

## Cumington Historical Commission News

The Kingman Tavern Museum will open for the 2016 summer season on July 9 from 2–5 PM. Guided tours are offered of the Tavern. The Barn and Carriage Shed tours are self-guided. New this year are tours of The Old Parsonage, which opened on June 18. Interesting programs are offered on some Saturdays. Refreshments are served on the lawn & picnicking is encouraged. Admission is free, however donations are accepted. We invite you to visit.



Housed in an early 1800s tavern, the Kingman Tavern Museum facility consists of a furnished house and several outbuildings housing over 5000 artifacts depicting Cumington history from the late 1700s to the mid-1900s. Most items were lovingly donated by Cumington families in honor of their ancestors. While the rich display is not categorized by discrete time period, it collectively presents a mosaic of 200 years of farm, industrial and domestic life in a small western Massachusetts hilltown. The two story house, used as a tavern in the early 19th century, includes a replica of a well-stocked general store, a kitchen, parlor rooms and bedrooms, as well as rooms dedicated to textiles, military history, light industry, millinery and clothing.

The Commission purchased another significant property on Main Street in 2013. With the renovation complete, the building is now called The Old Parsonage, and joins the [Kingman Tavern Museum](#) complex.

### The Old Parsonage Opening Day and Ribbon Cutting

The Cumington Historical Commission proudly hosted the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting at The Old Parsonage on June 18th. Pat Keith, Chair, welcomed everyone and explained why the Commission felt the need to purchase and renovate the building. She thanked all the commissioners for their vision and everyone who worked on the renovation. It is the commissioner's great pleasure to gift it to the townspeople both in honor of past townspeople that gave, for present townspeople, and for future use by generations to come. Lifelong Cumington resident and Commissioner, Stephen Howes, talked about the history of previous owners. Mary Quigley, builder, spoke about the challenging renovation process. Bill Streeter, one of the founding members of the Commission, gave his stamp of approval for both the need for the building and the artistic quality of the renovation. He further explained that the The Old Parsonage on Main Street now completes the town square. Sean McWilliams, Architectural Designer, explained the buildings architecture from c. 1821 to now. The Ribbon Cutting was done by Stephen Howes, representing family, Bill Streeter, founding member of the Commission, Hannah Streeter, representing the future of the Commission, Pat Keith, Chairperson and Mary Quigley, builder. Carla Ness, also of the Commission, thanked everyone for attending the opening and extended a hearty invitation to return to The Old Parsonage and to visit the Kingman Tavern Museum, both of which will be open Saturdays from July 9–August 27, 2–5 PM or by special arrangement.

The Parsonage is nearly 200 years old. It was built around or before 1821 by Hatch Noyes as Main Street in East Cumington was becoming a residential, commercial and industrial center for the town. Noyes sold the house in 1821 to Beriah Shaw who in turn sold it to Robert Dawes in 1826. In 1839, it became

the parsonage of the newly built Village Church. It served as a parsonage for 41 years. In 1880, it was sold to N.S. Stevens. Later owners were Ida McLellan who bought in 1888, Theodore P. Tower, 1919, and Henry Dunham, 1946. The Commission purchased the house from the estate of Jean Dunham Sr. (Deed information from Foster&Streeter, Only One Cumington)

The Kingman Tavern Museum recently received two significant donations.

The first is a post Revolutionary War Presentation Sword owned by Samuel Parker and passed down through his family to Waneeta Parker Sears of West Virginia. Waneeta was the daughter of Leston Parker and Beulah Griffin Parker, from Cumington. It was her wish that it become part of the museum collection and to be hand delivered. Members of her family, both local and those from WV were in attendance when Lonnie Sears, son of Waneeta and Franklin Sears, presented the sword to Stephen Howes of the Historical Commission.

Also the ledger, or "Day Book," of the Charles Ford scythe snath shop was received from Lee and Jane Taylor of Maine, formerly of Michigan. It was handed down through the Ford family and came to be in the possession of Lee (great-great grandson of Charles). Charles Ford (1809-1889) married Fidelia Bates (1823-1879) in 1835. The scythe snath shop was located near the former home of Barbara Bates. The first entry is dated August 12, 1835 and runs through 1850 when the family relocated to Ohio. Items listed as sold in addition to scythe snaths include: coffee, tea, sugar, cornmeal, molasses (molasses), raisins, walnuts, buttons, candles, linen thread, callico (calico), tobacco, nails, cordwood and codfish. Accounts are posted in the familiar names of families of the day; Willcutt, Kingman, Bates, Pettingill, Dawes, Gurney, Tower and Shaw as well as many others. As Jane Taylor put it, "this book has finally come home".

The Historical Commission thanks these donors and will proudly display these articles. If you have pieces of Cumington history in need of a home please call. Sometimes one wonders whether or not a potential item is appropriate or not. Please don't throw it away! Call us to discuss first, you may be surprised to know how much historical value an item holds.

Please call Pat at 413-563-1981 or Carla at 413-695-6569 for more information about the Cumington Historical Commission

# The Old Parsonage



## The Ribbon Cutting

From Left: Steven Howes, William Streeter, Hannah Streeter, Pat Keith, Mary Quigley

Photo by Peter Spotts



The crowd at the ceremony