



"THE STONE HOUSE MUSEUM"

Belchertown Historical Association  
Belchertown, Massachusetts  
1903—2020

September 2020

Volume 20, Issue 1

# MEMBER NEWSLETTER

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

## HARD TO BE "PERKY"

Greetings, and best wishes to all, during this most trying of times. I know it has been summer, but does it seem like summer happened when we missed so many of our usual round of activities? No Annual Meeting potluck? No opening Day? No Cocktail Party? And now, no Fair, or Living History Day or Yuletide? Life seems so strange and different for all of us, and one consequence of the COVID Crises is that many feel disconnected from their favorite organizations, their churches, their friends, and even their families. Life just feels different, and we at the Stone House Museum also share all of these feelings as we try to shepherd our beloved museum through this trying time, and ensure that it will be even better than ever when it is feasible for us to re-open.

Although it is all-too easy to focus on the things we CAN'T do and HAVEN'T done, it is also important for us to bring to mind the progress we continue to make around the grounds. The garden, for one, continues to be restful and lovely, and Peg and Lew Louraine have done a fine job with the kitchen garden, as usual. Inside the museum we have worked and made progress fixing our alarm system, dealing with climate control problems, and dealing with the occasional pest control issue as well. And, of course, work has continued on the Schoolhouse, and the roof is nearing completion. Our annual program book is very beautiful (thanks Mary

Knight!), and grants have been applied for to help us during these trying times (thanks Randi, Erica, and Maureen!) but the demand is very high right now, and as a volunteer organization we are ineligible for some COVID-related grants. The next milestones will be connection of our new sewer line and the installation of the front steps of the Schoolhouse.

We also continue to plan for our future, and are trying to figure out what we CAN do during this time to bring History alive NOW and prepare for a richer in-person experience at the museum when that is possible. We are hoping to offer our lecture series on-line this year, as this type of experience is becoming more common and mainstream; we are discussing whether or not it is possible for us to use this "down time" to refurbish some of the floors and walls also, although we are having to count our pennies without our traditional fundraisers; and we are hoping to have our Halloween cemetery tours in the Mt. Hope cemetery, as this would be an outside event, if we can be assured after consulting with town officials that our safety protocols would be sufficient. Keeping everyone's safety in mind is a big responsibility, and it's a lot to think about, but we hope to provide some Living—or "dead"—History on Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>!



On a positive, fun note, please watch for our FIRST EVER online Facebook silent auction, which we hope will bring in much-needed revenue, get our face "out there," and recreate, in some small way, our usual Yuletide experience. Trustee Erica Morrison is spear-heading this attempt, and, if successful, this may well become an annual part of our fundraising effort: so watch out for the opportunity to bid on unique gift items and support your museum!

Finally, please know that as we continue to deal with our present and work for our future, we miss you and the special spirit that you add to our shared life as a historical community! Please watch for future announcements, and know that we are thinking of all our extended family of members, supporters, and friends!

Tom Stockton  
President, Belchertown Historical Association

## Doctor Estes Howe's Revolutionary War Notebooks

By Cliff McCarthy, Archivist Stone House Museum

Disease killed more than twice the number of American troops that died in combat during the Revolution. Historian Joseph Ellis suggests that Washington's decision to have his troops inoculated against smallpox was one of his most important decisions. Dr. Estes Howe, one of Belchertown's first physicians, was a surgeon in Rufus Putnam's regiment during the first years of the conflict and his notebooks, preserved at the Stone House Museum, provide an interesting look into 18<sup>th</sup> century field medicine, as well as a first-hand chronicle of the revolution.



History.com December 1977

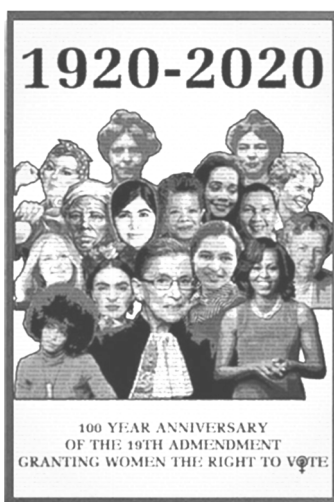
The two notebooks contain the Revolutionary War Record and Accounts of Dr. Estes Howe, 1775-1785. Book I, entitled "Estes Howe, his book, Peeks Kill, June 7, 1777, Belcherton [sic], May 14", is 56 pages and records the treatments he dispensed, with the names of the soldiers who were sick or wounded. It includes a list of the troops he inoculated against smallpox.

Book II has no cover, but contains Dr. Howe's Revolutionary War Records, 1775-1776, and his notes as Belchertown Town Clerk, 1782 – 1783. It is 68 pages long. Both notebooks contain important and detailed notes about units and commanders, troop movements, and the day-to-day life of a soldier.

Dr. Estes Howe (1747-1826) was a major figure in Belchertown's history. He served as Town Clerk, Selectman and in many other positions of responsibility. He and his second wife, Diana (Hinsdale) Dwight Howe, gave to the town the land that is now the north part of Belchertown Common.

Local legend -- likely true, but not recorded in any known contemporaneous account -- relates that when the Marquis de Lafayette passed through Belchertown on his way to the dedication of the Bunker Hill Monument, he was told of an ailing doctor who had given great service during the Revolution. Lafayette asked his driver to stop at Dr. Howe's home and he visited with him, briefly, paying his respects, before continuing his journey through Massachusetts. Whether true or not, Dr. Howe was among the early doctors in Belchertown (some say the first) and he resided here until his death in March of 1826. His portrait, painted by Chester Harding, proudly hangs in the Stone House parlor.

As we slide into the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of events leading to our nation's birth, Dr. Howe's notebooks will certainly deserve scrutiny by researchers and scholars. The Stone House has treasures like these by virtue of the foresight of the early members of the Belchertown Historical Association and their efforts to preserve our nation's story.



The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women's constitutional right to vote. This historic centennial offers an unparalleled opportunity to commemorate a milestone of democracy and to explore its relevance to the issues of equal rights today. A Not-So-Well-Known Fact About Another Centennial Anniversary: What was achieved in June 1919 with the 19th Amendment passing the U.S. Congress was obviously a big success, but female suffrage remained a controversial cause until it was officially ratified in August 1920.



**Yuletide at the Stone House** will be an online event this year! We've had so many cancelled fundraisers this year and we hope to make this one a great success! The proceeds from the auction and marketplace will all go to support our general operating budget.

If you decide not to donate an item but would like to make a monetary contribution, please send it to Belchertown Historical Association, PO Box 1211, Belchertown MA 01007 with yuletide in the memo line. Thank you, as always, for your continued support!

### Silent Auction

The auction will begin on **Saturday, November 7th at 9am**; bids will close on **Friday, November 13th at 11:00 pm**. We will be using Facebook to run the event online. (Note: you do NOT have to be a Facebook user to participate!) When the time gets closer, we will send out a link to our event on our website [www.stonehousemuseum.org/yuletide](http://www.stonehousemuseum.org/yuletide) and Facebook [@TheBelchertownStoneHouseMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/TheBelchertownStoneHouseMuseum) pages along with more exact information on how to participate in the auction.

**We are looking for donations** of all genres of original artwork (photography, painting, drawing, and sculpture), jewelry, gift baskets, wreaths, gift certificates from local businesses, etc. Also, if you have a

local family member or friend who you think might like to donate an item, please ask them! For this event we are asking that items have a minimum value of \$25.

**Donation Instructions:** Take a photo of your item and complete the enclosed form—write a description of the item, provide a suggested fair-market value, and provide your contact information. Send the photo and form to **Mary Knight at [mfknight@crocker.com](mailto:mfknight@crocker.com)** or PO Box 1034, Belchertown MA by Friday, October 30th.



If you need our help, please contact Mary or **Erica Morrison-Brazitis [marick-ey@charter.net](mailto:marick-ey@charter.net)**. We ask that you keep possession of the item that you are donating until the conclusion of the auction. A Board member will be in touch then to make arrangements to pick up the item and get it delivered to the highest bidder.

### Marketplace at the Museum

We are also looking to fill our website Marketplace with smaller homemade crafts, preserves, and other items you would find at our Yuletide event—perfect for holiday giving—starting 11/7 and ending on or about 12/15. Donation form is the same (see enclosed). Pictures and descriptions of items will be featured and sold at market price on [StoneHouseMuseum.org/yuletide](http://StoneHouseMuseum.org/yuletide).





## **Yuletide at the Stone House 2020 – Donation Form**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Item to be used for**  **Silent Auction**  **Marketplace**

**Title of Item:**

**Value:**

**Description:**

**Please submit this form with a picture of the donation item to:**

Mary Knight [mfknight@crocker.com](mailto:mfknight@crocker.com) or PO Box 1034, Belchertown, MA 01007.

Deadlines: Silent Auction 10/31 ~ Marketplace 11/7.

**Note: If you need help with photo or description, please contact the Committee Chair:**

Erica Morrison-Brazitis at [marickey@charter.net](mailto:marickey@charter.net) 413-537-3218 or

Mary Knight at [mfknight@crocker.com](mailto:mfknight@crocker.com) 413-323-4806

**We are requesting that donations and bidders be LOCAL for ease of pickup by BHA Board members and delivery to the buyers.** If, for instance, a donor from Georgia has an item, it would need to be sent by the donor to a friend in town for safe keeping until sold.

Save us postage! Send in your dues today!

## Membership Form Belchertown Historical Association

The BHA, a nonprofit organization, exists primarily on income from membership, event admissions, contributions and bequests. Members enjoy unlimited visits to the museum, subscription to our newsletter, discounted admission to special events, and deep satisfaction in knowing they are preserving the past for generations to come.

Check one: \_\_\_ New Membership \_\_\_ Renewal Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

If this is a gift membership, provide giver's name:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Member Categories

\$5 Student (under 18)  
\$10 Senior ((65+)  
\$20 Individual  
\$35 Family (children <18)  
\$50 Friend  
\$100 Patron  
\$250 Benefactor  
Lifetime Member

### Corporate Matching Program

Double your tax-deductible donation by attaching a matching

**Member Dues** enclosed:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please check off categories on left

**Donation** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Specify In Honor or In Memory of, or specific purpose of this donation.

I am interested in volunteer opportunities

**Due to COVID-19 and its disruptions, many of our members have not renewed yet this year.**

While the membership dues are low, we depend on this revenue stream to help with administrative costs. If you have a yellow marker by your address label, please complete this form and submit with the annual dues.

**Please also invite relatives, neighbors, friends and colleagues to be part of our mission:**

*"The Belchertown Historical Association exists to preserve historical artifacts pertaining to the Town of Belchertown; to maintain the Stone House Museum; and to foster knowledge of and interest in the history of Belchertown by opening the Museum to the public and by offering educational programs, lectures and events."*

**Thank you for all you do. Our important work would be impossible to accomplish without your support.**

Send completed form and tax-deductible donation payable to the Belchertown Historical Association to:

**The Belchertown Historical Association  
PO Box 1211  
Belchertown MA 01007-1211**



BELCHERTOWN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
 20 MAPLE STREET, PO BOX 1211  
 BELCHERTOWN, MA 01007-1211  
 VISIT US AT THE STONE HOUSE,  
 CALL US AT 413 323-6573 OR  
 EMAIL [INFO@STONEHOUSEMUSEUM.ORG](mailto:INFO@STONEHOUSEMUSEUM.ORG)

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## Graveyard Tours

Have you ever spent a night in the graveyard when Halloween is approaching? The Belchertown Historical Association is once again holding Halloween Graveyard Tours in the Mount Hope Cemetery. Inhabitants of the cemetery who impacted Belchertown's history, will come "to life" represented by members of the community in period costumes. Small group tours will start from the parking lot and be led by a tour guide. Visitors will meet Belchertown residents from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, along with some occasional spirits, and lost souls wandering among the tombstones. The event is free, donations being collected toward continued reconstruction of the Washington District Schoolhouse. Tours will be Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8pm in the cemetery behind the United Church of Christ on Park Street, off the common. COVID-style masks required and participants will be grouped for social distancing. This is not a trick or treat event.



BELCHERTOWN HISTORICAL  
 ASSOCIATION  
 20 MAPLE STREET  
 PO BOX 1211  
 BELCHERTOWN, MA  
 01007-1211

