



MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 5

June, 1990

Number 1



Photo by John C. DeBoer

M.H.S. Vice President John FitzGerald with an early gravestone in West Milton cemetery which reads:

Rev'y Soldier
Wm. Newman
Died March 1840
Age 91 yrs
3 mos

THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE

by Bob Hooker

As many of you know, Milton has 11 1/2 cemeteries. For those of you who didn't know, that sounds a little unusual, I'm sure. How can a town have a half of a cemetery? Well, it's easy... Just as some

towns straddle state or international borders, and some houses even straddle town lines, this cemetery straddles the Milton-Georgia town line. The two towns share in the upkeep, as one would expect.

In many small towns in Vermont, and elsewhere, the care of the old cemeteries is either minimal or non-existent. With the increased cost of everything these days some of the less critical maintenance is falling by the wayside. This has left a good many of the inactive cemeteries to the responsibilities of private cemetery groups or historical societies. However, Vermont law states that any cemetery that is not supported by private funds becomes the responsibility of the town it is in.

Some of Milton's old graveyards have seen an improvement in the upkeep with mowing and trimming during the summer. But we still have to raise our voices to get the fences patched. And we could easily spend several years and \$2,000 or \$3,000 on restoration of old stones.

But we all seem to have several pots on the stove at any one time these days; and fund-raising can be a chore as well... So we wait, and we watch...possibly hoping for new inspiration (or some new blood in our group). And time passes...

But let me leave you with this parting thought... Town meeting is comes each June in Milton. There are Select Board candidates to vote for, or not...and budget items to vote for, or not...our annual chance to speak out on the issues that concern us! A golden opportunity, if you ask me!

NEWSLETTER

of the Milton Historical Society
P.O. Box 2, Milton, Vermont 05468

Volume 5 June, 1990 Number 1

Editor..... Robert J. Hooker
Production Assist... John C. DeBoer

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Museum: Iris Mayville, Ruth Ryan, Ardell Campbell, Judy Perry, Roger Perry
Homes Tour: Jane FitzGerald, Lorinda Henry, John FitzGerald
Cemetery: Jim Ballard, Bob Hooker, Sharon Flaherty, Lorinda Henry, Jane FitzGerald, Gail McDonough, Jim Manley Sr., Art Mayville
Historic Sites: Gwen Brown, Stan Henry, John FitzGerald
History Contest: Gwen Brown, Ardell Campbell, Edith Holden, Edna Frye

MONTHLY MEETINGS & PROGRAMS

The Historical Society meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the American Legion Hall, Route 7, Milton, at 7:30 p.m.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Twelve years ago, in 1978, the Milton Historical Society was organized to collect, preserve, and make available to the public information pertaining to Milton's history. We were fortunate and pleased that the people of Milton, in 1979, recognized our need for a place to display artifacts, pictures, maps, documents, etc., by voting to allocate a room to our use in the newly renovated Clark Memorial Building. We are very proud of the Milton Museum and encourage anyone who hasn't visited it to do so. Our exhibits do change periodically.

In 1982, the 200th anniversary of the first five settlers arriving in Milton, the members of the Historical Society made a Bicentennial Quilt. The squares commemorate important dates, places and people from Milton's first fifty years, and the quilt is displayed in the museum.

During 1991, the State of Vermont will be celebrating the Bicentennial of its statehood. The Vermont Bicentennial Commission has been encouraging all the towns and communities throughout the state to get involved. Many workshops have been held during the past few months to help Societies such as ours prepare for this important historic event. Each town has a unique heritage, so this is a great time for us to research our roots, spruce up our communities, and invite relatives and friends back to celebrate.

One of my goals this year was to increase our membership to two hundred members. The response to the membership drive has been great, but we still need more members to

THE MILTON MUSEUM

Located on the third floor of the Clark Building on Main Street, the Milton Museum is open from 1 pm to 4 pm every Saturday from May through October, and the first and third Saturdays November through April. Class field trips and special visits by appointment.

reach our goal. We would also appreciate your support in any of the following areas: Researching, lending or donating of items--especially pictures, making financial contributions, typing, host/hostessing at the Museum and other events.

The Milton History Book Committee is currently researching and gathering more material and pictures to compile a complete history of Milton. If you have any material or pictures that could be used, please contact one of the members of the committee listed in this issue's masthead. A member of the committee who is an experienced photographer has offered to make negatives of any pictures loaned to the Society. The original would be returned as soon as possible.

The new 1990-91 program of our Society is printed elsewhere in this issue. Some of the highlights this summer will be an Indian Heritage Celebration during the month of July. The Milton Public Library is planning a family (age 6 to adult) program on Indian life on Friday, July 13. And Indian story-teller will present a program on Indian folklore. There will be a special Indian exhibit at the Milton Museum, and other activities are being planned. On Sunday, July 29, the Society is planning a trip to the Calvin Coolidge Homestead in Plymouth. If interested, call 893-2340 for details.

Any Milton resident eighty or more years old is eligible to be an honorary member of our Society. We are presently updating our list, so if you know of anyone who qualifies, please contact me.

Jane FitzGerald

STANNARD-SANDERSON HOUSE

At the present time our Historic Sites Committee is waiting to hear from the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, owners of this historic building that was once the home of Civil War General Stannard, as to its future. GBIC is presently discussing with town officials preservation of the building while using it commercially.

1990 HISTORY CONTEST WINNERS

Milton public school students honored by the Milton Historical Society at its May meeting are:

1st Honors: Eric Ballard, Jessica Bartlett, Catherine Brodeur, Amanda Bruchs, Carrie Desranleau, Amanda Jean King, Julie Roberts, Erin-Jane Paulsen, Jo-Ellen Rowley.

2nd Honors: Nicole Billings, Seth Clark, David Tontaine, Justin Kretzer, Andrew Martello, Ricky Reen, Jessica Reynolds, Mary Beth Robie, Jason Roy, Nate Towne, Justin Wheeler.

HISTORIC CAMPS & HOMES TOUR

by John C. DeBoer

Over 100 persons attended the annual Historic Homes Tour sponsored by the Society on September 30. In 1989 this tour took the form of a tour to historic summer camps, as well as homes, in the western part of Milton.

Tour participants were provided with a map and a self-guided tour brochure including historic features of each building or site visited, which included

- Camp Everest, associated with the historic Everest farm, established by Zedediah Everest in the mid 1800's;
- Camp Martin, a group of cottages and cabins that once included the Algonquin Inn and was a summer camp for Jewish youth for a twenty-year period prior to the Great Depression. Moss Hart, musical comedy notable, directed summer dramatic workshops here.
- Cold Spring Camp, founded by a Connecticut school teacher in 1927 after he fell in love with the Eagle Mountain area.
- Milton Boro Cemetery, burial place for Revolutionary War soldiers, and site of the Methodist Church whose pews and chancel furniture were acquired by Shelburne Museum when the congregation disbanded.
- Camp Rich, founded in 1874, with a

central guest house, and a number of cottages and tents for rent each summer, picking up guests by carriage from the Central Vermont Railroad station in Milton or by motor launch from the steamboat docks in Burlington or St. Albans.

--Camp Eagle Mountain on some of the highest elevations on Lake Champlain.

Tickets for the tour were \$7.00 (\$5.00 for members of the Milton Historical Society).

Interestingly, the hosts and hostesses of homes visited reported that a moose had been making his way up the Champlain shores a day or so before--evidently giving the tour a preview of his own!

The tour concluded with refreshments at the home of Odessa and Franklin Cary on Lake Road--a home filled with historic items.

MILTON MUSEUM ENJOYS AN ACTIVE YEAR

By Ruth Ryan

The Milton Museum, located in the Clark (municipal) Building enjoyed an active year in 1989 with exhibits, projects and donations, and some 411 visitors.

A new portable sign proclaiming

MILTON MUSEUM OPEN NOW

was made by a member, John DeBoer, designed to be placed on the lawn in front of the Clark Building whenever the museum is open.

Recent donations include two copies of a research paper entitled, "An Assessment of Growth in Milton, 1960-1987," by a Milton resident, Judy Stewart, a student at Trinity College, Burlington, at that time. Also, one copy of "The History of Chittenden Chapter 59, Order of the Eastern Star," by Barbara Mills.

In June a class of twenty-two fourth graders, their teacher, Mrs. LeSage, and two parents--all of

South Hero--visited the museum. It was a special appointment visit, and I wish to thank Iris Mayville for her assistance.

On September 30, the day of the Historic Camps and Homes Tour sponsored by our Society, the museum was open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and a total of 20 persons visited. Thanks to Iris Mayville for assisting on that day, too.

The museum was open on the evening of December 6, when the Milton Historical Society met in the Selectmen's Room, located across the hall from the museum. About twenty visited the museum at that time.

The museum was again open on the evening of December 16, the night of the town's Tree Lighting Ceremony on the lawn of the Clark Memorial Building. Some thirty persons visited the museum following the ceremony as refreshments were served across the hall in the Selectmen's Room.

An exhibit of 35 cameras and one tripod was on display for three months with Sharon Flaherty, Emile Racine and Mr. Fodor lending cameras. Iris Mayville and Ruth Ryan loaned one camera each. Also included was a history of photography with poster, the drawing done by Lorinda Henry and the poster and research by Jane Fitzgerald. Also included was a profile of J.K. Smith, a well known photographer of Milton.

Out of town visitors to the museum last year included persons from Canada, England, Florida, New York state, New Hampshire and points in Vermont.

SOCIETY VISITS ETHAN ALLEN HOMESTEAD

Eighteen members and guests of the Society organized a group excursion to the Ethan Allen Homestead in Burlington on July 30. The group was taken on a personally guided tour of the establishment by Scott Stevens, its Director, and enjoyed a picnic lunch together.

PROGRAMS FOR 1990-1991

Most of our programs are held at the American Legion Hall, Rt. 7, at 7:30 pm and are followed by our regular business meeting. Read the "Islander" or the "Buyer's Digest" for details, or call 893-2340, or 893-7790.

- July 11:** "Collecting Oral History."
Speaker: Richard Sweterlitsch of the English Dept. at UVM.
- July 29:** Picnic & trip to Calvin Coolidge Homestead, Plymouth, Vt.
- August 1:** Tour & slides of historically restored home & outbuildings on Cline Road in Georgia.
- September 5:** Harvest Supper
- October 3:** Civil War speaker
- October 6:** Historic Homes Tour
- November 7:** Reed Cherington: stories from the "Old Stone House," the "Brownington Village Historic District" and the area's leading historic figure, Alexander Twilight, believed to be the first Black American to graduate from a US college and to serve in a state legislature.
- December 5:** Christmas party, bring a gift to exchange and a Christmas memory to share. There will be refreshments and singing.
- January 2:** "Area by Area, Town by Town, Native American History & Relations from the first settlements to the present," by John Moody (subject to confirmation).
- February 6:** "Vermont Prehistory & the Changing Environment" with Peter Thomas of the Consulting Archeology Program, Dept. of Anthropology, UVM. Also Pie Night. (Bring a pie to share.)
- March 6:** "Happy Birthday Vermont: 200 Years Old." Neighboring historical societies are invited to join in our celebration featuring the Bayley & Hazen Singers.
- April 3:** Elections and annual planning meeting.
- May 1:** Junior Historian Night: Certificates will be presented to the best of the 4th graders' papers. Speaker to be announced.
- June 5:** "Vermont's Bicentennial" speaker, author, William Mores (subject to confirmation).

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

by Ruth Ryan

The Society enjoyed a number of outstanding programs at its monthly meetings during recent months. Here are some highlights.

AN INTRODUCTION TO GENEALOGY

At the September 6 meeting the speaker, Marjorie Napoli, read an article which indicated that genealogy ranks with coin and stamp collecting in popularity.

"Start with yourself and your parents," she said. "From your parents get information about your grandparents and great grandparents. Consult family Bibles, family albums with old pictures." Also of value are land records, vital records in town clerks' offices about deeds, wills, births, marriages and deaths.

She recommended that the following resources be consulted: The New England Genealogical Society Library in Boston; the Vermont Historical Society Library in Montpelier; the Vermont Census of 1790-1800; the Genealogists's Handbook. All Vermont vital records since 1919 are in Montpelier. Old newspapers are kept at the Supreme Court building.

Ms. Napoli showed colored slides of Greens Corners Post Office and Creamery (the only slides of that site), Sheldon Cemetery, the Fairfield and Sheldon town clerk's office, and maps. She displayed her own genealogical chart two yards wide and a pedigree chart of the kings and queens of Great Britain.

VERMONT FOLKLORE

Evelyn Stanley of Enosburg addressed the Society informally at its October meeting, pointing out how folklore handed down by word of mouth by each generation shows what everyday life was like in the past and sometimes corrects mistaken historical assumptions. For example, she pointed out that oral history makes it clear that Chester A. Arthur was born in Fairfield, Vermont, even though many people believe mistakenly that he was born in Waterville, Vermont.

She recounted folklore stories told her by her father when she was a child, including a wolf story.

Ms. Stanley is Vice President of the Green Mountain Folklore Society, which was founded April, 1948, by Prof. Leon Dean, and is a former editor of its publication, "Green Mountain Whittlers," and "The Potash Kettle."

BOOZE SMUGGLING ACROSS THE BORDER

At the November meeting Eloise Hedbor enlightened the Society with such statements as these:

- **The roots of smuggling in the United States start with the Champlain Valley, aided by the Embargo Act of 1807 which prevented American ships from being seized.
- **The St. Albans town fathers wrote to President Thomas Jefferson concerning the smuggling problem.
- **John Jacob Astor was behind smuggling activities, and this might have been the start of his fortune.
- **During Prohibition smuggling went on across the Canadian border, and it was no problem to obtain liquor right on Church Street in Burlington.

Ms. Hedbor reminded the Society that the Volstead Act (Prohibition amendment to the Constitution) passed into law on October 28, 1919, and became effective January 19, 1920. The 18th Amendment was repealed in 1933, when Prohibition ended for beer; hard liquor became legal again in 1935.

Following the talk several Society members reminisced concerning smuggling activities in this area during that period. It was noted that Smuggler's Notch was used to smuggle booze, and years before, cattle were smuggled through there.

ETHAN ALLEN; A CLOSE LOOK

Ethan Sims, a descendant of Ethan Allen, was the guest speaker at the January 6 meeting, and was introduced by Scott Stevens, Director of the Ethan Allen Homestead in Burlington.

Speaking informally, Mr. Sims

referred to his ancestor as "the other Ethan Allen", because the *real* Ethan Allen is not well known. He was, said Mr. Sims, a philosopher with no formal education who wrote a book entitled, "Reason, the Only Oracle of Man," published in 1784 and reprinted in 1940. Sims displayed both books as he spoke.

Sims said that Ethan Allen compared Nature to God in his book, and described superstition and the creation of the world. He believed in a life hereafter, and thought that every man should have the intuition to know what is right and what is wrong, being responsible for his own actions.

Sims reviewed Ethan Allen's life. He was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, the oldest of six boys. He ran an iron smelter in Salisbury, Conn., in 1757 when he was 20. He travelled to Philadelphia in 1782 to argue for Vermont's joining the Union. In the closing months of the Revolutionary War he led an expedition to Montreal, which was unsuccessful. Allen lived at his Homestead in Burlington only for eighteen months.

Scott Stevens, speaking as Director of the Homestead, said that volunteer help would be most welcome at any time.

FILM: "FLOOD HITS MILTON"

A silent film with printed commentary of the 1927 Flood was presented at the February meeting. Borrowed from the UVM Media Center, it showed scenes of ruined homes along River Street as far as Gimlet Hill. The iron bridge that spanned the Lamoille River in Milton was swept away, as were several historic buildings directly in back of the Clark Memorial Building and also buildings along the west bank of the river. These included the store owned and operated by William and Ella Kennedy, and before that by Ray Coburn. Also, the Star Theatre owned by Earl Bevins. Also, Orvis Mayville's brick house east of the river and north of the bridge.

Undoubtedly the flood on November 3 and 4 of 1927 was the worst flood in the history of Vermont.

The film showed the Winooski River bridge between Winooski and Burlington, where damage of \$100,000 was inflicted. A temporary pontoon bridge was put in place, but this was swept away several days later.

Also pictured in the film was Waterbury, the town hardest hit by the flood. Also, White River Junction, badly damaged by flood waters, including the bridge there. At Bolton one man lost his life. At Belows Falls the road was covered by twenty feet of water. Other scenes of Rutland and Proctor showed great damage. Cambridge, Vermont, was hard hit, and many cows and pigs were killed. Another washed-out bridge was at Hinesburg, and a man from that area spent the whole night in a tree.

The film also showed damage in North Adams, Massachusetts, and West Lebanon, New Hampshire.

Devastation occurred all over Vermont, and the cleaning up was the hardest part of the flood. The Red Cross worked wonders in every town during the emergency.

Following the program several members and guests participated in a lively discussion of personal recollections of the Great Flood of 1927.

BERLIN REVIEW

An Irving Berlin musical program was presented by Barbara Cox at the March 7 meeting. She played many longtime Berlin favorites on the piano and commented on them, showing how the songs reflected history.

"White Christmas" was written in 1942;

"Oh How I Hate to Get up in the Morning" was a World War I song;

"A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody" was written in 1919;

"Always" -- 1925;

"Blue Skies" -- 1927;

"God Bless America"--written in 1917--was introduced in 1938 by Kate Smith, when it became most famous. Jane Fitzgerald read an article by Ronald Reagan entitled, "God Bless Irving Berlin."

Irving Berlin was born in Siberia, Russia, on May 11, 1888, and came to America in 1893. He had

only two years of formal education and is said to have written 1,500 songs.

MILTON IN THE EARLY 1900'S

by Ruth Ryan

Many changes had accorred in Milton by the turn of the century, with new enterprises replacing the old ones, and new businesses having started. It should be noted here that the sawmill business in Milton was all but ruined by the Panic of 1873.

The International Paper Company built a pulp mill at Great Falls on the Lamoille River, which provided employment and prosperity for the town for many years, until it shut down about the year 1925. It is the present site of the Central Vermont Public Service Corporation. In the 1920's there was an airfield where the B & M Auto Parts now operates. Paul Schill and the Vermont Air Transport Company operated a flying service; also planned to manufacture aircraft there. This plan did not materialize, and in the 1930's the hangar was converted to a dance pavilion, and was used for the then popular marathon dances.

The Milton Cooperative Dairy Corporation was organized in 1919 by the farmers of Milton and vicinity. John McGrathg was the President for 34 years, and one of the founders. The creamery closed in 1974. The J.A. Ryan Co. feed store was owned and operated by James A. Ryan and William P. Ryan, who purchased it in 1913 from Heil C. McNall. It was operated in later years by Clinton and Paul Ryan. The property is now owned by the L. Oliver Seed Company.

The great flood of 1927 destroyed many buildings and homes on River Street and also the old iron bridge. In 1937 the dam was constructed and Arrowhead Lake was filled in.

About 1920 the Milton Boro Telephone Company, which had been organized in the western part of town, sold out to Joel Farnsworth, who made and installed private

telephones, and who had joined with Central Telephone Company. The New England Telephone and Telegraph Company replaced the private and central telephone lines in 1939.

The Milton Water Corporation was formed in 1920 by John McGrath and nineteen other residents. John McGrath served as President of the Milton Water Corporation until his death. In 1968 the town voted to purchase the water system from the stockholders for \$60,000. It is now known as Milton Water Department. The Milton Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1937 with Chief George Allen, Assistant Chief John Jacobs, and Captain Earl Slocum in charge. The Milton Fire Station was built on Upper Main Street on land donated by Mrs. Ellen Miller. A new fire station was built on Kienle Road in 1965 under Chief George LaCharite.

Somewhere it has been said that "History is the bridge that spans the distance between the past and the present."

MEMBERSHIP

The Milton Historical Society is open to anyone who is interested in joining. The fees are listed below.

Honorary.....	\$0.00
Student (under 16 yrs) ..	\$1.00
Individual.....	\$5.00
Couples.....	\$7.50

The term of the annual membership is from the spring of one year to the spring of the next.

It has been our tradition to award an Honorary membership to any Milton resident who is 80 years old or older. If you know of someone who fits this description, let us know. Please send your membership fee directly to our Treasurer, Mrs. Edna Frye, North Road, Milton, VT 05468, and you will receive your membership card by return mail. In addition to receiving our newsletter, members are also offered discounts on tickets to the annual Historic Homes Tour and other events.

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