



The Marston's Grist

The newsletter of the Marstons Mills Historical Society
P.O. Box 1375 Marstons Mills, MA 02648

A few words from the President...

Looking back at the past six months of the Marstons Mills Historical Society year, we see a variety of activities and topics for the membership and guests. A significant event for this period, of course, was the celebration of the Society's 40th anniversary in October, which is detailed elsewhere in this issue of The Grist. Our topics have included a range that has addressed both local and regional interests---appropriate because we all live in both a historic Cape Cod village and at the same time in the larger context of the area and the world. Our presentations have also represented another kind of mix---local member presentations as well as resource persons from outside of the Mills. In 2024 we look forward to more of the same variety of activities. We also express appreciation to Wendy Bierwirth for her dual role of website manager and editorial production of The Grist. All best wishes to everyone for a productive and happy year ahead.

---David S. Martin, President

COMING EVENT

January 16 2pm—Marston Mills Library Historical Story of the Cape Cod Canal

DUES TIME

January is the month for members to send in their membership renewal dues; a dues announcement was sent to members in December 2023. Current dues are \$20 per year, and members may add a donation to their renewals. Payment may either be sent via regular mail using the form on page 2 to MMHS, Box 1375, Marstons Mills, dropped off at the Library's circulation desk, or paid online by clicking on Membership at <https://www.marstonmillshistorical.org/join-contribute>. A pop-up membership form will appear. Once "Submit" is pressed, you will be taken to PayPal where your payment can be processed.

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.****

MMHS OFFICERS

President: David Martin

Vice-President: Rick Presbrey

Secretary: Marguerite Adams

Treasurer: Bebe Brock

Archivist: Dianne Potter

Website Mgr & Grist Editor:

Wendy Bierwirth

Past Presidents:

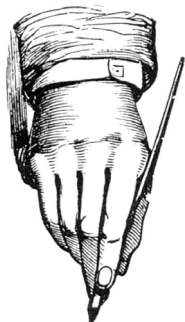
Bob Frazee & Sandra Bolton

BOOK STORE

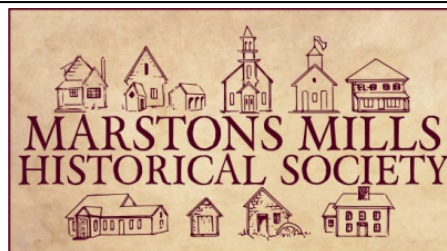
Images of America: Marstons Mills. An Arcadia Publication written by local historians James Gould and Vivian Cushing. Limited signed copies. View this publication at marstonsmillshistorical.org/publications. Available for purchase at MMPL.

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 2023 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.

P.O. Box 1375

Marstons Mills, MA 02648

marstonsmillshistorical.org

A SALUTE TO VIVIAN CUSHING



We in the Society reflect on the outstanding historical work done by the late Vivian Cushing, who passed away since the previous Grist issue at the age of nearly 98. Vivian served the Society in a number of ways. She was its Treasurer for many years, carefully keeping our books in excellent shape. She also was the co-author, with Jim Gould, of the Arcadia book on the History of Marstons Mills—a book which has been a valuable tool of reference for many members in reconstructing the past of the Mills. Vivian and Jim both generously donated all of their royalty payments to the Society’s treasury. Still another major contribution was her voluminous writings—in many cases handwritten—about the genealogical history of numerous Mills families. These records now reside safely in our Archives at the Library. In her writing she also recorded many events from recollections of past citizens of the Village. Our Archives are significantly richer as a result of all of her writings. Her family is currently identifying other local historical records and writings that she kept, for additional donation to the Archives. We treasure her memory and her many historical accomplishments.

A BRITISH PERSPECTIVE OF CAPE COD



Photo: Michael Kemp
With David Martin
Photo by Aimee Silberman

An international perspective on Cape Cod History was the subject of the September 2023 meeting. Mr. Michael Kemp, amateur historian from County Devon in England, presented fascinating evidence of the historical parallels between Barnstable, Massachusetts and Barnstaple, England (for which Barnstable was named in the 17th century). Using maps and other documents, Michael demonstrated how some of the Barnstaple names became Barnstable names, as well as common products such as the brick industry in both places which used similar clay deposits and therefore have some common designs. And the parallels are even somewhat geographical—Barnstable has its Sandy Neck as a peninsula and Barnstaple has its Braunton Burrows; both are sandy and both were used as training grounds for World War Two American troops who were preparing for the assault on the Normandy beaches of France in June of 1944. Michael presented a lovely illustrated gift book to the Society—the history of Barnstaple, England

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY



LEFT: *Something Old Something Something New* players David Martin, Sue Crocker & Rick Presby with Sandy Bolton (photo by Sandy Bolton) CENTER: Birthday Cake celebrating the 200th anniversary of Burgess House and the 40th Anniversary of the Society (photo by Sandy Bolton) RIGHT: The Sand Bars Barbershop Quartet performs for the 40th Anniversary (photo by Wendy Bierwirth)

For its observance of its 40th anniversary at the October meeting, the Society enjoyed a four-part celebration which took place at the Burgess House (which was also celebrating its own 200th anniversary). First was a composite color slide show developed by former president Sandy Bolton on events and individuals since the 30th anniversary in 2013. Next was an original play, written by Sandy, called “*Something Old, Something New*”; the event was a play-reading about local events including the use of a metal detector (see later article on this topic); actors included Sue Crocker, Rick Presbrey, and David Martin. This event was followed by a performance by a Barbershop Quartet—The Sand Bars—from the local Barbershop Chorus, The Surftones; in the quartet was Sue Martin, wife of President David Martin. The events concluded with a giant birthday cake citing both the Society and Burgess House.

METAL DETECTION CONTINUES



Member Tony Mulone continues in his third year of effective use of a fine model of metal detector around historic local sites. Among his recent uncoverings have been further detecting at the William Marston house on Route 149 and the site of the now-removed elementary school. Among his discoveries, all of which have been shared with Society members, have been metal tools, discarded bottles, a musket ball, and a number of old coins. Some careful guesswork is now being applied to a mysterious old coin. Anyone with an historic property is invited to contact Tony to set up a session when Tony will bring his special instrument; all discoveries are shown to the property owner and the owner can decide whether or not to keep them or donate them to the Society. Owners have been generous in always allowing Society members to view the discoveries, even if they would like to keep them eventually. Tony can be reached at tonymulonejr@gmail.com.

SPECIAL FUNDRAISER EVENT

On October 28, a special fund-raiser event was held at Liberty Hall, to benefit the community and the Society. A guitar musician began the afternoon program, followed by a repeat performance by the same players of the play, *“Something Old, Something New”*. A stand-up comedian then entertained the audience with his humor, some of which had local references. A raffle for a gourmet gift basket was held, along with a separate raffle for one free hour of genealogical consultation. Refreshments were provided, along with a chance to purchase Society-related books, T-shirts, and sweatshirts. The event was supported by a special grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, initiated by Sandy Bolton. More than \$400 was raised to benefit the Society.



ARCHIVES CONTINUE TO EXPAND

The Society’s Archives, in the lower level of the Library, continues to expand as space allows. People with historical documents and artifacts continue to donate them to the Archives, which keeps our faithful Archivist, Dianne Potter, more than busy. Anyone with an interest in looking up archival information there or in donating an item to the Archives is invited to contact David Martin (davidmartindr@aol.com) to set up an appointment.

INTERVIEW

Several recent interviews with individuals who have long memories of the Village have now been filed in the MMHS Archives. The most recent of these was with Rob DeMelo, a long-time resident with three generations of Mills family members. This interview is among those in the Archives. More than 45 past interviews are available to be read on the Society's website,

HYDRANGEA FESTIVAL 2024

The Society will participate in July 2024 in the annual Hydrangea Festival of Barnstable. Anyone with an interesting garden may offer to have visitors during the second weekend of July, and Society members are invited to volunteer on one of two days to host visitors. Visitors pay an entrance fee of \$5 for each garden, and all of that revenue from Society-sponsored gardens will go directly to the Society. Anyone with questions about volunteering a garden or as a host may contact Marguerite Adams at madms917@gmail.com before March 31.

SANDWICH & MARSTONS MILLS PROGRAM

For its November meeting, historian John Cullity of Sandwich provided a presentation on historic events which are shared by adjacent Sandwich and Marstons Mills. He provided historic photographs of people and events in the Mills, including information about some historic Mills families. John had previously provided significant displays for the 2022 Nye House Museum's program about Cape Cod and the Revolution. He specifically set the stage for the December program which is described next.

THE CROCKERS OF MARSTONS MILLS

The December 2023 meeting featured a presentation by member Jeffrey Crocker, who lives in Virginia but spends some time each year visiting his parents in the local area. Jeffrey has done extensive research on the numerous Crocker families who populated the region; he gave a Talk in August on the Crockers of Cotuit. His presentation for the Society naturally focused on the branches of the family who lived – and continue to live—in Marstons Mills. One focus was on the historical character, Samuel Fremont Crocker—an inventor, entrepreneur, and long-time resident in the past. Jeffrey has published a book on the Crocker family and will prepare a second edition which will include some newer discoveries.

HISTORY OF REVOLUTION ON CAPE COD & ISLANDS

David Martin is currently coordinating the production of a new book on the Revolutionary War on the Cape and Islands, for the Cape and Islands Historical Association. The book will appear before the 250th anniversary of the Revolution in 2026. Anyone with an interest in relating a story about an event or individual between 1761 and 1783, involving the Cape and Islands, is invited to contact David before Jan. 31, 2024 at DavidMartinDr@aol.com.