

Wakefield Historical Society

Post Office Box 1902
Wakefield, MA 01880



Wakefield Historical Society *upcoming event!*

Wakefield Heritage Day Saturday, September 30th, 2017

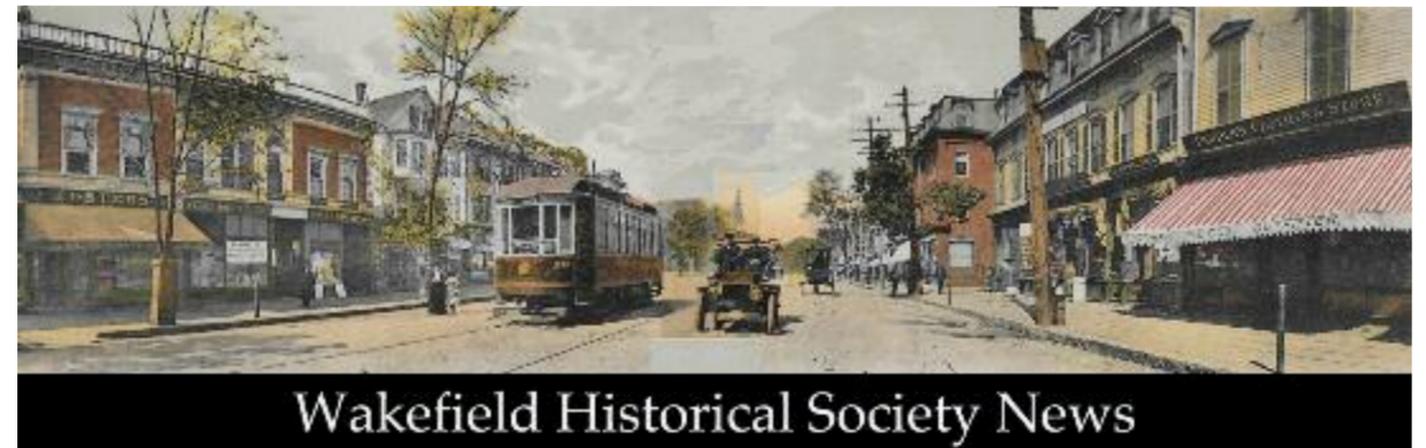
10:00 - 1:00 P.M.

**At the West Ward School, 39 Prospect Street
Museum Open House, Pumpkin and Mums Sale
White Elephant Sale**

1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

Old Burying Ground Cleanup (see inside for details!)

***In case of inclement weather, the Museum Open House will go forward as planned;
the Burying Ground Cleanup will be postponed to October 7th.**



Fall, 2017

The Wakefield Historical Society this month begins its 128th season of events and activities -- 128 years of working to preserve and protect the town's history!

This year we are reviving our periodic newsletter that will seek to bring you up to date with our activities. We hope that you will find time this fall to visit the Museum and see our exhibit memorializing Cyrus Wakefield, and his signature industry -- Wakefield Wicker.

The enterprising Mr. Wakefield had ancestors who had lived in this town. His grandfather, an orphan, grew up in a farmhouse on the current Albion Street, although some of his family later moved out of town. Young Cyrus was born on February 14th, 1811 in Roxbury, New Hampshire. Ambitious and determined, with unstoppable energy and a lot of what might have been described as 'true grit,' Cyrus left home at 15 to seek his fortune in Boston. There the young entrepreneur started the grocery firm of Foster & Wakefield in 1834. Cyrus would find his bliss in the early 1840s in a lot of discarded rattan on a pier in Boston. (Rattan was used as ballast on sailing ships bearing cargo from the far east.) Cyrus purchased the rattan and tried to figure out how to profit from it. From this modest purchase, his empire grew. His efforts to 'waste not, want not' would eventually give rise to the Wakefield Rattan Company, which began with the modest manufacture of hoops for ladies' skirts and progressed to baskets, rugs, chairs and other furniture. An early recycler, he used every part of the rattan.

He bought a homestead in South Reading in 1851, and moved his factory here in 1855, rapidly becoming the town's biggest employer. After he donated a magnificent building to serve as the Town Hall, the Town took the name Wakefield, Massachusetts in 1868. He died in 1873.

The Museum's Wakefield Wicker exhibit will be open to the public on many days this coming fall, but our season formally begins with our fourth annual Wakefield Heritage Day on September 30th, which will combine a pumpkin and mum sale with a white elephant sale and a museum open house from 10-1. (Donations of worthy 'white elephants' will be gratefully accepted!) From 1-3, we will sponsor an Old Burying Ground cleanup day; we are asking the community's help in scrubbing the lichen off our priceless old slate gravestones. (More details inside.)

We hope to see you at one of our events this fall! Stuffed inside this newsletter you will find a membership renewal form, which we hope you will use to send your membership donation to the Historical Society. As you probably know, we have no paid staff -- every penny that comes in is used to help preserve our collection and to maintain and preserve the West Ward Schoolhouse.

Keep up with us online at wakefieldhistory.org; send us your email address if you'd like emailed updates. Visit our facebook page, as well! Your support is so important to us! We hope to see you soon.



Walk in the footsteps of history –
take our self-guided walking tours!

Available tours include:

- * Lakeside
- * Prospect-Church Street
- *Downtown

Coming soon: Park District Tour

All are accessible on your computer, cell phone or device:

www.wakefieldhistory.org

Help preserve our schoolhouse!

The Historical Society struggles to meet the costs of utilities and repairs to our beloved 1847 West Ward School. Your gift to our schoolhouse fund would go a long way to helping us on our goal of preserving our history.

The Wakefield Historical Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Your donations are fully tax deductible.



Old Burying Ground Preservation Work!

Come out and help us preserve our heritage!

A part of Wakefield Heritage Day, Saturday September 30th, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. (Raindate Oct. 7)

Our Old Burying Ground is under seige by lichen that is attaching itself to the fragile ancient gravestones. If left unchecked, the gravestones will be destroyed. **You** can help us to preserve these priceless historical artifacts.



No harmful chemicals will be used. Our tools will be soft bristled brushes (plastic is fine), a wooden paint stick (or similar implement) and a spray bottle filled with clean water. (NOTE: no metal implements can be used!)

The real tool is the muscle and perseverance needed to scrub the gravestone clean. (Kids are welcome to help but must be accompanied by supervisory adults.)

If you'd like to help out, assemble your tools and join us for **Burying Ground Preservation Day**.

Even if you only clean one, it will make a difference, and will help us to preserve our historical heritage.

Visit <https://wakefieldhistory.wordpress.com/wakefields-old-burying-ground/> for more details.

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WE HAVE RECENTLY REVISED OUR BYLAWS AND HAVE VACANCIES ON THE BOARD! IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP US IN OUR MISSION TO PRESERVE WAKEFIELD'S HISTORY AND OUR MUSEUM, JOIN US!



Our most popular event, the annual Twilight Tour, will form in front of the First Parish Congregational Church. (Stone church adjacent to the Lake.)

Wear sensible shoes -- the ground is uneven!

The Old Burying Ground is like an outdoor museum. Some of our slate gravestones are considered pre-eminent examples of the stone sculpture recognized as Puritan gravestone art.

The tour is free of charge. Donations to the schoolhouse fund would be gratefully received. In case of inclement weather, the tour will be postponed.



Tour updates: www.wakefieldhistory.org
Recorded message: 781-246-3070