

FALL 2022

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



The Billerica Historical Society held its Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 23, 2022. John Bartlett summarized our 2022 activities and plans for 2023. Ann Stadtman presented the budget for 2023 and reviewed the income and expenses for 2022. Diane Douglas read the minutes from our 2022 meeting. We held our elections for 2023 Officers and

Board. Current members were reelected and Michele DeParasis was elected to the open Board position. (See below)



Matthew Ahern gave an interesting talk on the Industrial Revolution in Billerica. He focused on the 1800s and talked about the Middlesex Canal, the Billerica Bedford Railway, and Faulkner and Talbot Mills. He said that these industries changed Billerica, especially North Billerica, by bringing in hundreds of factory workers, many of them immigrants. We had a nice dinner and had time to mingle with other society members. The meeting was videoed by BATV so you may be able to see it on local cable.

John talked about the continuing open houses on the first Sunday of each month. In December our open house will be Saturday, Dec 3, the day of Billerica's Holiday Tree Lighting, from 3-7 PM. Open houses will not be held in the winter but will resume in April. John also discussed our booths at Yankee Doodle Homecoming in September and at the Farmers Market in October.

The Barn Restoration project is about to begin. Dick Hawes is managing this project for the Society. When completed next year, the restored barn will be climate controlled and designed to be an area to display artifacts. This project is



being funded by a Billerica Community Preservation grant for the restoration and a State grant obtained by Rep. Marc Lombardo for display cases, audio visual equipment, and furniture needed for the display area.

Next summer, we plan on having a celebration for the Grand Opening of the Barn and to commemorate the Sexton House 300th anniversary. Next October's Annual Meeting will mark 100 years since the society's time capsule was sealed. Once opened, we expect to find many letters, photos, Town of Billerica documents, and names of all Billerica students in 1923. We will then place current documents in the time capsule and reseal it. We are looking for ideas as to what should be included.



Mary Jones had BHS t-shirts made with the front having the society's insignia, while the back has the names of the 113 Billerica Minutemen who went to fight the British at Merriam's Corner in Concord on April 19, 1775. Instructions to purchase a t-shirt is on page 3 in this newsletter.

In 2022, our income from membership dues, fundraisers, gift shop sales, and donations covered most recurring expenses but we had to transfer \$1500 from savings to balance income with expenses. We expect our utilities costs will increase during 2023. We continue to look for ways to increase our income. Your generous contributions are still very much needed.

Please consider becoming a Preservation Patron in one of the following ways:

- Corner Stone \$1,000
- Landmark \$500
- Founders \$250
- Members \$100

Last year, your preservation contributions raised about \$5,034. These donations allowed us work toward balancing our Sexton House operational budget and was greatly appreciated.

Monetary donations can be sent to:  
 Billerica Historical Society  
 PO Box 381  
 Billerica, MA 01821



Regards, John Bartlett



**PINEHURST PARK 1918**

**Pinehurst Park  
By Virginia K. Maguire**

Pinehurst Park, built by Lowell and Boston Railway, was formally opened to the public in September 1901. The park, about 20 acres, was next to the Shawsheen River on Boston Road in Pinehurst where the present-day Pinehurst Park is located. The park was built to attract people from the cities to ride the trolleys to Billerica (specifically Pinehurst) and spend the day at a cool pine grove in the country. There were many attractions at the Park, which included picnic grounds, dozens of swings for the children, afternoon and evening band concerts, an outdoor bowling alley, and across a brook by a small bridge was a ballpark. At the top of a fifty-foot hill, surrounded by a beautiful pine grove, was a pavilion where refreshments were served, while broad verandas around the building furnished with plenty of rocking and easy chairs. The pavilion was also used as a dance hall and movie theater in later years. At the foot of the hill was the band stand and booths selling sodas and soft drinks.



The park became one of the most popular places in the vicinity between Lowell and Woburn, and

many fields and picnics were held there by various organizations. The fare from Woburn to Pinehurst was 5 cents. Many patrons were from Cambridge and Somerville.

According to James Shaw, a former resident of Pinehurst, Pinehurst Park enjoyed many years of prosperity and memories for thousands of visitors until the hurricane of 1938 literally wiped out the park, pavilion, and most beautiful pine grove.

**Middlesex Turnpike  
By Alec Ingham**



(Photo courtesy of Kevin Murphy)

On June 15, 1805, the Middlesex Turnpike was chartered by the State Legislature. Among the incorporators were James Abbott and Ebenezer Bridge, both of whom had associations with Billerica's history. The turnpike was designed as a toll road to provide safe, convenient travel between either Medford or Cambridge and Tyngsboro. Much controversy developed over the route selected by the incorporators and the Bedford leg was never accomplished. In an effort to resolve the disagreements, the route to Cambridge was



altered necessitating that the turnpike cross Nutting Lake in Billerica on a causeway which split the body of water nearly into two equal portions. By 1812, the turnpike road was in operation, but it never proved to be a financial success. By 1841, the pike's charter was revoked and the route was absorbed in the Middlesex County road system. The Middlesex Turnpike at Nuttings Lake and the closely surrounding area became a great summer resort for folks from the city a hundred years ago.

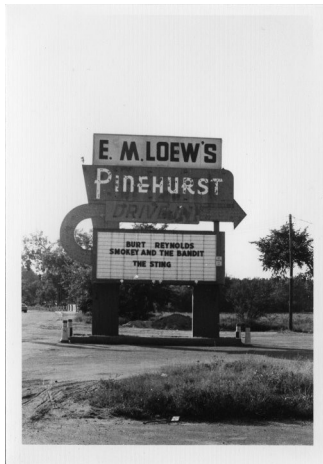


The historical society has Middlesex Turnpike Christmas ornaments for sale for \$5, including shipping. Send your request and check to :

Billerica Historical Society  
PO Box 381  
Billerica, MA 01821

### .The Pinehurst Drive-In by Alec Ingraham

After reading the article the September 13, 2021 issue of the *Lowell Sun* extolling the memories of drive-in theaters, I was surprised no reference was made to the Pinehurst Drive-In in Billerica. The establishment was opened by Aldrich Forward and James Sheeran on August 30, 1951. Two hundred invited guests attended on opening night. A full-page ad appeared in the *Lowell Sun* on August 19, 1951 heralding the opening of the drive-in which was located among the picturesque pines in Pinehurst. All the latest accoutrements had been incorporated into the venue during construction. Built-in location lights illuminated all the 6" speakers that were designed to afford a rich sound. This was the first time this had been done in Massachusetts. The setting included a snack bar/luncheonette for movie goers.



Among the first movies shown in technicolor was "The Lost Outpost" starring Ronald Reagan and

Rhona Fleming. Typical of the time, the movie had a western theme. News, a cartoon, and the "Bowery Battalion" were added attractions. In 1960, E. M. Loew's obtained an interest in the enterprise. In July of 1981, "Gas" was one of the final flicks shown on the big screen in Pinehurst. It starred Susan Anspach, Howie Mandel, and Sterling Hayden. This movie was a comedy parodying the late 1970's energy crisis.

A May 2, 1982 article in the *Boston Globe* reported that the E M Loews Pinehurst Drive-In closed that year. The 11-acre commercial site occupied by the Pinehurst Drive-In was advertised for sale in the *Globe* as early as April of 1981. A subsequent December 20, 1981, article reported that Gary Fagelman and Richard Pass of the Mutual Development Group of Newton had acquired the site. The plans included the construction of three two-story, brick, 60,000 square foot buildings which were designed by the Boston firm of Victor Vitols and Associates. The Burlington office of Nordbloom Company was elected broker.

### Billerica Minute Man T-shirts

The historical society is currently selling T-shirts with the BHS logo on the front and the list of the minutemen who marched to Merriam's Corner on April 19, 1775 on the back.



Sizes include:  
Men's - Medium,  
Large, XL - \$20

XXL, and XXXL - \$25

Women's V-neck -  
Medium, Large - \$25

To order, send request, size, number of shirts, cost of shirts plus \$5 for shipping to:

Billerica Historical Society  
PO Box 381  
Billerica, MA 01821



**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 2022-2023**

**Officers:**

President	John Bartlett
Vice President	Richard Hawes
Treasurer	Ann Stadtman
Secretary	Diane Douglas

**Directors:**

Cathy Burns	Alec Ingraham
Mary Jones	Richard Kunicki
Michele DeParasis	



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 \$173.65 as of June 2022, from purchases made by folks like you.



**Upcoming Events**

**Dec. 3: Victorian Christmas Open House, 4-7 PM**

**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	<b>\$10.00</b>

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