



# HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2022-2023

## PROJECT: PRESERVATION

# The Story of the Clark Office Building

by Marty Steinhausen

*A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.*

- MARCUS GARVEY

This is the partial story of the Joseph P. Clark office building in Milton, Vermont. It's the partial story because there is still much to be learned, and much has been lost to time. While no historian, I'm the guy who spent the last three years renovating the two-and-a-half story brick building that sits at one of Milton's busiest corners, the intersection of Main Street and River Street. Today my wife, Kari Stoakes, and I call it



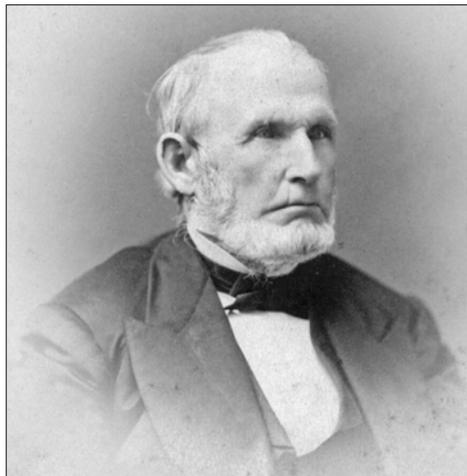
Rick Stowell

*Marty and Kari Steinhausen in July 2018, on the day they invited Milton Historical Society members in for a look at their early progress on the Clark office building.*



J.K. Smith

*The Upper Dam at Clark's Falls, 1909.*



Milton Historical Society

*Joseph Clark, 1870s.*

home. Our windows overlook what was once known as Clark's Falls, now the Clark's Falls Dam. The renovation taught us a lot about history. And most importantly, we learned that the most memorable experiences come not as a result of the best laid plans, but from wrestling with the unexpected. There have been a lot of challenges along the way, a few surprises, and tremendous rewards.

*Never doubt that you can change history. You already have.*

- MARGE PIERCY

### Joseph P. Clark

The Clark office building was named for an early Milton settler and successful

businessman, Joseph P. Clark (1795-1879). Clark was an entrepreneur involved in many pursuits, including lumbering and mercantile, as well as banking, politics, and Morgan horses. He was also instrumental in bringing the Vermont and Canada Railroad through Milton, having chartered the railroad in 1845. By 1869, the early locomotive *The Governor Paine* was renamed *The Joseph Clark*. An excellent photograph of the engine can be seen at the Milton Historical Society Museum. Clark resided in the Clark mansion (built in 1835) which sits next door, just east of the Clark office building. Joseph P. Clark died in 1879 at the age of 84 and is buried in the Milton Village Cemetery.



Library Company of Philadelphia

*E.L. Whitney advertisement card, 1884.*

### Who Worked Here?

According to the 1975 booklet, *Look Around Colchester and Milton*, the Chittenden County Historical Society reports

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# MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Membership is open to the public. Annual dues are:

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 13 School Street  
 Milton, VT 05468



## HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

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# Message from the President by Rick Stowell

Greetings, Folks! The Milton Historical Society, which operates a museum at 13 School Street in Milton, will be reopening in early June with an entirely new lineup of exhibits which allows visitors a fun and interactive learning experience.

As we embark on getting back to some normalcy, we do so with much anticipation of re-opening the museum. Although we have been closed for 2 years, A museum group known as the Reimagining Committee has been hard at work creating these exhibits for the upcoming season.

We are currently seeking volunteers who would like to be part of a fun and exciting group. We will be conducting training sessions for all volunteers. If you would



like to volunteer or have questions please email us at miltonhistorical@yahoo.com. We look forward to seeing you soon. As always, we appreciate your support!

### Open House Celebration

Please join us on **Saturday June 4 from 10-2 pm** as we celebrate the opening of the "Reimagined Milton Museum". Exciting new exhibits, a free raffle with great gifts donated by area businesses, and refreshments will be served. Extra parking with shuttle service will be provided at the Milton Elementary & Middle School on Herrick Avenue. All are welcome!

The Museum will be open every Saturday from 10-2pm through October. We hope to see you soon!

## Editor's Notes by Bill Kaigle

Being from a print and design background, and with a developing love of local history, I got involved in the Milton Historical Society in 2000, after moving to town in 1999 with my wife Jen.

I immediately got excited about the great work the Society had been doing of sharing Milton's story, and I wanted to help. It seemed like a best way to contribute would be to create a newsletter. Former Society president Bob Hooker and others had started one in the late 1980s, and it was a great success. It was published into the early 1990s when Bob moved to Pittsford, but the stories continued! *Historically Speaking* was born in 2001, with the first issue celebrating moving the Milton Historical Museum into the 1891 former Trinity Episcopal Church building on School Street.

Since then, *Historically Speaking* was published annually till 2018-19 with our Calendar of Events, and we're happy to bring it back here in 2022-23. As you can see, we

have a lot to talk about, and this is our biggest issue ever! As we all know, with today's 24-hour news cycle and social media, the way people get informed has changed. We've decided to shift the focus of *Historically Speaking* to be more on stories and reflections. Sure, "story" has always been the most important part of the word "hi-story", and stories have always been at the core of this publication, but we will instead publish when we can, and moving forward we will continue to share more timely news and event information via other channels such as our monthly e-newsletter, the Milton Historical Society Facebook page, Front Porch Forum, and other media. Stay tuned, and please sign up for our e-news at miltonhistorical@yahoo.com and "Like" our Facebook page.

As you can see, there are many voices in this newsletter....and we'd love to share yours too! Reach out to us anytime if you have a story that you think should be told.



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# Reimagining the Milton Historical Museum by Gary Furlong

In March 2020, the Milton Historical Society Board of Directors approved a plan to begin a makeover of the Milton Historical Museum. The goal was to ‘reimagine’ the space with new exhibits. The “Reimagining the Milton Museum” committee was born. Unfortunately about a week later, Covid shut everything down so it was a number of months before the committee was able to begin work. Finally, in August 2020 the committee began to meet to evaluate options and begin to plan a reimagined space. We used a book titled *The Art of Relevance* to think about museums today. Items from the main floor were moved to the basement to create space for exhibits. After discussing many topics for possible exhibits using our



Rick Stowell

Charlie Farrell (left) and Lou Mossey (right) install the osprey nesting platform created by Randy Barrows, a part of the Arrowhead Mountain and Lake exhibit featuring “Osprey Lady” Meeri Zetterstrom.

collection, a survey was created to measure the preferences of community members. Another shutdown for Covid in November and December of 2020 slowed the work further but progress was being made.

In early 2021 the committee settled on creating exhibits around the history of Arrowhead Mountain and Lake, the Flood



Rick Stowell

Peggy Stowell handpaints the dairy cow for the Farming in Milton exhibit.

of 1927, the early businesses of Main Street and River Street, the history of farming in Milton, and an exhibit titled *Tales of Milton*, which will include a variety of interesting stories from our town. The racing exhibit which was created a few years ago will also remain. The goal was also to create a space where new exhibits would be able to replace current exhibits at some future time to fully take advantage of our collection and the interests of museum visitors.

As 2021 progressed, the committee set to work on cleaning out the museum, painting the lobby and walls, researching topics and



Rick Stowell

Milton High School students helped organize and clean the museum basement during the 9/11 Day of Service in September 2021.

collecting information and artifacts for each exhibit and then planning those exhibits. The committee was fortunate to have a variety of skills and interests among its members which helped in the process of creating a reimagined space. In September 2021, a group of high school students joined us during a high



Rick Stowell

While researching the Arrowhead Mountain and Lake exhibit, the Museum Committee took a field trip to the Green Mountain Audubon Center in Huntington.



Rick Stowell

Bill Kaigle preps exhibit header graphics for installation. Bill will finally be getting bifocals soon.

school day of service to further clean out the basement and conduct a thorough cleaning of the museum. Although much work remains to organize the many items in our collection, the work done so far has laid a good foundation for the improvement of our archives in the future.

The museum will reopen on June 4th, 2022. Visitors will be interested to learn

*continued on page 19*



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## The Story of the Clark Office Building

that the second floor of the Clark office building served as “Mr. Clark’s office and C. Witters law office.” The two downstairs rooms served as the post office and E. L. Whitney Bookseller and Stationer. Advertisements from the period indicate E. L. Whitney was also a purveyor of confectioneries. The 1886 publication *History of Chittenden County* stated “E.L. WHITNEY, dealer in books, stationery and fancy goods, began a general trade in Milton in 1866. He restricted his stock to the present assortment in 1869. He now carries a stock of about \$3,500.”

In the early years when the building served as the local post office, it was the subject of a brazen stamp theft, the result of which reached the halls of Congress. From the House of Representatives, 45th Congress, 2d Session, Report No. 400:

*“That on the 5th day of March, A. D. 1874, H.G. Boardman was postmaster, and Ebenezer Whitney was deputy postmaster, at Milton, in the county of Chittenden, and State of Vermont; that there was no safe or vault in the post-office; but that said H. G. Boardman was a member of the firm of Clark, Boardman & Co., which said firm had a safe, in which the postage-stamps kept by the postmaster were deposited by the said deputy postmaster for safe-keeping; and that on the night of the said 5th day of March, 1874, the office of said Clark, Boardman & Co. was entered by burglars, the safe broken open by them, and postage-stamps to the amount of \$116.34, placed there by the said deputy postmaster, were taken therefrom; and that said postage-stamps have never been recovered, nor any part thereof.*

*From the affidavits of the said Horatio G. Boardman, postmaster, Ebenezer Whitney, deputy postmaster, and Jed P. Clark, member of the firm of Clark, Boardman & Co., it appears that the office of said Clark, Boardman & Co. was a new, strong building, situated in the most public part of the village of Milton*



*Civil War Soldiers Monument Dedication, held on September 6, 1909.*

*Falls, in said Milton, and that the safe in which said postage-stamps were deposited was a large, strong, iron safe of the Wilder patent; that said safe, as well as the doors of the office, was securely locked, and the windows properly fastened; that the office was entered by prying open the window to the office, and the safe was broken open by means of cold-chisels, iron bars, hammers, sledges, and other tools.”*

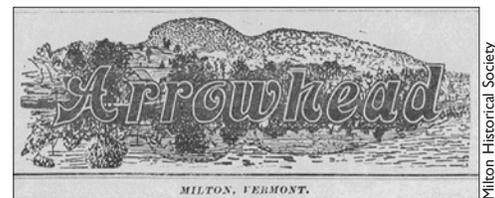
The request was approved, and Congress reimbursed the money for the stolen stamps.

On September 6, 1909, more than 2,000 people gathered outside the Clark office building for the Civil War Soldiers Monument dedication. The monument honors the “Boys in Blue” who marched from Milton to the battlefields of the Civil War. The statue stood in the same spot for decades, surviving Vermont weather, vandals, the ravages of time, and more than a few collisions by motorists. The monument has since moved twice, and is currently located at the Milton Historical Museum on School Street.

On August 30, 1912, Theodore Roosevelt stopped in Milton and gave a political speech in the square, directly across from the Clark office building. Roosevelt had been president from 1901-1909. He had just started the Bull Moose Party after having lost the Republican nomination to Taft. Roosevelt’s bid was unsuccessful, and the split allowed Democratic nominee Woodrow

Wilson to win the election.

Between 1909 and 1924 the Milton Public Library moved into the building, where librarian F.S. Morgan published a newspaper at his Arrowhead Press office at “Bridge Square.” *The Arrowhead* had local stories, legal notices, and advertisements. It was printed every Wednesday and was “available for twenty-five cents a year, in advance.” F.S. Morgan published a series of local newspapers including *The Milton Rays* from 1898-1899, *The Milton Times* from 1899-1909, and *Arrowhead* from 1909-1918. It’s possible that these 20 years of publishing occurred at the Clark office building, but more research is needed to confirm this.



*The Arrowhead newspaper was published in Milton Falls from 1909-1918.*

*The Milton Times* mirrors the *Arrowhead*’s statement, “Printed every Wednesday at office on Main St.” *The Milton Rays* subscription price doubled to fifty cents per year. The newspaper states, “Subscriptions should be paid in advance and should never be more than six months past due... One or two cent postage stamps in sums of less than \$1.00 are as good as cash.”

The undated photo on page 5 shows The Great A&P Tea Co. which operated on the ground floor. The Great A&P Tea Co. was like the Wal-Mart of its day. The photo was likely from the 1920s. There is a J.K. Smith photo at the Milton Historical Museum showing the building from 1914 in which the display windows had not yet been installed.

In 1924, the Clark heirs sold the building to H. H. Beeman, a local merchant. That

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*The Gilbert  
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Milton Historical Society

The Great A&P Tea Co. operated in the Clark Office Building, circa 1920s.

same year, the library collection was moved next door to the Clark Memorial building, a gift to Milton from the Clark estate which became the town offices and remained so until the 1990s.

The square where River Street and Main Street met was changed forever by the flood of November 4, 1927. Although the building survived, the flood badly damaged many of the neighboring structures, and washed out the iron bridge that spanned the Lamoille River.



Milton Historical Society

The raging waters of the Lamoille River rise to the height of the Milton Falls iron bridge on November 4, 1927. Many spectators gathered to witness the bridge wash away.

In 1938, H.H. Beeman sold to Public Electric Light Company (PELCO), which built the dam creating Arrowhead Lake and developed the area for production of electricity. It was PELCO's second dam project in Milton, the first being downriver at Great Falls.

In 1946, PELCO sold the property, and it changed hands twice more in the next three years. It ended up in the ownership of Rheo and Amanda Brisson, who converted the upper floors to become their family residence. Interestingly, when the Brisson family bought the building in 1946, the ground floor was already a restaurant or tavern of some sort. The warranty deed states, "included in this conveyance two pool tables, one grill, one ice

box, one Coca-Cola machine, and all other equipment and fixtures in downstairs place of business."

### Brissons Above, Bars Below

A year after their 1946 purchase, Rheo Brisson added a one-story concrete block addition to the north end. Local Miltonians suggest that this was known as "Rheo's Pool Room." The booklet *Look Around Colchester and Milton* says, "A place in town to play pool had been sorely missed by those who enjoyed the game. Eventually, this table too, was sold and the area made into a three-room apartment." Eventually the apartment went back to being part of the bar, and later served as storage. Finally, the eastern wall of the addition collapsed and the block addition was demolished making way for the welcoming outdoor patio that is part of Arrowhead Lodge today.



Vermont Landscape Change Program

This 1970s aerial photo shows the rear addition built in 1947.

At some point in the 1950s, the building was engulfed by a major fire. The fire probably started in the bar's kitchen. Armand Brisson, who was a boy at the time, remembered the fire. Many years later, he told Fire Marshal Chris Boyd that the flames were so intense that they blew out the south-facing windows and reached all the way to the peak of the building. The extent of the damage was clearly evident during the most recent renovations.

While the Brisson family lived in the top two floors of the building, the ground floor commercial space went through a series of bars and restaurants, including Terry's Restaurant (1970s), Finish Line Pub (1980s-1990s) and Irish Annie's Pub (2000s). We've also heard references to the name Pigeon's Pub perhaps in the early 1980s, and it was known for a time as Rosie's Riverside Bar. Many locals still refer to the building as "The Snake Pit," a reference to the unsavory reputation it had for many years. One person told us that her mother would make her cross the street to avoid the seedy premises and its patrons.



Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Terry's Restaurant operated here in the late 1970s. The steel truss bridge shown was in place from 1929 until being replaced in the 1990s.

### This Old House

Rheo and Amanda Brisson raised four children in their new home and resided there until their final days. Their son, Armand, was four years old when the family bought the property, and he never left. Armand's obituary claimed he was, "The greatest keyboard player ever." He was choir director and organist at St. Ann Catholic Church, plus played popular tunes on piano at the old Shakey's Pizza on Williston Road. Although Amanda Brisson had a reputation for a tidy home and well-kept garden, after her death in 1980 the property began to go downhill.

As a result of deferred maintenance and Armand Brisson's propensity for accumulating objects, the building attracted the attention of local authorities. According to Vermont Supreme Court records in *TOWN OF MILTON BOARD OF HEALTH v. Armand BRISSON*:

*"On May 6, 2012, the Milton Police Department notified the Town's deputy health officer that bricks were falling off the western exterior of the building onto the street and sidewalk below. After confirming this and observing that a part of the western brick wall was bulging out, the health officer issued an emergency health order later that same day condemning the building and declaring it unfit for any use or occupancy... Over the next several days, additional bricks fell and the bulged area of the wall collapsed. On May 11, AOT workers installed concrete Jersey barriers along the western side of the building adjoining Route 7 as a buffer zone."*

Armand Brisson wrangled with Town of Milton authorities in a legal back-and-forth regarding health and safety requirements over the next few years, prompting one judge to

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# The Story of the Clark Office Building *continued from page 5*



Courtesy Lamdin / Milton Independent

Armand Brisson sits outside the building in 2013.

quip, “I’m getting a little tired of playing This Old House with the Town of Milton.” In one instance, when a garbage truck entered the property to begin a mandated clean-up operation, Armand Brisson stormed out of his home in a rage, and proceeded to throw a loose brick through the windshield of the brand new garbage truck. Armand Brisson, a beloved and most colorful character of Milton, passed away in April of 2016.

The building had become a victim of time and neglect, and Irish Annie’s Pub closed shortly before the southwest corner of the building began falling into Route 7. Due to the health order imposed by the

Town of Milton, the commercial portion became unusable until major renovations could be done.

In 2017, Kari and I purchased the building and began the formidable process of preserving and renovating. We were so pleased when in 2020, Nick and Lauren Mark opened Arrowhead Lodge, a new addition to the long tradition of taverns that have called this place home.

*History is a pack of lies we play on the dead.* VOLTAIRE

## How old is it?

I’m not sure anyone can say with certainty exactly when the Clark office building was built. The “for sale” sign in the window said the building was constructed in 1836. The booklet *Look Around Colchester and Milton*, states, “In the center of Milton Village is an attractive two-and-a-half story brick structure which was built by Joseph Clark some time after 1835 for offices and shops.”

Kari and I were looking for a fixer-upper, and the idea of owning a property that dated to the Andrew Jackson presidency sounded intriguing. Unfortunately, those early dates proved to be inaccurate. I’ll tell you how I know in a moment.

The 1980 application to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation suggests the building was constructed “c.1845”. According to the 1886 publication, *History of Chittenden County, Vermont*, “The most important industry in town is that of Jed P. Clark, whose father, Joseph Clark, in 1845 built the saw and grist-mills now standing, having purchased the site of Warren Hill. The saw-mill, which originally had an up-and-down saw, is now supplied with circular and gang saws, and has the capacity for cutting a large amount of lumber. The grist-mill operates six runs of stones, and is used as a custom mill.



J.K. Smith

The site has always been a prominent location for milling industries.”

That 1845 date made sense. If the mills were built in 1845, then the office building must have been built shortly thereafter to handle the business affairs of the milling. It sounded right, but I discovered that date still wasn’t accurate.

A few months ago, I was taking a close look at a photograph of the area where our building stands etched with the words, “MILTON VT. BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR” (above). Something was missing. In the photo, the Clark office building doesn’t exist! The stately home of Joseph P. Clark (the Clark mansion next door, not the office) sits proudly behind a heavy brick wall and overlooks an outcropping of rock. Although the photograph doesn’t give us a specific date or year, we know the Civil War lasted from 1861-1865, so the photograph is likely from 1860 or thereabouts. Now let’s move forward in time.

Thankfully, there’s a photograph that overlooks the square dated 1870 (below).



J.K. Smith

*continued on page 8*



Jenna Brisson

Nick and Lauren Mark helped reimagine and build the downstairs space into Arrowhead Lodge. It opened in February 2020 and has become a popular local taproom and gathering space.

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# It Takes a Village: A Thank You by Caitlin Blake

When I was a freshman in Drew Gordon's history class, he asked us all to write a letter to our senior year selves about what we hoped we'd be doing and who we'd become. Freshman me, or even senior me really, would never have imagined that about 10 years later I'd be working for the Smithsonian Institution—the world's largest museum, education, and research complex. I like to think that my getting here was equal parts hard work and sheer luck, but I know it would not have been possible without the wonderful teachers, mentors, friends, and family who supported me each step of the way.

When I graduated from Milton High School, I did not know what I was going to major in. As a student at MHS, I had loved almost every subject I had taken. I had learned about ancient civilizations, I took French and German, and even had a fleeting love for physics. I had the opportunity to take philosophy and anthropology. Milton High School had provided me with so many options, that I felt a little lost when it came to what options I should pursue.

As a sophomore in college, I decided on a whim to take a class on Museum Studies. I had taken a few history classes (and somewhat cautiously declared myself a history major) that I had really loved, one of which took me to Plimoth Plantation on an overnight where I slept on the ground in the 17th century village, dressed in time period appropriate clothing, and cooked a full meal using only 17th century tools and methods. After my sleepover at Plimoth Plantation, and with some fond memories of visiting museums as a child, I registered for the Museum Studies course without knowing what it was. The course was eye opening for me; I learned about things that I never knew I had such a desire



Caitlin Blake, MHS '11

National Portrait Gallery

to learn about. The course had me visiting various museums, reading about the history of museums, and learning about this field called Museum Education. For the first time, I started to think, "Maybe this is what I want to do with my life?"

When my sophomore year ended, I did not want to return to the college where I had been studying. I was excelling academically but I was miserable. I dreaded returning and could not bear the thought of spending another two years at the school. I had adored my professors, I had made some extremely wonderful friends, but I was deeply, woefully unhappy. With support from my parents, I decided to take a year off college and take the time to transfer to another school. I have never been someone who was happy to sit around and needed to keep myself busy, so I applied for an internship at the ECHO Center in Burlington. During the internship I worked on creating hands-on learning carts, I led programs where the public could learn about the history of the Lake Champlain Basin;

I even participated in programs where I fed lake sturgeon and facilitated a program while holding a black rat snake that was as long as I am tall. During the internship, my supervisor told me if I wanted to work in a museum professionally that I would need a master's degree. As a quasi-college dropout who had not even been accepted to transfer schools yet, the thought was overwhelming. How could I think about graduate school when I wasn't even sure when or where I'd be finishing my undergraduate degree? It was during this time that I started judging the National History Day competition, both at Milton High School and for Vermont History Day. I started to love history, and was excited to share that love of history with others.

The seed had been planted, and I started making sure everything I was doing academically was allowing me to keep my options open to pursue a career in museums. I transferred to Smith College and through a connection from judging at History Day became an intern at the Vermont Historical Society with Victoria Hughes, the Museum and Education Manager. The summer I interned with Victoria was life changing, I learned about educational theory, I interacted with school groups, I helped come up with fresh ideas for classroom kits, among other things. As the internship ended, and I was about to enter my senior year of college, Victoria suggested I look into getting my master's degree in Museum Education from the George Washington University. She warned me that the program was intense, but it was one of the programs to do if you wanted to be in museums. By March of my senior year, I applied and was accepted to the George Washington University's Museum Education Program. Exactly four weeks after my college

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## The Story of the Clark Office Building *continued from page 6*

In it, our building stands looking much as it does today. This narrows the building's origin to somewhere between 1860-1870. I still haven't found any photos of our part of Milton between those years, but we did find a Beers map from 1869 indicating the building was here at that time and lists the occupants as: "Clark Boardman & Co., Post Office, J Clark, and CW Witters." Aha! Now we're getting somewhere. I'm not sure if we'll ever know the exact year it was built because Milton's official records were destroyed in a fire many years ago. Based on the evidence uncovered so far, I think it's accurate to say the building was constructed between 1860 and 1869. It's interesting to note that the Clark office building served as the post office in its earliest days, and the offices of Messrs. Clark and Boardman. Early records tell us that Jed P. Clark was appointed postmaster in 1863 and H.G. Boardman in 1869. Could the building have been built as early as 1863, housing the post office? It seems likely, but without more evidence, we may never know.

### Architecture

The architectural style of the Clark office building would probably be considered Greek Revival. The masonry suggests a wide band of trim with corbels just below the roof. In architecture, a corbel is a projection jutting out from a wall to support (or appear to support) a structure above it. The corbels here are built with each brick slightly overhanging the one below to resemble inverted steps.

Above each window you'll see a segmental



Rick Stowell

*An early chimney on the south gable end of the building was built at an unusual angle.*

brick arch. The windows are slightly recessed in the brick, and feature flat wood trim with a curved wood moulding. On close inspection of the wooden arch trim, you'll note something remarkable. Each moulding is constructed using dozens of pieces of wood about a half-inch wide and fitted meticulously together to form an arch. Incredibly, much of that wood is as solid today as it was 160 years ago.

The brick walls of the Clark office building are one foot (three bricks) thick. Each brick width is called a wythe, so technically the walls are three wythes thick. The building once featured a chimney at each end of the gable roof. The chimneys were built with a different make of brick than the walls of the building, indicating the chimneys were most likely added after the original construction or had replaced earlier chimneys. The walls of the building are built from a soft brick of unknown make, while the chimneys were made of much harder bricks stamped with the Drury logo. The Drury Brick and Tile Company was a major brickyard in Essex Junction which was in operation from 1867 to 1972. Unfortunately, the mortar in the chimneys had failed and many bricks had already fallen to earth. The south chimney was built on a diagonal in order to exit through the center of the roof. The unusual curve was causing stress on the building. A structural engineer recommended that both chimneys be removed.

Over the life of the building, it may have only had three roofs. When we bought the building in 2017, the roof was made of slate. I had grand plans to repair and replace all the broken pieces. Alas, a slate roof only lasts 75-150 years depending on the hardness of the slate. The slate on the Clark office building was at the end of its life expectancy so we would have to come up with another plan. While removing the slate shingles (and salvaging what we could for other projects), we discovered the original shake shingle roof was still underneath. The shake shingles had almost completely turned to dust making it a very dirty job. The building is now capped by a third style of roof, this one made of standing seam steel.

The loft area has a pair of exposed queen-post trusses made of heavy timbers. This is exactly the same type of construction used for many of Vermont's covered bridges.

Although the building looks much as it did when first built, photos show that there was a double-door entry on ground floor where a window now exists. Shutters once graced each of the upstairs windows, including each of the quarter-round loft windows. According to *Look*

*Around Colchester and Milton*, "In the 1920s, for a short time, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company kept a store in the Clark office building. It is thought that the two display windows were installed at that time." There is also evidence that an interior stairway once rose from the ground floor to the 2nd floor.

*History is merely a list of surprises. It can only prepare us to be surprised yet again.* KURT VONNEGUT

### Tunnel Mystery

In any building with as much history as the Clark office building, legends and mysteries are bound to exist. One of the most intriguing is the suggestion of a tunnel between the Clark Memorial and the Clark office. There is an excellent entry exploring the possibility of a tunnel on the [obscrevermont.com](http://obscrevermont.com) website. During our renovations, we were fully prepared to find a tunnel opening that would solve the mystery. Instead, we found a beautiful stone foundation that looked nearly as good as it must have when it was constructed in the 1860s. In fact, the owners of Arrowhead Lodge decided to make it a feature. Just go to the bar and admire the stonework behind glass. There was no tunnel, but there was another mystery that confounded us...

### A Ton of Bricks

In the northeast corner of the first floor of the building was a floor-to-ceiling brick structure approximately the size of a 10-foot by 10-foot room. Only there was no door. What could it be? A vault? A bricked-up tunnel entrance? Buried Confederate gold? We were baffled. The floor of the story above was a single layer of boards, and after removing those, we found more brick underneath. This edifice appeared to be a room-sized cube made completely out of brick. I decided to dig a little deeper... literally. I began removing the brick from the top of the structure. After about an hour of hammering, prying, and swearing, I had removed enough of the top of the thing to be convinced that it really was nothing but bricks, bricks, and more bricks. The answer to why it was here was actually very simple.

The Clark office building was built on an outcropping of solid rock, or ledge as it's known here in Vermont. The ledge passes unevenly through the northeast corner of the ground floor of the building and out through the patio. In the 1860s, it must have been cheaper and or easier to simply build

*continued on page 13*

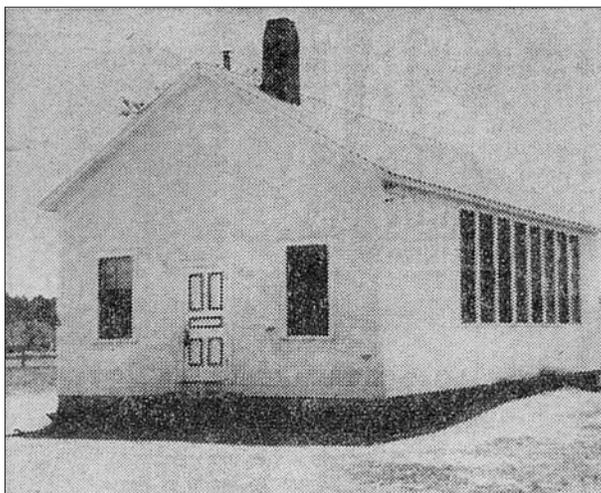
# My One-Room Schoolhouse by Clifford Giffin

*This story is from my memory of the Plains one-room school. It is an attempt to portray a snapshot of the physical plant and activities that took place in one-room schools at this time in Vermont history. The story is as factual as my ninety-plus year old memory could produce.*

In the Fall of 1936, my family moved from Burlington to Railroad Street in Milton. I then became a student at the Plains one room school from that time until I graduated from there in 1942. The Plains school was one of the nine one room schools in the town of Milton. The school was about a mile south of my home on a side road off the Middle Road from Milton to Colchester and directly across the street from farmer Hobbs. (now Hobbs Road) A three-plank whitewashed fence marked three sides of the school property; the front side was open to allow access from the street. The building was approximately twenty-five feet wide and thirty-five feet long with an attached woodshed on the west side. The East side had several tall windows from about waist high to the ceiling. Two wide stone slab steps led up to an entrance hallway. At the end of the short entrance hallway a door opened into the main room, the school room. The teacher's desk was a few feet into the room, and to her right was a large round gray metal wood burning furnace. In the winter, farmer Hobbs or his son from the farm house across

the street, would start the fire. Then the older boys would bring chunks of wood from the woodshed to keep the furnace heating during the school day. Attached to the wall on the left side of the teachers' desk was a long black board about waist high with chalk and erasers in a red tray at its base.

Just beyond the end of black board was the door to the woodshed. Metal frame single student desks with a storage space underneath and a small wooden work area were arranged in rows facing the teacher's desk. Four kerosene lamps with long thin glass chimneys, one in each corner of the room with a shiny metal reflector behind them, were placed on small shelves just below the ceiling. Behind the teacher's desk to her right and left were doors to the boys' and girls' outhouse bathrooms. The school lacked water or electricity service. Drinking water was obtained by an older boy going across



Burlington Free Press

*A photograph of the Plains School, from a 1954 Burlington Free Press article highlighting the opening of the consolidated Milton Elementary School on Herrick Avenue.*



Bill Kaigle

*April 2022 photo of the Plains Schoolhouse at 15 Hobbs Road. The building's tradition of education continues today, as the residence and homeschool of the Caron-Giroux family.*

the street to the Hobbs farmhouse, filling a pail with drinking water then emptying it into the five-gallon earthen crock on a shelf in the school entrance hallway. A drink of water came from the spigot at the bottom of the crock into a single tin cup provided for that purpose.

The teacher, usually a young unmarried woman, started the school day with the pledge of allegiance and then assigned work for each class. The teacher had lesson workbooks to keep students occupied while she was teaching a class. There were eight grades, so the teacher would call one grade at a time to the front of the room by the blackboard for detailed instructions. With only perhaps twenty-five students, the grade sizes were not large. Throughout the day the teacher would instruct the different grades and at times make comments and give direction to the total student body. Students, if so inclined, could follow along what was going on at

the black board at front of the room, particularly a subject that they found interesting even though not related to their own class.

The students were predominantly from farm families, quite often brothers and sisters. There were no school buses, so students that lived within walking distance walked, and the majority were carpooled. There was a one-hour break for lunch and students would swap items from their lunch boxes with each other. Those who lived nearby would go home for lunch. The culture of the school was like that of a large family.

The older students would assist the younger ones. Like families, disagreements would arise and maybe one group would not talk to the others for a few days until it blew over. At this time Milton farmland was available, and several French-speaking farmers had purchased farms in the area. Their children would come to school speaking very broken English, or none. They were assigned classes like every student and within a few months their speech would be like the other students with perhaps a little accent.

The only sport at the school was pick-up baseball. The game was played in the cow pasture behind the school where care had to be taken not to step in a cow flop. Sides were picked by two students going hand by hand up the bat handle and the

one that could get his full hand under the top crown of the handle had first pick. All nine positions could not be filled because there never were enough players available. A few of the older girls were good players and would be high on the list to be picked. The equipment was whatever came to school that day with the students. There were a few baseball gloves that were shared by all. Usually one bat and one ball. If the bat handle got cracked it would be taped to hold it together, and if the cover of the ball became loose, like the bat it would be covered with the black tape.

At Halloween time a box party would be held. The kerosene lamps would be lit for the evening and the schoolroom decorated. Each girl and the teacher would bring lunch in a decorated box. The boxes were auctioned off and the winner of the box would then eat lunch with the girl. There were ways of

*continued on page 12*

## It Takes a Village: A Thank You *continued from page 7*

graduation, I moved to Washington, D.C. with my B.A. in History, a U-Haul full of hand-me-downs, and my head full of dreams of someday working for the Smithsonian.

My time in graduate school was intense to say the least, I completed four semesters in 13 months (two summers, one fall, and one spring semester) with 33 credit hours and two internships that brought me to the Duke Ellington School of the Arts and the Library of Congress. I was spending every waking moment eating, sleeping, breathing museums. I wrote lesson plans, I took high school students on field trips, I created family guides and learning carts. When my graduate program ended, my former supervisor at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts called me and offered me a job teaching Museum Studies to 10th and 11th grade students; I would be teaching Art and Culture, Art History, Museum Education, and Archives, Collections, and Exhibitions.

I taught at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in the Museum Studies department for one year. I took my students to museums, I got to share my love and passion for museums with my students, and I was able to be creative with my lessons. I started my classes off asking my students “What do you want to learn in this class? What are some things you are passionate about?” and I tried to build as many of their responses as I could into my lessons. I realized I loved working with teenagers, but I still wanted to be in a museum. About halfway through the school year, a friend sent me a job listing for a position at the National Portrait Gallery, one of the Smithsonian Institution’s 19 museums. The position was for a Teen Programs Specialist, they were only going to accept 100 applications before the listing closed. I quickly got my references in order and applied, never expecting to hear back. The application hit 100 applications in about four or five days. I knew that it was likely that



*The National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C.*

Smithsonian Institution

nearly every applicant was truly qualified for the position. I was shocked when I was asked to interview for the position about a month later.

I went to a massive office building in downtown DC for my interview. I barely remember my interview, but I remember thinking, “Okay. This went well. If I don’t get the position, it’s truly because there was someone better for the position” as soon as it was over. A week later, I was asked to interview with the director of the museum, Kim Sajet. I remember prepping for the interview and repeatedly reminding myself not to botch pronouncing the director’s name: “It’s pronounced SAY-ET, Caitlin. SAY-ET! As in SAY-ET correctly and you might get the job.” Thankfully, I did pronounce her name correctly and again, I remember thinking the interview went well, but I tried not to get my hopes up.

A few weeks later, when my future boss called me to congratulate me on getting the job, I profusely thanked her, hung up the phone, and cried what can only be described as happy, exhausted, thankful tears. In August 2018, a few weeks shy of my 25th birthday I became the Teen Programs Specialist at the National Portrait Gallery. The National Portrait Gallery, located in downtown DC a few blocks away from the National Mall, tells

the story of America through the people who shape the nation’s history, development, and culture. There are people in our collection who you would recognize: presidents, Beyoncé, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., astronauts, and more. But more often than not, people visit our museum and learn about people they’ve only learned a little, if anything, about. My job primarily is to help teenagers connect with the Portrait Gallery and its collections, and so I run the Teen Museum Council, I oversee and manage a nationwide portrait competition for teens, create online resources for teachers and students, lead teacher workshops, and give school tours. Every day, I get to share my love of learning and history with people from around the United States and the world.

It took a lot of hard work to get to my position, but I learned so much along the way from so many people both in Milton and outside of Milton. I have so much gratitude for my teachers at Milton High School: thank you for giving me such a strong foundation for my future learning. I have so much gratitude for the Vermont Historical Society and the ECHO Center: thank you for helping me find the right path to go down. I owe endless gratitude to my family and friends, especially my parents, Anne and Gary, my grandparents, Paul and Eileen, and my partner, Evan: without your support, literally none of this would have been possible; thank you for believing in me when I wasn’t sure that I believed in myself. They say it takes a village, and I know it to be true; I’m glad I had a great village behind me on this journey.

*Caitlin Blake is a 2011 graduate of Milton High School and a 2016 graduate of Smith College. In 2022, Caitlin returned to Vermont as the Public Programs Manager at ECHO Leahy Center for Lake Champlain.*

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# General Stannard House Committee Report by Bill Kaigle & Kate Cadreact

In 2021, the General Stannard House Committee was pleased to complete work on the Stannard Park at the town's southern gateway, original site of George Stannard's post-Civil War farmhouse. The previous summer and fall, volunteers completed all of the landscaping work and installations from plans designed by Al Russell. Everett Ridley of Ridley Tile and Stonework and Jeff Towne put the icing on the cake with beautiful masonry restoration, finish trim and blue stone caps and benches installed atop the original house foundation walls.

In addition to the two interpretive sign panels installed in 2020, the final feature of the park was developed and installed in 2021 – a state roadside historic marker. In a process we had begun with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation a few years ago, in April we gained approval for a 2-sided marker highlighting George Stannard's military achievements and local connections on one side, and the history of the site, farm, house and families on the other. Along with Al, Everett and Jeff, thank you to these other volunteers who helped make the park



Bill Kaigle

*Future site of the General Stannard House on Bombardier Road in Milton. House components are currently stored in the barn behind.*

a reality, to create an attractive heritage stop and welcome to Milton: Chris Brosseau, Kate and David Cadreact, Roger Dickinson, Alex Fenton, Charlie Farrell, Bill and Evan Kaigle, Madeline Martin, Peter Pratt, Terry and Janet Richards and others.

October 20, 2020 was George Stannard's 200th birthday. In celebration, we opened the park with a wonderful dedication ceremony that weekend. We returned in October 2021 to dedicate the newly installed state historic marker. Both events were filmed by LCATV and are available for viewing. Many thanks to everyone who attended and delivered remarks: Author & military historian Liam McKone; State Representative Michael Morgan; Vermont Historic Preservation Officer Laura Trieschmann; Milton Town Manager Don Turner Jr.; Civil War

author & historian Howard Coffin; State Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Commander Mo Cerutti and members of SUVCW Stannard and Ripley Camps; Milton Select Board members John Palasik, Darren Adams, Brenda Steady and Chris Taylor; town historian Jim Ballard; members of Champlain Valley Historical Reenactors, and others. We encourage you to visit the park and other sites on the *Vermont in the*



Bill Kaigle

*Jeff Towne (right) and Evan Kaigle (left) install the state roadside historic marker at Stannard Park.*



Chris Taylor

*Civil War author, military historian and reenactor Liam McKone addresses the crowd at the state marker dedication.*



George Houghton

*George Stannard (left) at camp during the Civil War. Photo courtesy of the Vermont Historical Society.*



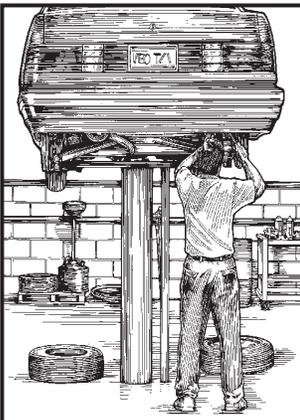
Bill Kaigle

*(L-R) Charlie Farrell and Janet and Terry Richards with the Stannard House display outside the Community Room at the Milton Municipal Building.*

*Civil War Heritage Trail.*

The house components remain in safe storage at the Bombardier barn, and in December 2021, with town approval we placed a "Future Site of the General Stannard

*continued on page 12*



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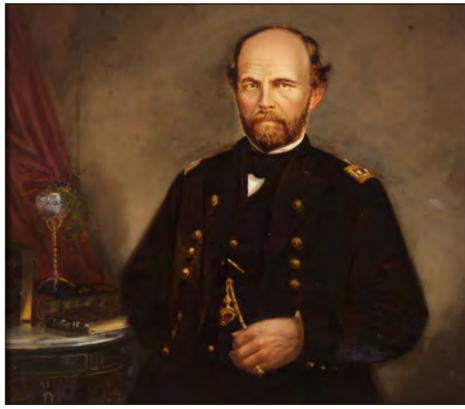
## General Stannard House Committee Report *continued from page 11*

House” sign in its adjacent location in downtown Milton. Fundraising remains the largest remaining goal in our quest to bring the restoration project to fruition, and we hope this visual representation will assist in that effort. The committee has sent successful fundraising appeals in May 2021 and January 2022, and we appreciate every single one of our donors who have contributed throughout the year. Your ongoing support puts our account balance currently at \$54,992.85.

In 2022 the Committee plans to engage the help of a fundraising consultant well-versed in preservation-based fundraising and capital campaigns, as well as the Preservation Trust of Vermont. Alongside fundraising,



Members of Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Stannard and Ripley Camps, formed the Honor Guard at the state marker dedication.



George Stannard portrait in Brigadier General's uniform by Carlton, 1870.

other plans currently in the works for the coming year include a complete re-vamp of our website with updated information and images, a merchandise page, and other resources. We will also work on site plans for the house restoration, and if appropriate, beginning permitting processes.

George Jerrison Stannard, major general in the Union army, was renowned for helping to blunt Pickett's Charge at the battle of Gettysburg. On July 3, 1863, he ordered a series of pivot maneuvers and provided withering flanking fire to repulse the Confederate assault, a turning point in the battle and the Civil War. The restored General Stannard House will feature exhibits and an educational experience on Stannard

and Vermonters in the Civil War, as well as community or town space, inside the Milton farmhouse he owned after the war.

We encourage your thoughts, suggestions and participation in this community project. Regular Committee meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday monthly at the Milton Historical



The new state historic marker at Stannard Park.

Museum, and reach out anytime at [www.generalstannardhouse.org](http://www.generalstannardhouse.org), 802-734-0758 or [generalstannardhouse@gmail.com](mailto:generalstannardhouse@gmail.com). Very special thanks to our generous supporters for your donations of financial and in-kind service gifts. You all are very much appreciated.

Portions of this report were published in the 2021 Milton Town Report.

## My One-Room Schoolhouse *continued from page 9*

knowing which box went with which girl and the most popular girls would of course be favorites. The teacher's box was a favorite of the older boys, but they were always outbid by her boyfriend. For Valentine's Day, students would make valentines and purchase some for their special friends and slide them through a slot into a decorated box. On valentine's day the teacher would hand them out to the anxious students gathered around the box.

At Christmas time several older boys were given the day to get a Christmas tree. There was a swampy area about two miles down the Colchester road that had some tall spruce trees. The boys would search the woods looking at the tops of the trees for a good shape then chop it down and cut off a suitable length tree for the school. If upon getting it on the ground the top was not as good as expected they would simply cut another tree. Then the tree was dragged back to the school. There was no thought given to contacting the owner of the land where the tree was cut. The students would make colored paper chains to



Mae and Ira Hobbs at their home in the 1950s. They lived and farmed across from the Plains School, on the road that bears their name.

decorate the tree. A Christmas party would be held, and students would exchange gifts.

A mobile library became available to the school. I think it came once a month. This

made the popular children books available to the students that did not have access to the town library. The Plains School library was sparse.

The teacher would warn us when the superintendent was scheduled to visit and tell us that we all should be at our best behavior. He did not visit very often.

In the Spring of 1937, muddy roads made it difficult for the carpoolers to get to school so school was canceled for a day. As the school year was winding down the teacher, Miss Paul, scheduled a short session for Saturday morning, May 17, 1937 to make up the lost day. The half-day session started on time with some students absent. About 8:30 a knock came on the inner door to the school. Miss Paul went to the door and then collapsed on the floor. A car with four students on its way to the school had been struck by a train and the driver and four students killed. Two of the victims were brother and sister. Although it was more than eighty years ago the incident is still vivid in my mind.

## The Story of the Clark Office Building *continued from page 8*

on top of the ledge rather than attempt to remove it through chiseling or blasting. That's the reason for the brick cube. The original builders found a simple solution to a basic problem of geology and geometry.

### Well...What's this hole in the ground?

During renovations, when people would visit the property I would usually take them to a place in the back yard that had been perplexing me. It was a hole in the ground about ten feet in diameter and three feet deep. The hole was lined with bricks which had once been covered with a smooth layer of mortar. Inside the hole were rectangular stones standing vertically around the edges, like numbers on a clock. Near the middle, an iron pipe rose slightly above grade. "What do you think it is?" was invariably my question. I think I eventually got the answer, and a big surprise.

The hole was full of junk to begin with, plus a thick layer of stinky muck. One thing seemed certain. It must have been used for some kind of water storage, and it would still hold water after every rain. I initially thought it must be a well, so I stepped very carefully when cleaning it out. Or maybe it was a cistern, used for storing household water. It couldn't be a cistern though, as it was at the top of a hill and there was no common sense way of diverting water into it. And what was up with those rectangular stone blocks? It turns out, you just have to ask the right person.

As fate would have it, I had a surprise visit by Rick Hamilton. Rick is a highly respected local craftsman and someone I consider an expert on historic houses. He mentioned that around the turn of the last century it was common for people of means to display their wealth with an outdoor fountain. The rocks around the edge were simply placed there for decorative purposes. Indeed, there was a simple concrete fountain base found nearby that may have been part of the display. I like Rick's theory the best. And even better, I found something cool and historic at the bottom of the pit.

The summer of 2018 had several dry spells. During one of these periods, it was finally time to clean all the leaves and muck out of the bottom of the fountain. It was a dirty job, but at the end of it, I discovered two interesting things. The first was a pair of iron tools about two feet long with a hole on one end and perpendicular spikes at the other. These were resting on a large, flat, circular stone about five feet in diameter. The stone had a cross in the middle and carved grooves radiating out in an even swirl pattern. It was



At right is Joseph Clark's grist mill in 1911.

a millstone, and it was heavy! The millstone would have to stay right where it was for another year. Eventually, we had an excavator on site that was able to pull it out of the pit and set it aside. Did the millstone come from Joseph Clark's gristmill? It seems likely, but that question (and how it got there!) is another mystery that may never be solved.

### Lost and Found

I poked around the internet trying to identify those strange iron tools. It took a great deal of searching, but I eventually hit the jackpot. They're called jack grapples. According to the 1880 publication *The Ice Industry of the United States*, jack grapples are, "for towing rafts and sheets by horse power along the channels, and also used for hauling blocks up the inclined plane by horse-power when no endless chain is used." It's probably no coincidence that the property is bordered on the north by Ice House Road. The building that houses the town's maintenance shop was once the town's ice house. And that odd little building on the dam that sits just above the old ice house was part of the harvesting operation. It still has a large pulley wheel in it. The ice would be harvested from the lake, pulled up one side of the dam using a pulley system, then transported down the other side to the ice house where it could be stored for later use. I can imagine the jack grapple probably didn't have to travel far from the ice house to the hole in our backyard. How long it sat there waiting to be discovered we'll never know.

Kari and I found a few other interesting objects, but not much of note as the area had been mostly cleaned up prior to our purchase. What we did find was a lot of junk. For example, I've spent hours and hours pulling plastic bags out of the soil in the yard. There were about 16 pianos and one pipe organ on the property when Armand Brisson passed away. Sadly, none were salvageable.

### Lost your marbles?

I don't believe in ghosts, but on Christmas Eve of 2017, as we were cleaning and sweeping near the front door, an antique Christmas card drifted down from the ceiling and fell right at our feet. We still have it.

Oh, and I keep finding marbles – everywhere. There were marbles in the ceilings, on the floor, in the yard, buried in the soil. It seemed like every time we made some progress on renovations, I would look down and find a marble. It was as if someone was trying to tell us that we were doing a good job – and keep going. It's happened at least a dozen times. I'm going to get them all together and put them in a jar so I don't lose them.

*History is who we are and why we are the way we are.* DAVID McCULLOUGH

### Onward

The best and most rewarding part of owning the Clark office building has been meeting people and making new friends. Kari and I didn't know anyone in Vermont when we moved here from Nebraska in 2016, but once we began work on this project, so many people stopped by to welcome us and offer their thoughts, memories, and encouragement. We're still collecting stories and photos in an effort to form a more complete history of this part of town. Today, we proudly call Milton our home, we're humbled to be a small part of this area's rich history, and we're especially grateful for the many dear friends we've made along the way.

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# History All Around Us

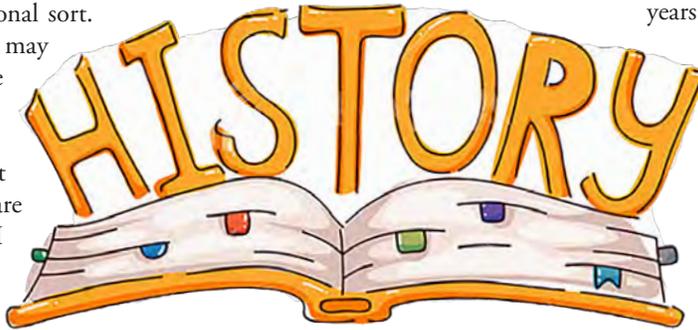
by Lorinda A. Henry

History seems to annoy a certain percentage of folks, although maybe not as much as poetry does. I am not sure why that is, because it seems to me that there are enough aspects of either one to show you an angle you would really enjoy. There is a lot of poetry in music, but I have never heard anyone say, "I can't stand music." Certainly most of us have certain styles of music that resonate, and others that are way less attractive to us, but few reject the entire art. And as far as history goes, there are different ways to approach. Many people are engaged in discovering their ancestors, for instance. This is history of a personal sort. There are historical novels, which may be read for excitement or romance but are by definition exhibiting a facet of history.

I tell kids at the museum that they are part of history, they are IN history, but what is history? I look at the word. Story. There is quite a break sometimes between what the school people think history should be and the stories of thousands of events and people one after the other. I've been a story person as long as I can remember, but I don't recall if I liked history then as I do now or not. I remember things I didn't agree with and things I questioned, but even there I can see I was paying attention, I was intrigued enough to think about it – to agree or not, to question assumptions. Maybe the exact dates and wars and politics weren't that cool at the time, but when my grandparents talked about their grandparents, I could appreciate how what I called history was to them *their lives*. No history class I ever had got far into the 20th century and when it did it was kind of thin gruel. I remember they taught about the Teapot Dome scandal but I don't know why. Really even now my reaction is kind

of "So what?" Maybe you have to have been there.

The idea that history is just facts about what actually happened has been a goal at times, but there is hardly any way of writing "just the facts, Ma'am," without veering toward one purpose or another. We like the idea of a kind of timeline – this happened, then that happened – but consciously or not, we tend to bend that line a little toward one view of another. For instance, it served a purpose for a while to believe that there were no native people in Vermont, so more weight was given



to facts that supported that view, and other facts (such as the wildly large number of arrowheads turned up by farmers) was disregarded and downplayed. In the 1800s a stated purpose of history writing was to glorify the heroes and important people. Now we know, or say we know, that the story of George Washington and the cherry tree was made up by Parson Weems, but at the time he wrote it he was doing a historian's duty of giving us marvelous myths to emphasize the good character of Washington. It was not proper to give the impression that Washington (or any of those esteemed forefathers) was a real person with faults, a person who sometimes fell short, who probably swore, who despaired, slammed doors, worried, and suffered from a toothache.

Now we want to know the "true story," or think we do. Possibly the Teapot Dome scandal was such a big deal because no one considered our leaders to be capable of taking bribes or whatever – they were perfect, and supposed to be so. We know so much now that 24 hours a day of the internet can't fill the gap. No one is a hero to his/her valet/maid, but right now few are heroes to any of us. It can be sobering, and it is hard to sort the important from the interesting from gossip. I don't think I need whitewashed heroes, but that may not be so. At least I remember that somewhere in the past 20 years someone decided to come forward with the news or story that Eisenhower had had an affair back while he was also saving a good part of humanity. I felt let down, even though loving someone extra had not a thing to do with planning for the rescue of Europe. I got over it.

But in looking at that, I have come to believe that a good part of the history I was taught was intended to polish up the reputations of our leaders, and that I was predisposed to assume that everything Eisenhower did was noble. We were kind of over Washington (although his owning of other humans was skipped over rather quickly) – we could be okay with the cherry tree story being false – but it was harder for me when a contemporary president was involved. But that is history. You get your little part, and I get mine. Like fish in water, we are in history, and like any one fish can only see a small section of the sea, each of us sees only a part of a whole huge picture of history that no one of us can see in its entirety.

*Lorinda Henry is a Milton Historical Society Charter Member and former Museum Director, and longtime Remembering columnist for the Milton Independent. Lorinda's art, research and writing talents can be seen throughout the museum.*



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*Robert & Mary Lou  
Lombard*

# Pride and Memory by Terry Richards

During an address in Wisconsin, Abraham Lincoln quoted King Solomon's phrase "And this, too, shall pass away." Please keep those words in mind the next time you hear someone older than you say, "I remember when..." or when someone says "What used to be there? This wasn't always here." Yes, I understand that conversations opening that way may be "oldies' talk." Boring. Not important, Not relevant. But...

It is not a new idea that what we call "memory" or "history" is really something that only lasts two or three generations. Beyond that, we have no one to tell us those things anymore. The facts, the emotions, the importance, the effects on the community may simply be gone. Some facts may be available in town offices or libraries or online. Some may have become woven into the fabric of the town, or family or business. Those memories may not always be accurate or consistent. Some may not have been thought "important enough to save". We can easily lose the immediacy, the warmth, the laughter or chagrin, or tears involved. We can do better. We can be more concerned with our values and legacies and what we can do for others.

For example, have you heard of the "Spanish Flu" of 1918? It was an influenza pandemic that could kill within one to three days from first symptoms. The second wave in 1919 was worse. 500 million people worldwide were infected. An estimated 50 million died, including 675,000 Americans. The highest mortality rate was within the normally healthiest 20 to 40 year-old range! What does this have to do with Milton? Did the Spanish Flu strike here? What did it mean? A long-term town resident, from

a multi-generational Milton family, spoke up during a conversation at the historical society. They noted that among other repairs and enhancements possible with our new attention to town cemeteries, we might look into the lost grave markers in the Milton Village Cemetery. Only one other person present knew what this was about. They remembered seeing about twenty wooden plaques serving as grave markers near the entrance to the cemetery. The markers had been removed decades ago. There was no memory of the graves being relocated. This seems so wrong on so many levels. How can we forget those people? How can we not acknowledge their existence? What happened to their families? Do their families even know? Remember, two or three generations and the story may go away.

We in Vermont are fortunate in many ways to have recorded or preserved our state's history. We have Shelburne Museum, we have the Billings Farm in Woodstock, we have Hildene in Manchester. In Milton, we have honored and recorded the triumphs of Catamount Stadium and our dragstrip from decades ago. The very visible Joseph Clark Office Building at the foot of Main Street has been renovated, and our own General Stannard House has been disassembled and stored for restoration when funding allows. We've done a great job documenting the cabins, camps, hotels and resorts, the steamboats of a booming tourist era. What about our families? If we don't record family details, who will? Of what value is this?

The value is in the details, the passing along of the emotions and importance of what happened, as perceived at the time.

Think about remembering family stories of WWI and WWII, of Sputnik, of the Cuban Missile Crisis, of September 11th, of the 2007-08 economic meltdown. How did you or past family members feel at three in the morning as the bed shook with B-52 nuclear bombers taking off from Plattsburgh Air Force Base? What did you think when you first saw that plane fly into the World Trade Center? How about the Chicago Cubs and Boston Red Sox as World Series Champions, after nearly 100 years? Genealogy does not touch this. We must.

History is not just dates and numbers. History is blood and breathing. How people learn, adjust, react, feel, improve. We get better when we can understand our past, and not just our recent past. I suggest that each and every one of us needs to seek out our most elder family members and talk to them. Ask them for memories, ask them about important events. Ask them what your family did on Sundays 50 years ago. Ask who got to go to school and for how long. Ask who had the best sense of humor and why. Do you have any old photos? Share them and find out the details of what was going on at that time.

Have you already lost family members or memories? Go see your neighbor. Compare and share memories with available siblings. Ask younger family members what their most important experiences have been. You might be surprised. At the very least, this pursuit will cause others to think a bit more about what matters most. And that, believe me, is very important for all of us.

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

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Take a minute to visit the Milton Historical Society's Facebook page, where we post our event information along with wonderful historic images, trivia and anecdotes of our town.

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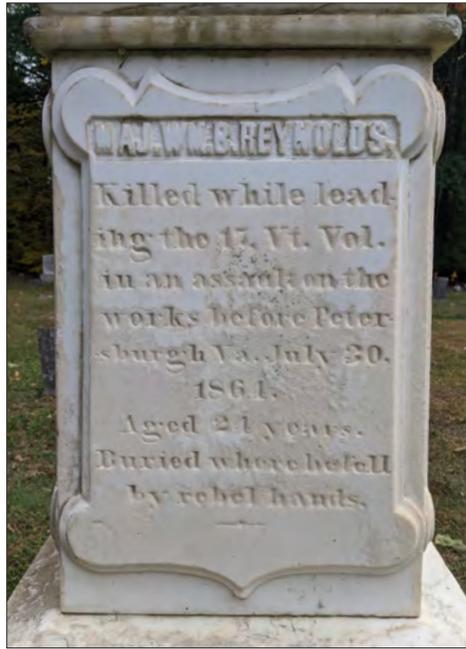
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# The State of Milton's Cemeteries by Jim Ballard

The Friends of Milton, Vermont Cemeteries was formed to work with the Milton Cemetery Advisory Board for the purpose of raising funds and enlisting volunteers to do projects in town cemeteries that go beyond the maintenance of cemetery grounds.

“Perpetual Care” is a term that generally refers to town funds used for repair and general maintenance of cemetery grounds, which includes landscaping and lawn mowing during the growing season. This general definition of Perpetual Care is also true for Milton. Superintendent of Cemeteries Peter Staniels (pstaniels@gmail.com) and the Selectboard-appointed Cemetery Advisory Board work to ensure that the basic maintenance of the cemeteries under town care is completed.

To date, the Friends have paid for identification stakes in the Village Cemetery to help visitors locate specific plots more easily. An informational sign for the Village Cemetery is in the works. In previous years, volunteers have cleaned stones in the Village, Plains and Checkerberry Cemeteries. Tom Giffin of the Vermont Old Cemetery



*The West Milton Cemetery monument of Civil War veteran William Reynolds.*

are willing to donate time to cemetery work projects, please contact Jim Ballard 802-893-7734.



*The stone fence at the Old West Milton Cemetery on John Rowley Road.*

## A parting thought...

A cemetery fence is not there just to mark its boundary with its neighboring property...it is a sign of a place of respect. This is an invitation to encourage you to visit one or all of Milton's cemeteries. Do not let a fence keep you out, or let the relaxing, quiet atmosphere of our cemeteries un-nerve you.

The Friends of Milton Cemeteries is fiscally sponsored by the Milton Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. All contributions are tax-deductible in accordance with current tax laws. Thank you!



*This volunteer crew did some amazing work at Checkerberry Cemetery on August 24, 2019.*

Association and a number of volunteers, including students from Milton High School and St. Michael's College, Town Manager Don Turner, and Peter Staniels have made wonderful improvements in the Checkerberry and Plains Cemeteries.

Our next Cemetery Work Day is Saturday June 4, 2022 at the West Milton Cemetery. Please see information at right and join us! The Miltonboro Cemetery has a GoFundMe campaign in process, to raise funds to restore the beautiful 1890's stone wall. This cemetery is the last public structure remaining in Miltonboro. The cost to restore the entire fence is estimated at \$8,000. To date, we have raised \$1,500

toward this endeavor and are hoping to begin stabilization in 2022. Visit <https://gofund.me/217d6a24> to make a donation to the GoFundMe.

What we need now is money or time or both. Our progress on purchasing materials to fix and clean stones, along with installing identification signs and labels, fence repair and numerous other projects, depends on volunteer time and donations. Thank you to Bill Kaigle of Ye Olde Sign Shoppe for donating signs for the new West Milton, Miltonboro, Plains, Austin and Old West Milton cemeteries. If you are able, please send

donations to: Friends of Milton Vermont Cemeteries, c/o Milton Historical Society, 13 School Street Milton, VT 05468. If you



*The Miltonboro Cemetery recently received a new sign, and restoration of its stone wall is being planned.*

## Work Day at West Milton Cemetery

70 Bear Trap Road, Milton

Saturday, June 4 • 8 - 11 AM

Please join us, and come prepared to dig in the dirt and/or clean stones.

### Necessary items:

Gloves, plastic putty knife, stiff bristle brush (vegetable brushes also work), spray bottle with water (with a jug to refill it - no water available onsite)

### Optional items:

Snacks, drinks bug spray, folding chair, long handled shovel you like to work with

### Questions?

Call Peter Staniels at 518-859-5145 or Jim Ballard at 802-893-7734

# A Different Kind of Pandemic Story by Anne Pierce

Since the beginning of the pandemic last year, I've been thinking a lot about my maternal grandfather. His name was Maurice J. Villemaire, M.D., and he served the town of Milton, Vermont, as a general practitioner for 40 years. He was born in 1902, grew up in Winooski, went to medical school at the University of Vermont, did his residency out of state, and came back home to marry a cute nurse. They settled down on Main Street in Milton, he hung out his shingle, and started practicing medicine in the early 1930s until his death in 1972. His home and office were one and the same.

All this background leads me to the early 1980s, after my grandmother passed away. My mom and family were cleaning out my grandparents' house, getting it ready for sale. I remember we discovered heavy card stock signs, 12 x 5 inches, with words like "Mumps," "German Measles," and "Scarlet Fever" on them. My mom told me the Vermont Department of Health provided these to doctors around the state for when they made house calls and diagnosed one of these dreaded diseases. She remembers my grandfather would nail the appropriate sign to the front door of a house as a quarantine measure. I always found it amazing that any of these signs survived, but under the front stairs were a stack of them!

Science has come a long way: German



Anne Pierce



Boston Herald

Sandra Smith of the Checkerberry School in Milton gets her Salk anti-polio shot from Dr. Maurice Villemaire on May 4, 1954. Milton was the first Vermont town to start the trials.

Measles (Rubella) is no longer constantly present in the U.S. thanks to a vaccine developed long ago. Likewise, smallpox, a highly contagious, disfiguring and often deadly virus, was also eradicated decades ago after a worldwide immunization program. The World Health Organization considers it one of the biggest achievements of the time, in international public health. Whooping Cough (Pertussis), though not eradicated, is a highly contagious respiratory tract infection that is easily preventable by vaccine.

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) reported that Polio was once one of the most feared diseases in the U.S. In the early 1950s, before the Polio vaccines were available, outbreaks caused more than 15,000 cases of paralysis each year. Do you remember seeing pictures of people lying in an iron lung?

Following development by Dr. Jonas

Salk in 1955 of the Polio vaccine, the number of cases fell rapidly to less than 100 in the 1960s and fewer than 10 in the 1970s.

This brings me to the date of May 4, 1954, when my grandfather, Doc Villemaire, administered the first polio vaccine shot in Vermont to a child in Milton as part of national testing of the vaccine! I've often wondered what was going through his mind at the time? Would it save lives? Was he doing the right thing?

Now, here we are, in 2021 with our very own version of a pandemic that has killed so many worldwide. I'm sure you've all read or heard news about the unprecedented research, development, time, money, and rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

I still marvel today how men and women so many, many years ago, without the high-tech computers and modern-day scientific tools, were able to discover and produce those older vaccines that are still in use.



Milton Historical Society

I'm so very proud I can say that, back in his day, my grandfather was on the front lines and helped save lives! This also goes to show just how far the human race has come, yet how far we still have to go.

*Originally published in the February 2021 issue of Wheel Tracks, the Vermont Automobile Enthusiasts newsletter. Reprinted with permission from the author.*



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# Milton Receives First State Roadside Historic Markers in 53 Years

by Bill Kaigle

With the development of the Society's *History of Racing in Milton* exhibit in 2017, and all of the exciting programming and events that surrounded it, one thing became clear – permanent recognition was needed at the auto racing sites where engines roared and adrenaline pumped for nearly 25 years from the 1960s until the 1980s, was needed. An ideal way to share a site's significance with visitors from near and far is with a Vermont Division for Historic Preservation Roadside Historic Site Marker.

Unveiled in 1947 by the Vermont Legislature, the marker program has proven an effective way to commemorate Vermont's many people, events, and places of regional, statewide, or national significance. Currently 292 cast-aluminum green markers, crested with the distinctive gold state seal, are placed throughout the state to provide a fascinating glimpse into the past and insights into the present.

Vermont's easily identifiable roadside historic site markers commemorate diverse topics, including the birthplaces and homes of United States presidents and legislators, Red Sox players, and founders of world-famous organizations like Cadillac, Lincoln, Rotary International, and Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as homes of famous authors and artists the likes of Rudyard Kipling, Pearl S. Buck, Robert Frost, and Norman Rockwell. Vermonters' contribution to one campaign of the Civil War is memorialized by a roadside historic marker at Cedar Creek in Virginia.



(L-R) Milton Speedway competitor (and its last owner in 1970-71) Rene LaBerge applauds as "Vermonster" driver Frankie Woodward and "The Flying Farmer" driver Norm Monette unveil the Milton Speedway marker on August 17, 2019.

**Islands - Samuel de Champlain**", honoring Champlain's 1609 lake exploration and discovery of the Lake Champlain islands. The second (#253) was installed and dedication in June 2018 on Route 7 at the site of the former entrance to **Catamount Stadium**, a 1/3-mile oval racetrack that excited stock car racing fans from 1965-1987. The third (#263) was installed two miles north of Catamount at the site of **Milton Speedway**, the state's only standalone drag strip, which drew local and nationwide competitors from 1963-1971. It was installed and dedicated in August 2019. **George Jerrison Stannard / Deming-Stannard Farm** is the fourth (#291), honoring the site of Vermont Civil War hero George Stannard's post-war



(L-R) Hometown heroes Beaver and Bobby Dragon unveil the Catamount Stadium marker on June 9, 2018, as town manager Don Turner Jr. applauds. Bobby Dragon was Catamount's winningest driver with 52 feature race victories.

The oldest markers record Revolutionary War battlefields, the meeting places of the Green Mountain Boys, and America's first ski tow, with newer markers recognizing a distinctive floating bridge, the first African American graduate of the University of Vermont, and the largest marble company in the world.

The Milton Historical Society is proud to now have markers #73, 253, 263 and 291 within our town. The first (#73) was installed on the westernmost tip just past Sand Bar State Park in 1965, "**Historic Lake**



Gathered with a group around the new Catamount Stadium marker at the June 9, 2018 dedication event, former drivers George and Barney McRae, Beaver and Bobby Dragon, Jean-Paul Cabana, Tom Tiller and even town manager Don Turner Jr. turned laps at Catamount Stadium. Cabana has the distinct honor of winning the track's first feature race in 1965 and its final one in 1987.



Civil War author and historian Howard Coffin stands by the George Stannard marker at the dedication event, as Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War state department commander Maurice Cerutti looks on.

farmstead. Stannard Park was created at the site and dedicated around Stannard's 200th birthday in October 2020, and the marker was installed and dedicated in October 2021.

What's next for markers in Milton? We've really enjoyed working with State Historic Preservation Officer Laura Trieschmann on our recent markers, and we have some thoughts on more. Two that come to mind right away are the site of the Joseph Clark mansion and office building on Main and River Streets, and Schill's Airport, at the site of the current Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Clark is Milton's most important

continued on page 20

# History in Education by Tony Burton

This summer, Milton Historical Society members will be examining the Social Studies curriculum in the Milton schools with an eye on how to link the resources we have with what Milton students are learning. We have great potential for taking a larger role in bringing our local history to students. Several ideas are being pursued. First, with our “Reimagining the Milton Historical Museum” efforts, we will see how this will be beneficial for teachers to bring students to the museum, but also how it can cater to outreach in the classrooms.

Next, we will continue to build on outreach into classrooms with the resources



*These young historians from Milton Elementary School visited the museum in May 2018. We look forward to offering dynamic new educational programs in the reimagined Milton Historical Museum.*

Bill Kaigle

the Middle School during their Civil War unit, a month before the pandemic started.

Lastly, we will examine and hopefully catalog many of the primary documents we have, which could be useful to our High School students for more in depth research projects. This could be very beneficial for the National History Day projects students conduct every year. Our hope is that through these efforts, our Milton students will gain a greater appreciation of our rich local history.

we have to fit the units that students are learning. This was done with great success and engagement in early 2020 with our Civil War era resources, when volunteers visited

*Tony Burton is a Milton Middle School Social Studies Teacher and a board member of the Milton Historical Society. He can be reached at 802-373-7918 or [tburton@mymtsd-ut.org](mailto:tburton@mymtsd-ut.org).*

## *Reimagining the Milton Historical Museum* continued from page 3

about the geological history of Arrowhead Mountain and Lake. The exhibit will also include some Native American artifacts on loan from Jim Manley that were recovered on and around Arrowhead Mountain. Meeri Zetterstrom and her effort to save osprey on Lake Arrowhead will also be highlighted. The Flood of 1927 was a statewide event that caused extensive damage throughout the



*Nan Marotti (left) and Kym Duchesneau (right) sifting through artifacts for exhibit materials.*

Rick Stowell

state, including Milton. The flood changed Milton in many ways. Much of Milton's history is tied to its many farms. The history of farming will be displayed with a focus on a few of the families that have farmed the land. The exhibit will even include a model of a cow that can be milked. Milton had a thriving business district centered around Main Street and River Street. Visitors should enjoy seeing the many businesses that existed over the years. Some of the buildings that housed the businesses are still standing and



*Lou Mossey's carpentry skills have been integral in the construction of new interior wall space to separate and display the new exhibits.*

Rick Stowell



*Sage Maynard (left) and Mia St. Amand (right) paint the interior trim on the museum's stained glass windows.*

Rick Stowell

visitors will be able to compare the buildings “then and now”. Finally, any town always has some interesting stories, and Milton is no exception. From the wedding in an airplane to the doctor who saved a 1.5 pound premature baby in 1904 and a few others, the stories in *Tales of Milton* will be of interest.

The museum will be open on Saturdays from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm beginning on



*Madeline Martin helps clean up during the construction process at the reimagined museum.*

Rick Stowell

June 4. The museum's season runs until the last Saturday in October. The museum will need volunteers to staff the museum and will provide an orientation to volunteers to help familiarize volunteers with the exhibits. If anyone is interested in volunteering for one or more Saturdays please contact the Milton Historical Society at [miltonhistorical@yahoo.com](mailto:miltonhistorical@yahoo.com) or 802-893-1604.



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*Milton Receives First State Roadside Historic Markers in 53 Years* continued from page 18

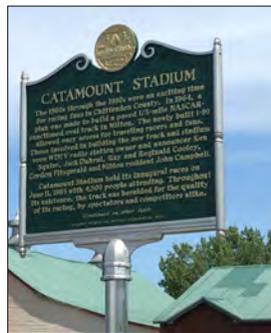


Chris Taylor

*A tip of the kepi by members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Stannard and Ripley Camps, including Milton's own Bill Orr and Ric and Alex Fenton. They formed the Honor Guard at the George Jerrison Stannard / Deming-Stannard Farm marker dedication on October 23, 2021.*

benefactor, operating early grist and saw mills, and bringing the railroad to town, leading to Milton's prosperity of the late 1800s. Paul Schill was an aviation innovator in the 1920s who operated his Milton airport that may have become the area's hub were it not for the Great Depression and a few other factors. Stay tuned, and we welcome your thoughts!

Visit [roadsidemarkers.vermont.gov](http://roadsidemarkers.vermont.gov) for an interactive map and descriptions of these and all of the state's roadside historic markers, and we encourage you to get out and visit the rich history our state has to offer.



Rick Stowell



Bill Kaigle

*The state roadside historic marker alongside interpretive panels at Stannard Park.*



Rick Stowell

*Milton Speedway founder Hubert "Bud" McCormick (right) entertained the crowd with his remarks at the marker dedication in August 2019. We were delighted that he could join us for the special occasion. Bud passed away in October 2020 at the age of 95.*