

Old Stone News

*The Newsletter of
The West Boylston
Historical Society
Fall 2015
Volume 18, Number 2*

MEMBERSHIP

The dues for the calendar year 2016 are now due. If you have received a due's envelope with this newsletter, it means that we have not received your dues. The Society needs and would very much appreciate your continued support.

CONTACT INFORMATION

www.wbhistory.org
Bigelow@wbhistory.org

We would very much like to have everyone's email address so as to notify you of changes when we need to reach you quickly and efficiently. It also saves us time and money. Please share. We promise not to pass them out.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS



Our preferred mowing machine.

The house committee returned to their summer duties of mowing and general maintenance.

MISSION STATEMENT

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"The West Boylston Historical Society collects, preserves and honors the history of the Town through programs, exhibitions, publications and maintenance of the historic Bigelow Tavern as its headquarters and museum."

## From the President

This "transplant" to New England only arrived in West Boylston in 1989 after my Air Force career, I am a "history nut" so soon was attending meetings at the West Boylston Historical Society where I soon saw there were Goodales everywhere. But two in particular were inseparable – Beverly and Aaron both were instrumental in the Society's smooth operation. Now one is gone.

The July 17 Banner headline "A mentor to many, he loved West Boylston" aptly described Aaron Goodale III on his passing July 9.

He not only contributed to many endeavors in West Boylston but especially so to the West Boylston Historical Society. His contributions of time and effort over the years for the Society are legend. The planning and construction of the ell addition to the Bigelow Tavern happened because of Aaron's efforts as did the deconstruction and relocation of the Joseph Winn barn to our location. He was also our treasurer and along with others was responsible for the maintenance of our buildings and grounds. We can all be proud of the Bigelow Tavern and grounds because of these workers.

Our Thursday morning meetings at the Society will not be the same without Aaron. Dressed in a Santa hat or Colonial garb his smile and presence will be missed.

It was fitting and appropriate that Aaron's calling hours were held at the Society where he contributed so much. Thousands came to pay their respects.

Farewell friend.

Neil Norum

## Historical Happenings

***Saturday, Oct. 3, 2015 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. - On The Town Common  
Historical Society Fall Festival - Please stop by our Basket Raffle Booth***

***Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2015 - 7:00 p.m. at the Bigelow Tavern  
The Patrone System - Workers who hand dug the Wachusett Reservoir  
Ranger Lt. Rebecca Baronoski***

***Saturday, Nov. 7, 2015 - 2:00 p.m. Sharp at the Bigelow Tavern  
Masonic Heritage History Museum, Lexington, MA  
Dinner following in Lexington***

***Sunday, Dec. 6, 2015 - 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Bigelow Tavern Holiday Open House  
A Victorian Christmas Patricia Perry - Historical Reenactor  
Lighting of Christmas Tree on the Common immediately following open house***

## HISTORY BY THE INCH

### Saint Anthony Catholic Church

At the end of the month of January 1903 members of St. Anthony Catholic parish had bought a building lot on High Plain in Oakdale from Mr. and Mrs. John Mixter; Mr. Mixter owned a two-tenement home and a boot shop on this lot. The parish decided this would be a good lot to build on even after an offer from the state of Massachusetts for a 99-year lease on a tract of land on Waushacum Street in Oakdale.

The new chapel was to be built beginning in the spring of 1903, for a total cost of ten thousand dollars. It will accommodate between 300 and 400 people and will command a view of the Wachusett Reservoir and the surrounding countryside for miles. The terms of the sale from the state of Massachusetts of the former Saint Anthony chapel in the valley and the building of the new chapel is that the parish is to receive the wreckage of the former chapel; which includes the altar, windows, pews and other church furnishings.

Saint Anthony Church in the valley was within the limits of the Metropolitan district and the church property was sold to the state of Massachusetts in 1896 for forty thousand dollars. With this sale being so early in the land clearing for the Wachusett Reservoir, the congregation was able to worship in the building, the provision being that the parish could use the building until the property was needed by the state. The last of the land stripping contract within the Metropolitan district includes the district containing the church.

Beginning in the year 1895, people who were communicants of Saint Anthony Church were gradually leaving West Boylston, due to the construction of the Wachusett Reservoir, and for this reason Bishop Thomas D. Beaven deemed it wise to defer building a new church until it could be determined how many Catholic people would remain citizens of West Boylston and Oakdale. By the year 1903 there were 70 families attending Saint Anthony numbering 250 communicants.

The history of the Catholic church in West Boylston dates back to 1844, when the first public act of worship was conducted in private homes. These Catholics were Irish and French-Canadians and because of the difference in tongue it was deemed necessary to gather in two separate groups.

In 1852, the Catholic townspeople bought a plot of land and in 1853 began to erect a chapel on Lancaster Street, which was called Saint Lukes, this chapel was completed in 1854. The town began to flourish in the Industrial age with its mills and many boot shops and by 1879 a new contract was given for building a new Catholic church and on November 4, 1882 a new church building was dedicated under the Patronage of Saint Anthony of Padua. This wooden structure seated 700 people and was the pride of the Catholic citizens of West Boylston.

A devastating fire on May 2, 1890 befell upon the church and the nearby Baptist church; which was just a small few yards away from each other, both churches succumbed to the fire and both burned down to the ground. By November 1891, a new more beautiful church was dedicated, but was short lived when in December 1896; the church property along with the remaining town properties was sold to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the construction of the reservoir.

In 1903, the new Catholic Church on the hill at High Plain, overlooking the Wachusett Reservoir was built and dedicated under the name of Our Lady of Good Counsel and this church remained for 47 years until the population of West Boylston began to grow again and once again a new larger church was needed.

In July 1947, the parish buildings at High Plain were sold to the Metropolitan District Commission for reservoir purposes, and a fund was established toward the building of a new church. In February of 1948 new plans were drawn up for a modern colonial style building to be built in the center of town. Ground breaking was in July of that year, and on Sunday morning July 31, 1949 the first masses were celebrated in the new church of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Steven Carlson, Historian



Be sure to check the Historical Society website for up to date information at:

[www.wbhistory.org](http://www.wbhistory.org).



**LOOKING BACK**

***Excerpts taken from the Mary Cook scrapbook collection***

**September 14, 1900**

**BODY DISCOVERED AT CANADA MILLS**

A man about 55 years of age was found dead near the Thomas Harris place at Canada Mills today. About 3:00 this afternoon Hazel Harris, 17 year old granddaughter of Thomas Harris, was passing down the road a few rods from her grandfather's house when she saw a man lying inside of the fence under the elder bushes. She thought he was drunk and told her people. An investigation followed which showed the man was dead. He was 55 years old, 5'7" tall, iron gray beard and hair, dressed in blue serge pants and vest, coarse gray socks, black road worn shoes and a dusty black sateen shirt, white string tie, brown derby hat and a black coat lay neatly folded over his arm.

The body lay on its back. The hands were raised to the level of the head, one hand clutching some grass. The head was thrown back, the eyes were wide open and the hat was driven hard into the head.

The spot where the body was found was opposite an old watering trough. A sort of gully runs under the fence by the roadside and elders grown thick on its banks. The water from the trough runs across the road and down the gully into the Quinapoxet River. The man had evidently sat down beside the road when he was seized by a fit or heart failure and rolled under the fence in the gully where he was found with a little stream of water about him.

No money, no papers of any kind, to show the man's identity was found. There was; however, a Boston Globe dated August 31 in his coat pocket. A piece of soap, a comb, a small mirror, a pair of steel bowed spectacles in a case and 2 red bandana handkerchiefs were also found upon him. It is thought that the body was there 2 days.

*Barbara Deschenes*



## Basket Raffle Fundraiser

Saturday, October 3, 2015 10:00 AM – 4 PM on the common

We are asking for donations of UNUSED items to put in the baskets which may be dropped off at the Historical Society any Thursday from 9:30 – 12:00. Of course money is always welcome: checks payable to the society should be mailed to PO Box 201, West Boylston. Please mark “baskets’ on the memo portion of the check.

IF YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A BASKET AND WOULD LIKE TO DONATE IT – THAT WOULD BE SUPPER....Please call Barbara at 508-835-6628 if you want to donations to be picked up at you home.

### Some Suggestions:

**Ice cream basket:** variety of sauces, Sunday dishes, sprinkles, ice cream scoop, cherries, jimmies...etc.

**Kids basket:** crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue, construction paper, sidewalk chalk, paint, paint brushes, glitter, markers. Games , stickers.

**Game night:** Go fish, Uno, deck of cards, Binge, Old Maid.

**Chocolate Lovers:** hot Chocolate, chocolates, cookies, truffles, etc.

**Wine & Cheese:** wine, cheese tray, wine glasses, corkscrew, wine glass charms.

**Italian:** pasta, red sauce, Alfredo sauce, pesto, dipping oils, bread, wine.

**Baking:** variety of backing chips, Vanilla, sprinkles, baking powder, baking soda, flour, confectioners sugar, brown sugar, recopies.

**Breakfast:** pancake mix, preserves, syrup, coffee, creamer, whisk, cinnamon/sugar, honey, oatmeal, coffee

We probably will have a Halloween basket and a West Boylston memorabilia basket again (both did very well last year) and plan to add a variety of nips in a ‘Winter Warmth’ basket and a ‘Pot of Gold’ lottery basket.

We are also looking for volunteers to help us man the booth on that day for 1 – 2 hour:

And to help put the baskets together. It is a lot of work for two people and we would appreciate help if you are able.

Jane Harrington and Barbara Deschenes