SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

Please join us for our public program that assures something interesting for everyone.

Wednesday September 20th
Cyrus “Porter” Colby
7:00pm, Milford Town Hall, 1 Union Square, Banquet Hall

See article inside
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To many with an old house, we know what a saga this can be. Milford has quite a few residences that are over 100 years old and they are warm homes with lots of history. If you don’t think they have history, you aren't looking closely enough. History is often found in books, but a good house story is carried down from owner to owner for generations. Perhaps your story is more myth than history, but the story is no less interesting or real to the ones that call the place home.

When my wife and I first bought this old house, we knew it was old but we did not know what stories it would bring forth. Shortly after our arrival Mr. Templeman was evicted from the big ole' "Ram in the Thicket" with the help of Federal ATF agents. As neighbors from across the street, we kept to ourselves and interacted with an occasional silent wave. After all, Robert Frost says "good fences make good neighbors". Benjamin Franklin said it a little differently, "Love thy neighbor, yet don’t pull down your hedge". This is the New England way. Years of newspaper accounts documented the story of Mr. Templeman and his exploits, we were to witness first hand, perhaps the last chapter of his story with Milford. An entire article can be dedicated to the "Ram's" history. This all reminds us that if your house doesn't have history, you may live close to one that does!

The Historical Society has documented over two dozen houses in town and along with a registered narrative, we created personalized house signs. These are very popular and they bring benefit to the homeowner and the Historical Society. If you know of an old house that deserves such a sign, we want to know! The "Ram" does not have a sign, but perhaps that is my fault for not telling them of our campaign. My house does have an Old House Sign, proudly showing the original builder, Nehemiah Hayward and the date, ca 1786. We learned shortly after moving in that the house was the home of Harriet Wilson, the first African American woman to pen a novel.

The tale, started as a story but soon became history as the work of several researchers were able to document Harriet's story as an indentured servant in pre-Civil War Milford. Her story was the catalyst to write "Our Nig" a tale of slavery in the north. Like Templeman's story, this one started in the pages of the Farmer's (Milford) Cabinet. Harriet's first published work was a poem in the local paper. The story first reported by Erna Johnson then, Jerrianne Boggis documenting the author of the novel as being from Milford also made the paper some 150 years later.

My latest saga involves getting this big old house painted. The reroofing effort proved that James Garvin's theory of construction was true. When the three layers of shingles were removed, we saw the proof of a large central chimney. This predicted original layout which Mr. Garvin documented years before showed his skill in recognizing original architecture. While prepping to paint the house, I discovered that many of the clapboards had to be replaced due to rot. I used cedar as that was used in the old days for its durability, resistance to rot and the unique quality to repel insects. Removing some clapboards on the oldest part of the house where researchers predicted that young Harriet slept in the attic I did discover something. These clapboards were hand-cut. Eric Sloan made his famous sketches of old tools and the marks they make on the wood. Originally, prior to 1750's clapboards were shaped on the ends with a taper cut with a drawknife. The clapboards were tapered vertically as well as horizontally. Mill cut boards could not duplicate this so the end tapering went out of favor.

Time to choose a color scheme. I left this to my wife of 36 years to choose. My choice was to use the colors of the house as described in the Harriet Wilson book of her childhood in the 1840’s (A two story white house in the north). Liisa wanted the house to be natural stained. This would mean that I would have to remove all remnants of paint, some 200 years' worth! This would be impossible, there is something to be said for preserving rather than restoring. To this I objected, “any other historically correct colors”, I compromised. The house wore a coat of primer white for five years until she found a set of colors from a "This Old House" article that she clipped many years prior. What is five years' worth in the timeline of 200? not much. The next step is to buy paint, to this she hesitated. Seeing the days getting shorter and the impending winter, I pressed, "give me the colors, I will buy the paint". To this she hesitated and said buy only a gallon of each.

This woman takes no middle ground. When she is in, she is all in. When I proposed to this 20 year old girl on our first date, she said "yes". To have her not buy the dozen or so gallons was just a little suspicious. It's not the money, she could care less, so very suspicious. I bought a gallon of Navaho White and one of

Continued on the next page
President’s message continued from page 2.

Marblehead Gold and painted the back side of Harriet's el. To me, the colors are white and yellow, but what do I know, I'm just a guy. Our expert, professional layout artist, Charlie Annand, might, good naturedly laugh at my ignorance. The original 1903, eight color Crayola Colors are more than I have words for. Lisa wanted the underside ceilings to be light blue as this is what we had seen around the state on grand porch adorned Victorians. There must be a reason... There is a reason even with the unreasonable. We only bought 1 gallon because she wasn't sure that she liked her choice. Go figure, this is something that she is unsure of. This is worth writing about. The blue has a very interesting source.

With a little research, I found that there is a tradition that comes from the deep South to paint the porch ceilings “Haint Blue”. This light blue with a hint of green comes from the legend of the African Gullah people. These people were not usually enslaved and they settled in Charleston, Savannah and in Ohio. According to Lori Sawaya of the Land Of Color website and Sherwin Williams, Haint Blue was a spiritually inspired color intended to ward off ghosts and repel insects. Haint or "haunt" blue was painted around doorways and shutters (and the underside of porches) to protect the entrances of homes. Alas, another story turned into history! I do have to report, that so far, the clapboards of cedar and the haint blue paint are only half working.

This does prove that the house isn't about its structure but the people who made history who lived there and those who preserved and told the story. Will your old house tell the tale of Milford's heroes, villains and victims? Let's do the research.

CURATOR'S CORNER

The Bunn Tyer

The Society has been spending many hours thinning out the exhibits to make the Carey House Museum more enjoyable. When you visit you will see first-hand how much more accessible the space is. This warrants the need for more storage as we circulate artifacts so that we keep the exhibits fresh. As we move items in and out, this peculiar machine stands out as an oddity. We are not sure how we got this or where it was used in town if at all.

A reprint from the Bunn Webpage:

Benjamin Bunn was an inventive sort. A teenager who liked to experiment until something came out right. And it did! By 1907 Benjamin H. Bunn had invented a prototype of the world's original "Letter Tying Automatic Turntable Two Wrap Cross Tie Machine" - the number one Bunn. This concept actually ushered in the era of automatic packaging.

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(Saves Time and Tangle)

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B. H. BUNN COMPANY
7329 Vincennes Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Enlisted at 18 years old in the War of the Rebellion, Porter saw combat and was imprisoned by the Rebels. While wounded and sent from Libby to Salisbury prisons, he was able to write home. Instead of mocking the enemy, Porter writes of the charity he felt for the rebel service.

Polly Cote will give us a special introduction to her new book “Rising Water” which transcribes her Great Grandmother’s and Porter’s diaries. This book is yet to be released and this will be your opportunity to speak with the author and perhaps reserve your first edition!

The photo shows a Milford resident late in her life. There are signs that she experienced a lonely, rough life. Widowed within a year of her first and only child’s birth, her husband, a successful business owner in Tyngsborough MA, died shortly after leaving the young bride, Phebe, and infant daughter. Phebe’s young life was not so lonely as she was one of a large farm family of five brothers and four sisters. Her betrothed, Jason Russell, inherited the family home in Mason. It was in the family for generations as one of the town’s first settlers built it. Both Phebe and Jason married later in life, mid-thirties in age, they were both successful. They were able to afford certain luxuries that were rare for a young couple. They had fine clothes and Phebe proudly showed off long earrings in a couple of large hand-painted wedding portraits.

Jason died from “consumption” or tuberculosis, all so common in the 1830’s. The disease was transmitted by coughing, which was likely due to a careless customer, in close contact with the successful store owner. Phebe lived a long life missing her 90th birthday by 2 months. She lived with her daughter and husband, George Worcester in the brick house on Souhegan street. The handsome portraits of the young newlyweds are on display at the Carey House Museum in our newest exhibit, the portrait gallery.

**Open House Dates:**

- September 9th & 10th
- October extended hours the 7th
- From 10:00am until 4:00pm for the Pumpkin Festival.
- October 14th & 15th
- Normal hours 2 till 4 or by Appointment Contact Barbara Tortorelli
OBITUARY

Rosario “Sarooch” Ricciardi

Sarooch was a friend to everyone and a true friend of Milford. To prepare for this important article, I spoke with old friend of Sarooch, Ed Medyn. An old friend, in this case means that not only was Ed a friend but Ed’s father too! Born as Rosario Ricciardi in Milford in October of 1919, at the corner of Mill and Cottage Streets, he was known as simply Sarooch. He served his nation and he served his town. Enlisted in the Army, he served in the Indonesian Islands on Middleburg Island barely big enough for the landing strip. Sarooch volunteered in every part of the town, his first love. He sat on the Budget Committee, and volunteered at the polls during elections and was a well-liked Selectman. He was one of three best friends that all married sisters. His wife Dorothy Clark, passed in 1993. For the two dozen years since her death Sarooch was known to live in apartments around town “He lived in every place twice” according to Ed. He liked the apartment above Andres’ on the Oval (now J.M. Princewell) as he could keep an eye on the goings on in town.

Once a Selectman, always a selectman, Sarooch made every effort to know everyone and everything in town back then, and most recently. Sarooch opened a diner at the location of the now Light of The World Church on Elm Street. He found an old red dining car and had it trucked to town. The kitchen was in the rear and a separate room was added for sit-down lunches. Known as the Monarch Diner it was sold after a few years.

Sarooch was pivotal in the creation of the WWII Memorial in town and personally laid the original stonework. Many know of his connection with the American Legion where he served as Commander. He was a member of the Historical Society, VFW, National Youth Administration, Conservation Corps, Chair of the Bicentennial Parade Committee and even involved in the former East Milford Improvement Society. A small man with a big smile, Ed says “he didn’t take a bad picture”. He was one of the most photographed men in town. To close, Ed provided another memorable quote; “You expect guys like that to last forever”.

LYCEUM 2017

Tuesday, September 12th at 7:30 pm - "Villains from Children’s Literature" Guest Speaker: Dr. Marilyn Fenton

Tuesday, October 10th at 7:30 pm - " World Travel: Chile, South America; Vancouver, British Columbia and Alaska" Guest Speaker: Karl Dahlen

Tuesday, November 14th at 7:30 pm - " The Reformation" Guest Speaker: Vicki Keskinen

"Adults of good moral character were admitted to membership for 50 cents for reading, discussions, and lectures illustrating sciences and their applications to the common business life"

PLEASE NOTE: All Lyceum programs begin at 7:30 PM in the Parish House. The November date is changed to the third Tuesday, since the second Tuesday is Election Day.

Notice of Elections for Board Members

The Executive Board is seeking nominations for President and Secretary for a two-year term of service. According to the Society By-laws, it states that we have to vote for our Executive Board Members every two years. The November voters meeting will vote for the nominees to serve for 2018 and 2019. There is always room for you on the board or a committee chair.
FEATURED OLD HOUSE

H. H. Barber (1852-1919)

Ramsdell describes H. H. Barber’s house as the “pretentious” home of Henry H. Barber. It is also referred to as a mansion. Today the house is one of the best-looking houses in town with three color paint and landscaped lawns. Believed to be finished in 1886, the original trees are still accenting the property but a fence and fountain are added in the style of the period. The property and original smaller building are said to be from 1836 when another entrepreneur, Abel Chase and his brother Leonard came to town to build the cotton mill and furniture factory. The house is located on the corner of Amherst and Pleasant Streets and is still a head-turner to all that pass by.

Henry Hiram Barber is on the list of State Representatives in the early 1890’s, a 32nd Degree Mason and was instrumental in starting several businesses in town including: the H.H. Barber Department Store which shared the space with the Town Hall, The Barber Plumbing Company, and the Milford Granite Company. To say he had his fingers in everything would be an understatement. He sat seven years as the president of the Souhegan National Bank, he sat on the board of The Fitchburg Railroad, Milford Waterworks and was credited for bringing the first electric lights to Milford.

Henry started his life and career in the town of Antrim initially as a farmer then a clerk at a dry goods store in the big city of Nashua. A Republican and “Methodist-Episcopal”, he married in 1873. He and his wife, Fostina M. Dodge, moved to Milford where five years later he bought a dry goods store on Union Square. This developed into an extensive contribution to the community here. Several items in the Carey House Museum show the markings of H.H. Barber.

*The photo on the left, Google Earth, below is taken from the Ramsdell History of Milford of 1901.*

Mystery Photograph

We only have the label, “Lady Sawyer”. The Historical Society has a collection of tens of thousands of photos, many remain unidentified, but from time to time we get a clue. The cover photo and detail in the rear of our current newsletter is from a postcard; on the rear, it does identify all the ladies, the coach of the woman’s basketball team of 1925-26 is Marguerite Sawyer. Could the picture of the young lady shown here be Marguerite? Please let us know your opinion by contacting any of the officers, use our web-page, or Facebook to respond.
The 2018 Calendar: The photos for the new 2018 calendar will all be from our Post Card Collection. Buy early, last year we sold out!

The Milford Historical Society
WWW.MILFORDHISTORY.COM
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
City: __________________________ State: ______ Zip: ______
Telephone: __________________________ E-Mail: __________

☐ Individual Membership ($15)
☐ Family Membership ($25)
☐ Supporting Membership ($35)
☐ Benefactor Membership ($50)
☐ Lifetime Membership if under 50 ($200) Please include your age on this form
☐ Junior Membership if under 18 ($33)
☐ Corporate Silver Membership ($101-$200)
☐ Corporate Gold Membership ($201-$499)
☐ Corporate Platinum Membership (over $500)

I wish to make an additional donation to the Society in the amount of $____________________
☐ My check is included ☐ This is a renewal

Please check the appropriate boxes above and include your check or money order along with this application and mail it to:
The Milford Historical Society
PO Box 609, Milford, NH 03055

Thank you for your support of the Milford Historical Society!
Visit us on the web at www.milfordhistory.com

A note to members: You should see a number on the address label next to your name; this is the last year that we received your membership dues. We regretfully no longer do mailings to those with dues delinquent more than 3 years.
Milford Historical Society
P. O. Box 609

OFFICERS & COMMITTEES:
President: David Palance 321-6068
Vice President: Heather Flynn 672-0081
Secretary: Roberta Douglas 673-2982
Treasurer: Greg White 673-8873
Curator: Janice Broderick 673-0805
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Room for your Business Here!!

TO:

Cover photo with detail shown here is from a postcard featuring the Ladies Basketball team of 1925-26. This is a detail of coach Marguerite Sawyer.