



MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 5

December, 1990

Number 2

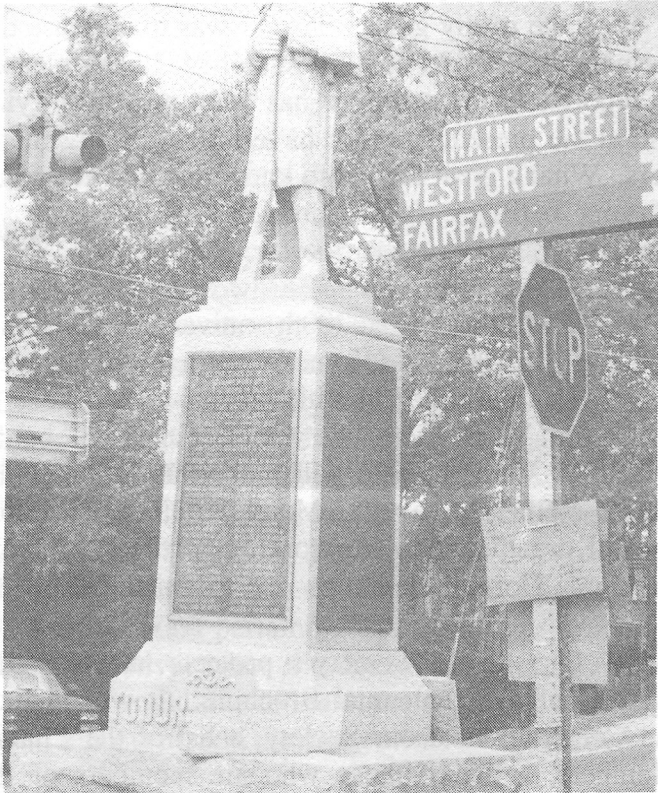


Photo by John DeBoer

SOCIETY PROTESTS DESECRATION OF CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL MONUMENT BY GARAGE SALE SIGNS

At its October meeting the Milton Historical Society passed a resolution deploring use of the town's Civil War Monument for affixing signs advertising garage sales, church barbecues and the like, and petitioning the Select Board to pass a town ordinance prohibiting such signs on, or within ten feet of, this monument or the granite memorial commemorating the "brave men and women" who defended our freedom in subsequent wars.

On October 15 the Select Board considered the resolution and accompanying photos illustrating instances of such inappropriate use of the Civil War Monument. (One of these photos is reproduced on this page, showing a cardboard sign advertising a garage sale on Sunset Avenue obscuring the words "TO OUR SOLDIERS" carved at the base of the monument.) Instead of passing an ordinance, the Select Board took action empowering the town police and the Town Manager to remove any such signs as whenever they are placed on the monuments. Further, as the Minutes of the meeting indicate, "the person(s) responsible for the placement of the signs will receive a letter asking that they do not use the monument for such publications."

At the same meeting the Select Board considered another request of the Historical Society. Noting that the Milton Museum is located on the third floor of the Clark municipal building and that there are no signs inside the building to help newcomers find the Museum, the Society had petitioned the Town Manager "to use his good offices to affix interior signs visible to those entering both front and rear doors of the Clark Building properly directing interested persons" to the Museum.

The Select Board acceded to the request, directing the Town Manager to have signs placed "with regard to the Museum's location." In consultation with the Society, the Town Manager is ordering a sign to be placed near the "back door" indicating that the Museum is two flights up the adjacent stairs, and another sign to be placed near the Main Street "front door" next to the elevator directing inquirers one flight up.

At its November meeting the Society expressed its appreciation for these actions of the Select Board and the Town Manager.

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

Volume 5 **December, 1990** **Number 2**

Editor Robert J. Hooker
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Cemetery: Jim Ballard, Bob Hooker, Sharon Flaherty, Lorinda Henry, Jane FitzGerald, Gail McDonough, Jim Manley Sr., Arthur Mayville
Historic Sites: Gwen Brown, Ardell Campbell, Edith Holden, Edna Frye
History Contest: Gwen Brown, Ardell Campbell, Edith Holden, Edna Frye
Bicentennial Brochure: John DeBoer, Bob Hooker, Gwen Brown

MONTHLY MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

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

THE MILTON MUSEUM

Located on the third floor of the Clark Building on Main Street, the Milton Museum is open from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. every Saturday from May through October, and on the first and third Saturdays November through April. Class field trips and special visits by appointment.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The beginning of Vermont's official Bicentennial Year is now only two months away. Local historical societies throughout the state and other organizations have been very busy making plans for this important historic event. A Bicentennial Celebration happens only once, and I am very happy and privileged to be President of the Milton Historical Society at this special time. We are proud of our rich history, traditions and values. Let's preserve these things for our children and grandchildren.

One of my goals this year was to increase our membership to two hundred members. I am pleased to report that the response has been most gratifying and at the present time we have a total of 172 members. What a great feeling to know that you are proud of your heritage. We appreciate your interest and increased support in the Society.

The theme of the 200th anniversary is "Homecoming." In 1900, Old Home Week celebrations were held by Vermont communities to honor and keep in touch with Vermonters who went West. It will be the people of Vermont who will make this Bicentennial year a memorable event. Many people representing several organizations are working hard to make our Welcome Home Celebration one to remember.

One of the Society's projects has been the printing of a Bicentennial Brochure. It will include the Constitution of our Society, a list of the Charter Members, a list of those who are members of the Society during this Bicentennial Year, and a report of some of the Society's accomplishments since it was founded twelve years ago. A big thank-you to John DeBoer for the idea and organizing the project.

We are planning some special displays in the near future at the Milton Museum in the Clark Memorial Building. New exhibits showing Milton's early history will be displayed.

Let's everyone take time to reflect and learn about our past, celebrate our great accomplishments, and plan for our future.



Home of Louise Branch on Main Street

ANNUAL HISTORIC HOME TOUR

by Jane FitzGerald

Photos by John DeBoer

October 8 was a beautiful Saturday as about seventy-five people toured six historic homes around Lake Arrowhead on or near Route 7 just north and south of the bridge at Milton Falls.

Owners of the homes visited were: Louise Branch, Maurice and Gyselle Bousquet, Thomas and Mary Curran, Rick and Jane Hamilton, Harry and Kim Barber, and Marilyn Klompus and Dayle Wiggins.

Refreshments prepared by several members of the Milton Historical Society were served at the Klompus-Wiggins home. There were many pictures and information pertaining to the changes around the Lamoille River when the dam was built in 1936-37.

I would like to thank the members who helped with this event, and the homeowners who opened their homes.



**West Milton Cemetery Fence:
article page 8**

MILTON GRADED SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED

Milton Graded Schools have been formally recognized by the Vermont Statehood Bicentennial Commission. As participants in the Bicentennial Schools Program, they are encouraged to become actively involved in Vermont's Bicentennial celebration.

The High School is currently involved in an art competition to design a local logo or symbol to be used by the Town Bicentennial Committee.

The High School also hopes to participate in the Ethan Allen Homestead Competition and fabricate a map of Milton the way it was in the early 1800's.

Mrs. Kathy Redman and Mrs. Ardell Campbell have volunteered to set up historical displays at the High School across from the library. This month artifacts on loan from the Sanderson family are featured. Everything from old photographs to kerosene lamps and curling irons can be seen. The display will change every two months through the efforts of these fine ladies. If you have not had a chance to see it yet, stop in at the High School.

School Street School and Herrick Avenue Elementary School are working on a theme calendar, art fair/festival, historic walks about town, local guest speakers, a museum corner in the library, and class visits to the local Historical Society Museum housed in the Clark Memorial Building.

COMPUTER AIDS MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

When the Historical Society's fiscal and membership year started in April, it appeared that many of the previous year's members had forgotten that it was time to renew. The Society decided to compile one list of all members and friends, getting names from the Treasurer, the President and the Editor of the *Newsletter*, and asked the President, Jane FitzGerald, to mail a letter of invitation to all on the list. John DeBoer volunteered the use of his computer, its database software, and his time to maintain the list. The letter was sent (mailing labels generated by the computer) conveying the President's goal of 200 members. Later there was a follow-up letter sent by the Membership Committee. In the previous year there were 54 paid and/or honorary members (counting family memberships as two); there are 172 to date this year. A hundred years from now the computer may be an artifact in the Museum. For now, it's a great help! Thanks to all who responded!

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WHEN THE MONUMENT WAS DEDICATED

The dedication of the Civil War Soldiers' Monument at River and Main Streets in Milton was dedicated on Labor Day, September 6, 1909. Governor George H. Prouty, Lieutenant Governor John Mead, Congressman D.J. Foster and other notables were present. A book in the Milton Museum, *The Thirteenth Regiment Vermont Volunteers*, describes the occasion:

"The transfer of the monument to the town by the monument committee, Col. H.O. Clark, J. Monroe Perry and Frank E. Cormia, then took place. Col. Clark then presented the monument to the town with the following speech:

"This is the largest assembly that this town has ever seen. Even in the stirring days of the Civil War no such body of people ever met together here. Never before has a Milton gathering been honored by the presence of the chief executive and so many of distinction from other parts of the state....

"A year ago at a special town meeting it was unanimously voted that a Soldiers' Monument be erected. It stands here complete today as we trust it will remain for thousands of years to teach the rising generations what their ancestors did in those arduous years of the Civil War. The monument will now be unveiled by Misses Elsie Clark and Gladys Perry, a daughter and a granddaughter of veterans whose names are on the tablet before you...

"This town in 1861 had less than 400 voters. It sent over 200 men to the front, 44 of whom lie in the cemeteries here and fill unknown graves on many a Southern battlefield. These soldiers that marched away were not all included in the less than 400 voters. Many, the majority in fact, had not arrived at the age that entitled them to the ballot, but infused with the spirit of loyalty they went out to fight [for] the country and do their share in preserving this Union...

"As chairman of the monument committee it is now my pleasure to transfer the care and custody of this monument to the town as represented by the selectmen. To you and your successors in office we now give over the completed monument, feeling assured that the loyalty of those who made the appropriation of it and their successors will forever take proper care that it is kept in the perfect condition as now transferred."

(A copy of the above was presented to Milton's Select Board in October along with the petition as reported on page 1 of this issue.)

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

from notes by Ruth Ryan, Historian

Historic Gardens

"Historic Gardens" was the program topic at the June 7 meeting of the Milton Historical Society. The guest speaker, U.V.M. Extension Ornamentals Specialist, Dr. Leonard Perry, stated that historic gardens of this country can be divided into three periods: Colonist and Pre-Revolution (1600-1776), Post Revolution (1776-1850), and Victorian (1850-1900).

During the Colonial period 90% of people farmed, and gardens were functional. Trees were used for shade or fruit. At the rear of the house would be a kitchen garden. After the Revolution there were more plant types, more nurseries, more lawn and garden ornaments, and lawns were used to set off the house. By the Victorian period less than 50% of the people farmed, and technology made ornamentals more available and affordable. Low-paid workmen in factories, having little income, had functional gardens like the Colonial period.

Dr. Perry closed his presentation with color slides of Thomas Jefferson's gardens at Monticello.

Collecting Oral History

Richard Sweterlitsch of the U.V.M. English Department addressed the Society's July meeting on the above subject, citing Alan Evans of the 1920s as a pioneer in this field. The way to get started, said the speaker, was to use a portable tape recorder and focus interviews on a particular subject—such as the current Bicentennial, town schools, history of particular sections of town, etc.. He suggested recording the history of the Milton Historical Society using recollections of local senior citizens. The interviewer should be a good listener, not interrupting, who has read up on the topic. "Preparing for the interview," he said, "is very important." Index the material immediately after recording the interview.

Tour of Mongeon Home in Georgia

On August 1 members visited the remodeled home of Mark and Annette Mongeon of Cline Road, Georgia. The brick house, built in 1830, was a stop on the Underground Railroad before the Civil War, helping Southern slaves escape to Canada. It originally contained 17 rooms and now has 8, several partitions having been removed. One room, the pantry,

was left as originally designed with a built-in iron sink and glass front doors on the dish cupboards. Outbuildings include a hog barn, corn crib, horse barn, tool shed, and five-seater outhouse—including two seats for children.

West Milton Cemetery

Rick Hamilton, a Society member and member of the Society's Cemetery Committee, addressed the September meeting outlining the problems involved in restoring or replacing the fence along the road at this cemetery. Over the years a 50-foot stretch of the long cast iron fence has become partly buried because the level of the road has been gradually raised. The Society expressed appreciation for the work of the Cemetery Committee and encouraged them to submit recommendations for the Society's role in helping the town to restore or replace the fence.

The St. Albans Raid by Confederate Soldiers

Stan Henry, Secretary of the Society, was the guest speaker at the October meeting, sharing his research on this northernmost action of the Civil War. In 1864 a group of about 24 Confederate soldiers came into St. Albans, not wearing uniforms, over a period of several days. On October 19 they held up several banks, stole \$208,000 that they said was for the Confederate war effort, stole some horses and escaped to Canada by way of Sheldon and Richford. Observers said that they were under the influence of alcohol. Some of them were captured by Canadian police and tried in a Canadian court. Although the court acquitted them (saying that what they had done was an act of war), the Canadian government found \$80,000 and returned it to the St. Albans banks.

John FitzGerald, Program Chairman, concluded the program by reading the account of the dedication of Milton's Civil War Soldiers' Monument. Over 2,000 persons were present for the occasion. (An excerpted version is printed on page 4 opposite.)

If you missed the above, join us on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 at the Legion Hall on Route 7! Look up the program schedule in the last issue. Enjoy good fellowship and some great refreshments!



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A PREVIEW OF MILTON'S

"Welcome Home" to the Milton celebration of the Bicentennial of the State of Vermont.

Imagine sharing in the joy of celebrating a 200th birthday! Everyone of you is invited to join with all of Milton in a grand weekend of celebrating Vermont's Bicentennial. JULY 26-27-28 of 1991. Appropriately, the calling theme is "Welcome Home."

As of this writing, there are plans for Friday night, clear through the closing ceremonies Sunday evening. The kick-off celebration will be a Field Dance and Bonfire at the Milton Recreation land on Bombardier Road, Friday night. The Rescue Squad and Business Association will be the hosts. On your way to the festivities, you might want to marvel at the new Rescue Squad building, a fine testimony to the unbelievable community spirit of so many, particularly the Squad members!

What would any celebration be without a parade? True to form, our ever willing, ever dedicated Fire Department is organizing a grand parade for Saturday morning. Floats and flags and fire trucks and friends! Grand Marshalls, Old Glory and a people grateful for the liberties not known beyond these United States!

At High Noon on Saturday, there will be official ceremonies which will include a Flag Raising, Invocations and Commemorations, also to be held at the Bombardier Road site, through the efforts of the American Legion, Milton Post. It will be a time for all to express gratitude for those whose efforts of the past and present, as well as for the future, are and have been in the interests of their fellow citizens of the town of Milton and the State of Vermont. It will be a time to acknowledge the essential freedoms we cherish so much.

Throughout Saturday afternoon there will be lots of old fashioned games and fun events for men, women and children of all ages! Perhaps there'll be some dancers to watch and some fiddlers to hear! Nancy Dunne, the Town Recreation Director, will organize this, with lots of help from the PTA.

Of course there will be a Chicken Bar-B-Que! The Masons and the Eastern Stars will cook up their finest for everyone's dining pleasure! And then, there will be an old fashioned Band Concert, coordinated by the Historical Society, featuring the Fairfax-Westford Band.

Sunday's activities will be centered in the Village, and will harmonize celebrations of the 100th

BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

birthday of Trinity Episcopal Church, with festivities celebrating St. Ann's Day of the 125 year old St. Ann's Parish, the 187th birthday of the Congregational Church and the 151st birthday of the Methodist Church—both of which federated to form the present United Church of Milton. Schedules of church services and events will be available before too long. All a time to acknowledge the blessings of freedom to worship.

Everyone is encouraged simply to park their cars in the various parking lots in the village and enjoy a multitude of displays and activities along the sidewalks (sidewalk artists from the Artists' Guild, kids with lemonade stands, etc.), hospitality in some of the older homes, exhibits at the Museum in the Clark Memorial Building, fun events ("cow milking") at the Grange Hall, and all sorts of activities held at the schools. You might want to brush up on your spelling for an Old Fashioned Spelling Bee--separate competitions for ALL ages!

And then, a Closing Ceremony at the Clark Memorial Building. A time capsule...Invocations...A Promise to Continue...A Flag Ceremony.

**Welcome Home to Milton, Vermont —
July 26, 27, 28 — 1991!**

(by Angela Barsalow, a Society member and Co-Chairman of the Milton Bicentennial Committee)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, VERMONT!

The Bayley-Hazen Singers will entertain on March 6th, 1991, at the American Legion hall in Milton at 7:30 p.m. Our Historical Society program, in celebration of Vermont's 200th year of statehood, will feature this historic singing group performing music that flourished in the 1790's and early 1800's. Some of the music will be works by Vermont composer Jeremiah Child.

People from neighboring towns and historical societies are encouraged to join us for this special presentation.

Following the entertainment will be our regular monthly meeting at which we will recognize Milton residents over 80 years of age as Honorary Members of the Milton Historical Society.

This event is free and open to the public.
(By Jane FitzGerald, Pres., Milton Historical Society)

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THE WEST MILTON CEMETERY

The Milton Historical Society has been concerned for some time about the dilapidated condition of the West Milton Cemetery, located a quarter mile from the bridge across the Lamoille River from West Milton Road. Gravestones dating from the 1830's are tipped over and so overgrown with lichens that they are illegible. A beautiful cast or wrought iron fence with decorative embellishments (with two gates, one for pedestrians and one for vehicles) stretches for some 225 feet parallel to the road. It has fallen over in some places and the southernmost 50 feet is half buried in the ground as the grade level of the road over the past 150 years has gradually been raised. At one point two young trees with 5-inch diameter trunks have grown up between the vertical iron posts of the fence.

The Society's Cemetery Committee has been reviewing the situation, attempting to determine what it would cost to exhume the buried part of the fence, restore and reset it. Jim Ballard, Chairman of the committee, has been digging along the fence to determine the condition of the buried portion, and has approached the Town Manager, Rick Schnaedter, to inquire about clearances for Society volunteers to explore options for the restoration of the fence—and to ascertain procedures needed for the Select Board of the town to release all or a portion of about \$7,000 held in trust for this cemetery by the town.

As reported in our last issue of this *Newsletter*, "Vermont law states that any cemetery that is not supported by private funds becomes the responsibility of the town it is in." In this case former trustees of the West Milton Cemetery relinquished care of the cemetery to the town along with a fund that can only be used for the care of this cemetery. Ballard reported that, although the Town Manager authorized the Society to restore the cemetery fence, he was not inclined at this time to recommend use of this cemetery's trust funds for this restoration.

The Society has taken the position at recent meetings that it is the responsibility of the town to maintain this cemetery, not the Society's, but that the Society is willing to give counsel to the town so that the historical integrity of the cemetery may be preserved. As this issue goes to press, the Society awaits a recommendation from its Cemetery Committee as to: (a) The cost of restoring the fence; (b) Where funds to pay these costs should come from; (c) How to muster volunteers and relatives of the deceased to restore gravestones.

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