



HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

NEWSLETTER &
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MILTON
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

2018-2019

MILTON'S HISTORY: IN PERSON

Talking Retirement with Kathy Montague by Gary Furlong

Author's Note: I had the opportunity to interview Kathy Montague, a long-time Milton school teacher whose connection to the town goes back over 50 years. Kathy was a Milton student in 8th grade in 1969 when the current high school opened. She was among the first group of students at the new Middle/High School. After graduation in 1974, Kathy attended Johnson State College and then returned to begin her teaching career in Milton in 1979. She retired in June after 39 years of teaching at Milton High School. Our conversation covered a wide variety of subjects from Kathy's memories of Milton as a student and teacher, the changes in the town, the challenges of education today and her plans for the future.

Kathy Montague (nee Hawkins) was not originally from Vermont. Her father was in the Air Force and Kathy attended 1st grade in Bangor, Maine while her father was stationed at Dow Air Force Base. The family was then off to Camp Drum in New York where Kathy remembers attending 2nd and 3rd grade in a two-room schoolhouse. By 4th grade her family was in Colchester, Vermont where Kathy attended school. Her father bought land in Milton and Kathy began

attending Milton schools in 5th grade. She attended the Milton Elementary School on Herrick Avenue in 5th and 6th grade and then 7th grade at the School Street School. Kathy's connection to the current High School building began in 8th grade when 8th-12th grade students took up residency in the new high school which opened in the fall of 1969. I asked Kathy what her memories were of entering the brand new building. "I remember being amazed by the size of the building, the pit in the middle of the lobby and huge library. The gymnasium was much bigger than the School Street gym." Kathy also remembered the amphitheater classroom next to the science labs.

Kathy reminisced about some of the former teachers and staff at the high school. She remembered Mr. Musella, Stan Folsom, Mr. Penrod and long-time librarian, Edith Holden. She shared that Ms. Holden had a favorite saying, "Time passes, but will you?" In the library, boys and girls could not sit on the same side of a table. I asked her about the pit in the middle of the lobby. Kathy's impression was that it was to be a "sunken living room" to be used as a gathering place. Over time it became the "senior pit" and she

believes the experiment was ended because it did not create the best impression when visitors came into the building.

Kathy shared some other aspects of student life in the 60's and 70's. She remembered the enforcement of a strict dress code. Skirts had to be a certain length and Kathy had her skirt measured to make sure it was an appropriate length. The dress code did not always sit well with students and Kathy remembers a protest by seniors who arrived at school dressed in bedsheets with rope belts. Like today, students seemed to be interested in having good friends and hopefully liking their teachers. Students wanted to be recognized by being on the Honor Roll. As Kathy remembers, Milton had some "co-op" classes for students interested in farming. Some other popular traditions were Donkey Basketball and "Greaser Day". As a student, Kathy enjoyed artwork and attended the Burlington Tech Center for their Child Care program. At the time she was not planning to go to college but two teachers at the Burlington Tech Center convinced her that she needed to go to college. I asked her what she planned to do if she did not attend college and she said, "I was planning on hitchhiking cross country with my good friend, Jeannie Rule. We were going to get odd jobs (waitressing etc.) as we worked our way across the country. We had a sense of adventure." When I asked Kathy what they planned to do when they got to California she replied, "We had no idea." Kathy related that her parents seemed rather relieved when she put the cross country trip plans on hold and decided to attend college.

Since Kathy arrived in Milton the town has changed a lot. She remembers the area across from the school being mostly cornfields. Lambert's with its cabins in the back on the site of the current Mobil Short



Milton High School

Kathy's 1974 high school yearbook photo.



Milton Historical Society

The newly completed Milton High School in 1969.

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Membership is open to the public. Annual dues are:

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Samples of Milton's Voting Past

by Jim Ballard

On November 6, 1860, Milton voters gathered to vote for President of the United States. The main issues of the time were about slavery and States' Rights. Republican Abraham Lincoln of Illinois was not an abolitionist, but he was against slavery. Union Party candidate John Bell and the Northern Democratic Party's Stephen Douglas from Illinois were for union, even with slavery. The Southern Democratic candidate John Breckinridge of Kentucky would preserve and expand slavery into new territories. Abraham Lincoln won the election with a majority in the electoral and popular vote. This was a political miracle, considering that there were four candidates and that Lincoln was not on the ballot in most Southern States.

In 1860, Vermont had five electoral votes, two more than we have today. Like the rest of the nation, Milton did not have the candidates' names on the ballot. In Milton, Lincoln's 5 electors received 198 votes each. The electors for Stephen Douglas, a native of Brandon Vermont, received 46 each. Bell and Breckenridge electors received one vote each.

For much of our history, the voters at the annual March Town Meetings elected the Moderator, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Constable, Select Board, Lister, School Superintendent, School Trustees and other positions.

On September 5, 1882 at 10:00 a.m. in the Central House, 332 freemen gathered to vote for State and County offices, along with local candidates for Justice of the Peace, and for our one Town Representative. Freewomen did not have the freedom to vote. The office of Town Representative to Montpelier proved to be the most difficult

to decide. Voters wrote in the name of their candidate on paper without party identification. On the first ballot, John Wheelock received 78 votes, Ell Barnum 17, Joseph Bean 36, H. A. Phelps 58, A. Allen 3, P. A. Booth 9, O.E. Coon 1, Horace Robinson 42, A. Fay 82, and 3 votes were scattered. 167 votes were required for election, so the balloting continued for 19 more ballots.

Wheelock, Fay, Robinson, Bean, Booth, Barnum, and Phelps remained as constant candidates, while Coon, Allen, Holbrook, Marrs and other names were suggested and dropped out as the voting dragged on.

As the voting on the 20th ballot began, Lansing Snow rose and offered a motion to suspend the voting for two minutes. The motion carried, therefore rendering the 20th ballot void. It was decided that a committee consisting of five Fay voters and five Wheelock voters be formed. The Committee decided to offer D.H. Quinn as a candidate, and he won on the 21st ballot.

Our Town reports are not just about elections, budgets or vital statistics. Every Town Meeting is warned in advance, listing the positions and the issues or articles to be decided by the voters. The articles usually begin with, "To see if the Town will...." The Town is not referring to those with power, or some group far away...the Town means "We the voters."

Our Town and School meetings are public diaries, where people express their hopes, fears and commitment, sometimes mixed with humor. It is up to us to make Milton not just a place, but a home...and our vote is a great way to do exactly that.



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Milton's History in Person: Talking Retirement with Kathy Montague *continued from page 1*

Stop and Midtown Plaza was a vivid memory for Kathy. Branch's IGA at the bottom of Main Street and some of the other businesses on Main Street were also important to Kathy at the time. As the town grew, she remembers discussion of making Route 7 a four lane highway through town.

Our conversation then turned to her teaching career, which spanned 39 years in June 2018. It was hard to pick out a few memories from her time here, but Kathy mentioned teaching with Barrett Smith in the middle school. She especially remembers a unit on ancient Greece where students dressed as ancient Greeks and had a Greek banquet to end the unit. One highlight for Kathy is the students who have come back to visit her over the years. Kathy also spoke fondly of having the children of former students as students. This first happened around 1995 so Kathy has educated many members of two

generations. She still is amused by former students who address her as Mrs. Montague



Fellow MHS English teacher Soomie Carpenter gives animated accolades to her retiring colleague Kathy Montague at the 2018 Senior Awards Night.

many years after graduation. When she told one former student that they could address her as "Kathy" the former student responded, "You will always be Mrs. Montague." As she prepares to leave education she sees school funding, school safety, possible teacher shortages, and new initiatives such as school choice as challenges for the future.

All retirees are asked about their plans. Kathy would love to travel. She has never seen Niagara Falls or Yosemite National Park, among other sites in the United States. She would also like to travel to Ireland, England and Scotland. Her perennial gardens, some home projects, some substitute teaching and working on her fitness are also among her plans. First as a student and then as a teacher, Kathy Montague's connection to the Milton schools runs deep. The faculty, staff and students wish her well in her retirement.

General Stannard House Update *by Bill Kaigle*

In 2017-18, the General Stannard House Committee continued its important work of saving the post-Civil War farmhouse of General George Stannard, hero of the Battle of Gettysburg. We've been busy laying the groundwork for physical progress in the second half of 2018.

In May 2017, the site was examined by the Vermont Department for Historic Preservation (VDHP) and UVM Archaeology to ascertain archaeological items of value for our Act 250 amendment application, and none were found. The Town DRB approved our Subdivision, Conditional Use and Site Plan in October. Our state Act 250 amendment was submitted and approved in April 2018.

In December 2017, we received a \$30,000 grant by the Vermont legislature, through the Capital Construction Budget, administered by VDHP. We thank the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions, and the Senate Committee on Institutions for their support of "the restoration and rehabilitation of important resources that are vital to the telling of Vermont's history", as stated by Laura Trieschmann, Vermont's State Historic Preservation Officer at the grant presentation event in Montpelier. Howard Coffin was instrumental in securing this grant, awarded with matched funding, reimbursed as phased work is completed.

We look forward to pursuing more grant opportunities once the property transfer to the

town is complete, and it is in process at this time, July 2018. We appreciate your continued support at www.generalstannardhouse.org/donate. Our donors' gifts help us to accept the entire state grant amount, as it is a match.

In December 2017, Peter Pratt of Pratt Contracting agreed to be our Clerk of the Works for the restoration project, and architect Al Russell joined our committee, giving very valuable insight and vision. In February 2018 a structural analysis was performed by timber frame engineer Katie Hill, who gave us necessary information to help plan for Phase 1 rehabilitation. It was advised that due to the structural needs in some areas, we disassemble, document and store the house in sections. This incremental step will stop the current decay, and allow us to obtain the necessary funding to complete the restoration. We have obtained VDHP approval for this plan, and enlisted timber framer and historic preservation expert Eliot Lothrop and Building Heritage for this Phase 1 work in 2018. Building Heritage will transport the documented timber frame parts to the town Bombardier barn for safe storage, and all unsalvageable parts of the timber frame house will be replaced with new wood of like species by Eliot and his crew when the house is reconstructed. Visit our web site for more details.

Legal deed transfer work is in process, with anticipated approval in August 2018. Associated site work, conditions of the

transfer, are currently being planned. Thank you to the town select board and staff for your ongoing support and assistance in our efforts to save and bring this Vermont Civil War Heritage destination to life in our town, and to Bob Miller for his donation of the property.

Our major heritage initiative in the past year was the development and launch of the *Vermont in the Civil War Heritage Trail* (VCWHT), in partnership with other sites and stakeholders statewide. Brochures have been distributed, and the Facebook page and web site www.vtcivilwarheritage.net are generating interest and traffic. People can now connect Civil War-related sites along the entire Route 7 corridor of the state. We look forward to the General Stannard House being a visited site - and a possible hub - on the Trail in the future. Further enhancements, including videos and regional interpretive signs highlighting each area's sites, are currently in process.

With Liam McKone of the Sons of Union Veterans - Stannard Camp, we also submitted to Senator Leahy (on Lincoln's birthday 2018, handed to Leahy himself) an official Recommendation that George Stannard Receive the Medal of Honor for Gallantry at the Battle of Gettysburg. We believe we have put our best foot forward making this case, and look forward to receiving updates on what could be a lengthy consideration process.

Our committee meets regularly, and all are welcome at any time. Call 734-0758 if you'd like to get involved in any way.

The Keeping and Getting of Wisdom by Terry Richards

Just what do you expect and want from your historical society? This seems like an easy question. The trouble is, we really need to ask, as it's not a simple issue. We and many other Societies are facing this same challenge. Our Society's success may depend on your thoughts.

History is flexible. It is not always obvious. It can be a slippery thing. Historic records depend on human beings to recognize, gather, record, preserve and transmit events and details. We choose what those may be. Essayist Sally Tisdale writes, "Memory is pocked with gaps at best, prone to falsehood and suggestion; the story changes over time." It seems this might be where we as historians come in.

It is not an easy thing to "recognize and gather events and their details." Think of "Lost Civilizations", the details for which we still search: Greece, the Middle East, ancient China, the ruins in the Amazon Rainforest. Among multitudes of controversies we can include the American Civil War, what started WWI, who was Shakespeare, who wrote the Christian Bible (and which version or translation?) All of this is "accepted history." And all are still open to many questions and doubts.

For starters, just how do we define "The History of Milton"? We are all living in history and have witnessed important moments in our lifetimes. History can be said to "be what we make it." How do we choose? What do we examine, preserve, pass along? Are there different "kinds" of history? I suggest we look at what we can call "Important History" and "Interesting History." This is not necessarily any "dumbing down" of our mission. This is no popularity contest for public attention. These two approaches can and should support each other.

History is perhaps most enjoyable or understandable when we have participated in or been told personal stories. This is what I'll call "Interesting History." We are somehow personally involved. We have pride in our knowledge, and don't forget our confidence in that knowledge. It can be events of 10, 20 or 50 years ago. Personal memories of Racing in Milton excited us all last summer. Our community's participation was huge. Is this an improvement to our Society's value to the community? Should we explore other relatively recent events?

Our examination of more recent history

might include "The Sixties Come to Milton". Or "Airfields and Aviation", or "Husky Comes to Milton", or "Catamount Industrial Park" or "Political Upheavals". The list can go on and on. All can be presented in meaningful and entertaining ways.



An examination of earlier history, or "Important History" might mean:

- What Happened to Our Paper Pulp Mill?
- The Lumbering Industry
- Fire, Police and Rescue Departments
- Milton's Veterans
- Our Contributions to the Preservation of America in our Civil War
- Turn of the Century Lake and Summer Camps
- Origin and Growth of the Birchwood Community
- First Families of Milton
- Dairy Farming
- Early Schools
- Modernization of Education and Central Schools
- And more...

Most simply put, different Historical Societies solve this in various ways. Stowe features the ski industry. Jericho has Snowflake Bentley, Brownington has the Old Stone House and Alexander Twilight, Springfield has the machine tool factories and Eureka Schoolhouse. What should Milton highlight?

The weekly publication *Seven Days* recently ran a feature on local historical societies in Vermont. They had a few

observations: These groups are big on artifacts. The Societies "represent a sort of benign fringe element throughout the State". They strive to document events, as well as acquire and protect artifacts. Some of those archives can be patchwork efforts. Historical Societies tend to be populated by older generations. These folks have the required "spare time" to participate and the acquired knowledge and experience to recognize how things have changed throughout their lifetimes. Perspective is helpful. All of this is enhanced by the status of Vermont as the state with America's second-oldest population. Yes, this can be a great resource and not an economic drag.

So, what to do? A huge presentation of our state's history used to be the annual Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge. It featured great variety, exciting presentations, and an expansive picture of Vermont's story. It is now gone, for lack of interest and funding. What can replace it?

With all this is in mind, we'd love to hear what you want to see from your Milton Historical Society. What is important to the citizens of Milton? What do we expand, and what do we cut back? The Milton Historical Society is reaching out to our public for answers, suggestions, and preferences for our future contributions to the quality of life in Milton. Your voice matters very much - please feel free to contact us with your thoughts, or join us at our meetings.

Terry Richards is a board member of the Milton Historical Society. He can be reached at 802-893-6791 or trichards@pshift.com.



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National History Day at Milton High School by Gary Furlong

Milton High School students again participated in the National History Day program this year. National History Day is a nation-wide program in which students choose a topic related to a theme, conduct research using primary and secondary sources and develop a thesis. Students present their findings in original papers, websites, documentaries, exhibits or performances. This year's theme was *Conflict and Compromise in History*. The program is challenging for students as it demands that they utilize a variety of skills to develop a project from an idea to completion of a final product.

Students began choosing topics and conducting research in late November. All 10th grade students participate and in early January, all participants had the opportunity to conduct research in the University of Vermont library. The books, databases and primary documents enriched the student's research and understanding of the significance of their topic. About 25 students chose to enter their projects in the

Vermont portion of National History Day that was held at Montpelier High School on April 7. At the state competition students can qualify for the National History Day competition if they place first or second in their category and receive a rating of superior

History Day competition which will be held in June at the University of Maryland. Their project was on the Korean war. **Billy Devers** placed 3rd in the individual website category with his project on the Christmas truce during World War I. In the group exhibit category Milton had two groups tie for third place. **Molly Gary, Magda Lelito, Taylor Anderson, and Kiera Robie** created an exhibit about the Salem Witch Trials. They tied with **Renee Ellis and Abbi Delong** and their exhibit on the Crimean War. **Kay Fagan** won a special prize from the Vermont Historical Society for her website on the Vermont billboard ban. At the May meeting of the Milton Historical Society Kay presented her project with **Sierra Pepin** (exhibit on Elizabeth Blackwell) and **Alexis**

Drown (documentary on Nicholas II and the Russian Revolution).

In the fall students will begin preparing projects for the 2019 competition. Next year's theme is *Triumph and Tragedy in History*.



Milton High School students visited the Vermont State House during the NHD state competition in April. Congratulations to the many award winners!

Gary Furlong

or excellent. Milton had a number of award winners at the State Competition. In the group website category **Marcy Dockham, Kaziah Vaughan, Gwen Jumper and Will Muzzy** placed first and qualified for the National

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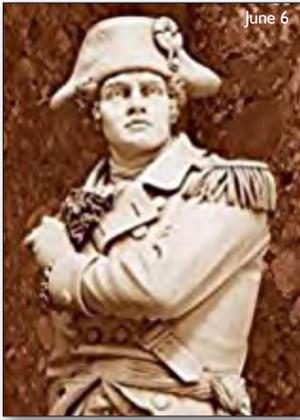
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Meetings are held at the Museum, 13 School Street, unless otherwise noted. Monthly meetings begin at 7 pm. Free refreshments are served after program meetings. Business meetings are for all members, and everyone is encouraged to attend. There is no regular monthly meeting on July 4, 2018. For further information call 734-0758 or email: miltonhistorical@yahoo.com.

- Wed. May 2, 2018 7pm **Vermont History Day Presentations by Students of Milton High School**
Join MHS history teacher Gary Furlong and participants in this year's Vermont History Day competition. History Day provides students with an opportunity to engage in primary source research and share what they have learned through documentaries, research papers, websites, dramatic performances, and three-dimensional exhibits. This year's theme is *Conflict and Compromise in History*.
Refreshments: Kate Cadreact, Amy Morway
- Wed. June 6, 2018 7pm **Ethan Allen: His Life and Times by Willard Sterne Randall**
Willard Sterne Randall is one of America's great biographers of our great leaders. His *Ethan Allen: His Life and Times* has been called the "definitive biography of Ethan Allen," who is a "profoundly American hero". Join us for a powerful look at one of the most essential and still little-understood figures in both American and Vermont history. Copies of Randall's books will be available for signing and sale.
Refreshments: Phyllis & John Mayville, Jim & Linda Ballard
- Wed. June 13, 2018 7pm **Business Meeting**
- Wed. July 11, 2018 7pm **Board Meeting**
- Wed. Aug. 1, 2018 6pm **Campfires, Bugs and Bats: We Love Two of Them! by Barry and Maureen Genzlinger**
An evening of outdoor natural history on the museum lawn. Barry and Maureen Genzlinger from the Vermont Bat Center have some great campfire stories about bat rescues, Vermont's bats, and bat houses. They have lots of fun facts to share about the work they do to help our state's five threatened and endangered bat species, and will bring along acoustical monitoring equipment they use in their work. If we are lucky we might even hear some bats as they fly by, snacking on the bugs that are trying to snack on us!
Refreshments: Nan Marotti, Alice Buinicky
- Wed. Sept. 5, 2018 7pm **Mill Girls: French Canadians in the Winooski Mills by Dr. Susan Ouellette**
The work world of the 19th century was a place of dramatic change. The creation of factory centers and the new ways of working with time clocks and mill whistles setting the pace and timing of work were all new. In the middle of the 19th century, mill owners began to recruit and hire immigrant labor, especially French Canadians. Dr. Ouellette, a professor of History and American Studies at St. Michael's College, will explore the role of these immigrant laborers, both in the mills, as well as in the communities – like Milton – in which they became such a large part.
Refreshments: Karen Brigham, Janet & Terry Richards
- Wed. Sept. 12, 2018 7pm **Business Meeting**
- Wed. Oct. 3, 2018 7pm **A Real Monster Walks the Streets of Burlington: H.H. Holmes in Vermont by Brennan Gauthier** Back by popular demand, Vermont Agency of Transportation Archaeologist Brennan Gauthier lays out the entire H.H. Holmes in Vermont story. Often called "America's first serial killer," Holmes was born in New Hampshire, arrived in Burlington as a medical student, and would return later as a wanted con man and killer. Highlights of Holmes' Burlington haunts, a recounting of his "Murder Castle" in Chicago, and a creepy look at the recent excavation and forensic investigation of Holmes' remains, make for an exciting evening of serial killer thrills. *And it's all true!*
Refreshments: Rosalie Larose, Pat Lindsay
- Wed. Oct. 10, 2018 7pm **Board Meeting**
- Wed. Nov. 7, 2018 7pm **The Story of Us: Milton's Town Meetings (1790-2018) by Jim Ballard**
Join Milton Historian Jim Ballard and special guests for a look at Milton town governance as carried out by her people through the grand Vermont tradition of the Town Meeting. The program will recount how the records of these annual events are much more than dull school board minutes and even duller financial reports. Tales of town leaders over two hundred years of history, and a look at the evolution from mostly elected positions to more often appointed ones, will chronicle the changing ways of how we run our town. And Jim assures us there will be plenty of humor as we look back in time at politics, past and present!
Refreshments: Ron & Ev Bissonnette, Peter & Rita Lavallee
- Wed. Dec. 5, 2018 7pm **Come & Help Us Decorate for the Holiday Open House!**



Sun. Dec. 9, 2018
11am-2pm

Holiday Open House Luncheon

Join us for a holiday lunch, festive treats and sounds of the season. Bring the whole family; with activities for the kids and vintage toys, there is something for everyone.

Wed. Jan. 2, 2019 7pm

Board Meeting

Wed. Feb. 6, 2019 7pm

Business Meeting

March 7, 2019 6pm

Dinner and a Movie: A Few Great Bakeries

Join us for a cabin fever-reliever pot luck dinner followed by the movie *A Few Great Bakeries* to celebrate these great places across America: They're popular neighborhood meeting places, they smell great, and they're full of wonderful things to eat, from crusty breads to gooey and sweet treats. **Bring an item to share - the dinner bell rings at 6pm.**

Sat. March 23, 2019 2pm
SPECIAL SPRING EVENT

Lake Champlain Over the Years: A Visual & Historical Narrative by Don Wickman

Lake Champlain is one of the most historic bodies of water in the United States. Created through a series of geological events, it has now remained within its present banks for 10,000 years. Native Americans first occupied the shores, leaving their marks before the lake's "discovery" over 400 years ago. Since 1607, the lake has been a site of military conflict, commerce and recreation. Vermont historian Don Wickman will feature tales of lake heritage coupled with illustrations.



Wed. April 3, 2019 7pm

Annual Meeting



Weaving at the Museum by Karen Brigham

An historic barn frame loom was discovered in a barn in Enosburg by Stanley Henry and was donated to the museum many years ago. It was placed in storage (*the Delaneys' barn - see Allison Belisle article on page 9*) until being brought to the Milton Historical Museum in 2016. The loom needed some repairs in order to be brought back into use, which Dallan Baker accomplished by hand-turning the necessary pieces.

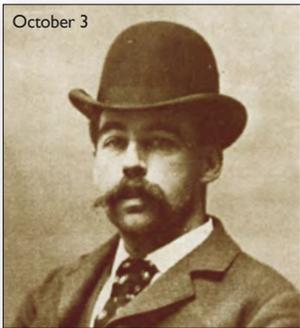
Dallan is a Milton resident, retired state police officer and an experienced weaver from the Shelburne Museum weaving shed. He agreed to take on a small class of students who wanted to learn weaving.

Karen Brigham agreed to facilitate the lessons by notifying the students, opening the museum and keeping a photographic and written record. Beginning in February 2017, Dallan and Karen met twice to ensure that the loom was ready. In March the lessons began with 5 students in attendance. Students were Karen Brigham, Pam Heald, Nan Marotti, Lorinda Henry and Eileen Sonnicks (due to the chilly museum basement, Eileen attended only one class).

With only a few exceptions, the students met weekly on Thursdays through the end of June 2017. They were very proud of the completed project, and a photo album showing the journey is now on display at the museum along with the rug. There is also a plan to prepare the loom for another rug, but to leave it "in process" as a demonstration piece.



Dallan Baker demonstrates weaving technique on the loom.



The proud weaving students display their rug. (L-R) Lorinda Henry, Nan Marotti, Pam Heald and Karen Brigham.

Lamoille Musings by Lorinda Henry

Ever since I was a kid I have wandered through landscapes imagining, or trying to imagine, what the land was like before there were roads, before the tall trees were cut down, before the farms. How, I wondered, did anyone even know where to start? If the whole place was covered with forest, how would you begin to organize – where to put your house, where to make a path, how to know where the mountains were?

You'd start, I think, with the river. Travel on it, fish in it, stalk game when it came to drink, drink it yourself. Rivers flow always down, meaning you could tell upcountry from down even with trees so thick you couldn't see far. By the time settlers came from Connecticut, there was already a map here, an internal map, and the waters of lake and river were the main roads. They came in February, which at first thought seems foolish of them – but in dead winter with the lake and rivers frozen, they could travel on the surfaces, and they could see where they were going.

Samuel de Champlain saw the mouth of the Lamoille – at least he named it. The Missiquoi above and the Winooski below have variations of their native names, but the Lamoille does not. The Abenakis called it Wintegok. The exploration of the lake was Champlain's main goal, but something about our river caught his attention and he gave it a name, although no one knows what he meant. The popular theory is that someone misspelled his "la mouette," meaning gull, to "La moille," meaning nothing at all.

How much did the first white settlers know about this place before they actually got here? Did they know ahead of time about the seven waterfalls? (Some of the waterfalls are now covered by water backed up by the Peterson Dam, so don't bother to look!) It didn't take anyone long to see the potential for mills and manufacturing and lumbering here. Tall, straight pines, valued for ship-building,



Milton Historical Society

West side of Middle Rock, near the former Wood's Falls on the Lamoille River in West Milton, 1946. Near the site of today's Peterson Dam.

were ubiquitous in West Milton, within easy transport to the lake, and then to markets in Montreal. It really took only about 50 years to pretty much deforest the entire area, for in addition to selling off lumber, the settlers mainly built with wood, made fences with it, and heated their uninsulated homes with cords and cords of it.

Mile by mile, the settlement moved upstream to where the village is now, drawn by the water power at hand. Eventually there were, in addition to sawmills and grist mills (to grind grain), a paper mill, three woolen mills, and tanneries on the river in Milton. Other industries coalesced around the river – there were coopers, tinsmiths and tin smelters. There was a window sash and blind manufacturer as well as the usual carpenters, masons, harness makers, wheel wrights and coopers who set up shop here. Once a watch maker, and later a professional photographer. The numbers of fish hauled from the river are difficult to estimate, but a good number of people earned their living off the Lamoille by fishing and trapping even into the 20th

century. The growth and living of Milton was powered by water.

It is impossible for me to imagine Milton without the Lamoille. It would be like doing without a heart. Naturally, there have been bad times, too – in the 50s it was so polluted it was practically legendary, at least in Vermont. I remember at least one folksong about that. And the disastrous floods have taken bridges, livestock, barns, and houses downstream – but no one's history is without bad times. You have to learn to deal, but I think it has always given more back than it took.

Except for two or three years in Burlington, I have lived my entire life in towns that border the Lamoille. Sometimes she's over a hill or two, sometimes right by my back yard – actually in some springtimes she IS the backyard. I learned to swim in this river at its most highly polluted – I think we all became immune to everything. My friend Julie and I spent hours rowing down the river and then back home. I kind of belong to this river, so I wanted to be sure to introduce you. Hope it was worth your while.

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Lloyd, Sandy, Greg,
Betty, Patrick and Nick

Thank you, Allison

by Bill Kaigle

Words hardly do justice to the contributions Allison Belisle made to the Milton Historical Society, but we'll give it a try. Allison is our most recent past president, bringing a wonderful level of enthusiasm, organization and fiscal responsibility, while developing her own amazing writing and storytelling skills.

Even when a history topic is not one that she would pursue herself, she greatly enjoys sharing and interpreting histories with those who are passionate about them - case in point, last year's *History of Racing in Milton* exhibit. Allison has never been a race fan, but she's known that a deep racing history exists in Milton, and she knew that the story was long overdue to be told in grand fashion at the Milton Historical Society. So Allison became the spark and with the help of Rick Stowell and program committee chair Bob Devino, applied for and received a \$1,000 Vermont Humanities Council grant to develop the racing exhibit that is now at our museum. From there, she helped connect the many people who are passionate about this history, and together we developed a full slate of exciting racing programs last year. This is a wonderful legacy for Allison to leave.

Last fall, Allison and her husband David purchased and moved to a beautiful country home in Brookfield, Vermont, and Allison completed her term as president at our April 2018 Annual Meeting.

Museum Director Lorinda Henry says of Allison, "I don't know how to quantify or fully describe her contributions, but Allison has been wonderful at helping improve our collection by being always ready and willing to crawl in dusty corners, talk to folks about their obscure treasures, drag things out in the light, and find auctions. My personal favorite was when we retrieved the antique loom from the upper reaches of the Delaney's barn. It had many, many years of dust and chaff on it, and it was reachable only by a ladder built into a wall



Society Vice President Rick Stowell presents recognition plaques to Allison Belisle at our April 2018 Annual Meeting.

and an opening in the floor above. I handed her down the pieces (it was deconstructed) one by one as she stood below and grabbed them. Except for the large roller which is basically a slightly smoothed-off section of log. It was so big I was afraid I'd lose control and drop it on her, so I had her stand away while letting it down! At one point I suggested maybe getting some guys to help and she said, "Naw, we don't need guys!" We loaded up her car, went to the museum and unloaded her car. It was a blustery day late in the year and possibly my favorite adventure with Allison ever!"

Along with adventures like these, Allison also received two statewide recognitions in 2012 from the Vermont Historical Society and the League of Local Historical Societies & Museums: an Individual Achievement Award

and a Publications & Oral Histories Award for the Milton Historical Society for her oral history series that she was doing at that time.

We're blessed that Allison had the desire to conduct interviews and write oral histories, starting the "Milton's History in Person" series. Here are the people she interviewed:

- Jane Manley FitzGerald (MHS charter member and former museum director, 2007-08 newsletter)
- Loren Sanderson (2008-09)
- Betty Bevins (2009-10)
- Grace McDonald (2010-11)
- Doris & Paul Mears: Town Mouse, Country Mouse (2011-12)
- Phyllis Ryan Everest: A Life and History of Community (2012-13)
- Hope Rowley: A Personal History & West Milton Retrospective (2013-14 - written by Hope, edited for publication by Allison)
- "The Stories are Everywhere" (2014-15, group oral history article after Milton 250)

Allison served 5 years as President (2013-2018), and 4 years as Treasurer (2010-13, 17/18). Her background in finance has helped the Society establish and maintain budgets, and helped us find improved financial footing.

Allison, we all really enjoyed working with you to make history fun and accessible, and we wish you all the best!



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2017-18 YEAR IN

The Milton Historical Museum continued to be a very active organization in town in our 2017-18 season, bringing the community together and making its presence known.

The year started in March 2017 with our community Sugar on Snow Party. Recognizing the important history and popularity of stock car and drag racing in Milton, the Society used the Vermont Humanities Council grant it received in late 2016 and worked with a curator from the Shelburne Museum to put together an exhibit honoring this history. Much of the program year was dedicated to events surrounding *The History of Racing in Milton*. The events were some of the most well-attended programs ever put on by the Society, bringing people from all over New England and Canada. The events also brought people into the museum who had never visited in the past. And the coordination involved many from the community who had never collaborated on any projects at the museum

in the past. We consider it a great success for us and for the community.

The museum was open throughout the season between April and October, staffed by our volunteers. During the open weekends, we drew in Milton residents, residents from other towns as well as tourists visiting the area. The racing exhibit brought in many visitors, some who could not attend our programs and others who had been but wanted to spend more time with it. Our town historian, Jim Ballard, continued his diligent work responding to inquiries sent to us for local historical information as well as the many genealogical requests that come to us via email and social media. Jim also continued his series of *Burlington Free Press History Space* articles that began in 2014, sharing the great story of our town, using research from the museum

archives, bolstered with pictures from the museum's collection.

We hosted the Chittenden County Historical Society annual meeting in late July. During that visit, they donated some wonderful historic posters from Milton 4th of July celebrations.

In addition to many donations and loaned artifacts related to Milton's racing history, we continued to receive other donations to add to our general collection from society members, local residents and neighboring historical societies.

The museum continues to foster new events and projects. A new cemetery interest group has formed and meets in the museum,



Clockwise, L-R: Milton July 4th Celebration poster donated by the Chittenden County Historical Society; A Barney McRae race fan dug out a T-shirt from the Catamount era for the 2017 Track Walk; The Vermonster dragster on the museum lawn for the racing exhibit opening in May 2017; Russ Ingerson's #51 Chevelle at the Racing Panel Discussion held at the Eagles Club in August 2017.



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REVIEW by Lorinda Henry & Allison Belisle

as does the General Stannard House Restoration group. Beginning in March 2017, several members took weaving lessons from Dallan Baker, who had restored our old barn-frame loom, donated years ago by Stan Henry. A fine multicolored wool rug was the result. The rug will be part of the museum's collection as an example of the type of work that could be done on such a loom.

The Technology Committee continued into its fifth year with weekly visits to the museum by Karen Brigham and Pam Heald. Together they have faithfully and meticulously worked to digitally record the details and photographs of our collection.

The racing exhibit was well met. Early this year, several people worked toward an exhibit on the first Little League teams in Milton, and it is now on display at the town offices. We always welcome input from anyone who has an idea and the information to help build new exhibits. History is always creeping up on us, and before we know it we realize we are history ourselves!

For his Eagle Service Project, Sawyer McNaney and other members of Boy Scout Troop 631 installed an American flag and pole on the museum lawn in May 2017. We proudly hosted Sawyer's Eagle Court of Honor in February 2018.

In June 2017 we presented our second annual scholarship to a deserving Milton High School student to help further their higher educational goals. The \$500 award was given to Gabrielle Fenton who began attending VTC in the fall of 2017.

Thank you to town

manager Don Turner, town staff and the Select Board for their support. Many thanks to Dustin Keelty for many years of directing his crew from the Town of Milton, helping us keep the museum open and able to host visitors and events, year round. We wish him all the best as he moves on, and appreciate the continued work of the Buildings and Grounds department. Thanks to Sheryl Prince, Celeste Lang, Loretta Devino, Paulette LaFond and Jennifer Willingham for helping us sell books and calendars through the town office.

We wish to deeply thank all of our board members and our loyal volunteers for everything they do. It is truly a team effort that makes us so successful. Thanks to the donors, volunteers, researchers, visitors, members, families, and guests for making the museum a lively place full of entertainment, fun and learning. Please feel welcome to come to any of our programs or to volunteer in any capacity. Stay tuned to the local media, or join our mailing list on Facebook or at miltonhistorical@yahoo.com, for news and updates on our ongoing events.

Portions of this article were published in the 2017 Milton Town Report.



Rick Stowell



Bill Kaige



Rick Stowell



Clockwise from top: Radio announcer George Goldring conducts a racing panel discussion with Catamount Stadium and Milton Speedway stars (L-R) Jean Paul Cabana, Beaver Dragon, Bobby Dragon, Frankie Woodward, Langis Caron, Tom Tiller and Rod Case; New American flag at half staff for Memorial Day 2017; Sawyer McNaney's Eagle Scout Court of Honor Ceremony at the museum in February 2018.

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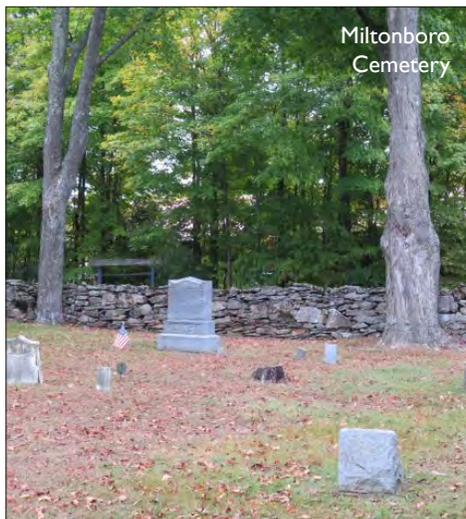
Purpose and Mission of the Friends of Milton Cemeteries

by James Ballard

The basic purpose of the Friends of Milton Cemeteries is to encourage respect for those buried in our historic cemeteries, and to create a welcoming atmosphere for those who visit them. We have been slow to realize that our cemeteries attract visitors from all over the United States and some from Canada.

Our mission is to seek fundraising and volunteer projects that will aid in the beautification and preservation of Milton's cemeteries, and education about them.

Some may exalt our cemeteries as outdoor museums, as a trail to honor those who served and sacrificed defending our homeland. When we care for our cemeteries we honor friends and loved ones. We honor those who struggled with the trials and celebrated the joys of everyday life. We honor those who toiled in the fields, who fished and hunted here, and whose trophies are passed to others. We honor past public servants, clergy and lay people, and members of various fraternal orders. We honor firemen, law



Karen Brigham

enforcement personnel, rescue workers and lawyers. We honor business people, factory workers, cemetery caretakers, cooks, teachers, carpenters, loggers, mechanics and athletes. We honor those with medical disabilities who have truly enriched our lives. We honor those

who cleaned homes and our public buildings.

The Friends of Milton Cemeteries encourage native community members and those who are new to Milton to visit our cemeteries. We seek your thoughts concerning their improvement or what you find comforting about them.

Our cemeteries are not the end of stories of those who are buried there. By your visit you may be reminded of stories of those buried there or have questions. I encourage you to visit also your Town Museum at 13 School Street and share those stories, to ask questions and to seek information on Milton's story.

The Friends of Milton Cemeteries is organized with non-profit fiscal sponsorship from the Milton Historical Society. We will be working with the new cemetery Caretaker Peter Staniels, and with the Town Cemetery Advisory Board to prioritize projects. The only Milton cemetery not under town care is St. Ann's Catholic Cemetery, as it is governed by the church.

For more information, to get involved, or to make a donation to the Friends of Milton Cemeteries, please contact Jim Ballard at 893-7734 / jamesbmilton@comcast.net or Karen Brigham at 802-524-3912 / seventhcove@msn.com.