



# The Marston's Grist

The newsletter of the Marstons Mills Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1375 Marstons Mills, MA 02648 [marstonsmillshistorical.org](http://marstonsmillshistorical.org)

A few words from the President...

*As we all recover from a sweltering summer, events have been occurring in recent months even without formal Society meetings since June 2016. First, we would like to extend condolences to the families of Arthur Thifault and Mae Grant, both of whom passed away since the previous issue of The Grist; both were loyal members of the Society.*

*Next, we are pleased to report on the success of the Marstons Mills Tour de Force—a first-time comprehensive tour of key sites in the Village, co-sponsored with the Marstons Mills Public Library. Nearly fifty persons participated in visits to the Community Church, the Sabatia Flower Farm, the Burgess House, the Airfield, the Cranberry Sunset Horse Farm and the Underground House on Wheeler Road. We salute the numerous volunteers who helped to staff the sites, including Society and Village Association members, as well as the owners of those sites who so graciously welcomed all of the visitors. The day concluded with a performance of an original play by Past-President Sandra Bolton in Liberty Hall, about the first Marstons Mills Librarian (Hattie Mecarta); the event was also an appropriate recognition for the 125th Anniversary Year of the Library.*

*We also express appreciation to Judith Galvin for her generous donation of library storage materials and historic books from the collection from her late husband Kevin, a past president of the Society.*

*At this writing, plans are being made for the construction of historic marker signs, to be posted for public information about the six different mills that were critical to the history (and name) of our Village. We are seeking volunteers who have experience with signage for advice and assistance.*

*And so another busy year is ahead; please help to spread the word about the interesting activities of the Society and plan to attend our regular meetings—always on the second Tuesday of the month at 2:30pm at the Library.*

**-David Martin, President**

## BURGESS HOUSE

Marstons Mills loves its old buildings, and shows it by giving lots of hard work to restore its historic sites. A lovely example is the Burgess House on the west side of Route 149, a mile north of the village center.

This Cape Cod cottage was probably built before 1823 by Timothy Hinckley, a local housewright, with the help of his housewright son Harvey. In those days housewrights served both functions of contractor and architect. Timothy probably built at least two other houses in the neighborhood, on the east side of the road.

At the core of the original three quarter Cape is a massive

brick chimney with three fireplaces, and it once had a baking oven. The largest fireplace is in the great room, which served as kitchen and family room. The other fireplaces heated the main bedroom and a parlor that was to become the doctors' office. From the front entrance, later enclosed with an entry porch, rises a steep staircase to the attic, where the children slept. In the mid-1830s the house was enlarged to full Cape size. At the rear is an ancient barn in saltbox style.

The builder's son Harvey Hinckley had gone to Nantucket, and in 1834 he sold the house to the village

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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.

# Coming Events...

- ◆ **Tuesday, September 13 @2:30 p.m.** - Monthly meeting of the MMHS at Marstons Mills Public Library
- ◆ **Tuesday, October 11 @2:30 p.m.** - Monthly meeting of the MMHS at Marstons Mills Public Library

*All are welcome*

## MARSTONS MILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

*President: David Martin*

*Vice-President: Claire Melix*

*Secretary: Jim Gould*

*Treasurer: Bebe Brock*

### BOOK STORE

***Barnstable 375th Anniversary.*** Marstons Mills is one of several villages highlighted in this publication. The coffee table book includes a fascinating brief history of the town. ***Available for purchase at MMPL.***

***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](http://marstonsmillshistorical.org/publications). ***Available for purchase at MMPL.***

**NOTE: prices of some books have been reduced!**

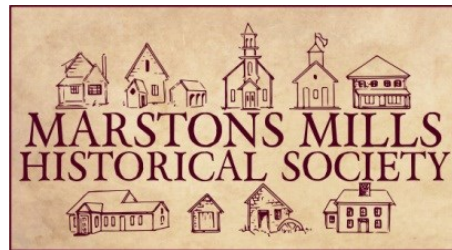
***Explore! Contemporary Marstons Mills, Cape Cod***

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](mailto:boltonslanding@comcast.net), subject line: order book.

The MMHS meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 2:30 p.m. at Marstons Mills Public Library. All are welcome!



Comments and articles for submission should be sent to [astephens@clamsnet.org](mailto:astephens@clamsnet.org).



## MEMBERSHIP FORM

I / we wish to join the Society and enclose payment for my / our Individual Membership(s) at \$15 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.

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

P.O. Box 1375 Marstons Mills, MA 02648  
[marstonsmillshistorical.org](http://marstonsmillshistorical.org)

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

# TOUR DE FORCE - A SUCCESS!



On June 19, 2016, a special Marstons Mills “Tour de Force,” co-sponsored by the Society and the Marstons Mills Public Library, took place from 10am to 3pm. The Tour provided an opportunity for more than fifty participants to visit six varied sites throughout the Village. Included on the Tour were the Community Church on Main Street, the Sabatia Flower Farm on Main Street, the Cranberry Sunset Horse Farm off of Cammett Road, the Underground House on Wheeler Road, the Airfield on Race Lane and the Burgess House on Route 149.

Teams of volunteers from the Society, the Friends of the Library, the Village Association and interested others served as assistants at each site, providing information and facilitating the visits by the participants. Sabatia Flower Farm donated bouquets of flowers as appreciation gifts to the owners of the visited sites. Both adults and children participated.

Several interesting features were highlighted for the visitors. At the Community Church, the rich history of the structure and its various congregations and beliefs were explained. The Sabatia Flower Farm showcased its extensive operation, including greenhouse and fields, for production of flower combinations for the public. The Horse Farm demonstrated how horses have been successfully rescued and have become riding animals for special-needs young people, using a specially constructed trail with stops along the way. The Underground house showed a construction that was done during the 1960’s to make a home as a part of a hillside—an ecological measure, with only one side of the house facing outward. The Airfield’s fascinating history was explained to visitors, who not only watched close-up the various private planes coming and going, but also were able to board a fully operational DC-3 which is owned by the airfield owner. The Burgess House tour showed the features of an early 19th-century construction which has been faithfully restored, as well as explaining the history of the House’s different owners through the years.

The day concluded with a performance of an original play written by Society Past-President, Sandra Bolton. The play was performed in Liberty Hall and was the story of the birth of the Marstons Mills Library (which celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2016), centering on the person of Hattie Mecarta, who was the first Village Librarian.

Appreciation is warmly expressed to all who helped to make the whole day a big success.

**-David Martin**

*Burgess House continued...*

physician, Dr. Ezra Stephenson of Hingham. It is probably he who had the Hinckleys fix up the south room as an office, which we can see has some fancy molding and trim. When we were restoring the house we found two bottles of medicine in a closet.

Five years later Stephenson returned to Hingham and sold the house to a local doctor, Bennett Wing, a Quaker of East Sandwich. Since much of medical training in those days was under a practicing physician, as Stephenson had learned the practice, Dr. Wing may have trained with Stephenson. In 1842 Dr. Wing went back home to care

for a brother stricken by dysentery, which he caught and from which he subsequently died.

During the last half of the century this was the home of two retired sea captains. It was bought in 1843 by Capt. Benjamin F. Scudder (1803-76) who settled here and farmed the 14 acres by the pond. A measure of his success is running the plowing contest at the county fair. His wife Marcia won fair prizes for her wool stockings and wall baskets. After his death the house was rented by Andrew Lawrence and J. M. Holway.

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# A WIFE TRANSPLANTED

The well-known Marston House at the corner of Route 149 and Route 28 has had a storied past, having at various times been a private home and a bed-and-breakfast inn. Benjamin Marston was born in 1768 in Barnstable and died in 1819 in Marstons Mills; he was married to Eunice Blish, who was born on 17 July 1828). Benjamin had the house built for his son, William, who was born on 23 May 1802 in Barnstable and died in Marstons Mills in 1882.

William and his first wife, Minerva Hinckley (born 17 November 1805), were married on 10 September 1827, according to Barnstable Town Records. They occupied the house with their family of children. William bought a grocery store from his neighbor Hinckley, which was also the local drugstore



advertising Goodwin's Indian Bitters which "purify the blood," Dottridge's Nerve and Bone Ointment which was said to be good for "man and beast," Strengthening Plaster, and Brandreth's Universal Pills. The store was also a general gathering place, as evidenced by the public auctions held there. One could even get a fitting by a tailor who came by weekly. He retired at age 80 and sold all his store stock. The business was taken over in 1881 by 31-year-old Lewis Nelson Hamblin.

When Minerva passed away, she was buried on the property with an appropriate headstone. William subsequently married Mary Lovell of Marstons Mills. Mary was born on 20 August 1828 and was active with the Marstons Mills Universalists, who had broken away from the Methodist Church and instead built Liberty Hall across the road from the Methodist Church in September 1859 on land donated by William Marston.

When Mary came to live in the house, she did not want Minerva's grave to be on the property and had the grave transferred to the Marstons Mills Cemetery on Route 149. The headstone, however, was not transferred, but instead was kept and used, presumably by Mary, as a stepping stone on the property! Later owners had the stone transferred to an otherwise brick patio, where it sits today and is well preserved. The photograph shows the gravestone as it appears on the house's patio—a bit of local history under foot! We express appreciation for this account to Mrs. Judith Galvin, the former owner of the property, and to historian Jim Gould; Judith's late husband, Kevin, was President of the Marstons Mills Historical Society.

*-by David Martin*



Photo by David Martin

*Burgess House continued..*

After Marcia Scudder died in 1887, the farm was sold at auction, and bought by Capt. Abner F. Crosby (1836-92) of Cotuit. He was a coasting schooner master, captain of the *Hattie Collins* and *Julia Berkeley*. After his wife Lottie Crocker Crosby died at age 38, he married the Marstons Mills school teacher Addie Gertrude Crocker, daughter of Capt. Joseph Crocker. The village gave them a lavish housewarming for which they provided oranges, figs, cake, candy and ice cream. Addie sang and wrote poetry. Abner died of TB at young age of 55. Addie sold the house to Wilton B. Cammett (1865-1920) in 1897 and built a new house next to the Methodist Church whose minister she sometimes boarded without charge. Addie carried on as a popular teacher in Marstons Mills and in Osterville, where she moved about 1907, and taught at Dry Swamp Academy. Chesbro recorded Elmer Whiteley's memory of "an old time school teacher [who] demanded attention. There you began to learn your three R's and no fooling."

The new owner, Wilton Cammett, was born and grew up across the road, the son of Bennett Wing Cammett (probably named for Dr. Wing). At age 22 Wilton had married the 47 year old Sarah Abbie Jones, divorced widow of Civil War veteran Hercules Jones. They went to Falmouth to run the town almshouse, but returned to this house where he took over the rural meat route of Andrew Lawrence in 1898. It is probably then that the barn was used as a slaughter house. The overhead trolley for meat hooks and ice box can still be seen. Wilton and Sarah eventually moved to Hyannis.

The old farmhouse became a summer home, starting in 1907 when it was sold by the Cammetts to New York banker Charles H. Leland. Swimming was now in Cotuit Lake, evidently a more attractive name than Griegsons or Hamblins Pond. Adjoining land was bought by the Lelands to total 39 acres. The Leland's kept the place for 18 years 1907-1925. In 1914 Charles Leland created "The Beach and Woodlands Trust" in favor of his son Charles Frothingham Leland and his wife Margaret. The son was a graduate of Harvard College 1891 and Harvard law school who gave up New York business to farm in Southborough MA.

In 1927 the Lelands sold this place to Malcolm and Elsie Morse of Providence who quickly sold it to Henry and Margaret Bedford of Providence. In 1930 they gave 2.75 acres to expand the Marstons Mills burial ground on the

north and west sides.

During the Bedfords' eight years 1927-35, it was rented out. In 1935 they sold it to Emma G. Whittemore of Cambridge. She sold it soon after she married Wilfred Wheeler, Jr. of nearby Carsley's Neck.

In 1938 it was bought by James "Jim" A. Burgess, on his wedding to Dr. Rachel "Ray" Burgess (1897-1987). A classmate of Franklin D. Roosevelt at Harvard (1904), and yachtsman, he dealt in marine insurance. She was a



*The Burgess house in Good Housekeeping magazine, courtesy of the Marstons Mills Village Association.*

Chief Pediatrician of New England Hospital for Women, specializing in juvenile diabetes.

The Burgessses retired here in 1940, calling it "Meadowview," and beautified the grounds so that it was featured in a national magazine as "Cape Cod's Prettiest House."

Dr. Burgess was an accomplished horticulturalist who hired Knute E. Carlson, former gardener for the King of Sweden, to landscape the grounds, including a romantic wooden gazebo in a rock garden above

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# SANDY SNEAKERS WALKS THE VILLAGE



Photos by Sandra Bolton

Yes indeed! Sandy Sneakers stepped right into Liberty Hall and was thoroughly entertained by the Marstons Mills "Players of the Day" performing a fun, educational skit about the birth of the Marstons Mills Library.

The grand finale of the wonderful Marstons Mills Tour De Force event! (A video of this performance will be available soon on the MMHS web site!)



## *Burgess House continued...*



photo by Holly Hobart

a glade of rhododendrons, azaleas, laurels, evergreens and exotic plants. There was a croquet lawn, a red-eyed wheat meadow, and a putting green, which was given to

Wianno Golf Club and replaced with a proper bowling green. In the hollow to the north she maintained her "Welsh Clock" with flowers every month of the year. On the lakefront was an aviary of pheasants and swans. Her husband had given title to her after the war, and died before her death here in 1987.

In 1989 the town bought the house on 29 acres from the Burgess estate. Lindsey Counsell laid out a disc golf course. The town did not want the house and in 1997 proposed spending \$17,000 to demolish it, to the protest of

neighbors and history lovers from other villages. The town turned restoration over to volunteers from Hyannis, Cotuit, Osterville, Falmouth, but much of the work was done by neighbors like Brian Lobdell, the Adamses and Lewises, based on plans by Jim Stewart, a model by Charles Fox, and preservation guidance of Bob Frazee.

The interior of the Burgess house was furnished by generous donations of antique furniture. It is the headquarters of the Marstons Mills Village Association, and often the meeting place of the historical society. Quakers of the Barnstable Friends Meeting now meet every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. in the home of the Quaker doctor.

*-Jim Gould*

(The story of the Burgess House first appeared in *The Barnstable Enterprise* on Feb. 5 and 19, 2010.)