



The Marston's Grist

The newsletter of the Marstons Mills Historical Society

P.O. Box 1375 Marstons Mills, MA 02648

marstonsmillshistorical.org

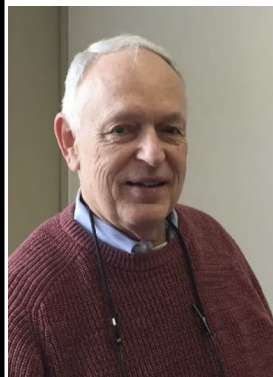
Acting President's Message

With the sudden passing of President Rick Presbrey in early June of this year, I have agreed to serve as Acting President for the remainder of this calendar year; the membership of the Society was shocked and saddened. The first half of the 2025 year was otherwise marked by a series of monthly program topics, including presenters, a field trip, and the activation of an excellent Program Committee led by Vice-President Freddy Kraics, whose report is included in this issue. Another positive development has been the consistent effort by Wendy Bierwirth (the editor of this issue) to record the monthly programs on video and audio—thus creating a fine record of these events. And the Society has expressed great gratitude to retiring archivist Dianne Potter for her generous gift to the Society for the maintenance of the archives and other program activities.

— David S. Martin

Next event: *TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2 PM, LIBRARY* A look-back at the history of the previous Camp Alpine, with Joanne Budd Cunningham, daughter of camp directors Mark and Lillian Budd.

IN MEMORIAM



The Society pays tribute to the late Rick Presbrey, its President for a short 5 months, for his many contributions to Cape Cod and local Marstons Mills life. He had a highly successful career in the development of housing in several locations, and had been active in the discussions in the Town about how to manage the needs for affordable housing in the region. He was a dedicated member of the Society as well as the Village Association, and had been in the midst of planning a Society program for Fall 2025 about the history of transportation on Cape Cod, based on careful research with historic local maps. His obituary in the local newspapers in mid-June details the many other contributions which he made in his lifetime. We extend deep condolences to his family.



The Society also lost another long-term faithful member and supporter. Dianne K. Potter, our archivist, passed away on July 19th. Her memory will be honored officially by the naming of our archives as “The Dianne Potter Archives”, with a permanent sign at the entrance to the archives for every researcher to appreciate her significant work of preservation. Dianne held a Masters in Library and Information Science and loved the research and discovery of family and community history. In 2010 she earned a certificate of Geneological Research from Boston University. We extend deep condolences to her family.

The Mission of the Marstons Mills Historical Society is to foster an interest in the story of our village. We preserve historical images, documents and artifacts, research historic resources and support educational opportunities for all ages for villagers and other interested persons, in order to better understand and appreciate the past, present and future of Marstons Mills.

*****The MMHS meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 2:00 p.m. at Marstons Mills Public Library.*****

2025 MMHS OFFICERS

Acting President: David Martin

Vice-President: Freddy Kraics

Secretary: Marguerite Adams

Treasurer: Bebe Brock

Archivist: Dianne Potter

Website Mgr. & Grist Editor:

Wendy Bierwirth

Past Presidents:

David Martin, Bob Frazee , Rick

Presbrey, Sandra Bolton

BOOK STORE

Images of America: Marstons Mills. An Arcadia Publication written by local historians James Gould and Vivian Cushing. Limited signed copies. View this publication at marstonsmillshistorical.org/publications. Available for purchase at MMPL.

NOTE: prices of some books have been reduced!

Explore! Contemporary Marstons Mills, Cape Cod
A limited edition, full-color book by Sandra Bolton. Mail a check payable to MMHS for \$32 plus \$5 shipping and handling to P.O. Box 1375, Marstons Mills MA 02648. Also available by emailing boltonslanding@comcast.net, subject line: order book.



Comments and articles for submission should be sent to davidmartindr@aol.com



MEMBERSHIP FORM

- ☐ I / we wish to **join** the Society and enclose payment for my / our Individual Membership(s) at \$20 each.
- ☐ I / we wish to **renew** my/our membership for 2025 at \$20 each.

- ☐ I / we wish to make a charitable contribution to the Society to support the development of its Village Archives and the Preservation of its Collection.

\$250 \$150 \$75 \$25 \$10 Other _____

Name: _____

Street / POB: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

- ☐ I / we wish to be notified about MMHS Meetings.

Please mail your check or bring it to the Library, marked for MMHS. Regular meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 2:00pm. Thank you!

*The Marstons Mills Historical Society is
a 501 (c) 3 Charitable Organization*

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

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CAPE VERDE MUSEUM



At its February meeting, a “field visit” took place for several members to see the relatively new Cape Verde Museum, located in Falmouth. Museum Director Barbara Burgo led an intriguing tour of the artifacts in the museum, documenting the arrival of citizens from Cape Verde into southeastern Massachusetts in the 19th century and afterward, illustrating how residents with Cape Verde roots have integrated into many parts of Cape Cod life. A visit to the museum is highly recommended for everyone to appreciate the stories and historical items from this history.

FRENCH CABLE MUSEUM



Following the Society’s Annual Meeting in January at which officers were elected for the year, the membership enjoyed a presentation from the director of the French Cable Museum in Orleans. The fascinating and important history of this Atlantic entry point for the cross-Atlantic cable from France in the last century is included in a facility that is well worth a personal visit as part of not only Cape Cod history but also national history as well.

CRANBERRY HISTORY



The history of the cranberry industry in not only the Mills but throughout our region was the subject of the March meeting of the Society. David Martin traced that history from before the 19th century to the present, pointing out that early development was by individual farmers with small holdings. By the late 1800s Abel Makepeace (1832-1916), a Mills resident for a time, became known as the “Cranberry King” and transformed cranberry growing into a thriving enterprise. In more recent years, the indus-

try has entered somewhat of a decline due to several factors, but is still an important and popular food product.

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CRANBERRY HISTORY CONT'D

Cranberries can be grown successfully only in a few regions due to the need for certain aspects of climate, the presence of sand, and other soil qualities—being limited to southeastern Massachusetts, New Jersey, upper mid-west, and one area of the west coast. Some local cranberry bogs are now being allowed to revert to wetlands as a positive environmental measure which also will benefit water flow.

HISTORIC PUBLIC BUILDINGS



April's meeting featured Barnstable Facilities Manager David Anthony describing the history of town buildings for the entire town of Barnstable. An example of little-known history is the location of the original Town Hall at the intersection of Old Stage Road and Oak Street, on the site occupied by the present Veritas Academy school. The history of other buildings was included also, and his presentation was a complement to the Fall 2024 presentation that had provided the Society with information by Barnstable Historical Commission Chair (and Society member)

Bob Frazee. These two presentations rounded out a thorough outline of most of the historic buildings of many types in the Town.

REVOLUTION ON THE CAPE AND ISLANDS



With the upcoming 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026, the May program provided a series of highlights from a new book being prepared on the Revolution on Cape Cod and the Islands. This is a somewhat neglected topic in view of most people's associating the Revolution with Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Valley Forge, etc.—when in actuality a number of important events and people in the Revolution were on the Cape and Islands. An example is the significant Otis family of

Barnstable. James Otis, Sr. was a judge in Barnstable, his son James, Jr. made fiery speeches through the decade of 1760-1770 which aroused the passion for revolution, and his sister Mercy—a well educated woman for her time—wrote and published a number of pieces related to the Revolutionary cause. David Martin outlined other Cape-centered and Island-centered events between 1761 and 1783, including shipwrecks and the Battle of Falmouth, which are part of the publication scheduled for availability by August of 2025.

INTERVIEW WITH EDDIE THEW



Long-time Mills resident Eddie Thew was the focus of a fascinating interview by Society members at the June monthly meeting. Eddie recalled how his father built the house on Lakeside Drive after obtaining the land which had been part of the previous Roseland Ballroom -- an active place of entertainment in Marstons Mills in the 1930's. A vivid memory was recalling how the currently very busy Route 149 was vastly different in his childhood in the 1940s. He and a friend would sometimes sit in front of his house and wait to hear the rather rare event of a car approaching by listening for the engine in the distance. He described going to the Marstons Mills School, now a fu-

neral home on Route 28. His clear recall of many events of 70 years and more ago, together with his engaging laugh, made for an informative and entertaining afternoon. A video of the interview may be viewed [HERE](#)

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

Future Programs & Subject Matter Experts

September 16, 2025 - Camp Alpine Joanne Budd and Dave Martin

October 14, 2025 - West Barnstable Brickyard Co. Nancy Shoemaker

November 11, 2025 – Slavery on Cape Cod Susanna Graham Pye

December 9, 2025 - Eastham Historical Society Marca Daley

Unscheduled Future Programs Ideas; Subject Matter Experts

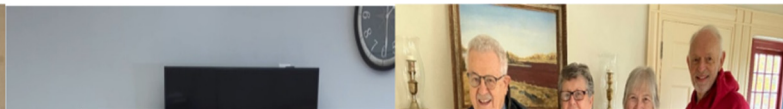
1. Cotuit Oyster Company - Chris Gargulo, owner
2. History of the 1690 Barnstable Jail – Brooks Smith
3. Coast Guard Museum – Docent Tour of Museum
4. Curious Cape Cod - Eric Williams
5. Archeological Discoveries- Dan Zoto, SME
6. Cape Cod Airfields, Airports and Air Park – Airfield SME
7. Marston Mills Cape Cod Airfield - Airfield SME
8. Local Grocery Store History, The COOP – Seth Burdick, SME
9. Local Grocery Store History, The Former Cash Market
10. Roaring 20's on Cape Cod - Sharon Anderson/Dorothy Skelly
11. Larinda- Bebe Brock
12. Nine Bronze Statues - David Lewis, Sculptor, SME
13. Nobeska Lighthouse Museum & Woods Hole Museum
14. CLIO App Project – Jean Oakley, SME
15. 10 Colonial Forts on Cape Cod - Jeffery Crocker, SME

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PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT CONT'D

16. Maritime Museum Hyannis - Docent presentation/tour
17. Whydah Book Presentation – Martin W. Sandler SME
18. West Barnstable Train Station History, NRHS, SME
19. Military History of Cape Cod - John Lapham, SME
20. CC Canal Army Fortifications- Scusset & Marion – SME - TBD
21. Aptucxet Trading Co. – Mavis Robinson, SME
22. Atwood Museum, Chatham – Museum Staff, SME
23. Stony Brook Grist Mill Museum - Museum Staff SME
24. Highfield Hall Museum – Museum Staff, SME
25. Thornton Burgess Museum – Museum Staff, SME
26. Marconi Wireless Station Museum – Museum Staff, SME
27. History of the Marston Mills Methodist Church – Freddy Kraics
28. Sachem Iyanough's Life and Death – Freddy Kraics
29. Gray Gables, The First Summer White House - SME
30. Sampson's Mill on the Santuit River - SME
31. Little River & Lovells Pond - TBD
32. The Great Awakening – Freddy Kraics
33. Jenny Lind Tower
34. Wampanoag Museum
35. President Grover Cleveland's "Por-Taj"
36. Nobsusset Tribe Burial Cemetery
37. Tawasentha, the Crosby Mansion
38. Cape Cod Lavender Farm
39. Amrita Island
40. Uncle Tim's Bridge and Cannon Hill
41. Historic Spohr Gardens
42. First Commercial Cranberry Bog in the World
43. Sachem Iyanough's Tombstone

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE



Rick Presbrey lived an accomplished life! Alongside his Marstons Mills Historical Society "Thespians", he volunteered his time and talent to the MMHS performing arts fundraiser. I am delighted to have had the opportunity to meet him. Rick was a man worthy of receiving a Lifetime Humanitarian Award along with the Society's Award for portraying, Ned, the eccentric historian beachcomber. During one of many rehearsals he improvised with great calm when the metal detector prop went missing. He used a beat-up broom!

A special tribute with fond memories-- Sandra Bolton