

Items for Sale

- Copies of Historical Society Newsletters, \$1 post paid.
- *History of Middletown*, by Barnes Frisbee, CD-ROM or photocopy, \$20, post paid.
- Historic photo notecards of Middletown Springs, box of 8, \$12 post paid.
- *Searching for Ichabod*, by Julie Van Camp, \$18, post paid.
- *A Gem in the Hills*, by Frances Krouse, \$25, post paid.
- Antique Mineral Springs Water bottles, prices start at \$60.

Membership Information

Membership dues for 2012 were due in January.
Check your mailing label for current status.

Dues (Check one):

Individual	\$10.00	Business	\$50.00
Family	\$15.00	Sustaining	\$100.00
Contributing	\$25.00		

Send to: Pat Hemenway, *Treasurer*
Middletown Springs Historical Society
P.O. Box 1121
Middletown Springs, VT 05757

Donations to MSHS, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, are tax deductible.

Visit our website:

www.MiddletownSpringsHistoricalSociety.org

Business Members

Blue Cat Bistro, John Rehlen
Gabe Friedman, Web Designer,
Dick Gray, Goldenbrook Construction
Green Mountain Timber Frames, Dan McKeen
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Twin Mountain Farm B&B, Annie & Walt Pepperman
Williams Hardware, Poultney, Bob Williams

The MSHS Newsletter is published twice a year for members and friends of the Society. Comments and manuscripts on subjects of interest are encouraged and should be sent c/o David Wright, editor, or e-mailed to montvert@vermontel.net.

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Address Service Requested

2012 COMING EVENTS
Sunday, Sept. 23 Annual Meeting, 6:30 pm
Sunday, Oct. 7 Museum Open House & Donor Celebration 1-4 p.m.

Thank You 2011 Annual Fund Donors!

Kelley Beckwith
Josie & Jere Berger
Robert Bertsche
Marilyn Bobseine
Raymond Burke
Dennis Clark
David & Linda Corbett
Lois & Paul Dansereau
Truman & Marilyn Esau
Kathy & Patrick Feeley
Gail Franz
Elmer & Frances Gombosi
Robert Gould
Green Mountain Timber Frame
Yolanda & Alfred Hansen
Vannilu Harrison & Sharen Underwood
Pat & Don Hemenway
Frederick Hinkle
Bruce & Judy Hirschon
Richard Hruby
Tom & Helen Jaeger
Johnson Energy
Patty & Matt Kenyon
Alice & Warren Marsh
Jon & Kimberly Mathewson
Andrew Moyer
Elmer Moyer Jr
David & Jenny Munyak
Larry & Evelyn Ritchie
William & Adina Roberts
John & Joan Roche
Donald & Helen Rogers
Diane Rosenmiller
Marilyn & Charlie Schubert
Joyce Scribner
Anne & Harvey Slatin
Ursula Smith & Linda Peavey
Anne Felton Spencer
Peter & Aileen Stevenson
Julie van Camp
Kathleen Whittet
Katherine Williams
Charles Wright
Mary Lou Willits & David Wright
Williams Hardware



Middletown Springs Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Vol. 43, No. 1

June 2012

The History of the Cannons on the Green

by Emmett Francois, Lt Commander (Ret.) U.S. Navy

What does one do when things need to be done but no one will do it? You do it yourself. In 1899 Senator Redfield Proctor asked his secretary, Brainard Avery, for two obsolete Civil War cannons that were to be placed on the town green in Middletown Springs. Senator Proctor had served in the Civil War with the Union Army and at one point he was the Secretary Of War. He sent a message to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and two twenty pound Parrott rifles were sent to Middletown Springs on gun carriages. It is said that every year the town fathers would fire the cannons on the 4th of July until the wooden carriages became too worn to withstand the firing. The cannons were removed from the weakened supports and placed on cement supports in the early 1940's. By the time I arrived in Middletown Springs in 1996 the cannons showed signs of wear. After looking up the history of the weapons I discovered that they had been on two different Union gunboats. They were Naval cannons. As a retired Navy officer that is were I came in to fix the situation.

Cannons are numbered so you can trace their history. Cannon 109 had been on the Union gunboat USS Pinola. The Pinola was a Unadilla Class vessel that was built by J. J. Abrahams in Baltimore, Maryland in 1861 and commissioned in 1862. A two-masted schooner it also had a steam engine to push it through the water at ten knots (11.5 miles an hour). The ship was involved in the blockade of Vicksburg and Mobile Bay and in the Gulf of Mexico off Texas. She captured two blockade runners and destroyed a third.

Cannon number 125 served on the USS Chocura. Like the USS Pinola both names were taken from names of American Indians. The two-masted schooner was built by Curtis and Tilden of Boston, Massachusetts in 1861 and commissioned in 1862. Her first patrol was on the York River as part of the blockade of Yorktown, Virginia. Off Wilmington, North

Carolina the gunboat captured two prizes and assisted the USS Maratanza in taking a third. In 1863 she sailed to New Orleans and became part of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron where she took six prizes, assisted in capturing two others and destroying a three-masted schooner in 1865.

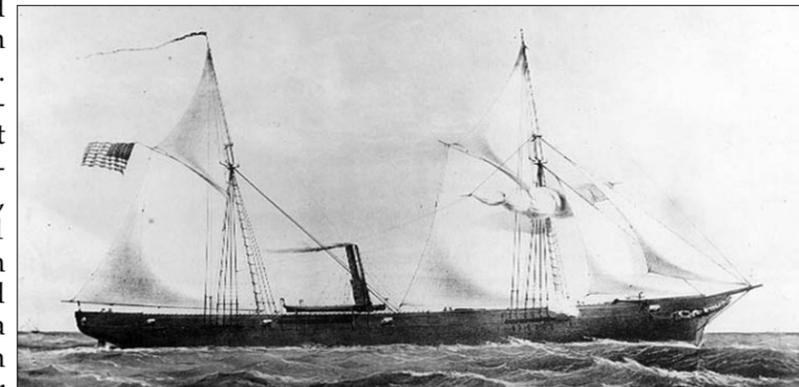
Both vessels had commanding officers who later became admirals. Rear Admiral Peirce Crosby had served on the USS Pinola and Rear Admiral Thomas H. Patterson served on the USS Chocura.

Restoring the two Parrott rifles to their former state was a daunting task. Children (and a few grown ups) had used the barrels to make things disappear. Some of the items that came out of the barrels were marbles, a golf ball, tennis balls, stones, plastic water bottles, a length of rusty metal pipe, broken glass, lots of rust, a brass bearing from a gasoline engine with its babbet intact and a Pico Soda bottle shard. The Pico Soda bottle indicated that some of the items had been down the barrels for well over fifty years since that is how long ago the company went out of business. To clean out the barrels also took a 3500 psi pressure washer to dislodge the stubborn rust.

To tilt the 800 pound cannons down to drain out the water took three men to finish the task.

Next came removing the six inch hole in one of the mounts that held some grass growing out of it. When the pressure washer hit it the ensuing blast

of mud and stones came out with a spray of muck that covered my safety glasses. Hydraulic cement patched the holes and covered the cracks. Paint was mixed to match the original Navy gray that was used on the cannons. The barrels had to be sanded and painted with two coats of paint. Fitting the barrels with Navy style gun plugs was the finishing touch to prevent anything else from disappearing down those holes. Once again the cannons stand as they formerly did in mute testimony to those Americans who fought almost 150 years ago.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As a recent resident of Vermont and Middletown Springs I am overjoyed at the impact a small community can have on an individual. I am flattered to be invited and selected as President for the Historical Society and have much to learn about the actual history and current day traditions, family heritage and future for this great community.

First I would very much like to thank the community and fellow trustees and members for your ongoing support for such fun events like Maple Festival and the upcoming Strawberry Festival. These events bring our community together, help us learn about the history of our hometown and also help us to share with the larger community outside Middletown Springs about this great Vermont town.

Secondly, I would like all who come in contact with the news of the historical society to please share with your neighbors, family and business contacts about the upcoming events, ongoing museum initiatives and special projects. One of the many goals I have taken interest in is enhancing the web and social networks of the Historical Society, as well as presenting the case for continued community support for the important activities of preservation and education that we are all passionate about.

I look forward to discovering more about Middletown Springs as you and visitors to our community do. I welcome feedback, questions or comments you may have to help us all continue this exciting journey.

Best,
Robert J. Gould

In Memoriam

RICHARD J. HRUBY, 89, died at his second home in Middletown Springs on May 25. Born in Elizabeth, NJ, he was a graduate of Jonathan Dayton Springfield Regional High School, attended Union Junior College and Philadelphia College of Textile & Science.

Rick enlisted in the US Army Air Corps and served in the World War II as a First Lieutenant and a member of the 44th Bomb Group, based in England. He flew 32 missions over Germany as pilot of the B24 Liberator "Sabrina III." On their last flight he was forced to ditch his disabled bomber in the English Channel. All on board survived. For his extraordinary service Rick was awarded the Air Medal with Three Oak Leaf Clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross with One Oak Leaf Cluster, among other awards.

After the war he returned to Mt. Holly, NJ, where Rick married his high school sweetheart, Betty, who had graduated from Middlebury College. In 1945 he joined Northampton Textile where he worked until it closed on the 1980s. He was active in many organizations in Mt. Holly including YMCA, Westwood Swim Club, United Way, and Burlington County Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He was Past President and one of the longest continuous members of the Burlington Country Club and was known as "the finest putter at the Club."

In 1974 Rick and Betty purchased the Matthews farm house on Spruce Knob Road, identified in the Frisbee history as Joseph Spaulding-Micah Vail farm, later the home of Crocker Clift. They spent many happy summers there with family and friends. They were long time members and generous supporters of the Middletown Springs Historical Society and Middletown Springs Fire Department. Betty died in 2006.

Rick is survived by five children: Marie Hruby-Frake of Brooklin, Maine; Richard A. Hruby of Toms River, N.J.; Christine D.K. Hruby of Catlett, Va.; Stephen E. Hruby of Hainesport, N.J.; and Elizabeth A.

Hruby-Mills of Salt Lake City, UT; seven grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

ARTHUR E. KROUSE, 80, died May 10, 2012 in Rutland. He was born October 3, 1931 in Middletown Springs, the son of Arthur R. and Orpha (Rounds) Krouse. He attended schools in Middletown Springs.

Arthur was a combat veteran of the Korean War serving in the U.S. Army, 7th infantry division 32nd regiment heavy weapons company.

Arthur operated earth moving equipment for construction and maintenance of roads as well as excavation work for building contractors.

Arthur was an original member of the Middletown Springs Volunteer Fire Department and helped to construct the first firehouse. He served in the department until 1969 when he relocated to East Poultney.

Arthur was a member of the J. Claire Carmody Post #39 American Legion in Poultney, the Korean War Veterans Association and was a member of the Middletown Springs Historical Society. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and gardening.

Arthur is survived by his wife, Anne of Poultney and his cousin Theron (Bud) Krouse and his wife Ann of Middletown Springs.

Maple Festival 2012

It was a warm day in March for the 24th Maple Festival, but it was a success even though there was no snow on the ground. Sap buckets painted by local artists provided a new twist to the silent auction. The many donated prizes for the auction and the raffle were gratefully appreciated as were the delicious maple treats. Fred Bradley demonstrated old-fashioned sugarmaking, while Bill Clark showed equipment used to make syrup over the years. Both are local sugarmakers.

Many volunteers worked hard to produce this event and generate net proceeds of over \$2,500. A warm thanks to all who helped with the organization and presentation, prepared maple treats, and donated gifts.

Springs Park Repaired by Volunteers and VCF Grant

Our Mineral Springs Park is a gem of an oasis. When the waters of the swollen North Brook and Poultney River subsided after Hurricane Irene, it left behind debris and wreckage to our lovely retreat.

The 5th and 6th grade students along with teachers, aides, principal, trustees, and members of the Historical Society removed trees and debris from the Park and Poultney River. The children seemed to take great glee in getting wet and dirty on the job and were rewarded with ice cream cones from Grant's Village Store as well as lots of memories!



Photo by Emmett Francois



RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Dana Carpenter Glass Negatives Donated

More than 100 years after they were created, a treasure trove of historic photographic images has returned to Middletown Springs. More than 100 glass plate negatives created by Dana Stedman Carpenter (1863 - 1940) were recently donated by Duncan Ball, an American-born Australian children's book author.

Mr. Ball purchased the negatives over forty years ago in a Vermont antique store. He put them in storage in the 1970s when he immigrated to Australia. Recently his son, Eliot, established the connection to Middletown Springs through research that led to the Historical Society website.

While the collection is yet to be inventoried or accessioned, a brief survey reveals an array of images of people, places, events and botanical specimens. Trained as a pharmacist, Carpenter was a highly skilled amateur botanist. His 6,000-piece collection is available for viewing at the Pringle Herbarium at the University of Vermont. An article of Carpenter's life and accomplishments appeared in the August 1995 issue of the News-

Historical Society and Elementary School Receive Grants for Tropical Irene Damage

The Vermont Community Foundation has awarded grants of \$5,000 each to support restoration of the Mineral Springs Park following flood damage from Tropical Storm Irene and to help stabilize the Elementary School sewer main and repair erosion damage along North Brook caused by flooding from Irene.

The Historical Society used its grant money to repair the abutments of the footbridge and to restore the bank of the North Brook. Carpentry repairs to the springhouse are complete. Landscaping, repair of underground drainage pipes, and repainting of the flood-damaged parts of the springhouse remain to be done.

The Elementary School used grant money to stabilize the force-main pipe from the school to the septic leach field and to restore the banks of the North Brook where the pipe crosses. The septic system of an adjoining house was protected. Planting of native shrubs to reinforce the stream banks will be done this spring.

The Vt. Community Foundation recognized that in order to provide relief to residents in the most affected parts of the state, many non-profits that serve those areas were going to need emergency funding to maintain or increase their services and repair the damage they had sustained. The Foundation established the Special and Urgent Needs (SUN) - Irene Recovery Fund for this purpose, modeled after the Foundation's original SUN Fund, which for six years has provided quick grants to nonprofits for unanticipated needs.

Thanks to the generosity of donors from across Vermont and beyond, the SUN-Irene Recovery Fund collected over \$420,000 and helped more than 70 schools, churches and other non-profit organizations.

letter. The Society acquired some 60 Carpenter glass negatives in 1975 and contact prints made from them were shown in an exhibit on Carpenter's life, which debuted at the 1976 Strawberry Festival.

Selections from the recent donation will be shown on the website and in future newsletters. Images of some can be seen on Mr. Ball's website www.duncanball.com, in the "My Blog" section, dated April 23 and May 4. Duncan Ball is the author of about 75 books. All but one are children's books, many featuring a dog named Selby.

WELCOME! NEW MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERSHIPS

David & Linda Corbett, *Brewster, Mass*

Gerald Dexter, *Highgate Springs*

Robert Gould, *Middletown Springs*

Garland Mason, *Middletown Springs*

Marjorie Shepard, *Brandon*

Alida Tarbell, *Middletown Springs*