

The BallardVale Gazette

Newsletter of the BallardVale Historic District Commission

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BallardVale, Massachusetts

July 2004

BEAUTY AND MEANING ON THE GREEN

Step onto the BallardVale Green from Center Street at the opening between the posts and chains that surround it and take a look around you. Enjoy the lushness of its trees and the dappled shade they provide on a sunny day. Watch the cars drive by on Andover Street from your higher vantage point on the Green. Listen for the train going by. Notice the granite bench that provides a spot to rest and the red geraniums planted at the base of a memorial stone. Notice the flagpoles and the relatively young tree planted at the southern end of the Green.

New residents of BallardVale will note and appreciate the Green for being a lovely spot of undeveloped property in the center of the neighborhood. Long time residents will remember that the Green was once the home of the BallardVale Community Center, razed in the 1970's, which housed, among other things, the BallardVale Branch Library. Some may even remember the meat market or the beverage store that operated out the basement of the Community Center. They may also remember that the Green didn't always look as beautiful as it does now. Much of its current incarnation and beauty is a result of the efforts of BallardVale resident Richard Bowen. Bowen, a former Town Manager (1964-69), Selectman (1976-78) and member of the Patriotic Holiday Committee cares deeply for the Green. He, sometimes accompanied by his wife or a friend, but often alone, plants flowers and spreads mulch around trees, waters and weeds, and paints the posts and chains surrounding the Green. And in the past, he proposed warrant articles or simply asked the town to provide for improvements to the Green.

New and old residents alike may not be aware that there is much significance to the plantings and objects on the Green, but Bowen remembers the meaning of each.

The trees you see when you step onto the Green from Center Street are three large black locusts. To the right, or south, is the blue spruce, which is decorated every Christmas holiday season with lights, and is the focus of BallardVale's annual tree lighting festivities.

Beyond the spruce, is a young thornless honey locust tree, known as the "9-11 Tree". Bowen explains that it was planted and dedicated to the five Andover residents who were killed in the September 11th attacks. Despite questioning, the donor of this beautiful tree remains unknown.

The stone monument at this end of the Green was once located across the street on the playground, but was moved to the Green after the Community Center was taken down. Its dedication plaque reads: "In Honored Memory of the Sons and Daughters of BallardVale who served in all wars."

The tall flagpole nearby was erected on the approximate site of the Community Center and original BallardVale Branch Library in memory of Martha D. Byington, 1873-1950, who served as the first BallardVale Librarian from 1913 to 1943. Martha Byington assembled the library and provided service to BallardVale for thirty years. Her successor was Ruth Sharpe.

The flagpole at the northern end of the Green was a gift of the town through BVIS, the BallardVale Improvement Society, and was erected while the Community Center was still standing. It was dedicated to John Reding, a member of the air corps who was killed in Europe in WWII, and whose mother lived in a house on Clark Road.

The granite bench by this flagpole provides a spot to sit and contemplate. The granite was leftover from the Elm Green Project that was completed several years ago. Bowen arranged for it to be saved and installed in BallardVale. It faces a large stone that once stood in the fields of Andover dairy farmer Syd White, who owned the farm, dairy and cow barn at the northern end of Andover Street. A forged pin in the side of the stone was part of a latch to the gate in his pasture.

This monument was erected by the townspeople of Andover in 1978, in memory of the ten soldiers who died in the Korean and Viet Nam wars. Ten Franklin seedless ash trees were planted along the Andover Street edge of the BallardVale Green for these same men, though only some of these trees remain standing. The dedication plaque is inscribed with a quote by Walt Whitman. It reads: "They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not, the living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd, and the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd, and the armies that remain'd suffer'd".

Bowen notes that the Green is a special place for BallardVale residents, as well as other Andover residents, who come to the Green, to reflect and remember and take pleasure in.

The Gazette would like to thank Richard Bowen for sharing his memories and Al Retelle for identifying trees on the Green.

BLOCK PARTY 4

Date: Saturday, Sept. 11, 2004

Rain date: Sept. 12

Time: 12:00 noon- 4:00pm

Place: BallardVale Playground

BallardVale's annual block party is just around the corner. Held every year on the weekend *after* Labor Day, this year's party is scheduled for Saturday, September 11, from 12

noon until 4 pm. Bring your lawn chair, a pre-bagged snack or a dessert and canned soda, bottled water or juice boxes (please no large bottles of juice or soda due to the bees) to share with your neighbors. All your old favorites will be present, too, including the Moonwalk and DJ Ted Teichert!

To contribute money or to be involved in the planning of this year's party, please contact Chris and Diane Huntress at 978-475-7738 or chuntress@comcast.net. Donations can be made in advance or on the day of the party. Checks should be made out to "BallardVale Block Party". See you in September!

2004 PRESERVATION AWARDS

Andover's 2004 Annual Preservation Awards were held in Memorial Hall Library on May 26, 2004. This year's awards recognized properties and people from all areas of Andover, including Robert and Stephanie Branca for their careful preservation of 200 Andover Street in BallardVale.

Certificate of Appreciation:

58 Red Spring Road, circa 1880

Owners: Anthony and Odalis Rosano

9 Bancroft Road, Pearson-Bancroft House, 1790. Owners: Timothy and Lucy Vaill

18 Carisbrooke Street, circa 1880

Owners: Kendall and Eleanor Storch

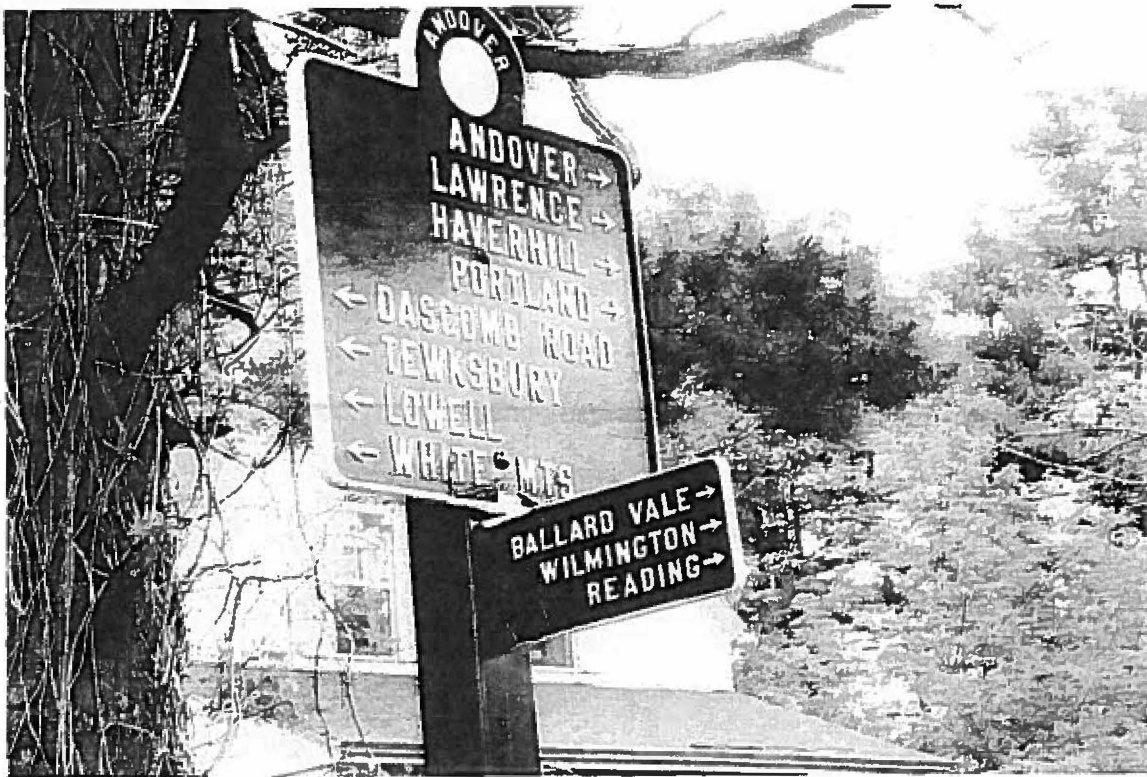
36 Haggets pond Road, circa 1936

Owners: Richard and Marilyn Kelley

200 Andover Street, circa 1850

Owners: Robert and Stephanie Branca

CHANGES IN AND AROUND BALLARDVALE



The directional sign at the intersection of Clark and Dascomb Roads was renovated and reinstalled this spring by the Department of Transportation, and, below, bridge reconstruction in the center of BallardVale is complete.





The BallardVale Fire Station now has a historic building plaque, and below, many of the fire hydrants in BallardVale were repainted this spring by members (and their spouses!) of the BallardVale Historic District Commission.



Sympathetic Addition:

12 Gray Road, circa 1830

Owners: Robert and Ann Gilbert. Architect: Craig Gibson. Builder: Tom Childs.

11 Abbot Street, circa 1860's

Owners: Tim and Karen Wakeling.

Historic Landscape Preservation and Building Reconstruction:

232 Salem Street, David Gray farm, built 1812

Owners: Frederick Taft, Nathalie Andrews and Eleanor Ethridge. Builder: John H. Watson, the Gothic Builder.

Landscape Preservation and Special Recognition Award:

Horticulturist Al Retelle for his work with AVIS and the West Parish garden Cemetery Committee.

200 ANDOVER STREET

200 Andover Street is shown on an Andover Historic Society map called the "Plan of the Village of Ballard Vale, and House Lots belonging to the Ballard Vale Machine Company" surveyed in 1848. The building is a mid 19th century industrial design with large windows to let in the light. It probably began life as the machine shop for this company.

According to Bailey's "Historical Sketches of Andover", The manufacture of machinery was attempted on a large scale at Ballard Vale by an incorporated company, of which Mr. John Marland was a principal member. They made machinery and steam-engines in the large stone manufactory built by the company (in the area neighboring 200 Andover Street) and which, after some reverses, they sold to the Whipple File Manufacturing Company. "

Ruth Sharpe, Ballard Vale historian, chronicled the building's history. In the

1860's, the building was part of the Whipple File Manufacturing Company complex. During the 1880's the Craighead and Kintz Plant occupied the building. This company manufactured artistic bronzes, plaques, inkwells and lamps. Many German workers moved into Ballard Vale to work at the plant, and they organized a German workers social organization, and built the German Club at 154 Andover Street in 1885. In 1898 the plant was destroyed by a million dollar blaze. This building apparently survived the fire.

In 1900, 200 Andover Street was a mill office building, in the 1950's it was a bag company, in the 1970's, John Doyle had his business there making architectural scale models. Eventually, the building was sold to Carroll Engineering. Robert and Stephanie Branca bought the building in March 2002 for use as a project management company.

200 Andover was also a part of a complex of mill buildings in Ballard Vale center that American artist Charles Sheeler found and photographed during his stay in Andover in 1946 as artist-in-residence at the Addison Gallery of American Art at Philips Academy. The working visit was significant and very influential on him. It affected the art he made for many years following.

The Awards Committee believes this is a positive example of adaptive reuse. Its careful preservation is an asset to the Ballard Vale Historic District. We applaud the Branca's for their effort.

--- Karen Herman, on presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to Robert and Stephanie Branca, May 26, 2004

The July 2004 Issue of the BallardVale Gazette has been sponsored by Sherry Kirby.

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CALENDAR

- Aug. 4 (Wednesday) BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting**
Town Offices – 2nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
- Sept. 1 (Wednesday) BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting**
Town Offices – 2nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
- Sept. 11 (Saturday) BallardVale Block Party at the BallardVale Playground**
12 noon – 4:00pm. Rain date: Sunday, Sept. 12
- Oct. 6 (Wednesday) BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting**
Town Offices – 2nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm
- Nov. 3 (Wednesday) BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting**
Town Offices – 2nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm

BallardVale Historic District Commission

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See you at the Block Party on September 11!
Rain date is September 12...