

The Quarterly Newsletter of
The MILFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

6 Union Street, PO Box 609 MILFORD, NH 03055

VOLUME 30

NO. 3

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2014

7:00 pm Milford Town Hall - Banquet Hall

GUEST SPEAKER ROBERT COURAGE will be with us to give a talk on “The Way We Were” about his remembrances of Milford. Bob has a unique perspective of Milford since he was head of Public Works for many years. He gave this talk at the Lyceum series at the Congregational Church in 2013 and it was well received by everyone.

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OPEN HOUSE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – by David Palance

Many of us have turned the brittle pages of the local Town Histories. The familiar Secomb's History of Amherst published in 1883 and the History of Milford by Ramsdell published in 1901 have occupied many of my hours. I have a few treasured downloads of those documents in digital form meaning that I can search on one word, one name or perhaps a phrase in those 1,000 plus page books. Each time I am looking for something in particular like the owner of an old house or tracing a family tree, I easily get side tracked by some tragic tale or the account of some African American man with only one name. I am sure many have started a search but ended up finding something else. To me, this is almost an obsession as I easily fall victim to a mystery, especially if they are true accounts.

This modern age of computers makes research so much quicker. I used to spend a day in Boston searching patents that I can now do on my smart phone in 15 minutes or so from anywhere. I have complete searchable versions of the History of Mont Vernon, the History of Lyndeborough, the History of Wilton, Hollis, Conway, Atkinson and many other towns in New Hampshire. The Historical Society received an inquiry last month looking for Timothy McIntrye who was from Milford. Looking at the date, I knew that he wasn't from Milford as we had yet at that time become an incorporated town. I searched all the histories mentioned here and yet, there he was, in the History of Amherst. I also have extensive records of the cemetery burials in Southern New Hampshire as I have personally mapped hundreds of these old burial grounds. Cemetery records are mostly carved in stone and last for hundreds of years. These records outlive paper documents and town histories. The orientation of graves and the closeness of the stones give valuable clues to genealogical relationships. My digital records preserve these relationships.

Like many of the early settlers of this area Timothy's grave is lost. I found some relatives of Timothy in Milford's West St. Cemetery but not Timothy. Secomb's History of Amherst gives account of these early settlers – Elisha Towne, whose second house was Elisha's Restaurant built in 1770 and is one of the more familiar names. Some early names from the 1734 tax role are familiar since the families are still here, Moore, Peabody, Potter, Barker, Frye, Parker, Tarbell and Abbot are just some examples of names that are still in the Milford phone book. To search for their graves should be easy, right? Sorry, no. One would think to look in the Town's earliest burial grounds at North River road or perhaps Elm St Cemetery. They are not there, I looked.

There is at least one burial ground in town that we have lost. We know this due to finding Native American burial grounds in the Fall of 1998. You may remember the dig on the West side of town on the south banks of the Souhegan. The other evidence comes from the first two histories mentioned in this article. Both the History of Amherst 1883 and the History of Milford 1901 talk of some "ancient graves" and "graves of the first settlers" near the site of the now Riverside Cemetery. Ironically, this is our newest cemetery and most new internments go there. Quoted here is from Secomb's History of Amherst.

"After all, we can know but very little of the personal history of many of the early settlers in the township. Their lives were spent in the midst of dangers and privations of which we know but little. Honest, true-hearted men and women, each labored faithfully in his or her allotted place, and building better than they knew, they assisted in laying firmly and securely the foundations of our great republic. The storms of a century have leveled even

the little hillocks that once marked their resting places in the ancient "burying ground" so that no one today knows of their precise locality. All honor to the memories of the brave but well-nigh forgotten pioneers." Further - "Their relics are occasionally found in various parts of the town, principally in the vicinity of the larger streams and ponds, and it is said that skeletons, supposed to be those of Indians, have been washed from their graves on the banks of the Souhegan." - History of the Town of Amherst, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire by Daniel F. Secomb Concord, N.H. Printed by Evans Sleeper & Woodbury 1883.

No surprise, but the 1858 map shows no burials in this area of town. Not until the 1904 map do we see that we started burying at the Riverside Cemetery on Nashua Street, although burials began as early as 1896. An interesting account appears in a Milford Town Report in the late 1930's. It seems that the cemetery trustees kept running into bones over at Riverside. They chalked this up to poor record keeping and instituted a card system for tracking burials. Thinking that frost heaves were moving bodies or that they lost track of burials this card system has only recently been upgraded to a digital computerized record. Here we are back to the modern age of electronic gadgets.

I mapped areas of the Riverside Cemetery and was able to use the computerized records for the rest. Looking at the maps, I found over one hundred grave lots that are marked "DO NOT USE". Could this be the ancient and the early settlers burial ground? Metal detectors are not much good to find bodies. They don't see bones or stones. They will find metal near the surface but not graves which are 4 feet or more deep. The Trustees of Milford Cemeteries are investigating the scanning of these areas just to know if there are unmarked or long lost grave markers at these locations. A person once told me that after a body has decayed they are not lost; he said "the dead always leave a shadow". He proved this with a machine he was trying to sell me.

GPR, or Ground Penetrating Radar, is a portable device that broadcasts radio waves into the ground. Like a Fish Finder, it finds differences in the density of objects; however it is used on land. The machine sends a pulse into the ground and then waits for the returning echo. The longer it takes for the echo to come back, the deeper the object is buried. With a metal detector you only get echoes with metals; however, with the radio signal it sees changes within the dirt. Different soil layers and soil types reflect with different intensities. The information is displayed on a computer screen in bands of different colors and sizes revealing changes in the ground below. The dead do leave a shadow. The Ground Penetrating radar has been used to find tunnels underground, ancient crypts at the Egyptian pyramids, and even bedrock close to the surface. What was under the ground was a mystery prior to GPR's.

I have spent many hours pushing a GPR around looking for Pauper's graves, bedrock and even the bones of the Rev. Robert Jordon on Castle Island in time for his 400th birthday celebration. I have located the burials of Ona-Judge, the runaway slave of Martha Washington and other slave graves in Portsmouth. I found multiple unmarked burials at the Northyard Cemetery and an old hotel foundation in the Village of Amherst. Although GPR's are expensive (tens of thousands of dollars) they are an indispensable tool when looking for non-metallic items under the soil. They are a tool of the 21st Century archeologist that lets you see beneath the surface of the ground. Other than random digging or probing there is no other way to look underground.

I would locate the ancient burial ground; I would find the lost cornerstone time capsules at the Library and the Town Hall. I would confirm the extent of burials at the Native American burial site on the banks of the

Souhegan. I would locate buried foundations of buildings that we only now see on glass slides hidden in the archives of the Carey House Museum. In short, I WOULD RULE THE HISTORIC WORLD! OK, I am back now, I can dream can't I? Some men have affairs or buy a fast car when they reach their mid-life crisis. Me, I would be happy to grow my hair out and become an electronic Indiana Jones. After all, I do love my dear wife and can't afford a Mustang convertible. So this leaves me at growing my hair out.

CURATOR'S CORNER by Janice Broderick -

For the past few years the second graders at Heron Pond School have a "road trip" to downtown Milford, visiting, among other places, the Milford Fire Department, Wadleigh Library, and the Carey House Museum at the Historical Society. The class is divided into small groups and stagger visits around town. The first year of their visit each group that arrived was divided into still smaller groups and given a guided tour of the building. As they walked through each room there were many displays that caught their eye. The girls liked the display of vintage items to care for a baby – the old wicker carriage, the delicate baby clothes and the wooden walker that seemed a bit cumbersome by today's standards. Another thing they all got a kick out of was our clothes washing machine called the "Easy". It is a big washtub with a funnel shaped attachment at one end of the dowl and is moved up and down with ease by means of a large spring in the middle. The "Easy" dates from about 1900 and was a big step up from a washboard that could only wash one item at a time while the "Easy" could do a whole tub-full, as long as the woman had the stamina to move the handle up and down until the clothes were clean.

There are two wreaths in the "Then and Now" room upstairs. When the children were asked what is on the wreaths, they answer "flowers" and "cones" and when they are asked what the wreaths are made of, there are a few guesses. But when they are told they are made of hair, there is a collective "ugh" from the groups.

Another thing the children like is "two-holer" in the barn. They can't believe anyone could use a bathroom like that. They weren't any more impressed when they are informed that this one was quite a luxury as the family didn't have to go outside at night or in the winter to the "out house" One little girl found it horrifying after she dropped her snack/lunch into the seemingly bottomless pit.

Another display that the children enjoyed was the bank robbery story of 1874. We have several of the artifacts involved in the robbery – an old lantern the robbers used to see at night, strips of cloth the robbers used to tie up the family and handcuffs used on the head teller – a Mr. Sawyer. We even have the door to the closet where holes were drilled to let in air so the family captive at home would not suffocate.

Although the children were cooperative, the commotion of the children walking though the building, the guide talking and the fact that there was so much to take in lead to the present plan. The Squire Livermore Chaise is removed to the driveway and five stations are set up in the barn. The granite industry, the old fire wagon, the cleaning area right next to the "two-holer" shows how people washed clothes and themselves along with an early bathroom, and old children's clothes.

It was exciting to hear that a group of high school freshmen in Mr. Dave Alcox's class were interested in learning more about Milford's history. Their first event was to tour the Carey House Museum on a beautiful day in January 2014 when the eight boys were able to walk down from the high school to the Carey House

accompanied by several parents as well as Mr. Alcox. They heard stories about the old saw used to cut ice on Slab City Pond – now Osgood Pond – and how it was stored in the ice house packed with sawdust, a perfect early insulation. They also enjoyed the 1874 bank robbery story. I could not resist telling them about the hair wreaths and they had the same reaction “ugh”. The War Room was also of interest to them. Mr. Alcox pointed out the names of the Milford men in WWII and many of the last names were familiar to them. The boys also got a kick out of our communication and electronics display with the old typewriters. The Hutchinson Singers also made quite an impression.

It was fun to give the boys a tour of the Carey House Museum and know that a younger generation is interested in Milford history.

MILFORD HISTORY by Polly Cote -

Milford, New Hampshire is a part of the Freedom’s Way project out of Massachusetts as we were once a part of a town called Dunstable, Massachusetts prior to New Hampshire’s incorporation. Patriots Path is a part of this project to enhance our sense of place in the history of the American Revolution and reveal how everyday people were roused to action in the years leading up to April 19. We were asked to submit an article about one of our early patriots. Following is the first of these stories -

New Hampshire resident participates in three major battles of the American Revolution.

The year was 1742 and the Hugh Maxwell Family of Bedford, MA were expecting yet another child. Hugh had come from Belfast Ireland where he was born in 1699. He and his wife had several children already - Hugh Jr., Benjamin, William, Margaret, Sarah, and James. Thompson was born September 11 of that year, the youngest of all the sons. He would go on to serve in the militia for a good part of his life during the French and Indian Wars, The American Revolution (battles of Bunker Hill, Concord and Lexington and the Boston Tea Party) and The War of 1812 where he was taken prisoner of war twice – a soldier for life.

By the time Thompson was 15 years old in 1757 he was already an active patriot and enlisted with Capt. Nehemiah Lovell of Dunstable, Ma for the protection of the frontier territory against the French and Indians. They were called the Provisional Rangers with 700 patriots under General Amherst. They marched up to Pennycook in New Hampshire, Fryeburg, Maine and then west over to the Connecticut River near White River Junction and finally arriving at Fort No 4 which had been burned three days before their arrival, all the while subsisting on wild game for their rations. For the next year Thompson was with Capt. Lovell marching through Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. They endured Indian attacks, ambushes, hard fighting with many killed and wounded. By 1760 Thompson was in Montreal with Gen. Amherst and Gen. Howland where Montreal surrenders and then he was on to Detroit, Lake Superior and in 1863 in the Spring in Chicago and finally obtained his dismissal in November of 1863 after Canada surrendered to Gen. Amherst.

Thompson Maxwell came home, settled in the new exposed frontier town of Monson where he was listed as a qualified voter beginning in 1762. The men living there when Thompson moved in could not furnish any considerable number of soldiers for the regular organized force as they had their own “castles” to defend and did their own scouting duties in their own neighborhoods. Indians prowled around these exposed settlements

waylaying, murdering or taking captives off to Canada. Thompson's older brother James had come to Monson around 1760 which most likely was his incentive to move into the frontier and many of the other men living in Monson were like Thompson – military men who had fought in the French and Indian Wars.

Thompson married Sybbel Wyman from Pelham, NH on November 23, 1763. Thompson was then 22 years old and Sybbel was 27. They had two children born in Monson Hugh 2/22/1764 and James 10/5/1765. (they eventually had other children born to them - Joshua, Thompson and Betsy) He was a taxpayer, deer keeper, hog-rever and elected Constable in the year 1767. His job was to collect taxes three times a year and pay them to the town treasury to be used for mending and repairing the roads and for the support of the gospel and a Parson. All taxes were paid in English Pounds. He was also to notify the freeholders and inhabitants that they were to assemble and where and that they were qualified voters. Life was good, quiet and he and Sybbel settled into family life in Monson, New Hampshire. The town of Monson dissolved in 1770 and was incorporated into Amherst, New Hampshire and eventually in 1794 became part of Milford, New Hampshire. There were frequent alarms and volunteers were enrolled, minutemen raised, arms collected and soldiers put to drill on the Common.

As was his usual practice for ten years, Thompson was teaming produce from local farmers by ox cart to Boston to exchange for what was needed when on December 16, 1773 he became an accidental volunteer. Thompson writes in the Milford Town History "I was in Boston when the tea was thrown overboard. Seventy-three spirited citizen volunteers in costumes of Mohawk Indians accomplished the daring exploit. John Hancock was then a merchant. My team was loaded at his store, near Faneuil Hall, for New Hampshire. At his request I put up my team to meet in consultation at his house". The business was soon planned and Maxwell was to be at Long Wharf at 2 o'clock pm and informed what was to be done. The colonist felt the Tea Act of 1773 gave the British merchants an unfair advantage in selling their tea in America and they condemned the act and many planned to boycott tea. When the tea did arrive in Boston harbor, many of the colonists wanted the East India Tea Company tea sent back to England without the payment of any taxes but Royal Governor Hutchinson insisted on payment of all taxes. The tea itself was not East India tea but Chinese tea called Bohea that came from Wiyi mountains of Juyian Province of China. The patriot's business was soon planned and executed and the patriots triumphed. Maxwell went accordingly and joined the band under Capt. Hewes. They mounted the ships and made tea in a trice. This done, Thompson Maxwell took his ox team loaded with goods and went home to New Hampshire "as an honest man should", he said.

On April 18, 1775 Thompson Maxwell was again in Boston with his ox team of produce and on his return trip decided to stop in Bedford to spend the night with his brother-in-law Capt. Willson. Capt Wilson had been called up to lead his militiamen as the battle of Lexington and Concord was about to begin. So Maxwell sent his ox team home to New Hampshire with a hired man and joined Capt Wilson in the battle on April 19, 1775. Willson hurried his men to Tanner's Brook to take a command in the woods when he was mortally wounded and died within minutes. Men from New Hampshire under the command of Josiah Crosby, also from Monson, soon arrived bringing 2000 troops and going on to Cambridge under Gen Ward.

By June 16, of 1775 Maxwell Thompson was now a Lieutenant with Col. James Reed's regiment at Charlestown Neck on Breed's Hill. Thompson's oldest brother Hugh was an engineer and surveyor and along with about 1,000 other men worked driving in stakes Thompson had come up-hill to visit the redoubt and overheard his

brother Capt. Hugh Maxwell suggest to Col. Prescott the priority of running an entrenchment from the northeast angle of the night's work to a rail fence leading to the Mystic River. It was agreed and Thompson set up stakes with his brother and other men. By June 17 they were engaged in action in what was to be described as one of the bloodiest actions of the Revolution, the Battle of Bunker Hill. Maxwell Thompson eventually returned to Massachusetts, migrated west to the Detroit area and became involved in the War of 1812.

OPEN HOUSE - THE CAREY HOUSE IS closed January, February and March. The building will open again April 12 and 13 Saturday and Sunday 2 - 4 pm. If you got your Town Planner calendar you will find all open house dates listed.

Important Message from our President –

I woke up this morning to temperatures of 45 degrees in my bedroom today and like many of you, I have a down comforter, a wife and two pets in bed to keep me warm. But to step out of bed - BRRRRRR. It seems that the boiler beast was begging to be fed its morning cup of fuel oil. We have consumed more oil this year than I can remember. I am also sure that your purse is as empty as mine but I have to ask:

The Historical Society converted to Natural Gas last year and we can see that our fuel bill is cut almost in half. We want to be good stewards of your generous gifts in the form of membership dues. We keep the museum at 52 degrees when not occupied but we still broke the budget this year. I want to personally ask that if you haven't paid the membership dues, please do so. If each of us pays our membership dues we will balance the budget. This will enable us to continue our important mission to tell the stories of Milford. Thank you for getting your check in the mail, and if you feel so moved, perhaps you can add \$20 for fueling the boiler beast at the Carey House Museum.

Dave Palance, President

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE LOCAL BUSINESSES LISTED BELOW
WHO SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF MILFORD'S
HISTORIC ARTIFACTS. THANK YOU.**

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY:**

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Web Site: Milford Historical Society's
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www.milfordhistory.org

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| Programs | Polly Cote |
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| Ways & Means | Board |
| Web Site | Chris Thompson |

T HE CAREY HOUSE IS OPEN 2ND SATURDAY AND SUNDAY **APRIL THROUGH DECEMBER**
2 to 4 pm and 2ND & 4TH Tuesday 9 to 11 am

MILFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 609

MILFORD, NH 03055