



# Middletown Springs Historical Society, Inc.

Middletown Springs, Vermont 05757

## Newsletter

September - October 1987

Dear Friends:

The Museum has had a very busy time this summer with eight special exhibits. All were well received, but one, Railroads, attracted over sixty visitors over the two-hour period. These Sunday programs will end with the Apple Festival to come on October 18 at the same 2 to 4 period.

The annual meeting of the Society will be held on October 29 at the Community House at 6 p.m. Following a brief time to elect new trustees, Marshall Peck, editor of the Vermont News Guide, will discuss the question "What can the news media do to stimulate interest in town history?"

Also on the program is a rare view of the earliest movies ever taken in Vermont. Mack Derick, who took them, will show an airfield in Swanton, asbestos in Eden, and the rooftops of Burlington around 1920.

~~A potluck supper will follow the entertainment. Members are urged to attend and their friends are also welcome.~~

### MORE ROOM FOR THE CHURCH

For the past several years the Community Church has felt the need of more room for activities other than the Sunday services. The Community House has some space available and more when the renovation of the second floor is completed.

The Church has already voted a willingness to enter into an agreement for the joint use of the Community House with the Historical Society, which owns the building. The Society is in agreement, because it will further its desire to have the building used as a community center. The project is now is now is in the

hands of an attorney to draw up a tentative agreement that would be legal and satisfactory for both Church and Society.

### NOW GOING ON

Our request for donations for some new curtains in the dining room was heard, and we hope that they will be in place by the time of the annual meeting.

Renovation of the Community House second floor awaits an agreement between Church and Historical Society, but the roof repair of the north wing is necessary for the safety of that part of the building. Plans have been made, and the work on it is expected before the winter.

### NEW ADDITIONS

The manufacture of farm machinery was the main industry of Middletown Springs in the second half of the 1800s. The A. W. Gray horsepower treadmills and harvesters were well known throughout this country and even abroad.

Even though not in general use for the past 80 years, some of the machines are still in existence and treasured as antiques. The Historical Society already has three, and since the last Newsletter, three more have been donated: a fanning mill, a planter, and a seeder. We already have a thresher, but are looking hopefully for a treadmill.

### DATING THE MACHINES

It is obviously impossible to date each machine, but the history of the Gray family and the company name painted on the side is helpful. "A.W. Gray Co." is from 1836 to 1856. "A.W. Gray & Son" is

Please make checks payable to the M.S. Historical Society and send to Mrs James Webber, South St., Middletown Springs, VT 05757. The dues are: Individual-\$4, Family-\$5, Contributing-\$10 Sustaining-\$50, Life-\$100.

Name Address Zip Amount

from 1856 to 1866 (Son Leonidas joins).  
"A.W. Gray & Sons" (includes Son A.Y.) is  
from 1866 to 1875. "A.W. Gray Sons" is  
after 1875, when A.W. retired.

#### PERMANENT HOME FOR THE MACHINES?

At present the Gray machines that have  
been donated to the Historical Society  
are housed in several empty spaces in  
barns or sheds in the town, but this  
does not satisfy our desire to have  
them on display.

Some thought has been given to the idea  
of a building in the Mineral Springs  
Park, but the question of adequate  
space for six machines, plus the need  
for maintenance and security makes this  
questionable. Does anyone have a solution?

#### MORE HOMES ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER?

When Middletown Springs became a member  
of the National Register, the Historic  
District was limited to the closely  
populated area along the four roads  
leading from the center of town. There  
are a number of houses outside the de-  
signated area that would have been in-  
cluded except for their location.

The Vermont Division of Historic Preser-  
vation tells us that individual houses  
can seek membership by going through  
a modified form of the same procedure  
that the town used: application, in-  
spection by an architectural histor-  
ian, evaluation by the Vermont office,  
and, if approved, a referral to the  
national headquarters in Washington  
for final action. For detailed

information, please get in touch with  
Herbert Davison (Box 271 South Street or  
235-2322) for a copy of the requirements.

#### CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK

This very popular event on the Pre-  
Christmas season will again be held on  
the Green with candlelight and song.  
The Grange is in charge and will set the  
date and time before the next Newsletter.

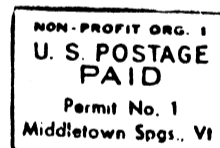
A live spruce tree was planted last year  
near the larger tree brought in. When it  
grows taller, it will become the per-  
manent center of activity.

#### MEMBERSHIP

The slip on the other side of this page  
is for the few who have not yet renewed  
their 1987 membership. If so, a "186" is  
after their name and address. If desired,  
other members may use it to renew for 1988.

*Herbert M. Davison*  
Herbert M. Davison  
Research Chairman

Middletown Springs Historical Society  
Middletown Springs, VT 05757



*Mr. Wood Wright*  
*Iron*