

February 2017 Historian Report for March 2017 Board Meetings
Marybelle Beigh, Westfield Town & Village Historian

Historian Activities during February 2017:

- Attended Village Board Meeting February 22, 2017
- Met with client, John Lawton and family on February 11th at the Patterson Library and we walked down to the Lincoln-Bedell Park where John filmed & recorded the story of Grace Bedell and Lincoln's Whiskers. The video was posted about a week later on National Lawtons – YouTube with the title Lincoln's Beard... it is just under 15 minutes long.
- Prepared for the Bedell story by reviewing my several researches and BeeLines over the past ten years as Westfield Historian, and doing further research online, on the digitized microfilms of Westfield Republicans, and contacting John Slater for more information about the railroads at that time. Also, wrote a BeeLines for the first week of February – “Remembering Grace Bedell and Abraham Lincoln... and How One Young Person Can Peacefully Change History” – photo from about 1890 showing the older railroad passenger station that was likely the one from when Lincoln came through Westfield. Discovered from historic maps that the location of the older train station was somewhat further east from the current station (now an art gallery in 2017). It was next to the tracks but between where the two branches of East and West Pearl junction English Street.
- Second BeeLines in February was about “History Mysteries along Washington Street,” as a follow-up to the Bedell story, since the Bedell family had lived on Washington Street when in Westfield, and another client had requested historic information about a house at 51 Washington, just a few doors further east and across the street. It appears that this house may be one of quite a few that were apparently overlooked during the 1980s efforts to get Westfield's historic structures onto the National and State Historic Registers. Photograph is from the Chautauqua County historic homes website.
- Third BeeLines in February was based on a 1965 article that I had copied from microfilm during some research a few years ago, about “Who was Michael Donnellan, Cavalryman Circa 1860?” Photos of the gravestones for this story were taken by yours truly at the old St James Roman Catholic Cemetery at the dead end of Union Street.
- Since February ended before the next Westfield Republican issue is to be published, and also because there was no BeeLines at the very end of January for health reasons, there were only three actual articles, although much continuing research.

One additional comment: I received a phone call on last Sunday morning from a local resident, saying she would like to ask some questions. The question was, “When was the current breakwater built at Barcelona?” I gave a ballpark date, as it was just after I graduated from WACS in the late 1950s. Then I was bombarded with all sorts of “armchair engineering” about the “peninsula” and lack of progress on repair of the breakwater... I gently directed attention to appropriate information and sources.