



# Middletown Springs Historical Society NEWSLETTER

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September 2004

## Baseball Follies

by Michael McMorrow

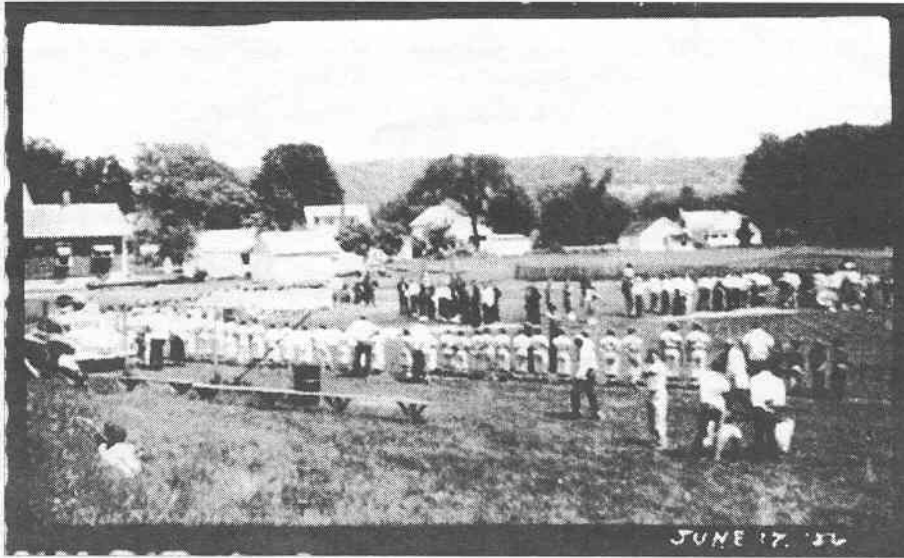
I was one of 27 students who graduated from Poultney High School in 1964. Middletown Springs High School graduated 3 students that year. The following year, 1965, Poultney graduated 54 students (it was the first year of the baby-boom graduations). 1965 was the last year that MSHS was open, although they didn't have any seniors that final year.

I don't know what sports were offered at MSHS but I know that they played baseball — they were on Poultney's baseball schedule. Let me tell you a little about baseball at Middletown Springs High School.

Most of the Poultney players knew most of the Middletown players. We started the Little League program in Poultney in 1955 (I played for the Taran Slate team that first year). Since neither Hampton nor Middletown had a Little League program, the guys from those towns (there were no girls in Little League then) played in the Poultney Little League. So when Poultney High School played MSHS in baseball, we weren't playing against strangers — we had already played with and against many of the Middletown kids for 4 or 5 years.

The strangest game that I remember was the 1962 Poultney-Middletown game that was played in Middletown Springs. The baseball field left something to be desired but was about par with some of the others around the league. The game was played in late April. The corn had not yet been planted in right field but the stubble was still there

from the previous year. Stubble or no stubble, the right fielder wouldn't want to play too deep because, if he did, he could only see the top half of the pitcher and he couldn't see the batter at all (there was a bit of a dip out there).



Middletown had some outstanding players in 1962 with the likes of Ernie Moyer and Don Marcy. However, the team got a bit thin once you got past the stars. Since there were only 11 boys at MSHS in grades 7-12 it was catch-as-

catch-can in the bottom part of the lineup. The game started at 3:30 and, from the outset, it was one-sided in Poultney's favor (the final score was 22-1). At 6:00, we had a problem. The home plate umpire needed to go home to milk his cows and there was no one in the crowd who was willing to take over behind the plate. Fortunately, Poultney had a backup catcher, David Capman. So it was agreed by both managers that Poultney's catcher, Morris Panoushek, would take a step back and umpire the rest of the game and Dave Capman would put on the catcher's outfit and take over as Poultney's catcher. Not according to Hoyle, perhaps, but it worked out well — we played the rest of the game, the cows got milked and we all took away pleasant memories of the strangest game we ever played.

*Michael McMorrow is a post card dealer who has been the source of many antique post cards in the Historical Society's collection. He lives in North Clarendon.*

Earlier this year the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared the entire state of Vermont endangered by the threat of sprawl and "big box" commercial development. A lively debate in the local newspapers has brought out the pros and cons of economic growth on a small, mostly rural state with a population equal to that of a medium sized city, like Rochester, N. Y., for example.

A few years back, the focus of successful compromise with big retailers like Wal Mart was to locate smaller-sized versions of the big boxes in the established downtown shopping area, as was done in Rutland and Bennington. But now the spirit of compromise has been abandoned by the big guys, as they apply for super-sized projects under an Act 250 permitting process that is annually streamlined (and weakened) by a legislature constantly pressured by business lobbyists.

At the local level, historic preservation encounters different issues, summed up in a general sentiment discovered in recent town planning research, that most Middletown Springs residents would like to see the town remain just about as it is. And yet things change in small ways that add up to a slow deterioration: historic buildings are torn down or disfigured, old shade trees die and are not replaced, roadways are widened and new signs are installed, etc., etc.

As a curmudgeon like Charles Parker, the unofficial Poultney town historian, who died earlier this year, might put it "I've seen a lot of changes in my day, and I don't approve of any of 'em!"

In the context of what seems like accelerating local change, the mission of a historical society in recording and preserving the local heritage takes on greater significance. A group of volunteers in Middletown Springs perseveres to preserve — with your support and encouragement!

## **NEWS BRIEFS**

### **REHOUSING WORKSHOPS RESCHEDULED FOR 2005**

A series of workshop planned in the Summer of 2004 to train volunteers in conserving and rehousing artifacts as part of the process of returning them to the newly renovated Museum Storage Room has been rescheduled for the spring of 2005. The training workshops are funded by a 2003 National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant of \$5,000.

The award is a follow-up to the 2002 NEH Preservation Assistance Grant of \$4,870 to construct storage shelves and other furnishings as part of the \$12,000 renovation of the Museum Storage Room.

The workshops, to be led by a professional conservator, will be open to volunteers from the Society and other local historical societies, and to the general public. Participants in the training will immediately be able to apply what they learn in a process that includes photographing, documenting and conserving objects in the Historical Society collection.

### **STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL IS SUMMER DELIGHT**

A lovely June day graced the 29th Annual Strawberry Festival. Strawberries from Dutton's Farmstand smothered vanilla ice cream and delicious biscuits baked by Julie Eekhof.

Brendan Taeffe returned to entertain with guitar and fiddle, in a variety of traditional Irish tunes and original compositions. Thanks to Bud Krouse for

providing the flat bed trailer stage.

In the Museum Room Jon Mathewson presented a new exhibit of recent research about the early history of Middletown from the 1840's, which he prepared for the June 2004 Vermont History Expo. The exhibit displays early ledgers of Henry Gray.

Thanks once again to Bill Clark for helping us acquire the very best Vermont-grown strawberries and to all the volunteers who transported and prepared the berries, served the short cake and beverages and performed the many tasks that make our annual festival a success!

### **A NEW ROOF FOR THE SPRING HOUSE**

A work day is scheduled for early September in the Mineral Springs Park for volunteers to help replace the roof on the ornate pavilion that shelters the mineral springs.

Built in 1970 by the newly established Middletown Springs Historical Society, the spring house was designed from antique photographs to resemble the c. 1870 structure that had been part of the Montvert Hotel resort.

The 1970 spring house, with posts, railings and scrollwork brackets prefabricated by Brandon Lumber Co., was erected on the original marble foundation that had been excavated earlier by Bud Krause and other volunteers.

A new red cedar shingle roof will replace asphalt shingles that have endured an extraordinary 34 years.

# Notice of Annual Meeting

The 35th Annual Meeting of the Middletown Springs Historical Society will be held on Sunday, Sept. 19, at the Historical Society Building.

## Agenda

- 6:00 p.m. Pot Luck Supper
- 7:00 p.m. Business Meeting and Election of Trustees, Approval of Bylaws Revision
- 7:30 p.m. Slide Lecture by Margaret Jenks, "The Early Gravestone Carvers of Middletown Vermont"

*The Trustees voted at their August 5, 2004 meeting to bring the following proposed amendments to the Bylaws of the Middletown Spring Historical Society before the membership at the 2004 Annual Meeting:*

## Proposed Amendments to the Historical Society Bylaws

### Article VII

The President shall annually appoint and charge such committees as are necessary for the furtherance of the objectives of the Society. Committees shall include Standing Committees: (Buildings/Mineral Springs Park, Collections Management, Executive/Finance, and Nominating), and Program Committees as needed (e.g. Cemetery, Youth, Events).

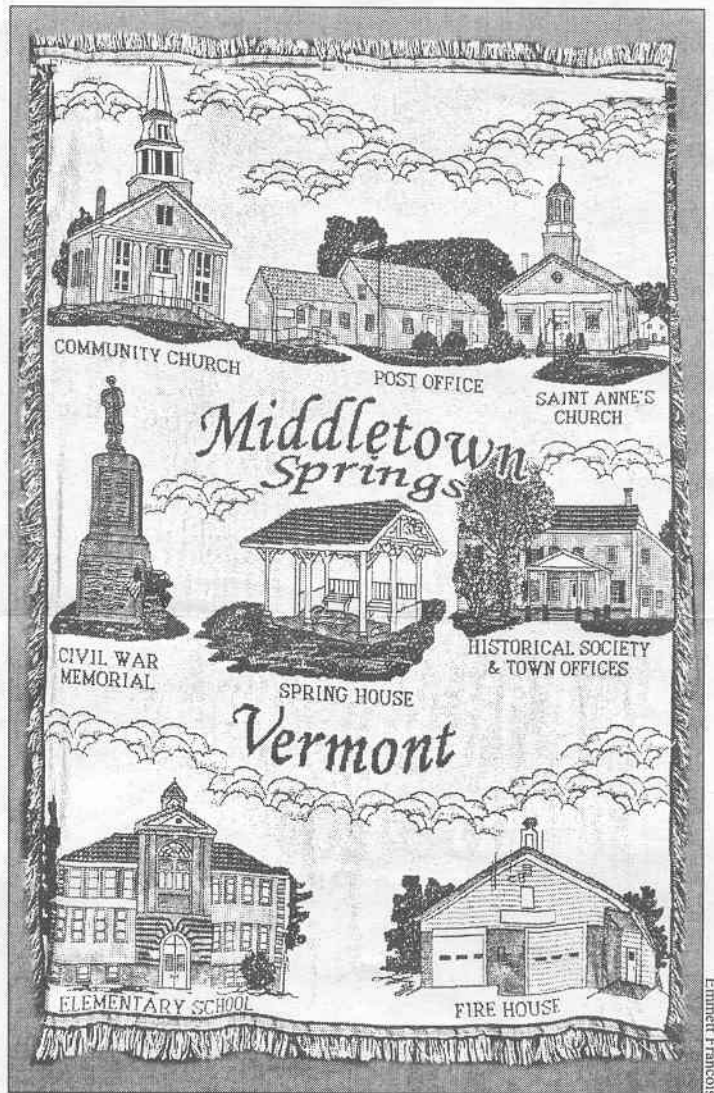
The Buildings/Mineral Springs Park Committee shall oversee maintenance and restoration of the Historical Society Building and the Mineral Springs Park and recommend action to the Board.

The Collections Management Committee shall oversee the conservation of the Society's collection in accordance with the Collection Management policy, adopted June 4, 1998.

The Finance Committee shall consist of the Board officers and shall prepare an annual budget for approval by the Board.

The Nominating Committee shall keep track of terms of office of the trustees and recommend new prospective trustees in accordance with Article VI, Sections 3 & 4 above.

Committees other than the Finance Committee will be chaired by a trustee and may include Society members who are not trustees.



**Warm and attractive cotton afghans** — (45 inches x 70 inches) featuring historic buildings and monuments of Middletown Springs are available from the Volunteer Fire Department for \$55, including postage. Color is blue with off-white background.

Send a check to Vicki Arsenault, Treasurer, MSVFD, PO Box, Middletown Sp. VT 05757

## COMING EVENTS 2004 - 2005

- |          |         |   |
|----------|---------|---|
| Sept. 19 | 6:00 pm | Potluck Dinner, Annual Meeting & Early Gravestone Carvers Talk      |
| Jan. 15  | 1-4 pm  | Antiques Discovery Day antiques appraisal workshop with Jim Marquis |

## Membership Information

Membership dues for 2004 were due in January.  
Check your mailing label for current status.

### Dues (Check one):

Individual	\$8.00	Contributing	\$25.00
Family	\$12.00	Individual Life	\$125.00
Business	\$50.00	Family Life	\$150.00

Send to: Pat Hemenway, *Treasurer*  
Middletown Springs Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1126  
Middletown Springs, VT 05757

- Frisbie's *History of Middletown* CD-ROM \$20, post paid.
- Lampshades featuring 12 historic postcard views of Middletown Springs, \$48, plus shipping.
- *Historic Architecture of Middletown Springs* pamphlet, \$3, post paid.
- *A Gem in the Hills*, by Frances Krouse, \$25.00, post paid.

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

Visit our website:

[www.members.tripod.com/MiddletownSpringsHS](http://www.members.tripod.com/MiddletownSpringsHS)

### Business Members

Thanks to local businesses that have joined MSHS under our "Business" membership category:

*Archideck—Sarah Grimm*

*Estelle Ellis—Business Image, Inc.*

*William Emberley—Antique Bottles & Collectibles*

*Green Mountain Timber Frames — Dan McKeen*

*LaValley Building Supply*

*Jim Marquis—Antiques Appraiser*

*Southview Arts—Digital Recording Studio*

*Stewarts Dairy*

*Williams Hardware, Poultney—Bob Williams*

The MSHS Newsletter is published as many as four times 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.

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

Return Service Requested

## Still Available A Gem in the Hills

Bud and Anne Krouse write to remind us that copies of Frances Krouse's *Middletown Springs, Vermont, A Gem in the Hills* are still available. Printed in 2000 after Fran's death from Lou Gehrig's Disease, the book presents a series of chapters on the history of Middletown Springs, touching on subjects like the schools, churches and clubs, personalities from Dana Carpenter to Clyde Parker, and events like the town Bicentennial Celebration in 1984.

Fran's history can be purchased for \$25, including postage, from the Historical Society (see details, left) or from the Krouses at 18 Montvert Road, Middletown Springs, VT 05757.

## Welcome! New Members

### ANNUAL MEMBER

Gary Kenyon, *St. Petersburg, Fl.*

Bruce Lake, *Pittsford*

Larry & Evelyn Ritchie, *Middletown Springs*

Curt Stevens, *Rockland, Mass.*

### NEW CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Pat & Don Hemenway, *Middletown Springs*

Patty & Matt Kenyon, *Middletown Springs*

Don & Helen Rogers, *Bennington*

Mabel Lake Wescott & Velma Reed, *Poultney*

### NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Vannilu Harrison & Sharen Underwood,  
*Middletown Springs*

