

## Bedford Historical Society – An Overview

THE BEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY was founded in 1916 for the purpose of saving the 1806 Methodist Church on the Village Green, now known as Historical Hall. It is owned by the Society and may be rented for private parties, community events, exhibitions and receptions.

From 1946 until 1975, the society acquired the following buildings on the Village Green: 1807 Bedford Free Library, formerly Bedford Academy, 1829 “Stone Jug” School House, c. 1838 Post Office, c.1838 General Store, c.1857 Jackson House, and the 1906 Lounsbery Building, once the village A&P. In 1977, through the efforts the citizens of Bedford, two acres of land surrounding the Bedford Oak was purchased to protect the Oak from encroaching development. The land was deeded to the society to forever protect Bedford’s oldest citizen. The society also holds four historic conservation easements. Since 1985, the Historical Society has maintained the Sutton Clock Tower for the benefit of the Town, assisted by a group of neighbors known as the “Clockwinders” who maintain the clock itself.

The Bedford Historical Society is a non-profit preservation and education organization. In addition to operating and maintaining these historic lands and buildings, we maintain the 1787 Bedford Court House for the benefit of the town and operate a museum of local history on the second floor. We also operate a 19<sup>th</sup> century one-room school site museum at the Stone Jug School House. The museums are open to the public from April to December with the help of interns and our devoted volunteers.

In 2008 the Society moved its offices to the renovated Bedford General Store. Here, we display artifacts, documents and photographs from our collections, provide information on Bedford’s history and current events, host educational programs, and operate a small gift shop offering our publications, Bedford gifts and penny candy in the spirit of the building’s original use as a general store.

The Society sponsors events and lectures of interest to our membership and the community, educational tours and programs, special exhibits of our collections, as well as fundraising events to support our mission. We work to preserve and collect our local historic treasures and to share Bedford’s distinct heritage with residents and visitors.

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