



Middletown Springs Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Vol. 41, No. 2

September 2010

"There are Cooks who are farmers here..."

In his exploration of the years 1912 to 1931 for this year's Vermont History Expo exhibit, Jon Mathewson rediscovered a poem by Ella M. Phillips. The poem takes a lyrical look at the names of some local residents and humorously juxtaposes them to picture Middletown Springs as a "topsy-turvy town".

Middletown Springs in Rhyme

by Ella M. Phillips

I'm asked to write a poem
Of this topsy-turvy town,
As you will quite agree with me
If you trace it up and down
There are White lights on the hilltops
And charming Vails below
And up among the mountains
The Brown lights softly glow.
Beside the winding river
Are Gray lights, also Greene;
Add Gray lights up the valley
With Hills just in between
Upon the lowland meadows
You'll find both Cliffs and Stone;
And up above the river
Snow and the Robins home
There are Woods within the schoolhouse
And Schollars in the mill,
While Frosts abound the whole year round
The Brooks are never still
There are Lakes upon the southern hills
And Fish's too, a few
While Deer feed in the Orchards
And lap the mountain dew
There are Cooks, who are the farmers here,
And also, if you please,
Although it seems most awful queer
The Cooks who make the cheese.
The Carpenters are druggists
The Mason paints for you,
The blacksmith eats with Robins
But nails the horse's shoe.
So I've painted it in colors
Of Greene and Gray and Brown
And think with me you'll quite agree
It's a most delightful town.

As published in The Poultney Journal,
November 28, 1919



The Cook farm on West St., now owned by the Tarbells.

Photo courtesy David Wright

Who are the real families in this "quite delightful" poem? The 1920 Census and a 1916 map in the Town Office give us some clues. Some are not listed and we are not certain exactly where some families were living. If you have any additional information, please send it along!

Charles E. **White**, a farmer (50) and his wife Lily M. (44) and their children Harold E. (16), Ruth (10), Thelma E. (7), Clayton E.(2) may have lived on Coy Hill where Leonard White later lived. (They were not related to Donna and Cecil White, who came to town in the 'Fifties to farm the Haskins place on Coy Hill.)

It's likely that Charles B. (77) and wife, Emma V. (71) **Vail**, and their son, Harry (57), and cousin, Lycurgus M. Bingham (74), lived in the M. E. Vail house on the green, later the Middletown Springs Inn, now owned by Jackie and Earl Parker.

Royal E. **Brown** (52) and his wife Esther E. (52) lived on South Street where Don and Muriel Smith now live. William J. **Brown** (34) may have lived on North St.

There were several **Gray** households. Albert Y. **Gray** (75) and his wife Sarah A. (71) lived on South St., where the Graces now live, with their widowed daughter Lena G. Knapp (49) and a servant, Frances Weaver (50). Fred **Gray** (58) and his wife, Ellen I.(54), and their son, Henry F. (29), lived on South St, where the Teers now live. Harry **Gray** (54) lived in the a house at the four corners, where Parkers Garage later stood.. William S. **Gray** (57)

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A good friend of the Society and of many of us personally, Doyle Lane, passed away on June 14. Doyle and his former wife, Priscilla, restored and transformed the Leonidas Gray house on South Street into Priscilla's Victorian Inn in the early 1980s. The care and sensitivity with which they carried out enlarging and reconfiguring this Historic Register gem extended to an inquiring interest into the history of the town and a membership in the Society.

While Priscilla baked endless supplies of scones and cookies for Society events, Doyle contributed his expertise in moving large objects

(learned in his piano and mechanical music instrument restoration business) such as A. W. Gray treadmills and threshers halfway across the state. He donated the money to purchase a working Gray drag saw after retrieving it from some Northeast Kingdom hamlet. At the other extreme he designed from catalogue pictures and crafted out of hardwood a tiny authentic stand for the patent model of A.W Gray's first horsepower treadmill, in the Society's collection.

A friend and supporter of the Society and the community for 25 years, Doyle Lane will be greatly missed.

and his wife, Estelle C. (53), lived on Spruce Knob Rd., where Kevin and Karen Rooney now live. Francis L **Gray** (57), his wife, Fannie H. (45), and their daughter, Frances (27), lived on South St. where the Redfields now live. We don't know where Alice E. **Gray** (62) was living.

Of the three **Greene** families in the 1920 Census, we are certain that Albert A. **Greene** (75) and his wife, Alice C. (43), and children, Albert A., Jr. (18) and Maureen E. (15), lived in the house now owned by Friends in Adoption on South St. Max E. **Greene** (45) and his wife, Nellie N. (43), likely lived on West St. where Tom Russell now lives and ran the nearby orchard, now owned by Rocks & Trees. Other **Greenes** living there were George D. (20), Esther H. (20), Marion M. (18), Florence N. (17), Marjorie E. (14), Max E. J. (12) and Ruth A. (2 ½). Another **Greene** household, including Sophronia (82), daughter-in-law, Ethel P. (38), and grandchildren Louella (5), Ruth E. (3) and Chauncey S.(1) may have been on North St.

We don't know where Walter A. **Hill** (53), likely the engineer at the horsepower shop, and his wife, Vera G. (35), a dressmaker, lived, but it was likely in the village.

Postmaster Crocker J. **Clift** (82) was still living on his own, likely in the village, as was Florence C. **Clift** (54), a secretary. William E. **Clift** (25) and wife, Esther M. (23) may have been farming on the **Clift** place on North St.

Carlos W. **Snow** (29) was a farmer and likely lived outside the village with his wife, Lena E. (34), and children, Chauncy M. (5) and Elizabeth (2 months).

We have no knowledge where Fred A. **Robbins** (51) a watchman, perhaps at the horsepower shop, and his wife, Ella (55), lived.

The **Schollars**, Rollin (52) and wife, Lillian (43), and children, Lizzie E. (9), Dorothy (7), Grace R. (5), Theodore R. (4) and Benjamin L. (2), lived on the west side of Coy Hill on a now abandoned road.

Walton E. **Frost** (44) who ran a store on East St., opposite the green and wife, Blanche (41), children Albert E. (16), Ruth E. (14) and Oakley F. (11) and mother-in-law, Maria E. Taylor (80), likely lived on North St. where the Lambertons now live. Oakley M. **Frost** (68) a farmer, and his wife, Emily J. (67), may have lived outside the village.

Charles R. **Lake** (41), his wife, Bertha E. (40), their children William H. (15), Mabel H. (13), Robert C. (8) and Henry P. Wescott (18), a farm laborer, lived on the Azor Perry farm on South St., now part of Honey Pond Farm, owned by Gary Kanew.

Charles A. **Fish** (55) and his wife, Carrie A. (50) lived on Brown Rd. on Coy Hill, on a farm now owned by the Fowlers.

Anson A. **Cook** (63) and his wife, Mary M. (58) farmed on West St. where the Tarbells now continue the operation. We are not sure where Edwin B. **Cook** (50) and his sister Clara M. (52) were farmers.

Dana S. **Carpenter** (57), pharmacist, photographer, printer, botanist, etc. and his wife, Aurora (34), lived in the house on West St. now owned by Anne Hicks. Carpenter's businesses were housed next door, where Sissy Hicks prepares and sells her tasty take-out food.

Other currently unknown locations are the farm of Daniel B. **Mason** (69) and his wife, Maria (67) and the village home of Elbert W. **Mason** (56), a painter, his wife, Nellie E. (47), and their children, Sarah L. (20), Laura L. (16), Joel S. (15) and Frances E. (9).

Poet Ella Phillips lived with her husband George in a house no longer there, just south of the Webbers.

Family names mentioned in Ella Phillip's poem but not listed in the 1920 census are **Stone**, **Wood**, **Brook**, **Deer**, and **Orchard**.

Strawberry Festival Braves the Weather

Showers and a cloudburst that preceded the start of the Thirty-Fifth Annual Strawberry Festival, didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the many volunteers poised to set up for the event on the lawns around the Adams House. The sun came out just before the start, creating hot and humid conditions.

Bowls of prepared Vermont berries from Duttons in Newfane, baskets of Cory Best's biscuits and mounds of vanilla ice cream and whipped cream adorned the serving tables. Lemonade, iced tea and coffee complemented the generous servings.

Peter Huntoon was on hand to demonstrate water color painting *en plein air*. David Munyak displayed his finely crafted wooden utensils, Soulange Martineau brought photographs and notecards of



local scenes, and Don Hemenway brought an array of tools and hardware for sale.

Dietra Davis held a children's raffle for a bride doll with complete wardrobe ensemble. Children's games and activities were led by Rosemary Moser.

Paul Morgan and Jenny Munyak entertained on guitar and flute.

Other volunteers and participants included Pat Hemenway, Winsome Moran, Nan Gilmour, Brooke Nuckles, Kathy Feeley, Judy Robinson, Mark Raymond, Kayla, Sean & Abby, Tara Beattie, Leslie Silver, Mary Lou Willits, Maureen McCormack, Jon Mathewson and David Wright.

Attendance at the Strawberry Festival was lower than last year and yielded a net profit of a little over \$1,000.



In Memoriam



DOYLE H. LANE, 70, died, June 14th at home in Middletown Springs, Vermont of cancer. He was known worldwide for his magnificent collection of beautifully restored antique music machines, for his restoration excellence, and his entrepreneurial endeavors. A creative and inventive man with an encyclopedic knowledge of many subjects, Doyle made his accomplishments look easy and loved to share his knowledge with others.



He was born in Detroit, Mich., the son of Walter and Laural Lane. He graduated from Whittier College in California in 1960 and then helped his parents create a successful summer resort on Kootenay Lake, British Columbia. In Vancouver, B.C., he worked at the Children's Aid Society, Shell Oil, and Xerox.

Doyle found his calling in the player-piano restoration business he started in the basement of his home. His interest in finding, fixing, restoring and tuning player pianos evolved into a lifelong passion for all mechanical music machines. In the mid-1970s he opened The Player Piano Center in Vancouver, BC. In 1978 he moved his business to Hillsborough, N. C., where it became the Antique Music and Wheels, an AAA attraction.

In 1985 Doyle Lane and his then-wife, Priscilla, moved to Middletown Springs, where they turned an old Victorian mansion into Priscilla's Victorian Inn. In Vermont his business became Doyle Lane Restorations, which was featured in a 1995 production of "Points North" on Vermont ETV. His worldwide clientele included the City of Holland, Mich., and their Dutch Street Organ, given to the city by the people of the Netherlands after World War II.

Doyle was a member of the Historical Society, serving as board member and President.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia McWilliams, whom he married in 1996, and two daughters from his previous marriage: Alison Lane of Huntington, Vt.; and Hilary Lester of Wilsonville, Ore. Survivors also include his sister Theran Balmain of Coulterville, Calif.; his former wife Priscilla (Follows) Lane of Burlington; and an enormous circle of devoted cousins, in-laws, friends, colleagues, and pets.

JEANNE E. ROBBINS, 83, died July 22 in Rutland. She was born in Brooklyn, N. Y., the daughter of Leslie & Eva Robbins.

Jeanne served as a U.S. Navy WAVE and was married to Paul McClure. She was a member and former Deaconess of the Middletown Springs Community Church and was an early member of the Society.

Jeanne is survived by her son, John David McClure, of Chelmsford, Mass.; her daughter, Paula Ann McClure, of Plattsburgh, N.Y.; a brother, Adam Robbins, of San Marcos, Calif.; and a sister, Barbara Spencer, of Berlin, Mass.

Membership Information

Membership dues for 2010 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

- 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 website:

www.MiddletownSpringsHistoricalSociety.org

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Blue Cat Bistro, John Rehlen
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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.

Middletown Springs Historical Society
P.O. Box 1121
Middletown Springs, VT 05757

Address Service Requested

**Museum Open House &
Donor Celebration
October 10, 2010**

Notice of Annual Meeting

The 41st Annual Meeting of the Middletown Springs Historical Society will be held on Sunday, Sept. 26, at the Historical Society Building.

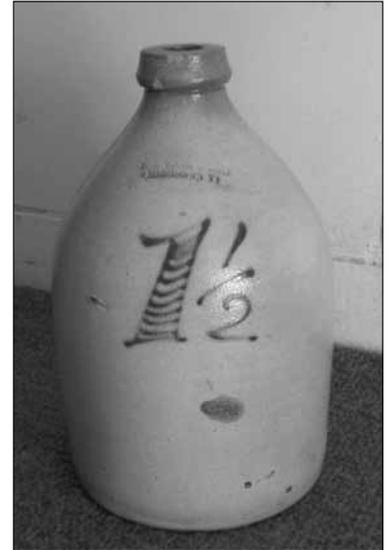
Agenda

- 7:00 p.m. Dessert Buffet
7:15 p.m. Business Meeting and Election of Trustees
7:45 p.m. Don Wickman, Vermont historian from Rutland with a special interest in the Civil War, will give a slide presentation on the Vermont Civil War flags.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

This 1-1/2 gallon M.E. Vail Store stone-ware jug, purchased in a Rupert auction, joins two similar Vail pieces in the Society collection.

Moses Vail kept a store in a brick building on East St. which burned in the 1920 fire that also destroyed three other buildings.



Welcome! New Members

Jim Platteter, Middletown Springs
Andrew Moyer, Tinmouth

NEW SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIPS
Robert Bertsche, Needham, Mass.