



# HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

THE  
NEWSLETTER  
OF THE  
MILTON  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

2004-2005

## Historic School Moments by Lorinda A. Henry

The year 2004 marks several Anniversary milestones for Milton's school history.

From the beginning, Vermonters have greatly valued an educational system for their young people. From the late 1700s we have documentation of towns requiring indentured children to be educated in academics as well as in the trade they were learning. Girls were required to be taught to read and boys to both read and write. Requirements for mathematics related to farming (boys) and housekeeping (girls) were added before 1800.

Besides expecting that youth should receive education, we can also interpret that there was a pool of readers and writers that could instruct the children. By the time of the Civil War, Vermont's soldiers were mostly literate as were the folks at home. Many Civil War letters are still existent in Vermont, and the quality of composition and range of vocabulary are remarkable.

Milton was no exception and had begun its one-room school system by the early 1800s. The ebb and flow of school-age population and changes in transportation kept the number of schools at any one time in flux, but by the 1950s there were eight still in use.

In 1894, 110 years ago, Milton constructed its first high school. Many rural towns of the era had no high school, but to the people of Milton it was important to provide a source of higher education for their students. The building of the high school illustrated a real commitment to secondary education by the community.

That high school was destroyed by fire during World War II. Even with constraints on materials and difficulty of obtaining skilled labor, since most goods and all able-bodied young men were involved in defense, a new high school was built in record time. Sixty years ago, in 1944, that new school was dedicated. The building still stands on School Street, its rather elegant facade a monument to the determination of a town bent on providing for its young people.

Ten years later, 1954, the one-room schools

had pretty much burst at the seams. Herrick Avenue Elementary School opened, and the last one-room schools were closed.

"New Modern Building to Replace Eight One-Room Schoolhouses in Milton," the headline in *The Burlington Free Press*

Some of the buildings replaced fifty years ago still stand and have been put to other uses, such as the American Legion Hall at Checkerberry. Others did not fare as well, and those buildings where many present Milton residents began their educations are no more.

However, photos of all of them, as well as some earlier schools, are on display at the Milton Historical Museum.

This year is also the 35th anniversary of the present junior-senior high school, which was dedicated in 1969. Though less graceful than the building on School Street, it too is a product of its times. The need for more space for classes was pressing, and there had been no athletic fields at all at School Street. Again the town of Milton rose to the challenge and the new school with new accoutrements and spaces to provide for future generations became reality.

Recent years have brought flower beds and other plantings to the high school's grounds, and students and teachers are celebrating the first years of the 21st century by brightening and personalizing the 1960s industrial design look.

One more major change in recent years was a large addition at Herrick Avenue. There have been several additions and modifications in the 50 years since the original school was built, but in 1998 the largest addition to date was dedicated. This change brought the fifth and sixth grades out of the aging former high school building and into a new wing of their own.

A town's schools indicate its interest in its youth, their well-being, and ultimately the cohesiveness and self-respect of the town itself. Milton people have traditionally provided for the education of future citizens. That we will continue to do so seems assured, at least in light of our history.

Take some time this summer to come by the Museum and reconnect with our school history. If you have any school pictures or artifacts, yearbooks, class pictures or memories of a beloved teacher, we would love to see them or hear your stories.



*Children playing at Snake Hill Schoolhouse.*



*The Class of 1913 at the original Milton High School.*



*Herrick Avenue Elementary School in the mid-1950s.*

announced that year. The schools replaced were Arrowhead (formerly Snake Hill) School, Miltonboro School, Plains School, West Milton School, Checkerberry School, Towne's Corners School, and Brush and Allen Schools.

MILTON  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ESTABLISHED 1978

Officers

Jane FitzGerald *Museum Director*  
 Bill Kaigle *President*  
 Stan Henry *Vice President*  
 Beverly Quebec *Secretary*  
 Linda Ballard *Treasurer*  
 Mary Skapski *Historian*

Directors

Bob Sibley *3 years*  
 Jerry Learn *2 years*  
 Richard Stowell *1 year*

Membership

Membership is open to the public. Annual dues are:

Individual \$5.00  
 Family \$7.50  
 Honorary (age 80 & over) Free

Please send payment to:

Milton Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 2  
 Milton, VT 05468

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING  
 VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1 2004-2005

Bill Kaigle *Editor/Design*

# 2005 Calendar Focuses on Main Street

by Bill Kaigle

The topic of the 2005 Milton Historical Society calendar is its Historic Main Street, with a unique and interesting history. Milton was chartered in 1763 and organized in 1788. Noah Smith, one of Vermont's first lawyers, owned most of the land that would become Milton Village. In 1798 Smith donated the land for Main Street (Milton's first East-West street), the first church, and the Village Cemetery. For almost two hundred years, Main Street was the center of Milton Village. This street was home to our doctors, lawyers, churches and many merchants of all kinds. Visitors arrived at the Main Street Railroad Depot and were transported by carriage to local hotels and summer accommodations on Lake Champlain.



Main Street is shown at the center of Milton Village in this 1840s photograph.

Historic Main Street has a rich and varied architectural heritage. Most buildings have kept their original setting, which contributes to their charm and historical value. To preserve this district requires two basic steps – identifying and inventorying, then conserving the individual buildings and streets. These attractive historic buildings are important resources which reflect the values and way of life of those who came before us. Each building in the area may not be an outstanding landmark, but the group of structures taken as a whole shows a strong sense of community, history and pride.

Historic buildings and districts help identify every village, town and city. As we value our heritage, we honor our future.

## HISTORIC Main Street

2005 Milton Historical Society Calendars are now available at the Museum or by calling 893-7387.  
 A Great Collector's Item!

## Fourth Grade History Contest!

About 150 parents and friends attended Junior Historians Award Night at the Herrick Avenue Elementary School on May 5th, 2004. A historian from the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum spoke about our lake's rich heritage, which was the topic of the contest. Books and certificates were awarded to over fifty students by Linda Ballard.



## High School History Project by Jane FitzGerald

The Milton schools are honored to have been selected to participate in the Vermont Historical Society's Community Project, a two-year program which started in the second semester of the 2003-04 school year. Social Studies teacher Gary Furlong is coordinator of the project, in which teachers, students, and Society members will form a partnership and

choose, research, and document a piece of history into a story format for a web site which the students will produce.

The students will learn the latest computer technology to store photographs and artifacts in a digital format and teach these skills to Society members. The Society is looking forward to this great opportunity!

## Remember!

Our membership year begins in April. Please renew or begin your membership today!

Send enclosed form and payment to:  
 Milton Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 2  
 Milton, VT 05468

A portion of printing cost donated by Paw Print Offset/Digital, So. Burlington, VT

# Society and Related Events for 2003-04 by Jane FitzGerald

The 2003-04 season was kicked off in May, with the 21st Annual Junior Historian's Award Night. Fifty-one fourth graders were recognized and received a history-related book. Linda Wellings, Program Director at Shelburne Farms, gave a hands-on program "Early Family Farms: Work, Food and Fun", which was the focus of the contest.

Last spring, graduate students from the Field Naturalist Program at the University of Vermont studied and developed a management plan for the 350-acre Milton Municipal Forest. Students visited the Museum, interviewed Society members, and gave a copy of the segment "The Cultural History of the Milton Municipal Forest" to the Museum.

Milton was one of twelve Vermont Societies honored in May 2003 at the 50th Anniversary and Annual Meeting of the League of Local Historical Societies in Strafford for their Museum activities and publicity, which were documented by photos, newspapers and programs. This year, Jane FitzGerald and Perry Thom attended the Annual Meeting held at Goddard College. Nicolas Muller III was keynote speaker, and our Society received an Award of Excellence for Museum Exhibits and Techniques!

On Memorial Day an Open House was held to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the Milton Historical Society in 1978. The people who contributed time and money for the restoration project were recognized and a plaque with their names inscribed is displayed at the Museum. The beautiful stained glass altar window was on public display after several months of restoration and the installation of protective Lexan.

Several members attended the Vermont Historical Expo at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds. Our exhibit portrayed "Camping on the

Milton Shores of Lake Champlain" during the late 1800s and early 1900s with photos, maps, and sports and camping equipment. An early camp scene was also the focus of our float in the Fourth of July parade, and our 2004 calendar carried a similar and expanded

Preservation Award presentations at the Milton Museum. About thirty people enjoyed a picnic lunch and an award ceremony where seven groups were honored for their unique preservation efforts. A tour of the museum followed the business meeting.

The Outreach Theater Company and Milton High School Drama Group produced "Our Town", which depicts life in a small town in America. An empty showcase at the school prompted the idea of the Society having a display of pictures and memorabilia pertaining to Milton's history. We chose an exhibit on the history of music and theater in the home, church and school over the past 100 years.

A Christmas Open House was held with the return visit of Stan Henry with his hands-on toy exhibit, a favorite of the children. Sally White, a Santa Claus collector, shared many of her collections. Guests enjoyed holiday music, refreshments, and a beautiful Christmas tree.

Programs at our monthly meetings this past year included: "The Abenaki of Vermont: A Living Culture", a video presentation by Judy Dow produced by the Vermont Folklife Center; an audio tape of Frank Morsell re-enacting the 1843 speech given in Ferrisburg by former slave Frederick Douglas; Eleanor Brodeur gave an informative

talk on collecting and preserving ephemera (short-lived paper items); and Stan Henry read selections from Dan Cady's "Remembering Vermont Rural Life".

Thanks to all who attended and helped with producing a most enjoyable year of events.

**See the enclosed events calendar for this season's great programs!**



Signs depicting Milton's early Lake Champlain summer camps welcomed visitors to our 2003 Vermont History Expo exhibit.



2003 Fourth of July parade float.

theme, "Greetings from Scenic Milton: Recreation & Relaxation Through the Seasons".

Anyone interested in Milton's history may visit the Museum on School Street on the first and third weekends of April through October, or by appointment year round by calling 893-2340.

In July, the Chittenden County Historical Society held their Annual Meeting and



**New Century Award signs are currently being produced to replace those which have become worn with age. If you are in need of one, please contact Bill Kaigle at 893-7387. Over the years Century Award signs have been presented, along with a property history, to participants in the Historic Home Tours presented by the Society. It's been a while, and we hope to resume these Tours at some point in the future.**

## TRIVIA TIME

*The Central House was an early Milton landmark. Do you know....*

- when it existed?
- who built it and ran businesses there?
- where it was located?

*Come to the Museum for the answer!*

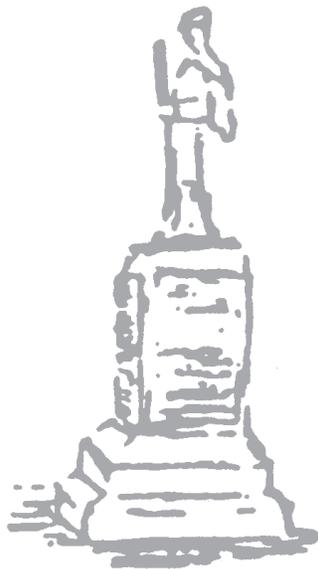




Much thanks to **Rick Stowell** and his employer **IBM**, who has donated a multimedia computer to the Society as part of their Community Outreach program.....**The Civil War Soldier's Monument** will be moved from its current Main Street location by September 2004,

the exact future location is uncertain at press time.....If you need assistance on a genealogy project, contact **Bob Sibley** at 527-0906.....If you have a historical program you'd like to see happen, call **Bill Kaigle** at 893-7387.....A gracious Thank You goes to **Lyndon Sheldon**, who passed away February 2002 and left a generous donation to the Society.....If you have photographs or other items you would like to contribute to the Milton Historical Society, please contact **Jane FitzGerald** at 893-2340.....Monetary donations to benefit the Milton Historical Museum may be sent to: Milton Historical Society, P.O. Box 2, Milton, VT 05468.

*If you are interested in learning about Milton's past and its many events and personalities of the past 150 years, plan to visit the Milton Historical Museum.*



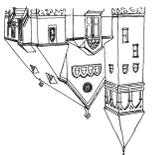
### MUSEUM HOURS

*April through October* 1st & 3rd weekend, 1:00 - 4:00 pm  
*Year-Round* By Appointment (call 893-2340)

*We would also like to invite you to join the Society. Annual Membership begins in April each year. Please return the membership form attached to the enclosed Events Calendar, noting your specific interests.*

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MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 P.O. BOX 2  
 MILTON, VERMONT 05468



*The monthly meeting of the Milton Historical Society is held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Museum at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. We have an entertaining program, a business meeting, and refreshments. All are welcome to attend. Special and related events are also listed.*

- Wed. May 5, 2004      **Junior Historians Awards Night** Milton Elementary School, Herrick Ave.
- Wed. June 2, 2004      **History of the Skeels Hotel** by Nelya Patry
- Sat./Sun. June 26&27, 2004 **Vermont History Expo 2004** Tunbridge World's Fairground, VT  
10 am - 5 pm      Great Exhibits, Presentations, Music & Entertainment. Milton Historical Society exhibit:  
"Historic Main Street".  
*A Vermont Chamber of Commerce Top Ten Summer Event*
- Sat. July 3, 2004      July 4th Parade – Come see our special Museum exhibit "A History of Milton Celebrations"
- Wed. July 7, 2004      **"Daisy Turner"** A presentation by Jane Beck.
- Wed. August 4, 2004      **"History on a Hatbox"** A fascinating slide presentation by Ken Wheeling featuring  
themed hatboxes with historic pictures, advertising and lithographs.
- Sun. August 15, 2004      **Sunday Picnic at the Vermont Historical Society Museum** at the Pavilion  
in Montpelier. Bring a food item to share. Meet at the Milton Museum at 11:00 a.m.
- Wed. September 1, 2004      **Preservation Trust of Vermont** Group discussion about Historic Districts. Speaker  
to be announced.
- Wed. October 6, 2004      **Box Supper Social** Ladies bring a decorated box of goodies / History of Halloween –  
6:30 pm      How It Has Changed
- Wed. November 3, 2004      **"Epitaphs"** by Stan Henry
- Wed. December 1, 2004      **Holiday Memories & Music** Bring a favorite treat to share. Preparation for Holiday  
Open House Tour
- Sun. December 5, 2004      **Holiday Open House Tour** & Christmas Caroling, 1 - 4 p.m. Meet at the Museum.
- Wed. January 5, 2005      **"Discovering Lake Champlain: America's Most Historical Lake"**  
*A Vermont Public Television video presentation*
- Wed. February 2, 2005      **"Ivan Allen: Black Sheep of the Allen Family"** by Vincent Feeney. An enter-  
taining discussion about the lesser-known but outspoken member of Vermont's famous family.  
*A Vermont Humanities Council presentation*
- Wed. March 2, 2005      **"From Cows to Milk"** History of Chittenden County creameries. Video presentation  
and discussion by Jerry Fox of the Chittenden County Historical Society.
- Wed. April 6, 2005      **"Abby Hemenway and the Vermont Historical Gazetteer"** by Deborah  
Clifford. A a unrivaled collection of Vermont settlement narratives, from bear stories to the  
exploits of the Green Mountain Boys.  
*A Vermont Humanities Council presentation*

For further information, please call 893-7387 or 893-2340.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Renewal       New Member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in (check all that apply):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attending monthly historical programs     | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring for Historical Museum collections        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guiding visitors at the Historical Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting with genealogical research            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping to restore Milton's cemeteries    | <input type="checkbox"/> Community outreach/public relations/fundraising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                               |  |

The Milton Historical Society meets the first Wednesday of each month at the Milton Historical Museum, at 7:30 p.m. Categories of membership are: Individual - \$5.00, Family - \$7.50, Honorary (age 80 and over) - Free

Membership dues and form may be mailed to: Milton Historical Society, P.O. Box 2, Milton, VT 05468

