The 2015 Holiday House Tour, sponsored by the Fitchburg Historical Society, will be held on Saturday December 5, 2015 from 11:00am-4:00pm. The Tour Committee has selected seven beautiful and historic private homes and four public places that will make for an outstanding and enjoyable event.

The Richard Bullock home at 30 Prospect Street was built in 1890 by Brigham N. Bullock for his new wife Flora. This brick home, one of Fitchburg’s finest examples of Victorian architecture, has been literally “untouched” and remains in its original elegant state. The grand granite steps were designed by H.M. Francis. A moose head hovers over a fireplace, a ram’s head hangs over the staircase in the entryway and a second ram’s head hangs in an upstairs bedroom. All are trophies of a hunting trip to British Columbia in 1915.

The stately brick home of Kristine and Kevin Caravella at 16 Atlantic Avenue is located on one of the prettiest streets in the city. The symmetry of the window placement and the architectural appeal of the sunroom and entrances are timeless. The interior of the home is elegant, gracious, and spacious. The central hall leads from the more formal rooms to a spectacularly designed kitchen. This exceptional piece of Fitchburg’s past has been lovingly cared for over the years.

The home of Jane Hennessy at 140 Ashburnham Road reflects what a creative eye can do to restore a piece of Fitchburg’s past. The cozy front hall with its gracious staircase and its welcoming pineapple-topped newel post are only the beginning of the warmth and character of this home. The tasteful palette of black, red and white throughout the house is exceptional in its appeal and warmth. This home will be decorated with Jane’s seasonal silk flower displays, which will be available for purchase.

The home of John and Lisa Crawley at 110 Pearl Hill is a step back in time to 1790; it’s an impressive grand Federal colonial of post and beam construction with exposed, hand pegged beams in many areas. Special features are original eyebrow windows, wide floorboards, and seven...

(Continued on Page 2)
15 Holiday House Tour (continued...)

...fireplaces, including a beehive oven in the kitchen. A secret hiding area around the massive chimney was used as part of the Underground Railroad. A former owner of the house was Dr. Ross who delivered over 100 babies in an area of the home that is now a small hallway.

The first house built on the Ross Street Hill is currently owned by Howard and Beth Leadbetter. The house has 16 rooms on three floors and includes pocket doors, a wrought iron center staircase, fireplaces, many built-ins original to the house, and a gravity fed cistern which served the third floor. The architect for this home was Oscar A. Thayer and the landscape architect was Herbert J. Kellaway, both of Boston.

Michael and Erica Sevigny are the proud owners of 137 Ross Street, a stucco English cottage also designed by Oscar A. Thayer and landscaped by Herbert J. Kellaway. The first floor was gutted to modernize the kitchen, dining room and living room. The renovations preserved the original wood floors, the fireplace and the butler’s pantry as well as the sun porch on the east side of the home that looks out over the rolling lawn and gardens. The house is seasonally decorated by Erica and daughter Zita (who encouraged her parents to put their house on the tour).

Our public venues begin with the Sacred Heart Church, whose cornerstone was laid on June 21, 1878. This parish was originally part of the Mother Church of St. Bernard’s. The church’s architecture is Gothic design. It has been renovated several times over the years with the latest renovation in the early 1990’s. The church organ is a HOOR & HASTINGS Opus 1064, built in 1882. Teresa Pierce, a member of the Sacred Heart Community, will be the hostess.

The newly renovated Fitchburg Art Museum, at 185 Elm Street is an exciting addition to the tour this year. In 1923, Eleanor Norcross, daughter of the first mayor of Fitchburg, bequeathed her home and art collection to the City in what was then the Fitchburg Art Association. In 1950, the Association became officially known as the Fitchburg Art Museum. The museum has become a vital cultural influence in the city and surrounding communities and is an impressive example of the diversity of architecture in Fitchburg.

The “Tea Room” for the House Tour will be held in a lovely room with wood wainscoting and a beautiful brick fireplace with period andirons at the Fitchburg Community, will be the hostess.

... honeymoons. The Boulder Gallery located at 960 Main Street is...put you in the holiday spirit!

The Boulder Gallery located at 960 Main Street is considered one of the nicest galleries in the area. We are so happy that they will once again be part of our tour. Please stop in for some wine, cheese, coffee, and Italian cookies. This is a great chance to visit if you’ve never been in before, stop and relax with Anne and Peter.

Researching the Underground

The Fitchburg Historical Society houses many wonderful resources on the abolitionist movement and resistance to slavery. In the years leading up to the Civil War, many of Fitchburg’s families fought slavery through civil disobedience, by conducting escaped slaves to Canada on the Underground Railroad, through political activism, in publishing and with their moral leadership.

During 2015, our volunteer researchers have been compiling a research and study guide to the Historical Society’s abolition and the underground railroad artifacts as part of the “Researching the Underground” project. This guide, partially funded by the Fitchburg Cultural Council, will detail the Historical Society’s primary resources on topics like the Trinitarian Church, Fitchburg and “Bleeding Kansas,” the Underground Railroad, and Fitchburg’s early abolitionists and their pro-slavery contemporaries.

From January 19 to March 9, 2016, the Historical Society will present the exhibition “Researching the Underground,” with artifacts of abolition, the underground railroad, and the anti-slave cause drawn from the Historical Society collection. At this show, you can see William Lloyd Garrison’s letters to Fitchburg, the Snow family records, and a first edition of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin, among many other treasures. We hope you will join us to rediscover the antebellum era in Fitchburg.

Fitchburg’s Italian Neighborhoods

The community in Fitchburg was divided into two neighborhoods. The starting point for Italian immigrants, whether from the north or south of the homeland, was an area known as the Patch...rows of tenements and foundries lining Water and Middle Streets. Jobs were easy to find in the iron and brass foundries clustered at the end of Water Street that supplied equipment for the nearby railroad yards.

... but the Veneto migrants usually moved to the Cleghorn neighborhood in west Fitchburg because Venetian men were often skilled in quarrying, so they were drawn to the quarries on Rollstone Hill, and Venetian women were apt to have experience in silk spinning, so the textile mills along River Street offered opportunity...Cleghorn’s Parkhill Mills were part of a dense cluster of factories that produced textiles, shoes, locks, stoves, pianos, and other products within a single square mile.

...But the Veneto migrants usually moved to the Cleghorn neighborhood in west Fitchburg because...
Stories From the Cemetary

On Tuesday October 27th, about 50 people came to the Historical Society for an ALFA Food for Thought Lecture. Susan Navarre, the Executive Director, gave a presentation of the history of the cemeteries in Fitchburg. In the first town cemetery on South Street are buried most of the earliest founders of Fitchburg, including Amos Kimball who built a dam and grist mill on the Nashua River. Kimball’s home at 16 Thomas Street was built in 1745 and is one of the oldest homes in Fitchburg.

The South Street Cemetery is also the burial site of Rev. John Payson, the first minister in Fitchburg. Susan noted that Rev. Payson seemed to have been born under an unlucky star. Payson’s wife died in 1802 and his son died in 1804. Rev. Payson committed suicide in 1804 by taking poison and slitting his own throat, a particularly gruesome way to die. The gravesite is easy to spot — it is the only tablestone in the cemetery.

In the West Street burying ground, a visitor will find the grave of Thomas Eaton, an anti-slavery activist who died in 1804 without knowing that the cause for which he had fought had been successful. His son Abel is also buried here. Abel joined up for the Civil War which he had fought had been successful. His son Abel who died in 1864 without knowing that the cause for which he had fought had been successful. Thomas Eaton, an anti-slavery activist who died in 1804 without knowing that the cause for which he had fought had been successful. His son Abel is also buried here. Abel joined up for the Civil War which he had fought had been successful.

By 1880, Laurel Hill Cemetery was established, with its spectacular view overlooking the city. Among those buried there are Josiah Trask and Joseph Kimball, young anti-slavery activists who had gone to Kansas with about 40 others from Fitchburg to keep Kansas from becoming a slave state. Both men were killed by confederate guerrillas during Quantrill’s raid on Lawrence, along with a couple hundred other people. Both were returned to Fitchburg for burial.

SUSAN noted that there are shields on the gravestones to identify those who served in the Civil War and members of the Ladies Aid Society (a precursor of the Red Cross). Some graves also identify those who took part in the 1840’s Gold Rush. And, at the newer Forest Hill Cemetery, there are ample evidence of the new waves of immigrants arriving in the city.

Shirley Wagner told stories about the Agudas Achim Jewish Cemetery that was established around 1900 when the Jewish population became significant enough to need its own burial ground. She retold stories shared with her by Elliott Zide, Allen Rome and Jean Miller in the fall of 2009. She noted that the oldest Jewish settlers in Fitchburg are buried on the right hand side of the fence in the upper part of the cemetery.

Historical Society member Bill Bourbeau shared his research on African American gravesites in Fitchburg, such as those of Lewis and Nellie Hooks. Born a slave in North Carolina, Lewis Hooks escaped to join the 25th Massachusetts Regiment; there, he became friends with two men from Fitchburg who helped him reach Massachusetts after the war. On the afternoon of the presentation, Bill looking at an Historical Society’s photo collection and found an 1893 graduation photo of a young African American woman. With the Moulton register in the Society’s collection, he confirmed that she was Fannie B. Hooks, daughter of Lewis and Nellie.

Michael Bourque was the final and youngest presenter; he is a high school senior. Michael created an Eagle Scout project to clean and repair gravesites of veterans to honor their memory. An inspiring example of a young person interested in local history, Michael encouraged the audience to participate in the “Adopt a Veteran Program,” to remember and honor the grave sites of veterans.

Two new members were elected to the Board of Directors for the Historical Society at the Annual Meeting on September 16th. They bring a love of history, a commitment to the cultural development of the city of Fitchburg, and additional expertise that will augment the skills of the current Board members.

Eugene Finney is currently the Director of Marketing and Community Relations at the Fitchburg Art Museum, where he also serves as the lead exhibition preparator and fabricator. His career has allowed him to work at a number of prestigious museums across New England such as the MFA, the Carrier, and the DeCordova. Eugene is a classical trained figure painter and an accomplished carpenter. He has extensive experience as an exhibition designer and as a collections care specialist.

Our business and corporate members help the Historical Society provide historical and educational programming about Fitchburg to local students, families and visitors. We all work together to highlight and preserve Fitchburg’s vibrant history: please stop in and thank them for all they do.

Board Welcomes New Members!

Vincent Pusateri, II is an attorney who earned his bachelor’s degree in political science in 1992 from Assumption College and his law degree from Southern New England School of Law. He was admitted to the Massachusetts bar in 1997 and joined the firm of Pusateri & Pusateri where he became and remains an advocate for clients in almost every court in Massachusetts. He was admitted to practice in the United States District Court in September 2000. He has been appointed by various Probate and Family Court judges to investigate matters before the court. He is a member of the City of Fitchburg Zoning Board of Appeals and Chairman of the License Commission. He is also a member of the Worcester County, Northern Worcester County and Massachusetts Bar Associations.

Many Thanks!

- Rome Insurance Company
- IC Federal Credit Union
- Godin Construction
- Rollstone Bank
- Ron Bouchard’s Auto Sales
- Windmill Florists, Mechanic Street
- Workers Credit Union

- Fitchburg Historical Society
- 781 Main Street P.O. Box 953, Fitchburg MA 01420 (978) 345 - 1157

Join Us Today!

Name: ___________________________  City, State, Zip: ___________________________
Phone: ___________________________  Email: ___________________________
Make checks payable to the FITCHBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY or
Charge my credit card account - Card # ___________________________
Expiration Date: ___________________________  CVC: ___________________________
Initial Authorization: ___________________________

The Fitchburg Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, and all contributions are tax deductible.
Letter from the Director

In a recent editorial in the Sentinel and Enterprise, Chamber of Commerce President Roy Nascimento urged new mayor Stephen DiNatale to celebrate Fitchburg's rich history, its downtown, and its “wonderful cultural institutions.” At the Fitchburg Historical Society, we are proud to be one of those institutions. We work to share Fitchburg's story with local residents, visitors and a new generation of students. That's the mission that animates us every morning when we open our doors to new visitors and longtime members.

This fall, we offered a busy slate of activities that welcomed big crowds of people downtown. They came for the premiere of a short film by Jennifer Potts; an ALFA talk on Fitchburg’s cemeteries and their people; Uniting Way Day of Caring; a reception to celebrate Felix Leger and Fitchburg's service at the front and on the home front in World War II; Veterans’ Day volunteering; and many educational opportunities for local teachers, students, and seniors.

Now it’s December, and time for a wonderful holiday tradition that brings us all together to celebrate Fitchburg’s extraordinary architectural heritage: the Historical Society’s Annual House Tour. Each year, new people discover the house tour; it’s a unique opportunity to be a welcome guest inside beautiful homes and enjoy a festive afternoon exploring new corners of Fitchburg. The House Tour is also an important fundraiser for the Historical Society, so I hope you will make sure to get your ticket and plan to spend a day exploring Fitchburg.

The House Tour is just one of our programs that bring the city together; we unite the city to remember our colonial and Revolutionary heritage, Civil War and industrial transformations, and our multi-ethnic traditions. The Historical Society's library attracts tourists from all over Massachusetts and the U.S. to discover their Fitchburg connections; our exhibitions, lectures and discussions generate lively discussion; and our programs in the schools provide enriched learning for a new generation.

It’s also time for our Annual Campaign, and your gift of any size helps make sure we are a busy and welcoming center for all of Fitchburg on Main Street. I hope you will include the Fitchburg Historical Society when you are distributing your year-end charitable gifts. Your gift makes a big difference for all of Fitchburg.

Written by: Susan Navarre

Come visit us!
Fitchburg Historical Society
Hours of Operation
Monday: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Tuesday: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Wednesday: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Recent Events
Fan Association meeting at Historical Society on October 3, 2015
• **Saturday, December 5:** 11:00 a.m.– 4:00 p.m. Holiday House Tour. Tickets $20, and for sale at area businesses and Fitchburg Historical Society

• **November 23 – December 22: A Year of Gifts:** Recent Acquisitions by the Fitchburg Historical Society

• **Tuesday, Jan. 19 – March 9, 2016:** “Researching the Underground”: An exhibition of the Historical Society’s Collection on the Abolition Movement and Underground Railroad in Fitchburg

• **April 4 – May 25: Healing Hands:** Medicine in Fitchburg A new exhibition on doctors, nurses, hospitals and medicine in Fitchburg

• **Sunday, April 10:** 10:30 a.m. Susan Navarre, Director of Fitchburg Historical Society speaks at First Parish Church of Fitchburg

• **Thursday, May 5: Healing Hands Fundraiser**

• **June 20 – August 2016:** Historic Iver Johnson Bikes exhibition

• **Sunday, June 26:** Longsjo Race and Fitchburg Rides