



Spring 2013

# The Marston's Grist

The newsletter of the Marstons Mills Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1375 Marstons Mills, MA 02648 [marstonsmillshistorical.org](http://marstonsmillshistorical.org)

Dear Readers,

Welcome to "Marston's Grist," the official newsletter of the Marstons Mills Historical Society. On these pages we celebrate the unique history of our village, Marstons Mills, located in the Town of Barnstable, MA on Cape Cod.

2012 for MMHS was a year of remarkable accomplishment, but it began on a painful and sad note with the untimely passing of our devoted President, Kevin Galvin. Kevin's skill set was endless; his sharp mind and exceptional ability with computers was legendary in his field, and his passion for local historical subjects knew no bounds. This combination of energy and talent put him at the center of every MMHS project, and his departure left us reeling from loss both personal and organizational. The months following were an exercise in teamwork and commitment by a crew of hardcore volunteers through whose efforts the Society has been able to begin recovery and to progress. All deserve and have my heartfelt thanks. Along with my continuing condolences, indeed with those of all the Society's members, I particularly want to thank Judy Galvin for her steady support and help through a time that we know has been excruciatingly difficult for her. We wish her the very best every day and look forward to her remaining an important part of our organization.

There is a magnet on my fridge at home with the ostensibly tongue-in-cheek aphorism, "Live in the Past, the Present, and the Future." It came from a booth at the County Fair and was meant as a joke, but nothing has ever made more sense to me, both as an individual and as someone involved with organizations that strive to have a meaningful place in the life of his community.

We are only here a short time and, especially in the "historical business," do well to concert our energies on being good listeners as well as good story tellers. MMHS is poised to fulfill just that mission in a number of ways, about which you can read here in this and future editions of "The Grist," as well as on our new website, [marstonsmillshistorical.org](http://marstonsmillshistorical.org). We have plans for future articles, and would be happy to add your suggestions. Already on the list: Cape Cod Airfield and its Classic Aircraft; Wilfrid Wheeler and his Gold-Medal winning American Hollies; Dairy Farming in Marstons Mills; Historic Buildings in the Village (many!); and others. Please watch our website and future editions of "Marston's Grist."

With our Annual Meeting this January 15th, 2013, we began a year-long celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Society's founding. I want to encourage you to join us both listening to and sharing the stories of our ancestors, our neighbors and our children. Membership is inexpensive, and a form can be found in the following pages. MMHS is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. We would certainly enjoy your company and very much appreciate your support!

With all good wishes for the New Year,

*Bob Frazee, President*

## Coming Events...

- **Saturday, June 29, 2013 @4:00 p.m.** Book launch for Jim Gould and Vivian Cushing's new book, *Marstons Mills*, published by Arcadia Publishing.

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT MOVES FORWARD

The collecting of rich oral histories from numerous individuals who have lived in or know much about the Mills in history is moving forward. An initial excellent group of interviews were carried out by former MMHS President Barbara Hill, while a later series of interviews were carried out as a team by professors Jim Gould and David Martin.

Now the Oral History Project has expanded further to a full team of interviewers, including Nancy Wong, Dianne Potter, Philip Roy, Donna De Florio and Claire Melix. Claire has been particularly helpful in assisting the team with suggested contacts and historical backgrounds on many individuals. Sadly, a number of the past interviewees have passed away, but their interviews have been preserved.

The project is now seeking permission of previous and current interviewees or their next-of-kin for the full digitization of the interview transcripts so that later the interviews will be searchable by individuals who are doing historical research on the Mills. Anyone interested in either being interviewed or becoming a part of the interview team is invited to contact David Martin at davidmartindr@aol.com.

*by David Martin*

### MARSTONS MILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

*President: Bob Frazee*

*Vice-President: Claire Melix*

*Secretary: David Martin*

*Treasurer: Nancy Wong*

The MMHS meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 2:00 p.m.



Comments and articles for submission should be sent to the editor at sturgisreference@comcast.net

## Marstons Mills Historical Society

PO Box 1375 Marstons Mills, MA 02648



Marston House



Grist Mill



Hearse House



Burgess House

### Membership Form

I wish to join the Marstons Mills Historical Society (\$10.00)

I wish to make a charitable contribution:

\$100      \$50      \$10      other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to be notified about meetings



Cash Market



Library



Liberty Hall



Horse Shed



Church



School

drawings by B. Hill

Cut out and return to the address on the top of the form.

## MYSTERY PHOTO from the archives...



*Marstons Mills School Classroom Lunch: Recognise anyone in this photo? Send ideas to [info@marstonsmillshistorical.org](mailto:info@marstonsmillshistorical.org)*

## HISTORY OF THE MARSTONS MILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The origins of the Society lie in the mystery of the curious ridges that cross the landscape in straight lines, often connected by granite pillars. Marstons Mills residents Wilbur Cushing and Robert McClusky explored the woods, bogs and fields, trying to map them and connect them to colonial land grants as recorded by the early proprietors.

On January 30, 1983 the Marstons Mills Historical Society was founded at the home of Arnold and Irene Hadfield, who owned the oldest house in the village: the Ebenezer Goodspeed house on River Road. They were joined by four founding members, including Cushing and McClusky. The latter was elected president, with Irene Hadfield as secretary. The first plans were to collect old photos, urging one's grandparents to contribute.

There was such enthusiasm that the Society met every week at the president's home in the Capt. Josiah Hamblin house. Early recruits were Vivian Cushing, Adele and Loring Jones, Jr., Sue Davenport Johnson and Barbara Hill. In May 1983 the Society merged with the Marstons Mills Village Association, meeting monthly at the Library. That December, the Society contributed to the recording of historic houses on the National Register of Historic Places, led by Hazel Meyer.

The first major project was to restore the Hearse House, which the town had proposed moving to Sandy Neck. McClusky organized a ham and bean supper at Liberty Hall on November 10, 1984, which raised \$692. He and Cushing put a concrete foundation under it, and Barbara Hill's son Michael

repaired and painted the frame under guidance of the state Historical Commission.

Under Sue Davenport the Society reorganized on December 4, 1984, separating from the Village Association. Barbara Hill became President, with McClusky as Vice President, Adele Jones continuing as Secretary and Vivian Cushing as Treasurer.

On July 1, 1983 Sue Davenport applied to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for a grant to do a history of the village. In 1985, the Library obtained a \$4500 grant, to which it added \$2500 and the Council on Arts & Humanities added \$1000. Barbara Hill directed the Living History Project, interviewing old-timers for memories. She began with 79 year-old Edwin "Teddy" Pierce. A rotating display of historical objects was placed in a case in the Library.

The initial asset of the Society was its collection of historic photos. The original idea of placing pictures in newspapers evolved into publishing a booklet, and finally into printing a historical calendar in 1986, at a cost of \$938 for 600 copies. This was done for a second year, 1987. On April 22 of that year, the Society became a corporation under state law, with tax-exempt status.

Bronze plaques with name and date of construction were placed on the four principal public buildings in the village in 1987, financed by a gift of Joan Knowlton in honor of her husband William Knowlton. The president's sketch of the buildings was reproduced on notepaper and letterheads sold to raise funds.

In 1998, the Society supported the preservation of the historic Burgess House, and in 2001, the historic buildings and sites in the Newtown area were recorded for the National Register by James W. Gould. The society continued to meet annually at the Capt. Joseph Crocker house on Race Lane, the home of Bunny Zenowich.

Kevin Galvin, the new owner of the William Marston house on the Mill Pond, was elected President on October 18, 2005. He succeeded Barbara Hill who had served for 21 years. Galvin began digitizing the photos in the archives, set up a website, revised the bylaws, revived the oral history project, worked to preserve the Isaac Crocker homestead, obtained the gift of papers of Crocker Snow and began the first herring count.

In 2009 the Historic Sites Committee (Holly Hobart and Jim Gould) completed the inventory of every house in the village built before 1945.

Galvin's tragic death in January 2012 led to loss of some of the society's digitized records, though the physical archives and photos were recovered. He was succeeded as President by Robert Frazee, a former member of the Barnstable Historical Commission, who has a degree in historic preservation from Roger Williams University.

Today the Marstons Mills Historical Society carries on its mission of recording the history of the village and preserving its historic sites. It invites all to join the growing membership in pursuing this work.

*by Jim Gould*



*19th-century photo of the Fuller Family and their historic farmstead on Cotuit Road, which was recently purchased by Barnstable Land Trust ([www.blt.org](http://www.blt.org)).*

See the upcoming Arcadia publication, "Marstons Mills," by Jim Gould and Vivian Cushing:

*[www.marstonsmillshistorical.org/publications](http://www.marstonsmillshistorical.org/publications)*