

**MILFORD
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

WELCOMES
ITS AREA FARMERS

NOVEMBER 14, 2001

**7:30PM
TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM**

Presidents Message

As the year 2001 comes to an end, it has been another busy year with more changes at the Carey House. The entire inside of the building has been painted, and a new bulkhead installed. Lighting in the barn has been installed for better viewing of the artifacts, as well as a motion light at the side door. Our Building and Grounds committee headed by Brant Wilson has done a wonderful job taking care of the needs of the Carey House. We continue to have wonderful support from our corporate and business sponsors as well as the Kaley Foundation. Again, a big THANK YOU to all of you as well as to you Society members for your support and to the wonderful Board of Directors of the Milford Historical Society who have worked so hard to make the Carey House what it is today.

As we welcome some of our local farmers to our November 14, 2001 meeting, it seemed a good tie to look back at Milford's early history and farming.

At the time grants were being given out in the early 1700's, those grants along the Souhegan River had unusually fertile land. The purpose of these grants was to reward some of the citizens of Massachusetts who had served in the Narragansett War which had taken place against the Indians led by King Phillip in 1675-76. There was a long period of time that passed between the war and the grant and in most cases the heirs of the soldiers were the ones who benefited.

Clocks and stove were not heard of in these early days. The hourglass and the huge oven in the fireplace were all the housewife had. Settlers located near brooks so water could be easily obtained. Wells were dug as prosperity increased and the water was brought up in a bucket attached to a rope. Carpets and wallpaper were unknown in early homes. The floors were covered with clean white sand; cider was a common drink and used for vinegar. There were no pleasure wagons; ploughs had a mouldboard of wood covered with scraps of iron. There was very little money in circulation during these early times and strict economy was practiced. All went barefoot in the summer, and only wore their shoes inside the church.

By 1768 Shepard's Grist and Lumber Mill was in full operation. Farmers brought their grains and logs to his mill from miles around. Men would carry corn, rye and other grains on their shoulders ten to twelve miles to the Mill. As time went on, other mills were established. Kendall and Wilkin's Mill, built as early as 1793, was located at the mouth of the Souhegan River and Great Brook. At times during the operation of the sawmill, huge piles of logs often extended far into the common. By the late 1700's most of the traveling was done in ox carts and farmers generally went to the mills on horseback.

In 1895, the cost of necessities of life were at their lowest since the incorporation of the town in 1794. Corn was 40 cents a bushel, oats 35 cents a bushel, flour \$4 per barrel, potatoes 40 cents a bushel, butter was 23 cents a pound and sugar 5 cents a pound. Sound young work horses weighing 1,200 pounds cost \$100.00

By the early 1900's, there were over seventy working farms in Milford. Farming was done with horses and the farmers raised cows, chickens and sheep. There were over 500 horses, 12,000 chickens, 180 sheep and 4 oxen. Just 10 years later horses had dwindled to 205, cows to 443, chickens to 6,000 and 11 sheep. No oxen were left in Milford. By 1937 farming had become largely mechanized and horses decreased to 69, cows to 372 and chickens to 9,700. Dairy farming and chickens were the only way a full time farmer could still make a living in Milford. The small family farms had been squeezed out by the new scientific farms until by 1978 there were only about four large farms left in Milford. Mass production had become the real threat to the farms. It lowered the unit prices paid for produce and the small farmer could not afford the cost of equipment for large scale productions. One elderly farmer remarked that until people go hungry, farming will not attract the younger generation. What he paid for a tractor and three or four attachments in 1965 was as much as he had paid his father for the whole farm. *(Ramsdell and Granite Town Histories)*

Milford still has several diverse farms. Come to our November 14, 2001 public meeting and listen to Milford's farmers discuss their history, farming techniques, and their plans for the future for farming in Milford.

Polly Cote, President.

If you would like to join the Milford Historical Society team of players, our Curator, Louie Carey, could certainly use your assistance. The Curator Committee meets every other Tuesday morning for a couple of hours to assess articles given to the Society and update records. You don't need any previous experience. Please contact Louie at the public meeting on November 14, 2001 or give her a call to discuss meeting times of the Curator Committee.

The Milford Historical Society lost one of its most faithful members when Dr. Alexander Law passed away recently. Dr. Law was program Chairman during 1996-1997 and he also did a lot of work on the Perry negatives, sorting and identifying them for the Society. He always had an encouraging word and wanted to be kept updated on whatever the Society was doing. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family. We know he will be greatly missed.

Please don't forget the Christmas Fair day December 1. The Society will be open from 9am to 1pm and will be selling baked goods, 2002 calendars and historical items. This is a good day for us. Many people tour the building and, of course, buy all the wonderful cookies, brownies, breads, coffee cakes, relishes, pickled mushrooms, baked beans, etc., that you members are now famous for. Please bring your items to the Carey House by 8:30am. Anyone who has an hour or two to help that day, please contact Geri Dickerman or Polly Cote.

**DATES FOR MILFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2001 – 2002 PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2002

7:30PM

**BANQUET HALL, MILFORD TOWN HALL
GLASS SLIDES – ANOTHER 100 NOT SHOWN YET**

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2002

5TH NEW HAMPSHIRE VOLUNTEERS LIVING HISTORY

ALL DAY

ON THE COMMUNITY HOUSE GROUNDS

7:00 PM

MAIN AUDITORIUM, MILFORD TOWN HALL

ANNUAL MEETING

7:30PM

CIVIL WAR PROGRAM

Polly Cote (603) 673-1946

Louie Carey (603) 673-3293

Geri Dickerman (603) 673-2293

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EVERYONE
OPEN
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The Carey House is open:

2nd Saturday & Sunday of every month 2PM – 4PM
2nd & 4th Tuesdays 9AM – 11AM



***The Milford Historical Society
PO Box 609
6 Union St.
Milford, NH 03055***