



The Billerica Historical Society *presents*

Yankee Doodle Times

A Quarterly Publication of Historic News and Events

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The Historical Society's mission is to acquire and preserve items of local interest as well as to inform and educate the town's citizens concerning Billerica's rich historical, cultural and architectural heritage.

“Threads of Time” Follows Fashion Throughout the Ages

It was a lazy, hazy, crazy day of summer when women from Billerica and surrounding communities gathered for a fashion show highlighting some of The Society's incredible collection of period clothing.



The event, held June 25th at the Clara Sexton house included displays and a Victorian tea, complete with delectable desserts.

Since last year, Billerica's 350th Anniversary celebration has brought together the descendants and stories of the town's forefathers, and some precious

One of those heirlooms was donated to the Billerica Historical Society, and became the inspiration for the special exhibit of the society's Victorian clothing, millinery and floral arrangements.



Mrs. Ellen Bennett Hazzard and her family from Seattle, Washington made a special visit to the Clara Sexton House during the town's 350th celebration. Ellen is a direct descendant of Joshua Bennett, benefactor of the Bennett Public Library on the town common. Like many of her ancestors, Ellen donated yet another family treasure to the society... a champagne-colored, silk wedding gown, worn by five generations of Bennett women. This cultural tradition, which originated during the later part of the nineteenth century, has been abandoned by many of today's brides. The gown is so significant historically, it quickly became the focal point of the exhibit.

The Billerica Historical Society would like to give special thanks to the volunteers and businesses that made this a successful event, including Maria Seminatore, Diane Douglas, Charlotte Gearin, Mary Camilleri, Fran Hanlon, Joan D'Orio, Burlington Coat Factory, the Billerica Garden Club, Cherry Dawson, Carrie Midura, Dave D'Apice, The Billerica Girl Scouts and Starbucks Coffee of Billerica.



Bottom photo left to right: Allison Rugg, Kimmy Amelons, Mrs. William Wilkins Warren, Katerina MacAfee and Kimberly Moore.

Sunken Treasure

The Concord River yields some unexpected surprises!



This Maltine Manufacturing Bottle is from just after the Civil War, found by divers in North Billerica. More on p. 3

Don't Miss These Historic Happenings

- 9/17** **Clara Sexton House Barn Sale,**
- 10/15** **Billerica Historical Society Annual Meeting at The Bennett Public Library, 4-7pm**
- 12/2** **Billerica Historical Society Holiday Open House at The Sexton House 4-7pm**

Call 978-670-8814 for more information or visit: www.billericahistorical.org

The Historical Society Takes to the Concord River



A special thank you to Society Secretary Betsy Gallagher, who hosted the August Historical Society meeting on the Concord River. Among the waterfowl, historic landmarks like the Two Brothers Rocks and the Pickman Estate and the sounds of the great River, Society board members and volunteers enjoyed a leisurely evening and informative tour provided on Betsy's boat. "The change of venue and special tour made for an out-of-the-ordinary meeting", quipped Bob Kinsman, Society Board Member. Following in the footsteps of 17th century Governor Winthrop and 19th century author Henry David Thoreau, the members were able to view sites that are difficult to access from land and rarely seen.

www.billericahistorical.org

The Next Generation of Historians in Billerica

The Society's future is only as firm as the young people that share a love of Billerica's history, and so it was great to see the bustle of young historians flood the Sexton house this past spring. The entire third grade of the Parker School, some 75 students, spent an afternoon at the Sexton House, marveling at some of the significant historic items on display. As the students learned about The Historical Society, The Society took special interest in what excited the students most. Among those items, a flintlock which has graced the parlor for generations.

Past President Bob Kinsman led tours, answered questions, and presented each student with a complimentary historical coloring book which was published last year. The book features a number of original illustrations developed for Billerica's 350th Anniversary celebration by noted artist Phil Christofori. The books are available in the Society's Gift Shop.

In addition to the visits that the Sexton has been hosting, Society member Diane Douglas has developed a historic "road show", which she premiered at The Ditson School this spring. The interesting and informative talk featured artifacts and graphics that detail colonial life in Billerica. The students enjoyed seeing these precious items, and the program has been an integral part of the Society's outreach efforts to spread history throughout the school system and the town.



The Concord River Yields Historic Treasures

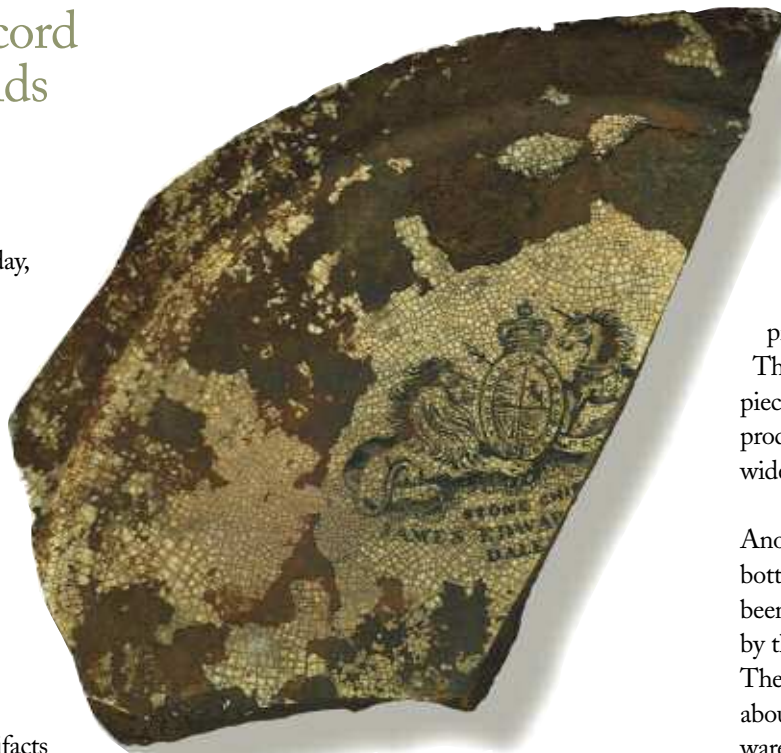
It was a cold rainy day, but the weather didn't bother three volunteer divers from *The Underwater Education and Training Center of New England*. Scuba diving a few dozen yards off shore in North Billerica, they uncovered a virtual treasure trove of artifacts from Billerica's past.

Some of the booty included items like Bennington teapots from the 1820s, clay pipes, bottles from the Civil War era, and many, many more items. In all, some 50 items were pulled from the murky depths during a dive program called "Zero-Vis" diving.



The dive team in North Billerica includes Alex Shure, Peter Marck and Hans Hug.

With centuries of silt and deposits covering the riverbed, it can be difficult to see and identify artifacts, and so each diver remains fairly centralized over a certain area, combing it carefully for anything that remain from long ago.



The artifacts were cleaned and stabilized, and are now being identified, cataloged and studied by Historical Society volunteers.



Society life member Dave D'Apice noted "some of these pieces were thrown into the river as waste, judging from the pock marked surfaces, indicating that they were smashed intentionally to compact a number of dishes, cups and pots".

One of the show-stoppers collected was a Maltine bottle, as shown on the front cover. Maltine was one of a number of "snake-oil" type cure-alls which came into fashion after the Civil War in America. It was a derivative of malt, and thought to promote good overall health. The bottle was made in a two-piece mold, long before mass production techniques came into widespread use.

Another piece of interest was the bottom of what may have originally been a chamber pot, easily identified by the makers mark on the bottom. The shard was made in England about 1860 and served as every-day ware in the average Billerica household, likely somewhere near the river.

The dive team hopes to return to the river in the springtime, confident that there are many more artifacts that yet remain.



For more information about our programs, or to get involved, visit www.billericahistorical.org

It's Happening at The Billerica Historical Society

From discovery and conservation to planting and socializing, The Historical Society has never had more to offer its membership. Dust off a treasure from Billerica's Attic (the Clara Sexton House), or enjoy a cup of tea with friends old and new. We especially need help with our membership campaigns, monuments and markers, and programming. A meeting schedule is provided below so that you can take your place in history!

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Mon., August 14	7:00 PM	The Concord River
Mon., September 18	7:00 PM	BATV Studios
Sun., October 15	4:00 PM	The Bennett Library Annual Meeting

Future meetings are typically scheduled on the second Monday of the Month. Make it a point to attend, and watch for a 2007 schedule in the next edition.

Society Condolences

The Society wishes to extend its condolences to the families of two long-time supporters of our efforts... Gil Griggs and Albert Henry Richardson. Their generosity and love of history have inspired all of us to better preserve, restore and share our heritage.

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The Society's volunteer Board of Directors includes:

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