



# Middletown Springs Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Vol. 37, No. 1

April 2006

## Treadmill Returns Home

by David Wright

**A**n agricultural relic of a prosperous era of the town's history was recently returned to Middletown Springs, thanks to the generosity of the granddaughter of the couple who first owned and used it.

The story begins in June 2005 with a note from a village near Salem, N. Y. :

*"We have a treadmill that says . . . 'A. W. Gray & Sons / Horsepower / Middletown Springs, Vt.' It has been stored under cover for years. It is old blue paint. We were wondering if your group would have any use for it or know someone who would. If you are interested please call or write . . ."*

A phone call to Rita and Carl Thygesen in Cosayuna, N.Y. revealed that the treadmill belonged to an elderly friend and neighbor of theirs, Isabelle Guthrie, and that she would like to donate it to someone who would preserve and appreciate it. A visit was arranged to investigate.

One pleasant evening in early July, Bud Krouse and David Wright drove over to Cosayuna, about 25 miles, to the Thygesen's farm. Carl took us to the nearby Guthrie place, a once-stately Greek Revival style farmhouse with several weathered barns and sheds. Isabelle Guthrie, 89, has lived all her life on the farm of her grandparents, Samuel and Rosella Guthrie. Her brother, Valentine, "Pudge", Guthrie also lived here and farmed the place until his death two years ago at age 91.

Carl led us to a barn built of hand hewn timbers with vertical board siding and a slate roof. Just inside the big center-bay doors, the fading evening light showed on the characteristic bright blue paint



*Isabelle Guthrie and Valentine Guthrie, her brother, on their family farm in Argyle, Washington County, New York.*

on the broad wooden side of a Gray treadmill. The red painted band wheel protruded from the hay and other debris that enshrouded the old treadmill, and the beautifully decorated stand was leaning against the far end. All the parts were there and the paint was in good condition.

The only irregular thing about the machine was that wooden front bar, which keeps the horse from walking out off the front of the moving tread, had been a lowered about eight inches. Isabelle later explained that her father said that they had used an ox to power the treadmill. That ox was apparently not as tall as a typical horse.

Bud, Carl and I returned to Isabelle's barn on a sunny Sunday in early September and, using a come-along and rollers, pulled the treadmill out of the barn for perhaps the first time in a hundred years. (Isabelle says she never saw it used.) We

loaded it onto Bud's trailer and tied it down for the journey to Middletown Springs. Isabelle came out for photo and chance for us to thank her again for her wonderful donation. She thanked us in turn and said she was delighted to see the treadmill heading "home".

Back in town, we took the treadmill to a barn owned by Margaret and Clay Fowler and family on Coy Hill Rd. where we unloaded it with the help of David and Jenny Munyak. The former dairy barn, built by Pete and Shirley Moyer, has a good roof and concrete floor. The thresher joins other artifacts from the Society collection which the Fowlers have generously allowed us to store there.

With the passing of Kay Avery, the Society has lost a founding member, a major benefactor and a persistent supporter, advisor and critic.

In acknowledgment of her donation of her family land for the Mineral Springs Park in 1969, (her great grandfather was A.W. Gray who discovered and developed the springs) the first bylaws of the newly created Middletown Springs Historical Society designated her, along with Theron "Bud" Krouse, as a life member of the board of trustees.

While she retired from active participation on the board in 1980, choosing a series of surrogates to hold her seat, she remained actively interested in the direction, successes and challenges of the Society over the years. Nearly every conversation

I had with Kay in the more than 20 years I have been actively involved, turned to what was going on with the Historical Society, and I suppose other board members and supporters of the Society had the same experience.

She did not always agree with the direction of the board and minced no words in telling us so. Yet she was overwhelmingly supportive and seemed endlessly impressed with our accomplishments. Her positive supportive attitude was reflected in her consistent financial support — from five dollar purchases of leftover plates of festival baked goods to the generous bequest reported elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Kay had a vested interest in the future of the Middletown Springs Historical Society and did all she could to assure its success.

### **Collections Care Workshops Continue**

A final collections care workshop in a series funded by a 2003 Preservation Assistance Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities will take place on April 22 at the Historical Society. Led by Eileen Corcoran of Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance, the workshop will continue the training of volunteers to improve the storage conditions of various items in the Society's collection.

Approximately half of the collection has been returned to the recently renovated Museum Storage Room. Curator Jon Mathewson, whose day job is Collections Manager at the Henry Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, is leading the Collection Management Committee in this important work.

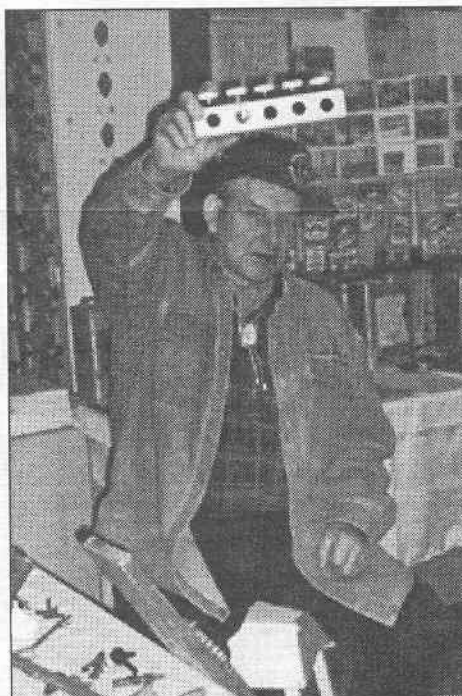
Another PAG funded project is complete, the installation of an environmental monitoring system, using the Box Car Data Logging System by Onset Corporation, which continuously monitors temperature, relative humidity and light intensity in four different storage and exhibition spaces.

Data is periodically downloaded into a computer where associated software can create graphs to display changes in the three parameters over time. A new computer system was purchased with grant funding to run the new data logging system and to store accession records. The Society has ordered Past Perfect museum software for the new computer.

### **Thank You to Donors to the 2005 Annual Fund**

- Joan Aleshire
- Jim & Shirley Anderson
- Katherine Bennett
- Josie & Jere Berger
- Toyo Biddle
- Bernie & Marcia Bischoff
- Marilyn Bobseine
- Truman Cavanaugh
- Shirley Croucher
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- Jean Ekwall
- Estelle Ellis
- Truman & Marilyn Esau
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- Jean Matthews
- Dan McKeen, Green Mtn. Timber Frames
- Dorothy Marie Miner
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- Anna & Robert Taggart
- Jerusha Jane Tanner
- Harry & Mary Thomas
- Gwen Wilder
- Bob Williams, Williams Hardware
- Edna Wiggins
- Charles Wright
- Mary Lou Willits & David Wright



*Bill Clark shows off the grades of syrup during his talk at this year's Maple Festival.*

# In Memoriam

**KAY AVERY**, 97, died October 18 in the house where she was born on Montvert Rd. Dr. A. C. Norton lived next door, and when the nurse for her four year old brother, Albert, called from the second floor window, "The baby is coming!", Dr. Norton came right over. She was named Katherine Gray Avery.



Kay was the daughter of Josephine Gray Avery and Brainard Avery, a lawyer who had been Sen. Redfield Proctor's secretary. Kay's maternal grandparents were Sarah Clark Gray and A.Y. Gray, partner with his brother in running A.W. Gray's Sons horsepower factory. Her paternal grandparents were Emmaretta Waite Avery and W.H.H. "Henry" Avery, the captain of a colored regiment in the Civil War, and later a Baptist minister.

Kay attended Middletown Springs school for a few years and then was sent to Horace Mann School in New York City, where her father had his law practice, and to Dwight School in Englewood, New Jersey. She traveled to France to study at the University of Grenoble and the Sorbonne in Paris. She later studied at the University of Maine, New York University and the New School for Social Research.

Her career included work for Overseas Press Club of America, American Red Cross, Child Study Association of America, National Consumer Retail Council, Teachers College at Columbia University and Advisory Committee on Political Refugees.

Kay was the author of six children's books (some of which can be found at the Middletown Springs Library) including *Wee Willow Whistle*, 1947; *All for a Horse*, 1955; *All for a Friend*, 1956; *All for a Ghost*, 1957; *Salt Water Sam*, 1962; *Goodbye Blue Jeans*, 1963. She is listed in *Who's Who of American Women*.

In 1969 Kay moved back to her family home in Middletown Springs with her husband, Dell Feuerlicht. Dell died in 1980. Her older brother, Albert, died in 1968. Her younger brother Brainard, Jr., "Bobby", drowned in Lake St. Catherine at the age of 15. Kay is survived by her son, Thomas Hettinger of Concord, N. H.

Kay was a founding member of the Historical Society. In 1969 Kay and Bud Krouse gave the land for the Mineral Springs Park to the newly created Middletown Springs Historical Society. She served for several years as a trustee of the Society. Over the years, she gave generously to fund improvements to the Springs Park and other activities of the Society.

Kay left a bequest of \$15,000 to the Society "with the wish and hope that said money will be used for the repair and maintenance of the Mineral Springs Park . . . and structures and fixtures thereupon".

She supported, as well, many other community projects. She left a bequest of \$5,000 to the Middletown Springs Public Library "to do with as they see fit." She was a member of the Garden Club and attended Fortnightly meetings, Town Meeting and other local events until well into her nineties. Intensely interested in her town and its residents, her first question to visitors was invariably, "What's new?"

An interment service will be held Sunday, May 14, 11 am at Pleasant View Cemetery, followed by a reception at the Historical Society building.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Middletown Springs Historical Society, P. O. Box 1126, Middletown Springs, VT 05757.

**RICHARD CROUCHER**, 84, died October 15, 2005 in Alma, Michigan. Dick grew up on Long Island and visited Middletown Springs with his family as guests at the Homestead, a farm resort on North Street. He was graduated from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pa. and served in the U. S. Army during WWII as a staff sergeant with the 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, the "Blood and Fire" division. He married Shirley LaPaugh in 1948 and worked for 33 years for Alma Products. His community involvement included service as treasurer of the school board, chairman of the United Way, and girls coach in many sports including Powder Puff Football.

Dick is survived by his wife, four daughters and nine grandchildren. He became a member of the Society a few years ago when he visited Middletown Springs in search of The Homestead.

**RUTHE M. GILMORE**, 81, died March 21, 2005 in Rutland. She was born in Middletown Springs, the daughter of Thomas and Leona (Kenyon) Traverse. She worked as a respiratory therapist at Rutland Regional Medical Center for 25 years.

Ruthe is survived by her husband, Carroll Gilmore, of Fair Haven, her brother, T. Blair Traverse, and several nieces and nephews. She was a member of the Society for many years.

## 2006 COMING EVENTS

Sunday, May 28	Memorial Day Parade
Sat. & Sun, June 20	Vermont History Expo, Tunbridge Fairgrounds
Sunday, June 25	Strawberry Festival, 1-4 pm
Sunday, Sept. 24	Annual Meeting, 6 pm
Sunday, Oct. 15	Museum Open House & Donor Celebration,

## Membership Information

Membership dues for 2006 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 or photocopy, \$20, post paid.
- Eight notecards with historic photos of Middletown Springs, \$12 postpaid.
- *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*

*Friends in Adoption—Dawn Smith Pliner*

*Green Mountain Timber Frames—Dan McKeen*

*LaValley Building Supply*

*Jim Marquis—Antiques Appraiser*

*Southview Arts—Digital Recording Studio*

*Stewarts Dairy*

*Twin Mountain Farms B&B—Annie & Walt Pepperman*

*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**

## Welcome! New Members

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Dennis Clark, *Charleston, S.C.*

Dale Milne, *Greeley, Colo.*

Adina Roberts, *Pasadena, Calif.*

### FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS

Gary & Cathy Kenyon, *St Petersburg, Fla.*

Elsie Norton & Jean Ann Reynolds, *Middletown*

Aileen & Peter Stevenson, *Middletown Springs*

John & Catherine Winkopp, *Greenville, S.C.*

### CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Joan Aleshire, *Shrewsbury*

Bernhard & Marcia Bischoff, *Middletown Springs*

Estelle Ellis, *New York, N.Y.*

Truman & Marilyn Esau, *Whitewater, Colo.*

Jon & Kimberly Mathewson, *Middletown Springs*

Rep. John Malcolm, *Pawlet*

Larry & Evelyn Ritchie, *Middletown Springs*

Julie & Don Scott, *Middletown Springs*

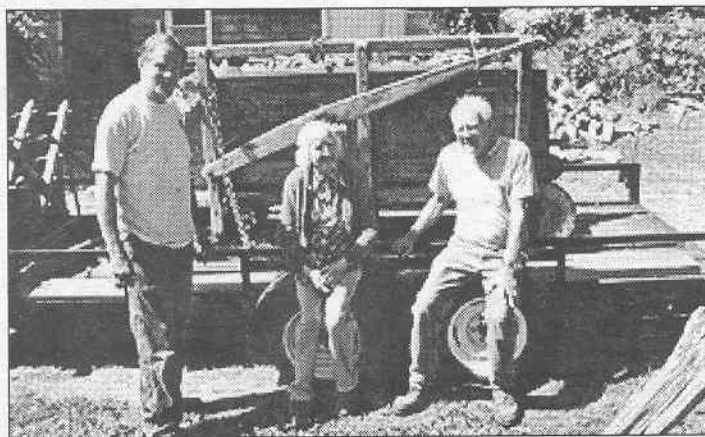
Sean & Alicia Sonderman, *Middletown Springs*

Harry & Mary Thomas, *Gansevoort, N.Y.*

Charles M. Wright, *Ankeny, Ia.*

### LIFE MEMBERS

Mary D. Herberich, *Yarmouthport, Mass.*



*Bud Krouse and David Wright thank Isabelle Guthrie for her gift of her family's A.W. Gray treadmill.*

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