



*Fall / Winter 2015-16 Newsletter*

*The Bidwell House Museum is a New England heritage site providing a personal encounter with history, early American home life, and the Berkshire landscape, through its land, house and collection. The Museum is a non-profit educational institution for the benefit of the community and today's audiences of all ages, dedicated to preservation, scholarship and enjoyment of the landmark site.*



## Celebrating Founder Bill Brockman

William Iles Brockman, co-founder of the Bidwell House Museum, died on August 27 at the age of 83, at his home, Fiddletop, which he shared with his spouse and best friend, Jack Jefferson, who left the party early almost 11 years ago to the day Bill joined him.

Bill grew up in Columbia and Edisto Island, S.C., the son of Washington Clark Brockman and Hazel Carver Iles Brockman. He earned degrees from both University of South Carolina and the University of Colorado. He served his country during the Korean War with the United States Air Force in Norfolk, England. After the war he taught English and history in Northern Alaska, and then biked and hitchhiked through Japan and the Near East. After traveling the world extensively, he worked in fundraising, including serving as the Vice President of Deferred Giving at the American University of Beirut. Bill also worked in non-profits in New York City,

*continued on page 6*

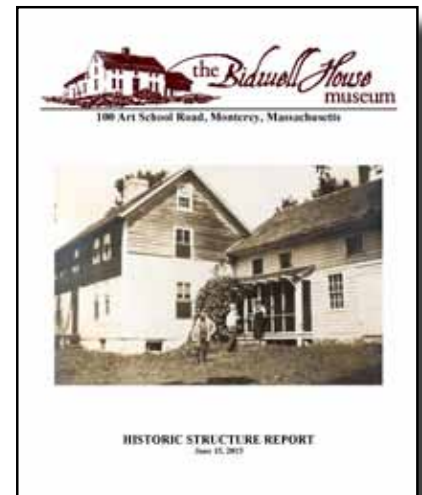
## Secrets of an Old House—Partly Revealed

The museum received a major 25th anniversary present in 2015, in the form of a Historic Structure Report (HSR). Funded by generous donors and trustees and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), the HSR is an apt anniversary gift. It is an in-depth study of all aspects of the house, its structure and mechanical systems. The report documents the conditions and makes recommendations for preservation of the historic building for decades to come. Architectural historian Bill Finch and architect Steve McAlister spent 8 months studying the 1700s building. It is well known that the Bidwell House is one of the oldest surviving homes in the southern Berkshires. What heretofore wasn't known is what of today's building is the original fabric, what has been altered, and when exactly the house was constructed.

Finch and McAlister produced a nearly 300 page document, richly illustrated with new and historic photographs. "I plan to make this exemplary report available to anyone interested in 1700s New England houses. It is available at the museum office, and I hope it will be consulted often," states museum director Barbara Palmer. "I was fascinated

to learn about the tools and techniques Bill used to investigate the house, its construction and building materials."

With no written records of the building's first two centuries, learning about its past was like detective work: a schooled eye, paint analysis, dendrochronology, and other state-of-the-art methods, as well as old fashioned sleuthing: a search for photos and stories of



former owners. Finch found the last surviving daughter of Rev. Howard Conn, owner of the house from 1941 to 1960 in Edina, M.N. Janet Conn sent numerous family photographs documenting the condition in their period of ownership. Finch also contacted experts in historic materials such as the roofing nails and the marble used in the fireplace surrounds. He looked for original materials and signs of later alterations.

What did Finch and McAlister conclude? "There is a great deal of original or nearly original historic fabric in place,

*continued on page 7*



*Original 18th-century spring latch on closet door in Dining Room*

## President's Message



Toasting the anniversary

*The winter solstice: a time to reflect on the past year and to plan for the new. The sun may appear to be "standing still" before beginning its journey back north, but the Bidwell House Museum is busy working on plans and programs for 2016.*

*It will be hard to top 2015—the museum's 25th anniversary season was highlighted by so many wonderful events: Diane Taraz's opening concert honoring 25-year members, many of whom attended; Tom Wessel's workshop and walk in the Bidwell forest; the fascinating*

*history lecture series; Township No 1 Day was a blast; the amazing gala at the Sena's, and the wonderful Thanksgiving party at the Engels', complete with singing around the piano.*

*And the completion of the Historic Structure Report, funded by Mass. Historical Commission and contributions from the board of directors. The "history detectives" pored over the house from cellar to rafters. The investigation highlighted that over 90% of the interior finishes of the house are original 18th century—the wood paneling, plaster walls, doors and window frames, some of the hardware. They even found some original paint, siding and roofing!*

*We were saddened by the passing of our founding director, Bill Brockman. It is fair to say the museum would not be here today without the guidance and financial support over the past quarter century of Bill and his partner, Jack Jefferson. Thank you, Bill and Jack. And thank you to those who made contributions to the museum in Bill's memory. There will be a special dedication to Bill and Jack next season.*

*Now to 2016: the 300th birthday of Rev. Adonijah Bidwell! In addition to a "birthday bash," we have some great new programs in the hopper, including several winter and spring "colonial heritage" demonstrations and explorations at the museum.... Stay tuned to the museum's web site—[bidwellhousemuseum.org](http://bidwellhousemuseum.org)—and Facebook page for upcoming events. We're looking into arranging a bus trip to New York to see the new historical musical "Hamilton" next fall—tickets are already sold out through June! Let the museum office know if you would be interested. And we're planning some new hands-on gardening and colonial crafts programs for the spring and summer in addition to the history lecture series, naturalist-guided hikes, and other favorites.*

*There are lots of opportunities for people of all ages and interests to learn and enjoy the Bidwell House Museum property even when the house is shuttered for the winter. Come explore the 192 acres of fields and forest; hike, walk your dog, snow shoe or cross country ski on the trails. Please consider joining one of the volunteer committees—the museum offers many different avenues to gaining and sharing insights about 18th- and 19th-century life styles. We'd love to have you.*

*Thank you for your love of history and for your support of the Bidwell House Museum. See you in 2016!*

*Rob Hoogs, President of the Board of Directors*

## Thank You 2015 Business Partners

Alarms of Berkshire County  
Baba Louie's Pizza  
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Brockman Real Estate  
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*Your support makes it all possible!*

# Rev. Adonijah Bidwell, an Old Light? by Richard Bidwell Wilcox

The terms Old Light and New Light were first used during the First Great Awakening, which spread through the British North American colonies in the middle of the 18th century. In *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737), Jonathan Edwards, a leader in the Awakening, describes his congregants' vivid experiences with Grace as causing a "new light" in their perspective on sin and atonement. Old Lights and New Lights generally referred to Congregationalists and Baptists in New England who took different positions on the Awakening than the traditional branches of their denominations. New Lights, like Edwards, embraced the revivals that spread through the colonies, while Old Lights were suspicious of the revivals and their seeming threat to authority.

Rev. Adonijah Bidwell's second wife, Jemima Devotion, was the daughter of the Rev. Ebenezer Devotion, the first man to preach in what is now Berkshire County, at Sheffield in 1734. During

the First Great Awakening Rev. Devotion became an Old Light proponent adhering to traditional Puritan dogma. That at least suggests that Bidwell was cut from the same cloth, or he likely would not have been allowed to seek Jemima's hand in marriage. Jemima's grandfather was the Rev. Edward Taylor, called the Puritan Poet, and the roommate at Harvard and life-long friend of Samuel Sewall, the Salem witch trial judge.

Jemima's cousin Ezra Stiles, a president of Yale College, was conflicted in his efforts to find comfort in either the New Light or Old Light camps. Stiles knew that to be appointed as president of Yale he would need the support of the Old Light ministers, which forced him off the fence and into espousing the Old Light theology.

Surrounded by that theological family, it would hardly be surprising that Rev. Bidwell left no evidence of any contact between himself and Rev. Jonathan Edwards in Stockbridge, even

though Edwards was probably the closest neighboring minister as the crow flies.

There is also no record of contact with Rev. Jonathan Hubbard, the first settled minister in Sheffield. Hubbard was orthodox in his faith, and a nephew of Rev. Devotion. He was ordained at Sheffield on October 22, 1735 in the presence of some neighboring church clergymen. Jonathan Edwards, then of Northampton, and Samuel Hopkins of Springfield attended. Town meeting vote gave Hubbard "the sum of One Hundred Pounds Settlement and also to Build him a Good Barn all excepting the Nails." He served until 1764.

Adonijah Bidwell left a thin paper trail of both his personal and professional life. His sermons, which might give some indication of his religious politics, were written in a short hand. Only a few have been decoded. A number of Rev. Bidwell's grandchildren were caught up in the Second Great Awakening, which is a story for another newsletter.

## New Education Initiatives at the Bidwell House Museum

The museum is pleased to announce new educational programming in 2016. Reaching out to area schools, the staff will collaboratively design field trips with teachers and strengthen its role as a go-to resource of Berkshire history, while developing ongoing week-end programs for different ages.

Expanding the presence of the Bidwell House as a community resource, the education staff is working to make public learning opportunities accessible to a wider audience. From the artifacts and architecture within the house, to the miles of in-tact stone walls and trails dating back hundreds of years, the Bidwell House bears both the well-preserved home-site and ecologically diverse grounds. Educational programming is geared towards inviting young families and their children to partake in the historical bounty that is the Bidwell House Museum, supplementing lectures and

events with hands-on learning—which reminds participants that the 18th century is not as far-off as we think.

Programs for 2016 include: winter tracking, conventional practices of timber-framing, mapping the historic landscape, herbal medicine and basketry. Reaching out to local naturalists, builders, farmers, and educators, the Bidwell House Museum will grow its network of community affiliates as well as exemplify historical life in ways that we can relate to.

The museum has engaged Camille Roos, education consultant, to lead this initiative. Camille is passionate about places where history is continuous, accessible, and pertinent, and thus looks to "primitive" skills, crafts, agricultural practices, as a source of ecological renewal and possibility. Camille has experience with a variety of arts and cultural organizations in the area, and is currently undergoing a wilderness instructor



Camille Roos, Bidwell education consultant

training at Wild Earth in New Paltz, NY. Camille brings her arts and outdoor experience to Bidwell House alongside her liberal arts education from Simon's Rock and Goddard College.

Come and support Bidwell House Museum as a center of learning and activity in 2016. Together, we are not only remembering, but making history in the Berkshires!

# 25th Anniversary Season Highlights



Chris Goldfinger, Cindy Hoogs, Joyce Scheffey and Alan Shartock at the Business Partners wine&cheese hosted by Farm & Home



Jill Cancellieri of Berkshire-Taconic & board member George Emmons



The Easy Ridin' Papas—Will Conklin and Adam Brown—entertain at Township Day and the Gala



Thanksgiving party host Mary Jo Engels and daughter Susan



Is that the board president?



JoAnn Bell, Kathryn Roberts, Marsha Norman, Linda Saul-Sena, MaryPaul Yates and Mark Sena celebrating the museum



Hats Off to Bidwell revelers Mark Sena, Nancy Kalodner, Justin Wernick & Malinka Jackson



Diane Austin with a prize hat



John Dinan, Rick and Debra Mielke at the 25th Anniversary Gala party



Thanksgiving songs with Mark Kelso on piano: Camille Roos, Linnea Grealish, Sarah Hudson & Maggie Barkin



25th Anniversary Gala hosts Mark Sena & Linda Saul-Sena



Julie Kern, Maggie Barkin, Mary Zimmerman & Barbara Tryon

# 25th Anniversary Season Highlights



Young History Scholar Interns Marya Makuc, Lexi Shumski and Aidan Santos welcome guests to the Summer Gala Party



Ecologist Tom Wessels' "Reading the Forested Landscape" workshop



On Township No. 1 Day over 350 visitors enjoyed the free community celebration of local history, music, food and re-enactors



Professor John Demos giving a talk on gender differences in early America at the Tyringham Church as part of the history lecture series



Alex Johnson of Tyringham, awarded Eagle Scout honors for his Bidwell project



New Marlborough School fourth graders enjoying the wigwam on their field trip day learning about the house and grounds



Painting en plain air at the Bidwell House on a beautiful September day with the Housatonic Art League and Frank Federico



Fourth grade students planting the gardens with head docent Rosalia Padilla



Young History Scholar Intern Jacob Makuc and visitors in the keeping room on a tour of the house



Gala Honoree Joyce Scheffey joined by Joyce and Lew's family



Fall colors adorn house and trails



Township Day Baking Contest Judges: Eric Schulz, Russ Breedem, Mimi Parker, Matt Puntin, Julie Neu & Maria Rundle



Heather Kowalski with daughter Catharine and son John

## Welcoming Heather Kowalski

Heather Kowalski joined the Bidwell House staff on October 12th as administrative manager. Heather brings significant museum experience, having served as registrar for the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh for the last 11 years and as assistant registrar at the Carnegie Museum of Art prior to that. Heather holds a B.A. in Art History from Penn State University.

"I am thrilled to have Heather on board," notes Barbara Palmer, executive director. "Heather brings collections expertise and excellent organizational skills to the museum at a very good time for us. I knew we had found the right person when Heather told me, 'I love historic houses and have been longing to work somewhere with a history.'" Sounds like the Bidwell House is just the place!

Heather grew up in nearby Schenectady, NY. She recently moved to Lenox with her husband, Jesse, the new curator at the Norman Rockwell Museum, and her two children. Heather is at the museum on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. Please stop by to say hi!

## Celebrating Founder Bill Brockman, *con't from p. 1*

primarily with two of Bill and Jack's best friends, John and Betty Lee "Mac" Carlson. It was the Carlsons who introduced Jack and Bill to Monterey, and to the Berkshires. They moved to the Berkshires first as part-time residents where they owned a home on Fairview Road.

In 1976 they made the move full time, and Bill founded Brockman Real Estate. "One of the great benefits of the real estate business is meeting wonderful people. We made some incredible

friendships in the last 30 plus years," Bill once said. "We had times of growth and fallow. It allowed us to live in the Berkshires and that has been a privilege." Bill grew up in a small town and he really loved life in the country, yet the proximity of New York and Boston. Bill was committed to his clients, never taking a single vacation with Jack 'because we didn't need to, we lived in the Berkshires.' Their getaway was a monthly trip to the Upper East Side of New York for haircuts, shopping, and lunch, but back by 5 o'clock for a cocktail on the screened porch.



Bill Brockman at the 2010 dedication honoring Jack Jefferson in the Bidwell gardens

Work in real estate and life in the Berkshires were completely intertwined for Bill and Jack—and were a part of their dedication and commitment to the Bidwell House Museum. They were good friends with Jack Hargis and David Brush, the owners and restorers of the Bidwell House. As founding trustees, Bill and Jack worked tirelessly with friends and neighbors to open and run the museum, and to ensure the future well-being of this beautiful property as a center for education and activities, and a window into what life was truly like in the wilderness that was New England in colonial America.

Bill is survived by his nephews and nieces: Clark Brockman, Kristi Brockman, Russell Brockman, Jeannie Brockman Anderson, and Judith Brockman Gilmore, as well as by Chapin Fish, his friend and business partner, and Chapin's husband, Kevin Fish, and of course by many friends. Anybody who knew them will remember their keen sense of humor, great intellect, and immeasurable charm. Bill had a razor sharp wit, and was a devoted partner to Jack. They were both gentlemen who lived and worked with the strongest sense of generosity, decency and fairness, and who genuinely cared about those in their lives. May it bring them comfort to know their legacy will continue.

Donations in honor of Bill may be gratefully made to the Bill Brockman and Jack Jefferson Memorial Fund at the Bidwell House Museum.

*Chapin Fish*



Bill Brockman enjoying a 2008 Bidwell program with Marie Bidwell Leuchs, Doug McTavish and George Emmons

### Thank You, 2015 Education Program Sponsors!

Alarms of Berkshire County  
Anniversary Party Donors  
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Murray & Jeanne Bodin  
Delight & Paul Dodyk  
Carol & James Edelman  
Walter & Mary Jo Emmons

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Richard & Lindsay Greene  
Carl, Elise & Shelby Hartman  
Hop Brook Community Club  
Cynthia & Robert Hoogs  
Nancy Jones & Gilbert Schrank  
Carol & Alfred Landess

Lenox Cultural Council  
Monterey Cultural Council  
Marc & Kathryn Roberts  
Joyce Scheffey  
Schwartz Family Foundation  
Martin & Jane Schwartz  
Linda Saul-Sena & Mark Sena  
Wilma H. Spice



## New Trustee Steven J. Weisz

At the May annual meeting, the Bidwell Board of Directors elected Steven J. Weisz to the board. Steve is a full-time Monterey resident and newly elected Monterey Selectboard member.

Steve brings a love and knowledge of old houses to the museum and has been on the fundraising event committee. When he is not working on town business, Steve is a real estate agent at Sotheby International Realty in Great Barrington. He grew up in Bergen County, NJ.

## Secrets of an Old House

*continued from page 1*

particularly in the house and the unfinished portions of the carriage barn.” The experts estimate over 90% is original.

Dating the house was more difficult: “The building was constructed in three major phases over about eighty years, probably beginning in the mid-1760s and ending in the early 1840s.” A Dendrochronology study by Bill Flint of Historic Deerfield was inconclusive. There are too few core samples and comparable data from the area to date the building, though it raised the possibility of construction a decade or two later than the 1760s. A later date conflicts with the stylistic evidence, though, such as the exposed summer beams, wall paneling, sheathing styles and front stair details.

Their findings and techniques are of interest to all fans of old homes and anyone taking care of, or restoring, a historic property. The idiosyncrasies of construction they found may relate to other houses in the early community as well.

# Bidwell Volunteers Rock!

*Thank you to all who gave so generously of your time and talents to the Museum this year\**

## Docents: Tour Guides of Distinction

Maggie Barkin, Nancy Jones and interns Ella Carlson, Jacob Makuc, Joseph Makuc, Justin Makuc, Marya Makuc, Aidan Santos, and Alexis Shumsky.

## Program Presenters: Inspiring Love of History, Craft and Nature

Jonah Bader, Butler's Rangers, John Demos, Bernard Drew, Bill Finch, Devin Franklin of Flying Deer Nature Center, Ruth Green, Richard Greene, Bonney Hartley, Rob Hoogs, Wendy Jensen, Steve and Ian McAlister, David M. Powers, Diane Taraz, Tom Wessels, Rachel Wheeler, Michael White, and Richard Bidwell Wilcox

## Gardens, Grounds, Trails and Buildings Stewards

JoAnn Bell, John Demos, Ray Coddington, Jan & George Emmons, Christine Goldfinger, Ruth Green, Richard Greene, Rob & Cindy Hoogs, Nancy Jones, Frank, Julie & Adam Kern, Joann Larsen, Eileen Mahoney, Doug McTavish, Jeff Mosher, Rosalia Padilla, Lauria Puntin, Kathryn & Marc Roberts, Tom Reeves, Pat Salomon, Steve & June Seiser, Beth Timlege, Barbara Tryon, Steve Weisz, Michael, Rachel & Michaela White, Rick Wilcox, Libby Wolf

## Party Hosts Extraordinaire

Mark Sena & Linda Saul-Sena and Walter & Mary Jo Engels hosted fabulous anniversary fundraising parties. Malinka & Ken Jackson and Marsha Norman graciously opened their homes. Chef Michael Keith provided fabulous food, with assistance from Ronald Skrepich, Eileen Mahoney and Kathryn & Marc Roberts.

## Township Day Champions

Maggie Barkin, Kenn Basler, François Benistand, Russ Breeden, Ella Carlson, Sal Correnti, Delight & Paul Dodyk, George Emmons, Christine Goldfinger, Ruth Green, Emma Haskell, Rob Hoogs, Sarah Hudson, Tommie Hutto-Blake, Wendy Jensen, Nancy Jones, Michael Keith & Ronald Skrepich, Julie & Frank Kern, Elaine Lynch, Mary, Marya, Jacob, Joe & Justin Makuc, Mashu, Steve & Ian McAlister, Julie & Doug Neu, Rosalia Padilla, Caroline, Henrik, William & Tonio Palmer, Mimi Parker, Matt Puntin, Alyssa Puntin, Adam Roberts, Kathryn & Marc Roberts, Maria Rundle, Pat Salomon, Gil Schrank, Eric Schulz, Lexi Shumsky, Barbara Tryon, Rachel & Mike White, Rick Wilcox, Monterey Historical Society, Tyringham Historical Commission, and Butler's Rangers

## Summer Party Volunteers and Auction Donors

Michael & Maureen Banner, Dan Barber, Maggie Barkin, Barbara Bell, D. JoAnn Bell, Christopher Blair, Sydney & Charles Brandwein, Cafe Adam, Ella Carlson, Castle Street Cafe, Lindsay Codwise, Scott Cole, Virginia Demos, Delight Dodyk, Steve & Ruth Dube, Mary Jo & Walter Engels, Beth Feeman, Beth Fletcher, Charles Flint, Damian Gatterburg, Jean & Wendy Germain, Ruth Green, Christine & Ron Goldfinger, Esther Heffernan, Rob & Cindy Hoogs, Carole & Gordon Hyatt, Jane Iredale, Malinka Jackson, Nancy Jones, Christa Lindsay, Mary Makuc, Justin Makuc, Marya Makuc, Joseph Makuc, Jacob Makuc, Doug McTavish, Marshall Messer, Rick & Debra Mielke, Steven Moore, Lynda Mulvey, Marsha Norman, Old Inn on the Green, Tonio & William Palmer, Paperdilly, Pearls Fitness, Red Lion Inn, Kathryn & Marc Roberts, Hy Rosen, Pat Salomon, Joyce Scheffey, Karen Shreefter, Alexis Shumsky, Nancy Jones & Gil Schrank, Marty & Jane Schwartz, Linda & Mark Sena, Julie Shapiro, Ski Butternut, Michael Keith & Ronald Skrepich, SoCo Creamery, Jamie Swirsky, Beth Timlege, Barbara Tryon, Michael Wainwright, Cliff Weiss, Steven Weisz, Michael & Rachel White, Rick Wilcox, Libby Wolf, Mary Paul Yates, Pat Yearwood

## Thanksgiving Party Volunteers and Auction Donors

Michael & Maureen Banner, Maggie Barkin, JoAnn Bell & Doug McTavish, Scott Cole, Delight Dodyk, George & Jan Emmons, Walter & Mary Jo Engels, Charlie & Joy Flint, Christine Goldfinger, Gould Farm, Rocky Greenberg & Susan Popper, Richard Greene, Rob & Cindy Hoogs, Sarah Hudson, Nancy Jones, Marsha Norman, Marc & Kathryn Roberts, Ronald Skrepich & Michael Keith, Vito Vitrano, MaryPaul Yates

## Photographers with an Eye for Beauty

Walter Engels, Charlie Flint, Rob Hoogs, Malinka Jackson, Frank Kern, and Arthur Provenz

*\* Please forgive the Museum if we forgot anyone. It's not the Museum's fault, it's the fallible staff. We are grateful to all of you!*



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[www.bidwellhousemuseum.org](http://www.bidwellhousemuseum.org)



*A fall visitor*



*Founding members, trustees and staff honored at 25th anniversary opening celebration*

## 2015-16 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Robert Hoogs, President*
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- Christa Lindsay*
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- Michael White*
- Richard Bidwell Wilcox*

## MUSEUM STAFF

- Barbara Palmer, Executive Director*
- Heather Kowalski, Administrative Manager*
- Rosalia Padilla, Caretaker*

### High School Students: Museum Offers Internships

*Thanks to the Great Barrington, Lenox and Monterey Cultural Councils and generous private donors, the museum will offer two-week stipended internships in Summer 2016. To learn more and to apply, please go to the museum's website.*

**Application Deadline: April 30th**

❧ Save the Date: Township No. 1 Day! ❧

**Celebration of Local History - Saturday, July 2, 1 - 4 pm**