

Several years ago, when the Billerica Historical Society transformed the Clara Sexton House on Concord Road into a representation of daily life throughout its 300-year history, they knew that space to display their many artifacts would be limited. But they also knew they had an attached barn, which was unheated and mostly unused, and the idea to create a barn museum was born.

On Sept. 24, the nonprofit group gathered to celebrate the house's three centuries and to open the restored barn, naming it after the late Margaret Ingraham, Billerica town historian for many years who passed away in 2012. A retired teacher, Margaret was appointed town historian by the then-Board of Selectmen in 1992. In 1996, she was given the Distinguished Community Service Award by the same governing body.

"Margaret served as a human reference in the days before Google," said Billerica Historical Society board member Richard Hawes. "She was a great inspiration to many in the town and kept our local history alive."

The Margaret Ingraham Museum of Billerica History was made possible by Community Preservation Act funding and a grant from the state. The all-volunteer group spent many hours cleaning out 150 years of dirt from the barn. Now, it's a bright and welcoming space with display cases for many pieces of history.

The barn museum now provides climate control to preserve many of the delicate artifacts, something they never had before.

Alec Ingraham, Margaret's son, who has followed in his mother's footsteps and serves as town historian as well as a member of many boards and commissions that focus on history, said he was touched by the honor bestowed upon his late mother. "I had no idea they would name it after her," he said.

At the museum's opening and house celebration, John Bartlett, president of the Billerica Historical Society, gave a talk on the 300-year-history of the Clara Sexton House, which is located at 36 Concord Road, while Hawes described the inspiration and journey to making the Margaret Ingraham Museum a reality.

The Billerica Historical Society opens the Clara Sexton House and Margaret Ingraham Museum to the public during monthly open houses and special events. For more information [Contact Us](#).