

# **MILFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

*Saturday Evening  
April 29, 2000  
Congregational Parish House 7:00PM  
Terry Lorden and Company*

*Wednesday Evening May 17, 2000  
Banquet Hall 7:30PM  
Annual Meeting and  
Blacksmithing with Frank Murphy*

*Tuesday Evening, May 23, 2000  
Town Hall Auditorium  
7:00PM  
Memorial Day Program*

**Sponsored by the  
Milford Historical Society  
Open to the Public**

I know I told you in the last newsletter I would write about the Mill by the Ford. But with the blacksmith program this month, it seems more appropriate to tell you about two of the blacksmith shops in Milford.

Milford has always had its share of blacksmith shops in town. With the beginnings of the Buxton Tavern established by Jonathan Buxton in 1787 we have had livery stables, blacksmith shops, wheelwrights and the like. There was the Buxton-Turner blacksmith shop at the mouth of Great brook near where it empties into the Souhegan River. As the Ramsdell town history states, a sawmill was built near the mouth of Great Brook by William Crosby and others. It is not certain what year the mill was built, but in a deed dated December 1, 1793, the grantor speaks of the sawmill at the mouth of Great Brook, "as recently erected by himself and others". Very soon after Crosby and his associates built this sawmill in the village, a privilege was granted to Jonathan Buxton, Blacksmith, to take water from the dam at the west end to operate a trip-hammer which for many years was in operation at the old Buxton or Turner blacksmith shop. This may have been the original blacksmith shop that stood for many years at the location of the present WWII memorial at the corner of Union and Elm Streets.

The following story from Ramsdell is about another old blacksmith shop that was owned by Martin W. Hall next to the old burying ground on Elm Street – (the old Fletcher Paint Works, nowadays the consignment Shop.) This was also the location of Milford's first pound. Hall's father, Nathan was also a blacksmith who came to Milford in 1805 and established himself as a farmer and blacksmith in the south part of the town at a place known as the Kidder place. Nathan died October 23, 1812 and Martin took over his business and carried on the business at the old shop until he moved into the village in 1832. He built a blacksmith shop of wood at the present site of the stone building (Fletcher's Paint and the consignment shop) on Elm St. On July 13, 1839 the blacksmith shop of Capt. Martin W. Hall burned.

A lawsuit was brought in 1844 between a Mr. Morrison and Martin W. Hall over who had legal title to the land on Elm Street where Martin Hall's blacksmith shop was located. Mr. Morrison felt he had legal title to the land, being a grantee of the land from William Crosby. But, Martin Hall had run his blacksmith shop at this location and paid the taxes for ten years and Martin Hall felt he had legal title to the property. The matter went to town meeting. After much discussion, it was voted to deed to Martin Hall the land from the river to within twenty feet of where the blacksmith shop stood on Elm Street, on condition that the town receive a quit-claim deed from Hall for the remaining land in dispute. People, generally, took sides and whether the village blacksmith prevailed as a strict matter of right or because the people wanted to keep a good blacksmith, will never be known.

## **OTHER NEWS:**

The Milford Historical Society is adding two additional meetings to its Spring schedule. As you may have read in the local papers, on Saturday evening April 29, 2000 at 7:00PM at the Congregational Parish House, Terry Lorden, a Milford native and founder of Playhouse 101 and The American Stage Festival, will come and present a program on the history of this theatre group. Memorabilia is being gathered as we speak and some of the original people – actors, stage hands, directors, box office crews, etc., will be there. If you have anything in your attic that would be of interest, or if you have special memories of this group please come along and share it. We are very excited about this program as it involved so many local people and should be a wonderful evening of reminiscence and history. Many of us remember going to an afternoon matinee play at the Stage Festival and then a band concert on the oval in the evening. Ahhh, Summer days in Milford never got any better.

On May 23, 2000 the Milford Historical Society along with Rosario Riccardi will be presenting a special Memorial Day program. Local Veterans of all wars are encouraged to come and speak of their recollections and experiences during their time served in the Armed Forces. "Sarooch" will be Master of Ceremonies and already has several speakers lined up, so if you are interested in being part of this program, please contact him. Milford has always been a very patriotic community remembering their brave citizens who have fought in its country's wars and conflicts. My own son had been in the US Army for almost 11 years serving in Korea twice, Egypt, and the Philippines. If you feel you can't participate, please come to this special Memorial Day program and support those who will be speaking.

We have had a very busy year at the Milford Historical Society – Labor Day Parade, our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the Historical Society, our contribution to the Cabinet's 100 Years in the Valley publication, The Brownies and Girl Scouts who came to tour the building, all the school children who have toured the building and taken a walking tour, our Teacher's Tea, and all our regular programs and monthly open houses. We continue to be a local resource of information for our residents as well as calls from all over the country. The Society has a very dedicated Board of Directors who all spend many hours of their own time working at home or at the Carey House on the computer; paying the bills; repairing artifacts; putting out display; sending membership cards out; putting the newsletter together; fund raising; calling for hosts for open houses and calling for those wonderful refreshments you all make for our meetings, etc.

We also have a wonderful group of CORPORATE SPONSORS who have always been very generous to us with their contributions each year. A HUGE THANK YOU to all of you for all that you have done this past year. I am only one small cog in a very big wheel and without the help of all of you, none of our accomplishments would have been possible. We have another big year ahead of us with some major repairs being done. And, with the Board's blessings, I have decided to stay on as President for another two years.

Our historic walking tours will be held again this year on the following Monday evening dates at 6:00PM: May 15, June 5, July 10, and August 7; Tuesday evening dates are June 20, July 25. This is a free, guided 2-hour walk around the downtown area of Milford. Dress very comfortable and casual. Please sign up as early as possible as the space for each walk is limited.

Again, thank you to each and every one of you for a great year. I look forward to the future and some historic and wonderful programs coming up. Don't forget the annual covered dish supper on September 20, 2000.

**Polly Cote, President**

## **Annual Reports**

### **Open House**

Thanks to all of you who have hosted our open house. If anyone has two hours on the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of the month throughout the year please give me a call. I have tried to open the Carey House on different time during the year such as Keeper of the Lore weekend, Labor Day weekend, Pumpkin Festival weekend and the Church fairs weekend in December. With many people in the area, this gives us more visibility. It has been very successful.

**Janice Adams, Open House Chairman 673-1998**

### **Curators Report**

The Milford Historical Society is fortunate in its membership and I wish to thank the member for their interest and encouragement. Some of the highlights of this past year include the beautiful Saturday morning last May when 10 members were willing to volunteer to vacuum, scrub, dust and wash windows. The Carey House was sparkling clean. Our sincere thanks to James Philbrick, Dick and Nancy D'Amato, Eleanor Fallon, Norman and Polly Cote, Ed Carey, Rosemary McEntee, and Janice Broderick.

The Perry negatives are being inventoried by Lex Law. He has completed a list of nearly ¾ of the negatives to be used in locating specific subjects. Eventually they will be entered into the computer by Brant Wilson's Committee.

This spring we were pleased to host the Girl Scout troop for a tour of the building. These girls had unpacked and sorted through the Town Hall china to make it accessible for both the Society and the Pumpkin Festival Boutique.

In March the Society held a Tea and Tour for the third grade teachers. Marion Jackson, Bill Dyer and Nancy D'Amato assisted with the program. We determined how the Society could be the most positive resource to an education unit of the History of Milford. Plans have been made for each class to have a tour of the Carey House and a walking tour of the Oval and surrounding area. These tours are made possible by the help of Noreen O'Connell, Joyce Wilson, Bill Dyer, Polly Cote, Ed Carey, Nancy Schooley, Brand Wilson, and Janet Craig.

This year we found a place for an exhibit of French & Heald Furniture Company pictures and papers. Furniture manufacturing has played an important part in Milford's history and we are pleased to give this more attention. Another new display features 20 artifacts and a quiz. We hope that guests will enjoy matching an artifact with the quiz description of its function.

We are gratified by the interest of people who visit the building and by those who have donated gifts pertaining to Milford history.

I am, as ever, grateful to the Committee, Marion Jackson, Mary Johnson, Christine White, Nancy D'Amato, and Kelly Carter. They have assisted with keeping records, accessioning artifacts, building exhibits and general housekeeping. I thank the members of the Executive Board for their cooperation and kindnesses.

**Louie Carey, Curator**

We are saddened by the loss of several of our members these past few months. We will miss all of them very much. We extend our sincere sympathy to the families of:

*Phyllis Joslin  
Helmi Karnis  
Margaret Swiezyński  
Emma Wheeler  
Rodney "Boo" Woodman*

**OH NO!!!!**  
**Another TREASURE LOST !!!**

**By Geri Dickerman**

It was a Sunday afternoon when a friend of mine was coming down from Federal Hill in South Milford off Route 13 and was detoured out Comstock Drive – there were several fire trucks in the area and some police persons as well. Everyone wondered what had happened – the next day – much to my horror!! I turned onto Colburn Road from Route 13 S and looked at an empty space where the old Colburn house had stood. It was totally gone except for a chimney base. What happened! Did it catch fire – did someone want it burned? It was never put on the market that I know of, but it's gone!! It had been empty for sometime and I believe Data Products or one of the Riccitelli's owned it but never used it.

Joseph Colburn, son of Jacob & Hannah Colburn, was born in Dracut, Mass. In 1783, moved here in 1861 and was a cooper and farmer at this homestead. Joseph married Hannah Spalding. Their son, William P. Colburn was born here in 1827 and he farmed the land, he resided here until 1901. George William Colburn, son of William P. Colburn and Elizabeth (Clarke) Colburn, was born in 1859 and he continued to live at the homestead until he died in the early 1900's. He never married.

The Colburn house was then owned by the Reid family. Mr. Reid died at the age of 90+ and later Data Products or one of the Riccitelli's purchased it.

There must be a way we can keep these old homes from being torn down or burned down – they are a part of our history. History is what we learn from to use in the think we must seriously think about this problem, I know people need homes but why not save an old home with all its dignity and charm. Instead of building a new one to look like the old one fix up the old one.

I believe we can somehow get together to work with the Town to save these homes. I was shocked to see the Guy Fitch house leveled to the ground and then one day when I least expected it the White Horse was gone!! The Josiah Crosby house across from the Granite Plaza is gone – he was one of the first settlers when Milford was Monson – it was a beautiful old place and I know it needed a lot of work but couldn't we get a few groups together and save these places – there must be a way!! If you think of something or have an idea or could donate some time for a project like this, I'd love to hear from you!!

It's been a rather wild year at MHS and it hasn't come without a bit of trouble. We have been due for some time now for the installation of a new furnace to replace the ageing boiler that has served the building so well over the past (well, who knows how many) years. Arrangements have been made to replace the furnace with a new and much more modern one to be installed by Ciardelli Fuel Co. here in Milford. The work will begin sometime in May after the old asbestos covering on the existing steam pipes has been removed. This is to be done by another local contractor, John Cullinan. Although the expense will be considerable the board feels that this move is necessary and will be well worth it.

The building still needs painting, both inside and out and plans are on the table for a painter to come and do the interior sometime this summer. We may need some help from all those who are willing and able to move the artifacts around so the painter can do his thing.

It has also been arranged to have the lighting in the barn enhanced so that finding ones way around the barn will be made easier. This will be happening as soon as I hear from one of our local contractors.

May all of you have a good year and I wish you all well.

**Brant R. Wilson**  
**Building & Grounds**

### **Membership Committee**

Dues for the new year are due May 1<sup>st</sup> (our year runs May 1, 2000 – April 30, 2001). Membership cards will be mailed to you if you send your check in the enclosed envelope. Please check your membership card to be sure that your dues are up to date. There are interesting programs planned and we hope that you will attend all of our meetings and that you will bring a friend.

Welcome to Paul Bagley who has just joined the Historical Society.

### **From our Representative**

As escalating development pressure in the Souhegan Valley continues to threaten our remaining open space, and so many of our historic properties, members should be aware of Senate Bill 401. This bill would create the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). This proposed Land and Community Heritage Investment Program would enable a long term commitment to conserve and preserve New Hampshire's most important natural, cultural, and historic resources. LCHIP would provide matching grants to municipalities, non-profit organization and state agencies for conservation, preservation, and restoration of these critical resources. For example,

Milford Town Hall, Monson Village, and Eagle Hall would likely have been eligible for grants under this program.

However, like any new proposal of this scope, there will be many legislative hurdles to overcome. It is urgent that supporters of this initiative contact their legislators in support of SB 401 in its' original form to preserve both land and historical properties. Any interested in more detailed information can contact Rep. Tim O'Connell at 673-2963

The new town master plan has a provision of a Historical Commission that will review the historical elements of town. Charlie Setaro is working of a survey of the old buildings around town. The planning board and DO-IT are very concerned with the loss of so many of our buildings. If you would like to help or just give your concerns speak to Polly Cote, Noreen O'Connell or Geri Dickerman.