDERSON.

Belchertown Historical Association
Belchertown, Massachusetts
1903—2015

April 2015
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MEMBER NEWSLETTER

DEDICATED TO THE MANY INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPORT THE ASSOCIATION'S MISSION

A Moment of Silence

2015 Calendar

Save the dates and share them with family, friends, neighbors!

Join us on April 26th at the Masonic Lodge Banquet Hall

2:00—3:30 Annual Meeting

Members only: Pot-Luck Dinner (bring a dish to share) followed by the annual BHA meeting.

3:30—4:30 Lecture Series

Open to the Public: Peter Dearness talking about the history of the Belchertown Sentinel and it's place in our town's life

Opening Day May 9 9-2 FREE

Join us on the Museum Grounds just in time for Mother's Day!

Crafts, Plants, and "Old Bags"

While everyone is having a great time on Opening Day at these many booths, remember the museum is open for free from 11 am — 3 pm for mini tours. The Stone House Museum is where your history lives.

Stone House Museum

Open May through October, Saturday 2-5 and by Appointment (323-6573)

Admission: FREE for Members; \$5 adults, \$4 seniors, \$2 children

Plans are being made for the **Members-Only Cocktail Party** in June and MANY other exciting events. For up-to-date information, please visit our stonehouse-museum.org website and like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/TheBelchertownStoneHouseMuseum.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Cleaners, dusters, house-sitters and docents—If you have some time, we would appreciate your help!

Call Tom at 323-0946.



Photo by Carol Mierzewski

In Memoriam

Doris Mae (Hawkins) Dickinson

March 15, 1925 – February 20, 2015

Regarding the passing of Doris Dickinson there is only too little or too much to say; we could devote the entire newsletter to her and say too little, and if we recited the many good works she did, there would be too much to include here.

I cannot write of Doris without personal emotions being present; my earliest memories of her are what would now impersonally be called "daycare" or "babysitting". While my mother, who Sarah

(her daughter) referred to as "your Doris" (my mother, a Math professor at UMASS) was at work, she ("my Doris") sometimes trusted Doris Dickinson to care for me and her same-aged daughter, Sarah. It was not a small or insignificant charge, as any working mother knows, but clearly I was in good hands. Doris Dickinson was my pre-school teacher, and her daughter (Sarah) was in my kindergarten class and we both walked about 20 feet behind the "graduates" in our little robes; we were two little chipmunks at the end of the line: we both had mumps!

Regarding her work for the Stone House—she did just about everything, at one time or another. If a job needed doing, she stepped in and did it, from buildings and grounds to painstaking research for special projects. In her later years she loved the documents and the archives, which the Trustees named in her honor when she moved; they are now the "Doris Dickinson Archives" at the Stone House Museum. Her enduring dedication to our Association, and her love for our town's history and our museum have been an inspiration to me for as long as I can remember; through her tireless perseverance and diligence she left a lasting legacy that will endure for generations. Since her passing, every stone of the house and grounds and every picket of the fence seem to want to tell of some positive contribution she effected. We mourn her passing and remember and celebrate the difference she made in all our lives.

The last I can say is that she did many good works in the different areas of the community that she was involved in, and really made a tangible, lasting, positive difference in the world around her. She will be sorely missed.

Tom Stockton, President of the Belchertown Historical Association

OPENING DAY AT THE STONE HOUSE ~ SATURDAY MAY 9, 9-2

Plan to celebrate the Museum Opening with us—just in time for Mother's Day! Pass the word to friends, family, and coworkers. All proceeds to benefit the Stone House Museum. **We also need your help!**

Plants—Sally Shattuck 323-4239
sallyshattuck@charter.net

We have high hopes that the snow will be gone and the flowers will be ready to jump out of the ground. We need as many donations of plants as we can get, so please look through your gardens and tell your friends to look through theirs'. Pot them up and leave them outside the Stone House sometime during the week of May 4th. I will see that they are watered. Call if you need our help!

"Old Bags"—Erica Morrison-Brazitis 413-537-3218 or Sharon Marean 413-896-7531

Drop off your gently used pocketbooks, totes, and wallets at one of the designated drop sites in town - Easthampton Savings Bank, Town Hall, Looks to Kill, and Making Waves. For every donated bag, you'll receive a coupon for \$2.00 off the highest priced bag you purchase at the sale.

Crafts—Carol Mierzewski 413-323-4344
emierzewsk@aol.com

Craftspeople and local artists will again display and sell their products. See our website for information on participation fees and an application.

Murder Mystery Dinner



We would like to thank all who supported our seventh annual Murder Mystery Dinner in January. Instead of hiring actors from outside of town, the Historical Association again entered into an agreement with BUCC'S PLAYHOUSE, from the Belchertown Congregational Church, so the dinner theater served as a fundraiser for both the Historical Association and the Congregational Church. The actors performed Paula Hilton's "DEATH BY VALENTINE", a high-energy comedy/mystery. Someone was murdered (or course) and bedlam ensued, resulting in an evening of entertainment that delighted the audience. More than 100 people came to the Villa Rose to support this much-needed fundraiser. The food was wonderful, the staff was very attentive and, of course, the actors from BUCC's Playhouse did a wonderful job. Everyone seemed to have a great time, so many thanks to the actors from BUCC's Playhouse, the management and staff of the Grapevine Grille, and all who attended this fun, mid-winter event.

Report from the Museum Committee

The Museum Committee has been very busy! **We have been sponsoring a Lecture Series open to the public at the Stone House.** The purpose is to promote interest in and provide information on Belchertown's history. October 16: "Boys in Blue" —Belchertown's Civil War soldiers by Cliff McCarthy. It traced the soldiers' lives from enlistment to "mustering out".

November 13: "World War I: The Home Front" by Randi Sherkman, a poster series of recruitment and the sacrifices made by ordinary citizens.

December 11: "Something of the Character Within" by Elizabeth Peirce and Sheila Damkoehler. Portraits of Swift River Valley children of the 19th and early 20th Centuries with discussion of clothes, poses, backdrops, and props.

January 29: "The Rescue of Angeline Palmer" by Cliff McCarthy. In 1840 a plan was made to sell Angeline, a ten year old free orphan, into slavery. She was saved by members of Amherst's Black community.

March 19: "Talking with the Dead in Massachusetts" by Rob Cox. The focus was on the American Spiritualism movement of the 1850's, its people and their beliefs, and activities in western Massachusetts.

April 26: "One Hundred Years of Sentinel History" by Peter Dearnness. This will be presented at the annual meeting at the Masonic Lodge at 3:30 and is open to the public. We invite all to come.

In addition to sponsoring a lecture series, the Committee has been reporting to the Trustees on the condition of the Stone House and making recommendations for upkeep and repairs. The new flagstone path has been installed and the gate moved. The railing on the front steps has been repaired. Plans for the immediate future include replacement of slate roof tiles and restoration of the fallen ceiling in the storage room.

Cliff McCarthy, archivist, and committee members have been cataloging new acquisitions and inventorying our extensive collection of period clothing. We appreciate all donations of artifacts and request that people dropping them off include their name, phone number, and/or e-mail. We like to acknowledge such gifts and obtain background information to catalog them properly

The Committee is looking for new members. Interested persons can contact Amy Moran at 323-0016 or Nancy Bell at 213-0126.

Our new brochures are finished and will be ready for Opening Day on May 9, 2015. We hope to see you there.

The Belchertown Historical Association is pleased to welcome the following new members: The Forrest Family, Donna Robbins, Meredith Weiss & John Belding, Janice & Dan Fitzpatrick, Pelham Auto Service, Mollie Sullivan, Edward Lukaswski, Stuart Wooley.

Update from Tom Stockton, BHA President

I haven't seen a Robin yet, but what a busy and event-filled winter it has been! The Stone House is truly a busy place, filled with momentum and activity in all aspects of our mission and it is exciting to be part of such a vibrant organization! A lot has been happening with regards to the maintenance and preservation of our Museum, our finances, and of course, the social life of the Association, and we pause to look back on all the important work members of the Association have been doing during the long winter months and consider the current state of our Association.

After the Fair we sponsored our annual fall Living History Days. For this year's Living History Days event we provided another activity relevant to Belchertown's history, with the theme: Bringing the House to Life ~ Harvest and Fall Activities in the 19th century New England Home. Live reënactors, many dressed in period costumes, demonstrated and discussed many of the fall and harvest activities that might have occupied residents of a house such as the Stone House in 19th century New England. Demonstrations and Lecture topics included Herb Gardening; Historic Farm Implements; Local Archaeology (thank you **Lindsay Hoadley!**); Preserving Herbs, Vegetables and Fruits; Candle Making; Outdoor Cooking; Spinning; Weaving; Corn Cob Dolls; and other seasonal activities. The Stone House was open with a display of our nineteenth century farm equipment, our re-creation 19th century garden and house tours from 10 to 2. This was a truly wonderful event: it was interesting, informative, entertaining, and very pertinent to our mission. We wish to thank our Sponsors **Easthampton Savings Bank, Bell & Hudson Insurance, Country Bank for Savings, Florence Savings Bank, and McCarthy's Pub—and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make this such a success.** We appreciate everyone's support, and hope more families will note the first Saturday in October 2015, for a new installment of this quality event. See you next year!

Following our Living History Event, it was time for our annual Yuletide Event, and many kudos are due to **Sally Shattuck, Denise Smith, Maureen Austin, Carol Mierzewski, Gerri Amprino, Becki Smith, Millie Harrington, Darren Chevalier** (for the wonderfully successful "Outhouse Raffle") and **the whole committee** for bringing off this event so beautifully. Our many elegant baskets, wreaths, and traditional crafts were the talk of the town and all who attended.

Much work has been done during the winter months by the **Museum and Membership Committees**—these volunteers have worked tirelessly in their respective areas

to make sure that the museum will be on a firm footing for the coming season. The Museum Committee's lecture series, in particular, was very well-received and provided an opportunity to hear lectures on many fascinating topics. In the Stone House we are still working on implementing our Community Preservation grant addressing certain structural issues inside the museum, and we have now moved the gate to match our new Goshen Stone walk when the ground has thawed. We are very grateful for the income from the **Edward & Eleanor Schmidt Trust** that has enabled us to complete this project. We have also gotten a new de-humidifier for the cellar, and are working on getting an on-demand hot water heater for the bathroom and kitchen. We are planning on a full report at our Annual Meeting, on April 26.

Of course, we have made time for a little fun this winter too, and **thanks to our Fundraising Committee** a wonderful time was had at the Ninth Annual February Dinner Theater held at the Villa Rose in Ludlow, with the actors from **BUCC's Playhouse**.

This is a great time to be involved in local history, and the trustees and museum committee have been involved in too many projects to fully mention here. We hope that this year will see an increase in attendance at the museum—and please don't forget that we are always looking for cleaners, dusters, house-sitters and docents during the summer months. If you have time during the week or on Saturdays and an interest in becoming more involved with our museum please contact me at 323-0946.

As spring progresses we begin to look forward to our traditional springtime activities at the Stone House. We are hoping for a good turn-out at our Annual Meeting on April 26th. This is always a fun time to get together and take stock of all we have been doing as an Association, and enjoy each other's company and wonderful deserts. Following the meeting, **Peter Dearness** — who worked at the Belchertown Sentinel for many years with its founder, Louis Blackmer— will talk about the history of the newspaper. This is the centennial of the Sentinel and we are kicking off that celebration with Mr. Dearness's public talk.

Also, our annual **Opening Day Plant Sale, Crafters and Old Bag Sale, Saturday May 9th** will be a wonderful day, and an opportunity to shop for your garden or closet while supporting your Association. We still need plants and crafters, so please read how you can help later on in the newsletter. Plans are also underway for our annual **Members Only Cocktail Party in June**, and for the third **Fall Living History Days event** that will celebrate harvest-time activities and traditional New England crafting. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending these events!

Belchertown Historical Association
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Visit us at the Stone House, call us at
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Assistant Curator: Shirley Bock
Archivist: Cliff McCarthy

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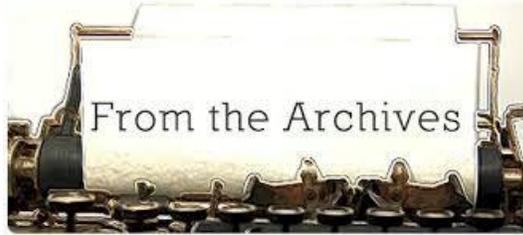
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Members Newsletter and the museum website edited by:

Mary F. Knight mfknight@crocker.com
Comments, suggestions are welcomed.



**Shumway Family
Correspondence
Comes to the
Stone House**

In December 2014, the Belchertown Historical Association acquired more than one hundred letters and other family material related to the Shumway & Works families of Belchertown. Delivered to the Stone House by owner John Schumacher-Hardy, these letters were mostly written to, and collected by, Mary (Works) Shumway. Though Mary and her husband George F. Shumway were both Belchertown natives, they were living in Monson during the time covered by most of the correspondence, roughly 1880-1910. George Shumway was the son of Loren and Harriet (Foster) Shumway. Mary was the daughter of John and Laura B. (Thresher) Works.

In addition to the letters, there is a large amount of genealogical material related to the Shumway, Works, Pratt, Coolidge, and Alden families. Anyone wishing to review these items, should make arrangements to visit the Stone House archives by contacting Cliff McCarthy at: camcca@charter.net

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