



The Bidwell House Museum

Newsletter

Fall 2014

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.

Museum Celebrates 25th Anniversary in 2015

It was 25 years ago that Jack Hargis and David Brush's wish to turn their lovingly restored home and exquisite collection into a museum for the community and for visitors from near and far became a reality. Hargis and Brush had bought the house in 1960 and spent over 20 years carefully restoring the structure and building a collection of early American antiques to furnish it. Thanks to the stewardship of the museum leaders and the generosity and support of the community, the museum thrives today, celebrating the 265-year history of the house and town. Museum board and staff are planning anniversary events all year long to celebrate this gift of history, culture and open-space landscape.

Twenty five years is a mere blink measured by the almost 300 years of stories the museum tells about the founding and early life of the southern Berkshires. For a non-profit organization, however, a quarter century is a major milestone. It confirms the importance

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Museum Awarded Two Major Grants

The Bidwell House Museum is proud and honored to announce that it has been awarded grants totaling \$60,000 this summer. The museum was awarded \$30,000 by the Massachusetts Historical Commission to fund a Historic Structure Report and plans for roof replacement and accessibility improvements. The museum also received a \$30,000 Cultural Facilities Fund grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council toward the construction of the roof replacement.

These are the largest grant awards the museum has received to date, underscoring the significance of the museum as a center of education about early Berkshire history for tourists and community members alike.

"These grants are helping us to address essential building needs," according to Rob Hoogs, President of the museum's board. "The cedar shingle roof is leaking and must be replaced

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A Look Back at a Great 2014 Season

Turn to pages 4 and 5 to see photographs of memorable moments at the Bidwell House this year.

Historic Barn Donated by Berkshire Historical Society

The Bidwell House Museum is thrilled to announce the gift of an 1850s carriage barn frame to the museum from the Berkshire Historical Society at Arrowhead in Pittsfield. The barn originally stood in Westfield, Massachusetts, and was acquired by the Berkshire Historical Society a number of years ago. Upon study, the Society's board determined that the barn was not suitable for the purpose they had hoped. Board member Charlie Flint suggested that they consider donating it to the Bidwell House Museum.

"We have dreamed for years of building a barn on the Bidwell property so we could host education programs here," noted Barbara Palmer, Executive Director. "When Betsy Sherman and Will Garrison from Arrowhead contacted us, our prayers had been heard. Board members Mike White and Rob Hoogs agreed that

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Thank You, 2014 Business Supporters

- Please patronize these generous Berkshire businesses -

Alarms of Berkshire County	John B. Hull, Inc.
Anonymous	Jacob's Pillow
Baba Louie's	Kwik Print
Kate Baldwin Catering	Mahaiwe Tent
Benchmark Real Estate	Mahaiwe Theater
Berkshire Fringe	Monterey Masonry
Berkshire Museum	Monterey General Store
Blantyre	The Mount
The Bookloft	Mt. Everett Sanitation
The Bookstore, Lenox	Norman Rockwell Museum
Brockman Real Estate	No. Six Depot
Café Adam	Paperdilly
Cain, Hibbard & Myers	Peter Vallianos, Esq.
Cakewalk Bakery & Cafe	Prairie Whale
Canyon Ranch	Salisbury Bank
Carlson Propane	Shakespeare & Co.
Cranwell Resort, Spa & Golf Club	Erik O.F. Schutz Cabinetmaker
Dana Bixby Architecture	Synergistic Designs, LLC by Michael Keith
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Charles Flint Fine Art & Antiques	Wells Fargo Private Bank
Foresight Land Services	Wheeler & Taylor
Gedney Farm	Michael White Contractors
Guido's	Woodruff Mountain Landscaping, LLC
Heller & Robbins	

Museum Remembers Nancy Dinan

Long-time Bidwell House Museum board member Nancy Dinan of New Marlborough died in March at the age of 87.

Nancy served on the Bidwell board for 17 years. Nancy helped guide the museum from its start-up phase to stability as a Berkshire institution, supporting founding board members Jack Jefferson, Bill Brockman and David Walker-Price. Her knowledge of real estate, non-profits, the Berkshire community, and her great business sense were invaluable to the museum board. Nancy served on the Membership and Program committees and chaired the Jack Jefferson Memorial Fund.

Nancy leaves her husband, John, two children, six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

The museum is grateful to Nancy and her family for the many years of her thoughtful guidance and support.



Welcome New Board Member Rick Wilcox

At its annual meeting in May, the Bidwell House Museum board elected Richard Bidwell Wilcox to a three-year term on the museum board.

As a seventh generation descendant of Adonijah Bidwell and a history buff, Rick brings great expertise to the museum, particularly to the Program and Collections committees. Rick grew up in Stockbridge, and he worked for the Stockbridge police department for 43 years. He recently retired, after 28 years as chief of police.

Rick serves on a number of Berkshire non-profit boards, including the Norman Rockwell Museum and the Stockbridge Library. He is married to Dr. Joyce Butler and lives in Great Barrington.



Photo at left: New Trustee Rick Wilcox, second from left, with visitor Shirley Clute, far left, who served as first executive director of the Bidwell House Museum from 1990 to 92, Board Chair Rob Hoogs, and board member and fellow Bidwell descendant Paula Moats.

Barnabas Bidwell: America's William Wilberforce? By Rick Wilcox

Adonijah Bidwell's son Congressman Barnabas Bidwell (1761-1833), often a dinner guest of President Thomas Jefferson, was one of two floor managers in the House of Representatives for the President. As floor manager, he was often referred to as "the sworn interpreter of executive messages." Bidwell appears to have played a significant role in the passage of the bill that ended the importation of slaves into the United States.

William Wilberforce (24 August 1759 – 29 July 1833) was an English politician, philanthropist, and a leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade. He began his political career in 1780, eventually becoming the independent Member of Parliament for Yorkshire (1784–1812). In 1785, he underwent a conversion experience and became an evangelical Christian, which resulted in major changes to his lifestyle and a lifelong concern for reform. He headed the parliamentary campaign against the British slave trade for 26 years until the passage of the Slave Trade Act of 1807.

Both Bidwell and Wilberforce were products of the *Age of Enlightenment*, that cultural movement of intellectuals beginning in late 17th-century Europe emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition. With its purpose to reform society through the use of reason, to challenge ideas grounded in tradition and faith, and to advance knowledge through the scientific method, it helped to spark the American and French revolutions while creating a significant shift in many people's attitude toward slavery.

Puritan New England had long found biblical justification for slavery. Some 18th-century wills listed cattle and Negro servants in the same sentence.

Mary Gray Bidwell, wife of Barnabas Bidwell, was also a child of the Age of Enlightenment and was provided a liberal education while living at the Watertown, MA home of her uncle Dr. Marshall Spring. Those influences appear to be reflected in the letters between Mary and Barnabas Bidwell, quoted below.

"The subject of importing slaves I observe is brought up at your board. I am confident you will oppose with your utmost energy this wicked inhuman traffic. Assuredly this is first in the black catalogue of our crimes as a nation, and it must soon draw down the vengeance of an offended righteous God, not only upon the barbarous wretches who barter human flesh, their fellow men! – But upon all who do not bear testimony against this abomination. 'Who stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but not be heard.' I should not perhaps have written so much upon this subject if I had not known that your sentiments, my dear friend, were perfectly congenial to mine upon this important point."

So wrote Mary Gray Bidwell on December 23, 1805 in one of a series of letters between Mary and her husband while he served the First Western District of Massachusetts in Congress.

Barnabas Bidwell appears to have come from an equally enlightened environment. Both Rev. Adonijah Bidwell's will and his death inventory are free of any mention of slaves, suggesting any help he had was hired and labored for wages. Barnabas' words and deeds, found below, seem to support that contention.

Washington, February 5, 1806 from Barnabas:

"Yesterday the House was engaged in debating Mr. Sloan's Bill for laying a duty of ten dollars a head on the importation of slaves into the United States. I moved an additional section, to prohibit the importation after the last day of December 1807, and assigned my reasons at large. It was opposed, as inexpedient, and also upon a doubt as to the constitutionality of legislating on the subject, until the year 1808."

Washington, March 7, 1806:

"Day before yesterday Mr. Gregg's Non-Importation Resolution was called into discussion. Mr. Gregg opened the debate by a sensible speech in favour of the Resolution. Mr. Clay followed on the other side. He was succeeded by Mr. Crowninshield, in support, and Mr. J. Randolph in opposition. Mr. Randolph was near three hours. His speech was a most violent declamation, in which he attacked the present and former administration, Republicans and Federalist, friends and foes. He alluded satirically to what had passed with closed doors. Declaimed much against France and Spain and applauded Great Britain.

He condemned our neutral carrying trade as fraudulent and not worthy of protection. Yesterday the debate was renewed. Mr. Nathan Williams of New York, Skinner's brother-in-law, made a handsome speech, in favour of the Resolution, and Mr. Masters against it. Mr. Smilie made an excellent speech in support of it and Mr. J. Randolph, a long speech against it. The debate will be renewed this day. So many gentlemen appear impatient to speak, I shall not speak, I believe, today. The Federalists are opposed to the measure. Many of the Southern Planters think it will affect the market of their cotton and tobacco. I do not expect a majority in favour of this Resolution; but I hope some efficient measure will be adopted. My attention is now required, and I must say, my dearest friend, adieu. B. Bidwell"

On December 2, 1806, in his annual message to Congress, widely reprinted in newspapers, President Thomas Jefferson denounced the "violations of human rights" attending the international slave trade and called for its criminalization on the first day that was possible (January 1, 1808). He said:

"I congratulate you, fellow-citizens, on the approach of the period at which you may interpose your authority constitutionally, to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all further participation in those violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country, have long been eager to proscribe."

**Rick Wilcox's article continues on the Museum's website.
Read on at www.bidwellhousemuseum.org**

Memorable Moments . . .



Musket firing by Butler's Rangers at Township No. 1 Day



Colonists-for-the-day Rob Hoogs and grandson Aiden at Township Day



Butler's Rangers explain life in a Revolutionary War encampment to curious young visitors



Wendy Jensen teaches basketweaving at Township No. 1 Day



A young basketweaver at work



Enjoying Township Day old-fashioned refreshments: Mary Jo Engels, Ronald Skrepich, Michael Keith and Kathryn Roberts



Moonshine Holler's Paula Bradley and Bill Dillof playing at Township Day thanks to the Tyringham Cultural Council



Caroline Palmer face-painting at Township Day



Board member Mike White demonstrating timberframing, wood-working and vintage tools at Township No. 1 Day



Ian McAlister demonstrating iron forging



Tyringham's historic rakes on display



Steadman Pond hikers enjoying a rest at the Museum

... from the Past Year



Diane Taraz singing and playing songs from the American Revolution on guitar and lap dulcimer at the Opening Party



Intern Justin Makuc keeping an eye on weaponry at Township No. 1 Day



Members and friends celebrating the arrival of Mary Grey Bidwell's portrait



The welcoming party for Mary Gray Bidwell, whose beautiful portrait was donated to the museum by John and Judy Herdeg



Member Charles Wales repairing the Museum's spinning wheel



Royal Hemlock Trail hikers with Richard Greene, heading off on a beautiful fall day in the steps of the early settlers



Docent Cory Hines explaining 1750s home life to visitors in the Bidwell House keeping room



Daniel Dillon & Annie Shaver-Crandell, artists in period attire at the summer party



Rob Hoogs, Frank & Julie Kern, Gilbert Schrank, Pat Salomon, Christine Goldfinger, Kathryn Roberts, Nancy Jones, and Ben Ketcham arriving at the Art School party



Partners Aaron Nurick, Diane Austin, and David & Susan Fedo



Hosts Jane & Marty Schwartz



Party guys Don Welsch, Dick Tryon, Charles Brandwein and Steve Weisz

Meet Kavi, New Bidwell Resident

On your next walk on the museum grounds you might have the pleasure of meeting Kavi, the newest resident of the Manse. Kavi is a friendly one-year-old shepherd-yellow lab mix, and hails from Alabama. She was adopted by head docent Rosalia Padilla and her daughter Danika, and is joyfully exploring the Bidwell trails and forest.



Museum Celebrates 25th Anniversary in 2015

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of the museum's contribution to the story of the Berkshires and its historic significance. This is something to celebrate!

Special people made the museum happen: Foremost are the founding board members: Bill Brockman, Jack Jefferson and David Walker-Price. They incorporated, organized and led the museum in its first decade. Their foresight laid the foundation for a successful ongoing enterprise in a most unusual spot: in the middle of the forest, far off the nearest paved road and miles from the nearest village. They hired first staff: Shirley Clute, Lisa Simpson, and Anita Carroll-Weldon.

Second decade board leaders included Maria Carvains, Robert Duffy, and Kathryn Roberts. Executive Directors in the new millennium were David Dashiell, Brian O'Grady, Candace Thayer, and Martha Dailey, assisted by Heather Oakes, Suzanne Gould, Esther Heffernan, Joanna Jennings, Pam Johnson, Christine Caccamo, Virginia Davidson and Robert Oakes. Each staff member contributed his or her gifts toward the museum's success. Scholarship, studies, reports and exhibit designs of past employees continue to shape the museum experience today. They have become part of the Bidwell House Museum's story.

Current board president Rob Hoogs with staffers Barbara Palmer, Eileen Mahoney and Rosalia Padilla are charting a course for the next decade. Future plans include reconfiguring the visitor welcome space and building a barn for education programs.

How will the museum celebrate a quarter century of history? Stay tuned, the spring newsletter will be chock full of plans for the anniversary year.

Historic Barn Donated by Berkshire Historical Society

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the barn's size is perfect for our needs," explained Palmer. The museum is in the process of having the storage trailer containing the beams moved to the Bidwell property. "Then it is only a matter of time and the gifts of angels until the museum has an education barn," noted Palmer. "The beams provide the frame, and we will need a foundation, roof and siding too."

The Bidwell House Museum is grateful to the Berkshire Historical Society for the generous donation, and to Charlie Flint for facilitating this gift to the museum.



The donated barn on its original site in Westfield

Museum Awarded Two Major Grants

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with historically appropriate roofing. The new roof needs to be designed to minimize ice damming and premature aging." The MHC grant will also fund designs for accessibility and future museum maintenance needs. Executive Director Barbara Palmer explained: "I am particularly excited about this. We hope to improve the visitor experience for everyone, with a better entry and comfortable welcome room and rest rooms, without altering the historic exterior."

"It is the museum's wonderful members and supporters that made this possible," noted Hoogs. "The grants are contingent on raising matching funds, and the museum's friends are pulling together to make it happen." Both grants require 1-to-1 matches, and the museum is more than half way toward raising them. Work on the Historic Structure Report is beginning this fall. "I am thrilled and grateful," said Palmer.

The museum plans to proceed with these improvements in three steps: 1. assessment, study and design this fall and winter; 2. Rebuilding of the roof next fall; and 3. Visitor enhancements and accessibility improvements in the following year—pending funding.

Bidwell Volunteers Rock!

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

*You are the reason the Museum is thriving!**

Docents: Tour Guides of Distinction

Maggie Barkin, Cory Hines, Nancy Jones and interns Ella Carlson, Eliza Fawcett, Emily Halford, Ben Ketcham, Jacob Makuc, Joseph Makuc, Justin Makuc, Marya Makuc, Madelinne Pope, Alexis Shumsky, and Samantha Twing

Program Presenters: Inspiring Love of History, Craft and Nature

Adam Brown, Butler's Rangers, John Demos, Charlie Flint, John Graney, Ruth Green, Richard Greene, Samuel Herrup, Rob Hoogs, Wendy Jensen, Nicholas Marshall, Steve and Ian McAlister, Barbara Swann, Diane Taraz, Rachel Urquhart, Wendy Warren, 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, Doug McTavish, Jeff Mosher, Rosalia Padilla, Lauria Puntin, Kathryn & Marc Roberts, Tom Reeves, Pat Salomon, Steve Seiser, Beth Timlege, Barbara Tryon, Steve Weisz, Michael, Rachel & Michaela White, Rick Wilcox, Libby Wolf



Board chair Rob Hoogs painting

Party Hosts Extraordinaire

Malinka & Ken Jackson, Marsha Norman, Jane & Marty Schwartz, and Mark Sena & Linda Saul-Sena graciously opened their homes. Chefs Michael Keith and Muriel Lazzarini provided fabulous food, with assistance from Ronald Skrepich, Bob Lazzarini, Eileen Mahoney and Kathryn & Marc Roberts.

Township Day Champions

Maggie Barkin, Kenn Basler, Ella Carlson, Sal Correnti, Delight & Paul Dodyk, George Emmons, Charlie Flint, Ruth Green, Emma Haskell, Cory Hines, Rob Hoogs, Sarah Hudson, Wendy Jensen, Nancy Jones, Michael Keith & Ronald Skrepich, Julie & Frank Kern, Ben Ketcham, Muriel Lazzarini, Dennis Lynch, Marya, Jacob, Joe & Justin Makuc, Rosemary, Steve & Ian McAlister, Rosalia Padilla, Caroline Palmer, Tonio Palmer, Mimi Parker, Madelinne Pope, Kathryn & Marc Roberts, Pat Salomon, Barbara Swann, Rachel & Mike White, Terry Wing, Monterey Historical Society, Tyringham Historical Commission, and Butler's Rangers

Summer Party Volunteers and Auction Donors

Christina Alsop, Karen Anderson, Michael & Maureen Banner, Maggie Barkin, D. JoAnn Bell, Eliza Blanchard, Catherine Bohrman, Sydney & Charles Brandwein, Asa Cade, Ella Carlson, Scott Cole, Diana Deacon, Catherine Deely, Delight Dodyk, Steve & Ruth Dube, Eliza Fawcett, Chapin Fish, Charles Flint, Jean & Wendy Germain, Ruth Green, Christine & Ron Goldfinger, Emily Halford, Esther Heffernan, Cory Hines, Rob & Cindy Hoogs, Beryl Jolly, Malinka Jackson, Nancy Jones, Benjamin Ketcham, Robert & Muriel Lazzarini, Christa & Charlotte Lindsay, Yvette Lucas, Mary Makuc, Justin Makuc, Marya Makuc, Joseph Makuc, Jacob Makuc, Nicole McManmon, Doug McTavish, Paula Leuchs Moats, Marsha Norman, Madeline Pope, Kathryn & Marc Roberts, Pat Salomon, Joyce Scheffey, Alexis Shumsky, Nancy Jones & Gil Schrank, Marty & Jane Schwartz, Robert Oakes & Kate Smith, Linda & Mark Sena, Julie Shapiro, Michael Keith & Ronald Skrepich, Beth Timlege, Samantha Twing, Barbara Tryon, Roger Tryon, Lisa Verschorr, Kristin von Korff, Steven Weisz, Michael & Rachel White, Elizabeth Wolf, Mary Paul Yates, Pat Yearwood

Photographers with an Eye for Beauty

Malinka Jackson, Walter Engels, Ilan Bachrach, Charlie Flint, Rob Hoogs, and Frank Kern

Scouts Serving the Community

Alex Johnson of Tyringham built a kiosk for the museum with his scout troop as Alex's Eagle Scout project. Troop members participating are Garret and his dad Bill Roche, John and Gus Free, Michael Roosa, Devon and his dad Damian Katt, Nick Langley, and Alex's brother Sam and dad Chris Johnson. The troop is also building trail bridges this fall. Thank you!



Eagle Scout Alex Johnson of Tyringham with the new kiosk he is building for the museum

** 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! Thank you.*

The Bidwell House Museum

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www.bidwellhousemuseum.org



The Bidwell House Museum

Our Colonial Holiday of Thanksgiving

A fund-raising party
Saturday, November 29, 4-7pm

- A 7-course sampling menu of autumn delicacies created just for you by Muriel Lazzarini & Bistro Box
- Bonner McAllester & Joe Baker on hammer dulcimer and guitar
- Wine, beer & Adonijah's Ciderjack
- Silent auction of gifts and treasures

2014 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Kathryn Roberts, Vice President
Paula Leuchs Moats, Secretary
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Delight Dodyk
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Charles Flint
Christine Goldfinger
Richard Greene, MD
Joseph P. Gromacki
Nancy Jones
Franklin R. Kern
Christa Lindsay
Michael White
Richard Bidwell Wilcox

MUSEUM STAFF

Barbara Palmer, Executive Director
Eileen Mahoney, Administrative Manager
Rosalia Padilla, Caretaker