



# Middletown Springs Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Vol. 40, No. 1

May 2009

## Searching for Ichabod

Exploration of family history led Julie Foster Van Camp to Middletown Springs in 1992. She brought with her copies of the diaries of her great-great-great grandfather Ichabod Foster, who had lived here from 1805-1811. The pages from Ichabod's years in Middletown (one page for each month) provide unique insight into daily life here in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

At a Sunday service in the church where her ancestor likely worshipped, Julie met Dan McKeen, local timber-framer who was able to shed light on diary entries for June 25, 1806: "I made Pins for the Meetinghouse" and June 26 & 27 "The Baptist Meeting House in Middletown was rased." Dan owns the old Baptist church building where he maintains a workshop. Through research in Town records, Julie also found the site of the Foster homestead on North Street.

Her search for other remnants of the Foster family had led her from Clarendon, where Ichabod and his wife, Susannah, settled in 1773, to Whiting, where they moved in 1784 and where their farmhouse still stands on the old Crown Point Road.

After six years in Middletown and possibly affected by the great flood of July 1811, Ichabod, at the age of 71, decided in October to move west to the Holland Purchase in western New York.

The "Freshet" of 1811 had killed one resident and many animals, destroyed two houses, many outbuildings and all but one of the mills in the village and had done enormous damage to meadows and fields along the rivers and streams in Middletown. According to Frisbie's *History of Middletown*, 1867, the fact that the town population fell from a peak of 1207 in 1810 to 1039 "was undoubtedly owing . . . to the sad effects of the freshet of 1811."

The journey west from Middletown to his son Benjamin's homestead in Willinck, a distance of



Dan McKeen and author Julie Foster Van Camp.

over 500 miles, took more than a month. Ichabod lived on for another year, dying there in January 1813.

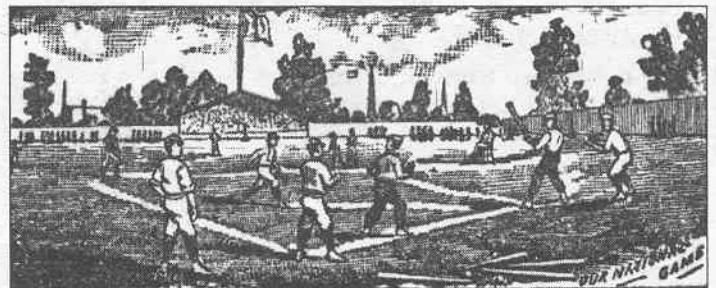
Julie Van Camp returned in April to Middletown Springs to share the story of her research at a event co-sponsored by the Middletown Springs Library and the Historical Society. This time she brought a book of her own making, the recently published *Searching for Ichabod: His Eighteenth-Century Diary Leads Me Home*. It tells what inspired her search, how she found her ancestor's diaries, and where her

odyssey retracing Ichabod's life journey took her.

Following Julie's talk, Jon Mathewson, Society board member and independent Museum Consultant, presented "Genealogy 101," an explanation of the resources available in town, in the state, and on the internet to pursue heritage research.

Julie Foster Van Camp's book *Searching for Ichabod: His Eighteenth-Century Diary Leads Me Home* is available from the Society for \$18, postpaid. Visit her website [www.searchingforichabod.com](http://www.searchingforichabod.com).

The Society has acquired copies of fourteen of Ichabod's diary pages related to his tenure in Middletown and will get others from the facsimile copy in the Sheldon Museum library. Excerpts from the diary will appear in a future issue of the Newsletter.



Local historians get very involved in families we may not know but who seem very close, whether we are related to them or not. We live in the town where they lived, perhaps worship in their church, study in their school, even live in their houses. We watch the passing of days and seasons and imagine that these long dead predecessors saw very similar weather (global climate change notwithstanding).

Besides the wealth of physical features that remain (mountains, rivers, buildings and the like), we have photographs of people from the past, and their words (sometimes thoughts and sentiments) in letters and diaries. But the farther back we look, the less we find surviving from the early days.

That's why the visit of Julie Foster Van Camp with pages from diary of her ancestor Ichabod Foster is an exciting event for local historians. Here we can read about notable events, like the framing of the Baptist church, and become acquainted with one of its builders. We can learn what crops were grown in Middletown (onions, peas, corn, cabbage, cucumbers, flax, "tobacco," beans, wheat, peppermint, "the new sort of coffee," parsnips, lettuce, winter squash, "turkey wheat," broom corn, "sage roots," potatoes, beets, oats, "white beans," summer squash, "wattermillion & mut million"). We might be shocked to find that in November 1806 the Fosters caught 30 rats in "the box trap" and counted 117 others "taken other ways."

— David Wright

## ***2009 Maple Festival Does Better Than Ever!*** — thanks to our members and friends!

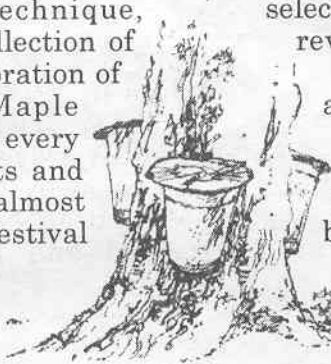
With delicious maple treats, a demonstration of old-fashioned sugar-making technique, expert interpretation of our fine collection of maple artifacts, and the timely celebration of the season, our twenty-first Maple Festival was a success once again in every way - weather, turnout, good spirits and financial success. Revenue grew, by almost a thousand dollars over last year's festival to nearly \$3,000.

Not only did the Maple Raffle, with 62 great prizes from area businesses and friends of the Society inspire donations, but this year's

event featured a silent auction of twenty specially selected prizes that netted over \$900 of the total revenue.

The generous support of our members and friends and first time visitors insured our success and supported the hard work of the many volunteers who make the Maple Festival happen. Thanks to all who bought a raffle ticket or left a bid!

Credit goes especially to the following donors of raffle and silent auction items. Please thank them again by buying their crafts and patronizing their businesses in the coming year.



Alderman's Chevrolet  
Apple Mountain Woodworking  
Applebee's Bar & Grill  
Josh Axelrod, framed photograph  
Birdseye Diner  
Castleton Village Pizza  
Bill & Sue Clark, maple products  
Clarendon Hardwood Bowls  
Lois Dansereau, hand knit gloves  
Dietra Davis, baskets of bulbs, B& B, and dining gift certificates  
Emmett Francois, framed photograph  
Grant's Village Store  
Green Mountain Coffee Roasters  
Hannaford Supermarket  
Sissy Hicks, dining gift certificate, gift baskets  
Hermit Hill Books  
Sarah Horne, hand made hats, design consultation, wool rug  
Peter Huntoon, watercolor print  
Patty Kenyon, hand-knit stockings

Anne & Bud Krouse, copies of *A Gem in the Hills*  
LaValley's Building Supply  
Perry Lowell Maple Syrup  
David Munyak, hardwood cutting board  
Naga Bakehouse  
Porch of Locks  
Rising Meadow Pottery  
Riverside Motors  
R.N. Williams Store  
Slate Valley Museum  
Solarfest  
Stewarts Ice Cream  
Trolley Stop Restaurant  
Twin Mountain Farms B& B  
Vermont Country Store  
Vermont Sport & Fitness  
Vermont Sweetwater  
Wallingford Victorian Inn B&B  
Wells Country Store  
Williams Hardware

## Thank you to 2008 Annual Fund Donors!

Thank you for your donation to the 2008 Annual Fund! And we apologize for those impossible to open return envelopes, which were accidentally sealed by last summer's high humidity!

Robert A. Bertsche  
Phil & May Biondi  
Bill & Barbara Bloom  
Marilyn Bobseine  
Raymond Burke  
Truman Cavanaugh  
Dennis & Enid Clark  
Larry Clift  
Lois & Paul Dansereau  
Kathy & Pat Feeley  
Margaret & Clay Fowler  
Fred & Margaret Gardner  
Stan & Maxine Garfinkel  
Elmer Gombosi  
Alfred & Yolanda Hansen  
Jerry & Rita Hansen  
Vannilu Harrison & Sharen Underwood  
Pat & Don Hemenway  
Rick Hruby  
Tom & Helen Jaeger  
Patty & Matt Kenyon  
Beryl Kirschman  
Alice & Warren Marsh  
Jon & Kimberly Mathewson  
Dan McKeen & Ellen Secord  
Joann Nichols  
Evelyn & Larry Ritchie  
Andina Roberts  
Howard & Judy Robinson  
Julie & Bud Scott  
Diane Rosenmiller & Nick Seidler  
Ann Vale  
Gwen Wilder  
Katherine Williams  
Mary Lou Willits & David Wright

## New Trustees Elected at Annual Meeting

At the Society's Annual Meeting in September 2008, Jon Mathewson was elected to a two year terms as a Trustee. Re-elected to second terms were Dietra Davis and Maureen McCormack. Continuing trustees are Sarah Horne, Patty Kenyon, Theron Krouse, Shane Thornton and David Wright. Retiring from the Board with sincere thanks from those attending the Annual Meeting were Lois Dansereau and Annie Pepperman.

At their October meeting Board members elected David Wright, president; Shane Thornton, vice president; Maureen McCormack, secretary; and Patty Kenyon, treasurer.

## In Memoriam

**MARGARET ANNE HALLIDAY**, 66, died April 7 at the home she created in Middletown Springs. She was born in Baltimore, Maryland, the daughter of Kathryn (Stout) and Victor Gairoard.

She was an accomplished craftsman, creating and marketing crochet designs. She was the author of *Decorating With Crochet*, 1975, and numerous pamphlets containing thousands of her crochet designs.

After more than 20 years of frugal living on her ten acre homestead, she designed and supervised construction of her dream house, which was featured in a book on small, efficient house designs.

Anne was a Historical Society member and a regular volunteer at Society events, where her specialty was clean-up.

She is survived by two sisters: Susan Cook, of Ohio; and Kathy Slosman, of Maryland.

**EDWIN A. ROACH**, 90, died Jan 1 in Bangor Maine. Born in 1918 in Springfield, Ohio, he graduated from high school in White Plains, N. Y. and attended Ohio Wesleyan University. He was employed for 35 years by Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. in Manhattan, N.Y.

Ed and his wife, Carolyn, first visited Middletown Springs in the 'Forties, vacationing at the Homestead, a guest farm on North Street, run by Frank and Jesse Rogers. The Roaches bought an acre of land from the Rogers, and Ed built a one room cabin which he elaborated upon over the next twenty years, creating a comfortable retirement home. Ed and Carolyn retired to Middletown Springs in 1973. They were active members of the community, as volunteers at the Historical Society and the Library and as members of the Community church and various other organizations. They later lived in Rutland and moved to Maine in the 'Nineties to be near their daughter, Sally.

Survivors include his wife, Carolyn; their son, Richard; and daughter, Sally Larrabee; five grandchildren; and a great-grandson.



Photo by Emmet Francois



## Membership Information

Membership dues for 2009 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: Patty Kenyon, *Treasurer*  
Middletown Springs Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1126  
Middletown Springs, VT 05757

- Frisbie's *History of Middletown* CD-ROM or photocopy, \$20, post paid.
- Eight notecards with historic photos of Middletown Springs, \$12 post paid.
- *Searching for Ichabod*, by Julie Van Camp, \$18.00, post paid.
- *A Gem in the Hills*, by Frances Krouse, \$25, post paid.

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

Visit our NEW website:

[www.MiddletownSpringsHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.MiddletownSpringsHistoricalSociety.org)

### Business Members

*Archideck, Sarah Grimm*  
*Blue Cat Bistro, John Rehlen*  
*Estelle Ellis, Business Image, Inc.*  
*William Emberley, Antique Bottles & Collectibles*  
*Friends in Adoption, Dawn Smith Pliner*  
*Green Mountain Timber Frames, Dan McKeen*  
*Sarah Horne Interior Design*  
*Johnson Energy, Tom & Eileen Johnson*  
*LaValley Building Supply*  
*Jim Marquis, Antiques Appraiser*  
*Montvert Real Estate, Nan Gilmour*  
*Professional Tile Installation, Jerry Hansen*  
*Round Barn Theatre, Karen & Leslie Klami*  
*Stewarts Dairy*  
*Twin Mountain Farms 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](mailto:montvert@vermontel.net).

Middletown Springs Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1126  
Middletown Springs, VT 05757

Address Service Requested

## Welcome! New Members

### NEW FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

Louise Bertsche, *West Caldwell, New Jersey*  
Brooke Nuckles & Pete Gentekas,  
*Middletown Springs*

### NEW SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

Robert A. Bertsche, *Needham, Mass.*

### NEW CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIPS

Josie & Jere Berger, *Middletown Springs*  
Jerusha Jane McKee-Tanner,  
*Leicester, New York*  
Dale Milne, *Greeley, Colorado*  
Joan & John Roche, *Suffield, Connecticut*

## 2009 COMING EVENTS

To be Announced	Antiques Discovery Appraisals with Jim Marquis, 6:30 pm
Saturday, May 23	Silent Movie Night with Leslie Klami, piano, 7 pm
Sunday, May 24	Memorial Day Parade 3 pm
Sunday, Sept. 20	Annual Meeting, 7 pm
Sunday, Oct. 11	Museum Open House and Donor Celebration, 1-4 p.m.

