

THE HOLYOKE-FRENCH HOUSE
1760

THE BOXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 78

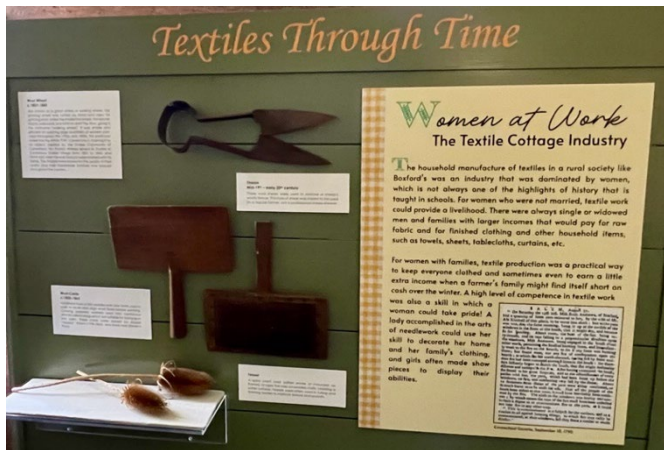
BOXFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01921



This is called a Sampler. Young girls learned needlework and embroidery by stitching these pieces, practicing their letters & numbers and even flowers and local motifs. They are regarded as important examples of early American female education. Harriet Perley made this one in 1824 when she was all of 10 years old. The renovation of the Holyoke-French house this year enabled us to bring such treasures out of closets and present them for today's 10-year-old girls, and everyone else, to come and see.

The renovation took many months and met our goal of having it ready for the Apple Festival. It turned out better than our original vision thanks to the grant provided by the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), and the talents of Robin Siegel who lent her museum experience to the tasks

involved. Closets were emptied, items matched to the old paper records, and then digitized. The age of paper gave way to the age of digital records and that process still has a way to go.



We have long identified the hard work-day of colonial era men by the stone walls built by our early settlers and found throughout our town (and forests!). Now, we have a room dedicated to Women at Work, the textile cottage industry, with a restored loom and other tools of the hard work-day of women back then.

The Holyoke-French house, by the way, located at 2 Elm St, is so named due to its ownership passing only through two families. As with many towns, such houses became ultimately historical properties and keepers of its town's stories. We take it as our duty not just to preserve the house, but to bring these stories forward for current generations to learn from and appreciate. You can expect to see the house open for tours more often in 2026.

In 2025, the BHS brought back the social evening, Harbinger of Spring, for our members and guests. The first floor was filled with chamber music, cocktails, and a lot of catching up. And of course, our primary event is the Apple Festival in September. Our thanks to the volunteers, who we worry if we'll have, but who always rally for us. And with that special ingredient of a warm sunny day, the Apple Festival was a terrific success. Please join us for the Grand Illumination tradition on Sunday evening Dec 21 for caroling and hot cider and cookies.

And of importance this year, the Boxford Historic Documents Center and the Boxford Historical Society have agreed to an important step of collaboration by combining our social media and crafting a central website, www.historicboxford.org. Although we remain separate organizations, we look forward to additional collaboration around America 250 events as we roll into 2026.

During the H-F house's inside work we also got to some needed cleanup of the property's outside. We have the good fortune of the Boxford Garden Club's labors to keep the front garden attractive and we also removed a lot of brush and debris and invasive growth along the edges of the property and repaired the rear brick sidewalk to the Cobbler's shed.

For 2026, one key goal is to repair and re-open the Cobbler's shed and have new stories to tell. For example, another Perley, William Perley, led Boxford's militia down to the battle of Bunker Hill. How did they get there? They walked! A good cobbler was very important to a village in those days and that is a story we plan to tell during the America 250 celebration season.

Well, you can probably guess this last paragraph was coming. We would like to ask for your financial support as you get to your end-of-year charitable plans. For current members, thank you for your continuing membership and support. For non-members, please consider joining the Boxford Historical Society and/or making a donation. We are a 501c (3) organization so your contribution is tax deductible. See the attached envelope, or you can make a contribution online at boxfordhistoricalsociety.org. and go to the **Donations** tab. The house is not heated during the winter months but we plan to have regular tours from April through October of 2026 on the first Fridays of each month from 1:00-5:00pm. The schedule will be posted online at the website in the spring. Special tours can be arranged anytime.



The kitchen with infant playpen

Regards,

Ed Flanagan
President, BHS
Nov. 01, 2025