



BELLINGHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION, PUBLISHER

CRIMPVILLE COMMENTS



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BELLINGHAM SELECTED TO HOST MASS. MEMORIES ROAD SHOW



Often we hear people lament about how so much history is lost. Now, Bellingham has a chance to preserve our history through YOUR photographs.

The Bellingham Library, in collaboration with the Historical Commission, will host the Mass. Memories Road Show at the Bellingham Library on November 5, 2022.

Your photographs are a part of history! We invite you to share them with the community. **Go through your photos now to be ready for November 5th.**

- Bring 2 to 3 unframed photographs – original prints, digital images or even cell phone images!
- We will scan your photos, return them to you, and help you record your memories!
- All photos will be added to the digital collection at openarchives.umb.edu.

The Mass. Memories Road Show is a statewide, event-based participatory archiving program that documents people, places, and events in Massachusetts history through family photographs and stories. Archivists and public historians in University Archives and Special Collections in the Joseph P. Healey Library at UMass Boston collaborate with local planning teams and volunteers to organize free public events where individuals bring photographs to be copied and included in a digital archive.

Contributors are invited to describe the photographs in their own words. In addition, they may choose to share “the story behind the photos” on video, have their own “keepsake photo” taken, receive advice on caring for their family photos, and learn from one another about the history of their community.

Since its launch in 2004, the Mass. Memories Road Show has digitized more than 12,000 photographs and stories from across the state, creating an educational resource of primary sources for future generations. Go to <https://blogs.umb.edu/massmemories/> to learn more.

Our goal is to collect an archive of at least 150 Bellingham photographs. YOU can help us reach are goal by:

- Finding 3 pictures to bring to the library on November 5th.
- Spreading the word to current and former Bellingham residents, or others with ties to Bellingham and encouraging them to join you.

We envision the library’s Community Room being filled with Bellingham residents past and present, sharing Bellingham history. Help our vision become reality!



You can watch this 6 minute video that talks about the details of the program on the ABMI Cable TV Archive at:

<https://abmi8.org/video/2022-09-22/mass-memories-road-show-bellingham-public-library>

HISTORICAL COMMISSION PRESENTS BOSTON POST CANE TO BELLINGHAM'S ELDEST CITIZEN, ROLANDE DUBOIS



On Monday, September 19, 2022, Bellingham Historical Commission Vice Chair Steve Joanis and Secretary Bernadette Rivard presented Rolande (Cartier) Dubois with a replica of Bellingham's Boston Post Cane. Boston Post Canes were created by the *Boston Post* newspaper in 1909 as publicity for the newspaper. They were intended as a tribute to honored and useful lives, to thrift, temperance and right living; and above all to the superb vigor of New England personhood. The gold-headed canes were presented to 700 New England towns with the request that they be presented to the eldest (male) citizen of each community. In 1930, the tradition was updated so that it could be presented to the eldest citizen, regardless of gender.

The original cane, which is on display at the Ernest A. Taft Bellingham Historical Museum, was produced by the J.F. Bradley Company of New York. It is made of ebony wood from Congo in Africa. The cap on the cane was soldered to the cane after being shaped from sheets of gold.

When the Commission Members arrived at Rolande's home, the driveway was full, and cars were parked on the street.

Her family and friends had congregated to celebrate this event with her. Those attending included her sister, Jeannie Levreault; her daughters Rita Boisse, Rosemarie Kraunelis, and Rachel Thifault. Also there to celebrate, were her niece Lorraine Leverault; granddaughter, Andrea McGovern; and great-granddaughter Abigail McGovern. They were joined by friend of the family Marcia Ficco and neighbor Barbara Neelon.

Rolande was born in Woonsocket in 1922, the second in a family of eight siblings. Yes, she turned 100 this year! Four of her siblings have passed away, Claire Trottier, Gerard Cartier, Larry Cartier and Estelle Valois. The three surviving siblings are Jeannie Levereault, Theresa Trottier and George Cartier.

As a child growing up in Woonsocket, Rolande aspired to play the guitar and piano, but the family could not afford lessons. She attended St. Louis School in Woonsocket. As was common at the time, when she was in 8th grade she dropped out of school to help her sister Claire raise her children. Claire's husband was deployed to Japan fighting in World War II.

She married Robert D. Dubois in 1946. Robert served in the Army during WWII. He passed away one year before their 50th wedding anniversary in 1996.

Prompted by her daughters, she told us that she was the self-proclaimed queen of Woonsocket Church Bingo games, moving from parish to parish to play her favorite game. She was also a talented seamstress who made wedding dresses for her daughters, as well as first communion and Cabbage Patch doll clothing for her grandchildren.

She lived in Blackstone for decades before moving to her daughter Rachel's home in Bellingham almost 20 years ago.

Rolande's pride and joy are her 3 children, 6 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. She also voiced that she is very proud of her nephew Robert Dubois who was elected to the Select Board in Blackstone.

We then asked Rolande, "If you could change anything about your life or the community you have lived in, what would it be?" Her answer, "Change my family life..." Then she paused for a while and added, with a laugh "for the better."

We wish Rolande and the Dubois family many, many years of health and happiness!

BELLINGHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION CLOSES 300TH ANNIVERSARY TIME CAPSULE



Celebrating the closing of the Time Capsule are left to right: Bernadette Rivard (Library Director, Secretary of the Historical Commission and 300th Anniversary Committee Treasurer), Sue Garten (300th Anniversary Committee), Pam Johnson (Member Historical Commission), Joe Lyons (300th Anniversary Committee) and Rick Marcoux (Chair of the Historical Commission).

Imagine it is 2044, you are in Bellingham for the opening of the 300th Anniversary Time Capsule. What will that look like? On August 11, 2022 we time-traveled to 2044, but instead of opening the Time Capsule, we put items into it for the members of the 325th Anniversary Committee to see 22 years from now.

Here was our letter to them:

Dear Bellingham 325th Anniversary Committee:

This time capsule was closed at the Bellingham Library on Thursday, August 11, 2022 during the town's annual Bellingham Days Celebration. The event was originally scheduled for April 2020, and was long-delayed due to the global pandemic caused by Covid-19.

Every 25 years Bellingham opens and closes a time capsule to remember the past and preserve the present. The 1994 capsule was opened on June 2, 2019 and it contained a menu from Ma Glockner's Restaurant, mugs and t-shirts from local businesses, and newspaper articles from the time period. It also included a guest book from the 1939-1969 BHS Class Reunion held in April of 1969 as well as a grocery list with prices for milk - \$2.09 per gallon (it was \$3.04 in 2019), bread \$1.19 per loaf (it was \$1.50 in 2019) and a note that minimum wage was a whopping \$4.25 (in Massachusetts it was \$12.00 in 2019).

For the 300th year we included the following items in the 2019 Time Capsule, with notation that it should be opened during the 325th Anniversary Year in 2044.

300th Anniversary Memorabilia

300th Anniversary Model Cake and 2019 Sign – this cake and sign was on display at the library and brought to many events throughout the Anniversary year. It was also used as a “bank” for fundraising!

300th Anniversary Flag – this flag was on display at 300th Anniversary events throughout town

2019 Boston Post Cane – this replica of the cane was presented to Bellingham's eldest resident, Mary Markey, in 2019. Mary passed away in 2022.

300th Anniversary Coaster Set (the Friends of the Library sold these as a joint fundraiser with the 300th Committee - donated by Bernadette Rivard, Library Director)

300th Anniversary Pins – these were sold at events and were provided to people who attended the closing ceremony in 2022.

300th Anniversary Volunteer T-shirt – All volunteers at the Bellingham Days events in August of 2019 were provided with volunteer t-shirts.

Bellingham T-shirts – with various locations around town, donated by Pam Johnson

300th Anniversary Fundraiser Brick (bricks were installed at 300th Anniversary Park, located in front of the Municipal Center) – Donated by Denis Fraine

300th Anniversary Hooded Sweatshirt – The “hoodies” were sold as a fundraiser. This one was donated by Bernadette Rivard, Library Director

Wall That Heals T-Shirt – These shirts were worn by volunteers at the Wall That Heals event and was donated by Jim Hastings, Memorial & Veterans Day Committee Chair

300th Anniversary Publications

300th Anniversary Issue of the Crimpville Comments



The chest the Time Capsule contents are stored in, and, the “cake”.

BELLINGHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION CLOSES 300TH ANNIVERSARY TIME CAPSULE (CONTINUED)

300th Anniversary Publications

300th Anniversary Issue of the *Crimpsville Comments*

300th Anniversary Event Calendar

300th Anniversary Book, *Bellingham Now & Then* –
Donated by the Friends of the Library

Wall That Heals Book – Donated by Jim Hastings,
Memorial & Veterans Day Committee

DVD of ABMI Cable 8 Something Special Show – Linda
Trudeau interviews Jen Altomonte (Chair of the 300th
Anniversary Committee) and Cindy McNulty (Select Board
Member)

DVD of ABMI Cable 8 Something Special Show – Linda
Trudeau interviews Sarah Houle (Secretary of the 300th
Anniversary Committee), Christine Cooper (Publicity
Coordinator), and Joe Lyons (Volunteer Coordinator).

Issues of the *Bellingham Bulletin*, donated by Pam Johnson

In the News and at The Time

We received a request to include these *Game of Thrones*
Coins, donated by Stacy Corrigan stating it belongs in the
time capsule because “*Game of Thrones* was a sensation that
culminated in the finale in 2019.” This gave us the idea to
record all the popular and acclaimed TV, movies, music and
books for 2019. They include:

TV Shows – *Game of Thrones*, *Stranger Things*, *When
They See Us*, *Chernobyl*, *The Mandalorian*

Movies – *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Green Book*, *Avengers:
End Game*, *Frozen II*, *Toy Story 4*

Music – *Bad Guy* by Billie Eilish, *Truth Hurts* by Lizzo,
Sucker by Jonas Brothers, *Old Town Road* by Lil Nas X
featuring Billy Ray Cyrus, and *Con Altura* by Rosalia
featuring J. Balvin and El Guincho

Books – *Where the Crawdads Sign* by Delia Owens, *The
Testaments* by Margaret Atwood, *The Nickel Boys* by
Colson Whitehead, *The Dutch House* by Anne Patchett,
The Silent Patient by Alex Michaelides

The top 10 news stories from CNN were:

#10 – Image of a drowned man and his daughter underscores
the crisis at the US-Mexico Border

#9 – Cameron Boyce, Disney star, dies at 20 after a
seizure, family says

#8 – Government Shutdown

#7 - Police sources: New evidence suggests Jussie Smollett
orchestrated attack

#6 – The Dayton shooter wore a mask, bulletproof vest
and hearing protection as he opened fire

#5 – Deadly shooting in El Paso, TX

#4 – President Trump has been impeached

#3 – Dozens killed in Christchurch mosque shooting

#2 – Hurricane Dorian slams into the Bahamas

#1 – Fire at Notre Dame Cathedral

And last, but certainly not least, in December of 2019 the
disease that came to be known as Covid-19 was identified as
an unknown disease, causing shortness of breath, fever and
death in China. By late January the CDC was screening
passengers arriving from China at major US Airports and the
first cases were identified in the US. Anyone above the age of
4 at the time knows what happened next.

We thought it was important to include some of the items
that became part of our everyday lives from 2019 through
2022, like masks, gloves and face shields. Also included is the
May 24, 2020 issue of the New York Times that marked what
it called the “Incalculable Loss” - the 100,000 deaths to that
date. Also included is Library Director, Bernadette Rivard’s
journal of her perspective of the pandemic as a Library
Director and daughter who was unable to visit her mother in
a nursing home for over 2 months.

We hope that those opening this time capsule in 2044 enjoy
seeing this glimpse back of what was happening in Bellingham
in 2019 and use this time
capsule treasure chest to
store the memories of
2044 for 2069. Those
years still sound like a
science fiction movie,
even though the famous
movie was 2001: A Space
Odyssey.

Cordially,

Members of the 2019
300th Anniversary
Committee & the
Bellingham Historical
Commission

*Upon completion of the reading of the letter, the Time
Capsule was sealed and will reside at the Bellingham
Historical Museum until 2044.*



*Historical Commission Members Pam
Johnson & Bernadette Rivard seal the
time capsule until it is reopened in 2044!*

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THROUGH YOUR LIBRARIAN'S EYES

In March of 2020 Bernadette Rivard, Library Director and current Secretary of the Historical Commission started keeping a journal about the impact of the pandemic on both her professional and personal life. She is sharing this with the community for posterity. A printed copy is at the Historical Museum and the Bellingham Library History Room, as well as in the 300th Anniversary Time Capsule. Here is selected content from the first journal entry.

March 25, 2020

Like many others, I first heard of this virus overtaking Wuhan, China in January of 2020. I often listen to the New York Times (NYT) podcast called "The Daily" and their first podcast on the topic was on January 30, 2020. It was called "A Virus's Journey Across China." It indicated that their reporters started hearing of the "mystery virus" in early January. At that point it was thought that it only spread from animals to humans. 130 people were infected and 3 had died and China reported it was under control. The NYT reporters were skeptical as they knew the Chinese officials were noted for downplaying the seriousness of these outbreaks: 17 years before, SARS began in China, and information was withheld about the outbreak. The next NYT Daily podcast on the topic was on February 13th and the number infected had exploded to 48,000 with 1,310 deaths, and it was being defined as a coronavirus epidemic called Covid-19.

Move forward to February 27th and it had moved outside of China. By March 5th there was an outbreak at a nursing home in the US in Washington State. I believe that was when most Americans began paying attention. And, as I sit here and write this on March 25th, today was the day there were two confirmed cases in our hometown of Bellingham. But let's go back.

The week of March 2nd, as the reports were coming out of Washington State, the first case was announced in Massachusetts in Norfolk County. As the Library Director I looked at what we needed to do, and at that time it seemed simple. We ordered more hand sanitizer and tissues to provide for the public. The hand sanitizer was already on backorder. The week went on and the news was that it was spreading within our state to other states.

On March 11th the world seemed to change. The World Health Organization deemed Covid-19 a global pandemic, the NBA shut down the basketball season and colleges began sending students home for the semester. Suddenly, everyone seemed to be talking about it. On that day, I was meeting a small group of librarians at a café in Holden, MA to discuss some committee work, and everyone was wiping down everything! Recommendations had come out that no group larger than 50 people should be meeting. At that point I put

out our supply of Lysol sanitizing wipes and our computer stations and near flat surfaces so people could wipe down their own areas as they used them. Our library trustees were meeting the following night, so on Wednesday and Thursday I worked on a plan to present to them. I knew we had to shut down our children's programming, as well as put away all shared toys and other items in the library that are routinely used by other people. With the approval of the local Board of Health, we enacted that on Friday, but were still open to the public on Saturday, March 14th.

Meanwhile, in my personal life, my family had been informed on Wednesday that Thursday was the last day visitors would be permitted at the nursing home where my 94-year old mother resides. She had a stroke in 2018 and has mobility and memory issues. And although we understood that not visiting for an unknown period of time due to a dangerous virus was for her protection and in her best interest, it didn't make telling her any easier. In fact, it was surreal. We knew she understood when we told her as she got teary eyed, but we still struggled with hoping she would be reminded by the staff that we wanted to be there. For over 21 months a family member had been with her every day, and the thought of her alone is heartbreaking.

Over that weekend the seriousness of the situation became frighteningly real. I received an email from a colleague that was written by one of her board members who was an epidemiologist stating that the virus was shown to not only be transmitted by cough droplets, but could live for days on paper and plastic surfaces.

Staff still reported to work on Monday morning...by Monday afternoon I began working with the Trustees and Town Administration on a plan to shut down the library at 5 pm on Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

Thursday of that week I went to the grocery store to stock up on some items to last a few weeks. For over a week stores were unable to keep cleaning supplies in stock and for some reason, toilet paper was flying off the shelves.



Photo credit: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/04/08/coronavirus-shortage-where-has-all-the-toilet-paper->

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THROUGH YOUR LIBRARIAN'S EYES (CONTINUED)



Sometime during this week, we began to hear about the seriousness of the shortage of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) - mostly masks and gloves and a shortage of ventilators for hospitals. In addition to a donation from Blackstone Valley Tech, our vocational school, of masks and gloves, the community Facebook page lit up with stories of people pulling out their

sewing machines to sew washable masks to donate to not only hospitals but to their neighbors. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) was telling hospitals with shortages of disposable masks that cotton masks that met certain standards were CDC compliant. Medical personnel began reporting they were reusing masks so they could save some disposable ones to make sure they had some to deal with the critically ill.

On Friday, I took a ride to my brother's house in Sterling, MA to join a couple of my siblings to Facetime with my mother. The nursing home hadn't heard of Zoom yet.

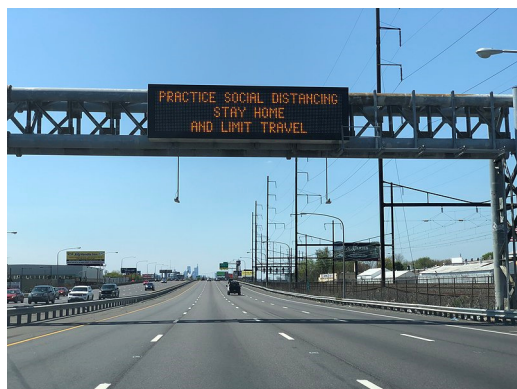
While driving up Route 495 the Mass DOT Highway alert sign said something I never thought a road sign would say... "Practice Social Distancing."



Masks made by resident Debbie Conklin GrandPre as a fundraiser for the local food pantry.

Photo Credit:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10157531396042893&set=pcb.2382782601851926>



Highway sign promoting "Social Distancing"

This is a phrase that has since overtaken daily conversation. The CDC recommends that people refrain from coming closer than 6 feet to another person to "socially distance" themselves from others.

I heard someone say they prefer the term physical distancing as that it is what is important. You can be as social as you want, call, email, text, SnapChat, Facebook Message, heck send a telegram (I'm not sure if you can actually still do that or not), but social connection is fine and even vital to our mental health while we have to physically distance. Most of us are staying in our homes except for vital trips to grocery stores or pharmacies or to get some fresh air.

On Saturday, we headed to our summer cottage on West Island in Fairhaven, MA for a change of scenery.



West Island Town Beach, Fairhaven, MA March 21, 2020

We walked deserted hiking trails to Buzzards Bay where we were joined by some, but not an extraordinary number of people walking West Island Beach.

Apparently, it was nothing like the weekend in many locations. York, ME on Monday morning closed its beaches to the public because of the dangers of overcrowding.

I spent Sunday at home preparing my work from home assignments for the library staff... Today I'm regretting I didn't go to Pandolfi's (the chocolatier in town) before they closed yesterday at noon in compliance with the Governor's order that all nonessential businesses must close. But my thighs thank me.

- Today there are 2 cases in Bellingham.
- Today there are 1,838 cases and 9 deaths in Massachusetts.
- Today there are 54,453 cases and 737 deaths in the United States.
- Today there are 466,752 cases and 21,148 deaths worldwide.
- Today the Governor announced that schools will be closed until at least May 4th.

That's a lot for one day. Let's see what tomorrow will bring.

Excerpt from the 38 page journal Bernadette Rivard, the Library Director and Secretary of the Historical Commission wrote during the pandemic.

Did you record your pandemic experience? If you'd like to share it with us, we'd love to have it!

Email it to history@bellinghamma.org.

BELLINGHAM TOWN COMMON CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Bellingham has had a number of Town Commons, but each was eventually used for purposes other than for what it was intended. The first Town Common was at the current site of the Bellingham Memorial School. The second was adjacent to the historical Town Hall, the site of the current 300th Anniversary Park.



In the 1990s the entire tract of land at the corner of routes 140 and 126 (across from the town hall) was owned by

Almac's Supermarket. When they moved to Hartford Avenue, the abandoned site became an eyesore. A Town Common Feasibility Committee was formed, but while the possibility of creating a new town common in Bellingham center was exciting to some, to others it was seen as a frivolous waste of money.



*Photo courtesy
Marjorie Turner Hollman*

The Committee was successful in getting the funding approved at town meeting, and the development of the Bellingham Town Common took three years. It was opened to the public in 1997.

The seven-plus acre area includes a gazebo, walkways, two small playgrounds, a water trough and Veterans Memorials. In cooperation with the Bellingham Library, the Town Common will soon have a story walk display

installation along the perimeter of the park.

The transformation from an abandoned eyesore to a treasure that everyone can enjoy has been truly remarkable. In fact, this new feature of the community won a United Chamber of Commerce and Business Development Enhancement Award for an "Outstanding Contribution to their Community Through Significant Redevelopment or Enhancement of a Commercial or Industrial Property."

This year, 2022 the Common is celebrating its 25th Anniversary, On September 10, 2022 scores of Bellingham residents and supporters joined the current Town Common Trustees to celebrate their milestone anniversary. The day featured music performed by Bellingham's own Oliver Brothers, food, pony rides and more.



Photo courtesy Marjorie Turner Hollman

As part of the 25th Anniversary planning, the Town Common Trustees have secured funds to restore the water trough to a working fountain. In reviewing the history of the fountain, we located an article in Issue #79 of the 1982 Crimpville Comments about the Town Well that fed the water trough. That article stated:

"Not many today can recall when the Center had its own spring fed well located between St. Blaise and the Baptist Parsonage. It was 10 feet in diameter and 24 feet deep. Not less than 11 feet of water was in the well at all times. A trench was dug about 3.5 feet deep and about 1000 feet long to the fountain near the Soldier's monument. It was extended to the Center School Building via another 300 foot trench. Later it went to the Town Hall. We guess that a 2 inch lead pipe was used to convey the water from the well. When it was filled in around the middle of the (20th) century, an old timer confirmed that a lead pipe was used. Evidently it was cheaper than the plan calling for iron pipe. Also it was much more flexible than iron which was needed to go around boulders, etc. Something happened in the late teens (1910-1919) because children took a pail and went over to Thayer's barn for drinking water for school purposes."

Having this water trough restored to a working fountain will certainly beautify our already quite beautiful and treasured Town Common.

Note from the Town Common Trustees: Over the years, a door that once was a part of the trough has been lost. If anyone knows the whereabouts of the door to the trough, please contact the Town Clerk at 508-657-2831.

CRIMPVILLE COMMENTS

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Bellingham MA 02019
Check [website](#) for current hours
Also open by appointment

Telephone: 508-966-5838

Email: history@bellinghamma.org

www.bellinghamma.org/historical-commission



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*Home of the
Ernest A. Taft Jr. Historical Museum*

Save the Date!

November 5, 2022

**Mass Memories
Road Show, a
project of UMass
Boston will be at
the library to scan
YOUR pictures of
Bellingham history.**

Details INSIDE!

The Crimpville Comments is mailed
free to long time subscribers and is
available electronically on the
Commission's website,
www.bellinghamma.org/historical-commission

You can subscribe to the
Commission's electronic newsletter
which will link to the Crimpville
Comments here:
<https://bit.ly/3dwc5sf>
or return the form to the right with
your email address.

New subscribers to the print edition
are encouraged to make a suggested
\$20 annual donation to help defray
the printing and mailing costs.

The Commission also has a gift fund
that can accept donations from the
community. As we move forward,
we would appreciate your support!

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Commission. Make the check payable to the *Bellingham Historical Commission Gift
Fund*.

All correspondence should be mailed to:
**Bellingham Historical Commission
3 Common Street
Bellingham MA 02019**

If you wish to donate items or artifacts to the
museum please complete and return an Artifact/
Material Donation Application Form. Download
the form here: <https://bit.ly/3trxJal> or scan this QR Code.

