

# *Brentwood Historical Society Newsletter December 2016*



## ***Hello to the Members of the Historical Society***

Welcome to the winter newsletter of the Brentwood Historical Society. Your membership support during the past year has been so important to the development of the Society and the museum. Some of you have made much appreciated donations of household items and memorabilia. Others have found precious photos and other material for our updated town history, which is still in progress. Some of you are giving time and effort to writing for that book. All in all, you, the members, are contributing to a significant period of growth in Brentwood's history organization. We hope you will enjoy the notes and tidbits in the next few pages.

## ***Restoring a Barn***

In the past year we've been reading about old barns and their preservation, in this newsletter and other papers. Certain non-profit organizations are urging barn owners to look at their buildings with new eyes; to determine whether their barns need rescuing, why it would be important, and how it could be done. Randall and Rebecca Davis did just that. Their barn at 224 Middle Rd. has now become a work in progress.

One of the first steps to be taken was to request from the Town of Brentwood a "historic barn preservation easement" for their property. They explained that their house and barn are an excellent example of a historic New England connected farm complex. Their letter to the Selectmen further said:

"In his book *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England* (1984), Thomas C. Hubka [wrote that] the typical farm complex consists of the 'big house,' which acts as the standard family living quarters. Connected to the 'big house' is the 'little house,' containing the kitchen area. Next to it is the 'back house,' which was traditionally a work or storage room, and connected to the back house is a standard livestock barn. In later years (post-1800),

when kitchens became more of a room of the house, the 'little house' became an ell off the 'big house.' Our house has an attached kitchen, work or storage room and barn.



**The Davis home on Middle Road.**

"The barn is now experiencing significant structural issues. When the farm was originally built in the mid-nineteenth century, there was only a dirt road in front of it. Now situated close to busy 111A, it is subject to the vibrations of traffic, including commercial semi-trucks and dump trucks. Additionally, small earthquake activity has been experienced in the area, and there have been both natural and man-made movement of the ground, not only at this location but on adjacent properties as well. Over the years these elements have combined to cause the rock foundation of the barn to shift. The sides are beginning to buckle and one side has completely



**The door wall, buckling in the middle and moved off its sill.**

moved off the sill. To save the barn, the foundation will have to be excavated, including the removal of an old poured concrete floor, and the sills replaced. The

Continued on the next page

# *Historical Society Newsletter*

## *December 2016*

### ***Restoring a Barn continued***

beams on the interior need to be stabilized as well, in order to support the loft, and the roof will need to be replaced— all at considerable expense.”

Randall and Rebecca did get their easement. They did not try for a grant of any kind, but relied on the valuable and expert advice of Kirk Kucharski, their own study and planning, and their own funds. Their goal is not only to strengthen and stabilize the barn, but to bring it back to the way it looked originally [c. 1857], based on an old photo. For instance, it originally had one big sliding door. Later owners added a second door. The Davises are going back to one door, and reinstalling a window where the second door was, according to the photo.

Former owners also poured a cement floor over the original floorboards when the boards were old and deteriorating. The Davises had the cement chopped up and removed. The old boards couldn't be saved. A new wooden floor is in place, with sturdy boards that are wide and thick.

The project is on hold for the present, while the Davises regroup financially and attend to some health matters. Below are views of the new sill for the barn, properly placed on the granite corner supports and stone fill; and the new barn floor.



The barn work is being done by Kirk and Seth Kucharski, of Kucharski Restoration of Exeter. The excavation work is being done by Kevin Fuller of

Brentwood. The wood floors and the sill were made from local pine trees. As a side note, the kitchen cabinets in the Davis home were made in the 1980s from pine trees on Lawrence Lyford's Creamery Brook Farm, which is now known as Stout Oak Farm.

There are two other barns on Middle Road that have been repaired or resurrected by their owners. Albert and Sandy Belanger, 128 Middle Road, repaired their barn in the 1980s. Kate Locke-Parks and her husband, 162 Middle Road, rebuilt their barn in the 1990s. If anyone is thinking about repairing, strengthening, or restoring their barn, you might like to talk with them or the Davises.

*Linda Rousseau*

### ***Needed: Someone to Write Grants for the Society***

Who has had experience in writing grants? There are some grants available for historic buildings and projects. It would be wonderful if Brentwood could have a share in them. If you can help, contact Alma Vahey, 679-8635, or Albert "Skip" Belanger, 772-5826, or skipandsandy@comcast.net.

### ***Wall Shelf Donated to the Museum***

A wooden shelf with three shelves has been donated to the Museum. This will be very useful for displaying small objects that would be difficult to see in the large lower cases. Keep looking around your premises for similar wall shelves.

### ***January Is the Month for Renewing Membership***

January is the month when almost all organizations have annual membership renewal, and the Historical Society is no exception. Watch for our letter toward the end of the month. The fee is \$10 per person, or \$15 per family.

# *Historical Society Newsletter*

## *December 2016*

### ***Update on the New Town History***

The Brentwood Historical Society at this time is putting its energy into all that is needed to get the 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Town History ready for publication. It will be a full 8 ½ x 11 size, with a glossy cover and glossy pages. It will be full of pictures, in color where-ver possible. Some forty residents are contributing their efforts – typing, writing, designing, lending photos, clippings and documents, doing research – and in the process, feeling ever-growing excitement and pride in the story of this town.

In all books of this nature, it is tradition to have a “Sponsors” section, listing businesses, families and individuals who show their support and interest by contributing to the publication expense of the book. It is also tradition to have an “In Memoriam” section where, for a modest donation, you may list the names of families or individuals who have passed on but are remembered for being very much a part of the life of this town. These two types of lists gain in interest and value as time goes on, becoming easy resources for people doing genealogy research.

Registration forms for the “Sponsor” and “In Memoriam” sections are now available. We are attaching a copy in this newsletter mailing for your perusal and consideration. If you wish to participate, please fill out the appropriate section(s), and mail it with your check to Rebecca Dunham as directed.

### ***Program on Inns & Taverns April 13 at the Museum***

The next program to be sponsored by the Historical Society will be on “New England Inns and Taverns,” presented by Mike Welch of West Newbury, Massachusetts. It will be a PowerPoint presentation, with all the images shown on our beautiful new big screen. This will be Thursday, April 13, at 7 p.m. at the Museum. Brentwood has several homes that were former inns or taverns. Come and learn more about them and their fellow New England inns.

Gary Farnham has built a book case for our many document binders and photo books. What a difference it makes to have them in one place and easy to find.



Alma Vahey and Rebecca Dunham with one of the new acid-free textile storage boxes, a smaller document box, and a quilt that was recently donated to the museum. Transferring items to these boxes will be a project this year.



Here are more of the recently purchased acid-free storage boxes. There are four large textile boxes and four smaller document boxes in all.



# Historical Society Newsletter

## December 2016

### Photos from Our Albums



For years we've been telling visitors that the Historical Society Museum was built before 1865 as a country store. This postcard, "pre-1905," tells us we weren't wrong. The sign over the porch says "Grocer James Barber." Not long afterward Mr. James moved his business to the building that became Lindy's and then the Brentwood Country Store – constructing the same kind of porch at his new location that is shown here.



October 2014 – Small-group practice in old fashioned story telling. Jo Radner, Oral Historian, leans on a post, listening to a group.



September 2014 – Spotlight on the Grange. Linda Rousseau, Marion Arkell and Betty Stevens learned that old fashioned switchel tasted better than expected!



October 2007 – Vintage Vehicle Day.

Brentwood Historical Society Museum, 140 Crawley Falls Rd  
Alma Vahey, President, 679-8635.

Mailing Address: 164 North Road, Brentwood, NH 03833.  
Website: [www.brentwoodnhhistory.org](http://www.brentwoodnhhistory.org).