THE BIDWELL HOUSE PROPERTY HAS BEEN PRESERVED!

The Bidwell House Museum is so thrilled to announce the preservation of about 180 acres of the Museum property in Monterey. The Museum is deeply indebted to Lew and Joyce Scheffey whose Turkeybush Foundation provided $300,000 for the preservation; and to the Berkshire Natural Resources Council and the Monterey Preservation Land Trust, which will co-hold the Conservation Restriction and whose resources and assistance helped to make this happen. The funds received as part of the new conservation restriction will help provide financial security to the Museum and insure its longevity, a beneficial outcome for the Museum, the town of Monterey and local land preservation.

In 2007, when Joyce and Lew Scheffey dissolved the Turkeybush Foundation, they donated several properties and $300,000 to the Monterey Preservation Land Trust. At the suggestion of Jonathan Sylbert, president of MPLT since 2001, MPLT offered to use the $300,000 toward the purchase of a Conservation Restriction on the Bidwell House property, thus preserving the grounds and surrounding land. “After stewarding the Scheffey’s donation for 14 years, I’m so pleased to see this Conservation Restriction become a reality,” said Mr. Sylbert. “The Bidwell House Museum and its lands now have a more secure future for all of us to enjoy.”

As a member, you know that the Bidwell House Museum’s mission is to provide visitors with a personal encounter with history. The long-term preservation of the Museum property will allow visitors, residents of the Berkshires, and neighbors in the towns of Monterey, to enjoy the beautiful and unspoiled grounds in perpetuity. In addition to Rev. Adonijah Bidwell’s gracious 1760s home, the acres of forests and fields around the house contain the remains of important historical sites, including cellar holes from the home of the early residents of Tyringham (which later split to become Monterey); the site of the original Meetinghouse where Reverend Bidwell preached his sermons; the remains of the Boston-Albany Post Road; and many more relics. In addition, the Museum property is part of the ancestral homeland of the Mohicans. Preserving this landscape allows the Museum to continue telling the Mohican’s long over-looked history while also allowing visitors to imagine Mohican lifeways long ago as well as appreciating their ongoing presence here in the Berkshires.

The Museum is also an important site for outdoor recreation in Monterey. Hikers, walkers, nature lovers, and cross-country skiers and snowshoers have access to 6 miles of trails that are open for free year-round, a resource that adds joy to the local quality of life. This Conservation Restriction will protect the land around the Museum from development, guaranteeing that the property will be accessible to all for generations to come!

HOUSE TOURS RETURNED IN 2021!

When the pandemic came roaring through all of our lives in 2020 the Museum made the difficult
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

**The Bidwell House Museum** had a great 2021 thanks to you, our loyal members. We’re very grateful to those who have continued to support the museum. And we’re delighted to have so many new members this year and to welcome back former members who rejoined the fold in 2021. Thank you!

During 2021 we celebrated the museum’s thirtieth anniversary...and celebrate we did! We hosted a wonderful series of history lectures both in person and hybrid. The filming and webcasting of these talks was thanks, in part, to a technology grant from Mass Humanities. These webcasts allowed many more attendees from near and far to enjoy the talks. We also hosted several in-person events at the museum grounds, including the Revolutionary War Reenactment weekend in September, a “Maker’s Day” with craftspeople including several Native Americans, and “Scary Stories Around the Fire” in October. We also opened the house for tours on a small-group reservation basis. This worked very well and our guests were enthusiastic about the tours.

We also had a fabulous gala on the Bidwell grounds in August. It was so good to see everyone in person and the flower gardens were especially beautiful, thanks to our new gardener, Pat Parkins.

Another highlight of 2021 was the enjoyment of the Museum Trails. Throughout the year we had numerous walkers, hikers, and snowshoers of all ages and descriptions, who explored the museum’s trails. In October, the museum opened two additional miles of new trails built by the Greenagers and thanks to a grant from MassTrails. These new trails open up a whole new area of the Bidwell property, with a beautiful walk along 1½ miles of the Loom Brook, plus several connectors. In November we led an inaugural hike with 45 community members!

Remember, the Bidwell trails and grounds are open for free year round during daylight hours. Dogs are welcome.

And finally, in 2021 we completed putting the Bidwell House property into a permanent Conservation Restriction (CR) held jointly by Berkshire Natural Resources Council and the Monterey Preservation Land Trust. The CR will assure that the property will remain forever preserved as open space.

Lew and Joyce Scheffey, through their Turkeybush Foundation, had donated funds a number of years ago to help the museum with this conservation. These funds, together with another bequest, have enabled Bidwell to preserve the property and also to establish an endowment for the future financial stability of the museum. A true “Win – Win!”

Moving ahead, Bidwell House Museum has planned a full calendar of lectures and events, both in person and hybrid, for 2022. This includes the return of the beloved Bidwell Country Fair in late June, along with many other programs. The Bidwell House Museum will also be collaborating with the Monterey Historical Society, Monterey Library, and the Monterey 175th Anniversary Committee on exhibits and programs celebrating Monterey’s 175th year since it was incorporated as a separate town from Tyringham.

In closing, thank you for your enthusiasm, your love of history, and your support. The Bidwell House Museum is here for, with you, and by you. You are the engine that keeps us going!

Rob Hoogs
President
Bidwell House Museum Board of Trustees
RAID ON TOWNSHIP #1

It was a season of new experiences at the Museum in 2021, most notably the weekend long historical Re-enactment “Raid on Township #1”. Held September 18-20, this living history event presented campaign life of the British Regular Forces and the American rebels during the Revolutionary War.

Around 75 re-enactors stayed on the grounds for the weekend in two separate camps, the British in the fields below the Museum and the Americans in a clearing in the woods behind the Museum. Visitors enjoyed battle demonstrations, woodland raids, laundry and cooking experiences, lectures on the medicine and clothing of the time and artillery demonstrations that included a real cannon! It was wonderful to see so many families enjoying the activities and learning from the participants.

And we were very lucky to have beautiful weather for the entire weekend. Many of the people who attended have asked about our next re-enactment and the Museum is excited to announce that we will be hosting our next re-enactment weekend in June of 2023!

decision to suspend house tours that year. While quite stately for the 18th century, the house is not spacious and limiting activities to those we could do outdoors seemed the safest option. At the beginning of 2021 we were cautiously optimistic about the summer season and decided to plan for house tours again, but with a few changes. In order to work more efficiently and effectively limit the number of people in the house we moved to a “tour by appointment” model, where all tours of the inside of the house had to be booked 24 hours in advance via phone or email.

This new model was incredibly successful for the Museum as it allowed Erin (our Administrative Manager and Docent) to better plan her time and it prevented people from arriving in the middle of a tour or stopping by when we were not open.

Not only were we happy, but visitors were very happy last season as well! Their enthusiasm, knowledge of history and general delight made the tour experience enjoyable for all and we can’t wait to welcome everyone back to the Museum this spring!
GREENAGERS BUILD THE NEW LOOM BROOK TRAIL

In July of 2020, local organization Greenagers received a $21,410 MassTrails grant to construct a new interpretive hiking trail along the Loom Brook on the Bidwell House Museum property in the summer of 2021. The South Egremont based Greenagers, through its paid employment programs, internships and apprenticeships, engages teens and young adults in meaningful work in environmental conservation, sustainable farming, natural resource management, and vocational skills building.

During the summer of 2021 the Greenagers trail crew, composed of youth aged 15-24, built this new trail. The crew fought through driving rain and clouds of mosquitoes to clear the trail of blowdowns and brush, install bridges, control erosion, and blaze the trail. Connecting the Stone Wall Loop at the southern end of the property to the Champion Oak Trail and McCallum Trail at the northern end, the 1.7 miles of trail and 14 small bridges built will be sure to entice hikers and museum goers for years to come.

THANK YOU 2021 MEMBERS!

Your gifts makes the Museum the gem it is today and preserves it for tomorrow!

Margaret Abbott
Silke Aisenbrey
Henry and Gerry Alpert
Diane M. Austin and Aaron Nurick
Barbara Austin and Tom Johnston
Maggie and Donald Barkin
Susan Barnett
Suzi Banks Baum
JoAnn Bell and Douglas McTavish
David and Deborah Bergeron
Jillian Bergman
Ronald M. Bernard
Marilyn Bisiewicz
Kelly Blau
Paolo Boffetta and Antonia Greco
Penelope Borax
Making Maple Syrup with Rob Hoogs, March 2021

Volunteers getting ready to begin the Spring Membership mailing

Brand new picnic tables, courtesy of Thom Lipiczky

Board Vice-President Diane Austin, her husband Aaron Nurick, along with former Board Member Greg Gimblette and his wife Paula, at the “Hats Off To Thirty Seasons” summer party
Intrepid Board Member Richard Greene showing the Bidwell trees some love!

“Scary Stories Around the Fire” with Robert Oakes in October

Reenactors portraying Adonijah Bidwell and his 3rd wife Ruth Kent, at the “Raid on Township #1” Reenactment weekend in September

Hiking along the Museum Trails, winter 2021

John Demos, speaking in the History Talk series, July 2021

Beautiful new displays in the 1840s room

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Heather Kowalski, Executive Director

Erin Hunt, Administrative Manager and Caretaker