

SUMMER 2022

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Fellow members,

The Billerica Historical Society continues to hold Open Houses on the first Sunday each month.

Board member, Diane Douglas, coordinated our successful Vintage Tea fundraiser in May. Almost \$1,200 was raised.

BHS will have a booth at Yankee Doodle at the High School on Saturday, September 17. We hope you will stop by and see us.

We will also have a booth at the Billerica Farmers' Market in front of the Senior Center on Concord Road on Monday afternoon, October 10.

At both the Farmers' Market and Yankee Doodle, we will have the 1923 Time Capsule to display.



The grand opening of the box will be at our annual meeting next year on Oct. 27, 2023.

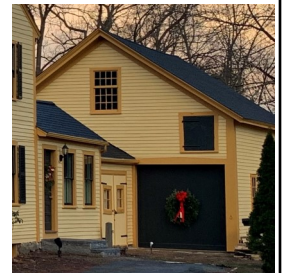
Our latest fundraiser is to offer the chance to write your name and a brief message in an archival book to be placed in a new 2123 time capsule. This is a unique opportunity to make your

mark in the future. The cost will be \$5 per entry. You can find us at the Farmers' Market, Yankee Doodle, or at open houses, to be able to write in the book.

Let us know if you have any suggestions of items to include in the 2123 time capsule.

The 2022 Annual Meeting will be held at the Bennett Public Library on October 23 from 4-7 PM. Matthew Ahern will speak about "Billerica and the Industrial Revolution." The menu will include: appetizers, sandwiches, salads, and desserts. The cost is \$25 per person. Send your check to Billerica Historical Society, PO Box 381, Billerica, MA 01821.

The restoration and installation of climate control of the Clara Sexton Barn, using Community Preservation Committee funds, will be commencing soon. We expect to have the project completed this year. Robert Scott is our general contractor. The barn has been cleared out and artifacts have been stored. BHS vice-president, Dick Hawes, is overseeing this project.



The BHS Board has formed a committee to start planning next year's activities for the 300th anniversary of the Clara Sexton House and the opening of the restored barn as a museum. Anyone interested in joining the committee should let me know.

We continue to make upgrades in the Clara Sexton House. Board member Rich Kunicki has been coordinating these efforts. Your generous contributions have allowed us to make these improvements.

Regards John Bartlett

Ozeline Wise and the Galehurst Guest House

by Alec Ingraham



Ozeline Wise courtesy of Martha Mayo UML

Ozeline Barrett Pearson was born in Worcester, MA in 1902 the daughter of Frances Lavinia (Gale) and William B. Pearson. Her father had recently moved to Worcester from Jamaica, where Ozeline's grandfather had been an enslaved person. She grew up in Michigan and later in Cambridge, MA, where she graduated from high school. Her father, for many years, was the pastor of the city's St. Paul African Methodist Church. Although she planned to attend college,

the death of her father changed her ambition. She took the Civil Service Examination for employment with the United States Postal Service. Despite receiving a high score on the examination, she was denied employment, not as a consequence of being African American, but as a consequence of her gender. She subsequently worked as a clerk stenographer.

In 1931. Ozeline married John Wise an African American, who was employed at the time as a chef at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. John was born in Cambridge, MA in 1904. In 1936, Ozeline purchased a first period colonial home on Concord Road in Billerica, MA from the Home Owners Loan Association. The couple would soon open Galehurst Guest House, which was primarily operated during the summer months. It was the only tourist facility in the local area recommended for African American Travelers in the *Negro Traveler's Green Book*.

Most reports indicate that they operated the inn for a period of seventeen years. An item in a 1940 issue of the *Lowell Sun* reports that Ozeline and John planned to spend the winter at

Galehurst. Their ownership of the colonial house was not without some difficulties. In February of 1941, a fire of undetermined origin broke out in the dining room of the establishment. The blaze worked its



Deacon Samuel Hill House Circa 1725

way into the ceiling and burned a large hole in the second floor, however quick work by the Billerica Fire Department saved the house from ruin. In 1955, when the "new Route #3," a four-lane divided highway, was pushed through Billerica, its path came perilously close to Galehurst. A portion of Ozeline's property was taken to accommodate the endeavor, which included an over pass and an interchange at Concord Road. Doubtless the noise from the construction deterred tourists from this once idyllic spot.

IN PATRONIZING THESE PLACES

- COLORADO**
PINE CLIFF
 Wink's Panorama Lodge
- CONNECTICUT**
WEST HAVEN
 Dadd's Hotel—359 Beach St.
 Sea View Hotel—392 Beach St.
 Home of Hawkins—372 Beach St.
- DELAWARE**
MILLSBORO
 Rosedale Beach
- FRANKFORD**
 Brlarwood Farm
- FLORIDA**
FERNANDINA
 Hotel American Beach—P. O. Box 195
- MAINE**
OGUNQUIT
 Viewland
- GARDNER**
 Pond View—R.F.D. 1*A
- FAYETTE**
 Pine Cone Lodge—P.O. Box 12
- NORCROSS POND**
 Lodge Norcross
- WEST SCARBOROUGH**
 Elcia Acres—Rt. 1
 Spring Hill Farm—R.F.D. 1
- SACO**
 Coley Acres—Portland St.
- MARYLAND**
ANNAPOLIS
 Carr's Beach
 Sparrows' Point—P.O. Box 266
- BENEDICT**
 Violet Belles Hotel
- COLTON**
 Shirley K. Hotel
- WESTMINSTER**
 Scarletts Country Club
- MASSACHUSETTS**
BILLERICA
 Galehurst—P.O. Box 583
- CANTON**
 Peter Pan House—808 West St.
 Whispering Willow—808 West St.
- CAPE COD**
 Osterville—Box 488
 The Root—P. O. Box 488
- EAST BROOKFIELD**
 Camp Atwater
- FALMOUTH HEIGHTS**
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 The Guest House—P. O. Box 60
- NORWELL**
 Norwell Pines—P.O. Box 234
- OAK BLUFFS**
THE O'BRIEN HOUSE
 220-222 CIRCUIT AVE.
 Shearer Cottage
 Scott's Cottage—P.O. Box 1131
 Maxwell Cottage
 Cinderella Club—35 Pequot Ave.
 Maxwell Cottage—P. O. Box 1354
 Lill & Della Cottage—School Street
- VINEYARD HAVEN**
 Araujo Rooms—P.O. Box 518
- SAGAMORE BEACH HIGHLANDS**
 Wagon Wheels
- STOCKBRIDGE, MASS.**
 PARK VIEW HOUSE
 PARK STREET
- WAREHAM**
 Clipper Cabins—294 Elm St.
- WEST HYANNIS**
 West Hyannis Port—Craryville Rd.
- WILLIAMSTOWN**
 Hart's Camp
- MINNESOTA**
PINE RIVER
 Ware's Resort—50 Lakes Rt.
- BACKUS**
 Pine Mountain Camp
- NEW YORK STATE**
ALLABEN
 Camp Bryton Rock
- ATHENS**
 Riverview—R.F.D. 1

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Copy of Page from the *Negro Traveler's Green Book* Courtesy of Martha Mayo UML

The couple had no children of their own but adopted an African American boy, Hubert (Smith) Wise. He graduated from Billerica High School in 1958. While attending he participated on the football, basketball, and baseball teams all four years, serving the last year as manager. He also ran track during his junior year and acted with the drama club. During lunch hour he and several other boys acted as DJ's spinning platters for the entertainment of their classmates as they dined. After graduation Hubert entered the construction industry. At the time of his marriage to Eleanor J. Ey, in 1961, he was employed as a shovel operator.

John passed away unexpectedly in Billerica in 1963 after which Ozeline left the Town and moved to Cambridge to live with and later care for her sister. By this time Galehurst had presumably stopped accepting guests. In 1969, Ozeline's Billerica property was rezoned from rural residential to industrial. Shortly thereafter, John Graham, a local developer purchased Galehurst and made plans to demolish it.

Billerica voter registration records in 1950 list John and Ozeline as living on Concord Road. He was employed as a custodian at a college and she was listed as a housewife. About this time, she accepted a position, which she held for some twenty years, in the banking department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She was the first woman of color to be so employed. While living with her sister, Satyra

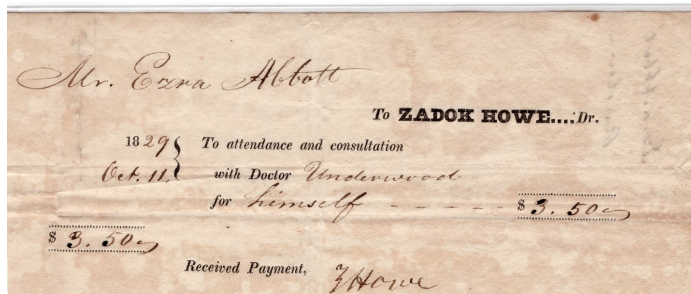
Bennett, they co-founded the Citizens Charitable Health Association and the Cambridge Community Center. Ozeline also supported other local civic groups and the church where her father was once the pastor.

With support of the Schlesinger Library, between 1976 and 1981, seventy-two black women, who had made significant contributions to American society during the first half of the 20th century were interviewed. Ozeline was honored as a participant with the Project.

Ozeline passed away in Cambridge in 1988. Among her many accomplishments one paragraph in her obituary reads: ...*She and her husband, John Wise, a chef, bought ...a colonial house in Billerica and converted it into an inn they called "Galehurst." The Wises were the second black family to live in Billerica and they maintained the house as a summer lodging and restaurant until 1960.*

As for the Galehurst, the house was purchased from John Graham by Dr. Charles E. Stearns, a historian and Hill family descendant. He moved the house out of harm's way to a nearby lot at 33 Riverhurst Road, where it sits today. As part of a 1990 thematic study of first period houses, the house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and attributed to its original owner Deacon Samuel Hill. The house was built circa 1725. Ozaline and John were among its many occupants.

A Medical Mystery
by Alec Ingraham



Although I rarely make a purchase on eBay, the name Zadok Howe on the receipt pictured above piqued my interest. My bid proved successful and a week later I received my prize via United States mail.

I wondered what I could discover about the three gentlemen whose names appeared on the receipt and what medical condition required treatment by two physicians. In 1829, medical care was much different than it is today. The word "Andover" on the obverse of the receipt provided a useful lead.

Unfortunately, I was unable to discover the nature of the illness or injury that Ezra Abbot suffered. Although there were members of the extended Abbot family living in Billerica at the time, the Abbots were among the early settlers of Andover. In 1829, there were at least three men with the

same appellation living with that town's bounds.

Ezra Abbot #1 (1761-1844) was 69 years old at the time. He was a farmer and the 6th generation of the Abbot family to occupy the family homestead, which was located along the Shawsheen River in the vicinity of the Pole Hill Reservation.

Ezra Abbot #2 (1808-1872) was 21 years old at the time. He was the son of Ezra #1. In future years he became a physician and established a successful practice in Hingham, MA.

Ezra Abbot #3 (1801-1890) was a farmer and 28 years old at the time. He was undoubtedly from a different branch of the Andover Abbot Family and related to Ezra #1 and #2.

It appears that Ezra #1 was probably the patient who needed medical care, however, that would be considered age discrimination. In any case the identity of the patient remains a mystery. A matter for extended research.

The physicians involved were Dr. Jonas Underwood who graduated from Harvard in 1815 and accomplished his three-year apprenticeship in Philadelphia before establishing his practice in Andover in 1823. Dr. Zadok Howe graduated from Dartmouth in 1809 and apprenticed in Concord, N.H. He practiced in Franklin, MA before establishing himself in Billerica in 1816. The medical training of both physicians met the accepted standard of the time, although the standards for doctor training in 1829 were in their infancy.

Whatever the malady that necessitated medical attention, the patient survived. In 1829, it was not uncommon for country physicians to be paid in kind, however, in this case, at least, \$3.50 paid to Dr. Howe for the consultation. Imagine today the fee for a consultation of this type would be approximately 115 time greater!



2022 Membership
Drive

Have you remembered to renew your membership in the historical society:

Senior is \$15
Individual is \$20
Family is \$30

Membership payment can be sent to:
Billerica Historical Society
PO Box 381
Billerica, MA 01821

We encourage you to invite a friend to join the society.

**Clara E. Sexton Memorial
House Museum,
circa 1723
Headquarters of the
Billerica Historical Society**

36 Concord Road
Billerica, MA 01821

(978)667-7020
Billericahistory.org



BHS Officers and Board 2021-2022

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Follow us on Facebook:

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Ways to Support the BHS

Due to COVID-19, many of you will be doing your shopping online with Amazon. If you use smile.amazon.com instead, you can designate the Billerica Historical Society as your charity of choice. (Smile.amazon.com IS Amazon.) Place your order as you always would but a portion of your purchase will go to the BHS every time you make a purchase. The BHS has received \$166.19 as of November 2021, from purchases made by folks like you.



Upcoming Events

Sept. 17: Booth at Yankee Doodle.
Oct. 10: Booth at Farmers Market

Monthly Open Houses:

First Sunday of the month, 1-3 PM

Be Watching for:

Historical Lectures at COA



Book & Gifts:

Hazen's History of Billerica	\$55.00
Sexton House Cookbook	\$3.00
Commemorative Spode Plate	\$10.00

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PO Box 381
Billerica, MA 01821