



# WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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December 2012

*During these four years of the nation commemorating the Civil War, we will continue featuring a local story in each newsletter. Mark Landry, our Veterans specialist, has provided all the research on our brave men from Westminster.*

## HENRY JAMES PARTRIDGE A CIVIL WAR SOLDIER

Henry James Partridge was born November 7, 1840 in Westminster to Amos and Melita (Reynolds) Partridge. (According to Heywood's History of Westminster some generations of the family spelled their name without the "r").

On May 11, 1861 Henry was one of the first ten from Westminster to sign up in Fitchburg for Westminster's quota (he was 20 years old). He was officially mustered into the service on May 25, 1861 on Brook Farm in West Roxbury as a Private in Company D, 2nd Massachusetts Infantry Regiment of Volunteers. The term of service was three years. After their training the 2<sup>nd</sup> Massachusetts traveled south and was assigned to the Army of the Potomac, where at one point, Henry got sick and was confined in General Hospital #21 at Yorktown, VA.

They were in battle at Winchester in May of 1862 and then the Battle of Cedar Mountain in Virginia on August 9, 1862 where Henry's close friend and comrade from Westminster, Corporal Benjamin Franklin Wilcox was killed in battle. Two days later, when Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson's troops retreated from the battlefield, Henry buried Benjamin on the battlefield.

The next month Henry was at the battle of Antietam at Sharpsburg, MD on September 17. This battle resulted in the largest casualties of U.S. troops on

*(Continued on page 5)*

## UPTON SCHOOL 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY PARTY

Sunday, Oct. 14, 2012. What a terrific scene on Academy Hill! A huge yellow and white tent set up next to the Upton School. Balloons flying from the corners of the tent. Scarecrows lined up along the road's edge welcoming visitors. The smell of freshly popped popcorn coming from inside the tent. Hot coffee, cold cider and mini cupcakes ready for eating. And lots of people poring over class photos from 1912 to 1993 in photo albums, trying to find parents or classmates to identify for us.



*Writing with an old fashioned ink pen and dipping it into an ink bottle was an adventure for the children who came into the area set up like a classroom of old.*

And the biggest attraction for the children, a classroom from yesteryear set up with old fashioned desks with wrought iron legs all lined up for them to

*(Continued on page 3)*

**2012-2013  
OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS**

<i>President</i> .....	Janice Swenor
<i>President-Elect</i> .....	
<i>Vice President</i> .....	
<i>Clerk</i> .....	Joan Longcope
<i>Treasurer</i> .....	Linda Landry
<i>At Large</i> .....	Roni Beal
<i>At Large</i> .....	Jim Biglow
<i>At Large</i> .....	Melody Gallant
<i>At Large</i> .....	Betsy Hannula
<i>At Large</i> .....	Ann Honkonen
<i>At Large</i> .....	Darlene Johnson
<i>At Large</i> .....	Tom Marien

**STAFF**

<i>Administrative Assistant</i> . . . .	Liz Maillet
<i>Assistant Treasurer</i> .....	Michelle Valentino
<i>Curator</i> .....	Betsy Hannula
<i>Genealogy Researcher</i> .....	Darlene Johnson
<i>Historian</i> .....	Patricia Lasky
<i>House Director</i> .....	Ken Marien
<i>Housekeeper</i> .....	Christy Lombardo
<i>Newsletter Editor</i> .....	Patricia Gendron
<i>Registrar</i> .....	Joan Longcope

(If you've ever had an interest in being on a committee or the Board, we're looking for additional members. Call Liz to talk about it!)

**MEETINGS**

Meetings are held September through June on the 3rd Tuesday at 7 pm at the House, and are free and open to the public.

**HOUSE & GIFT SHOP HOURS**

The Historical Society House is open Mondays 7-9 pm and Fridays 9-12 Noon. and other times by appointment.

**MISSION**

The Westminster Historical Society's mission is to save and share Westminster's past.



**LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear Members:

It is hard to believe that yet another year has gone by and the holiday season is right around the corner. Looking back, we've accomplished much, wrapping up with the 100th birthday celebration of the Upton Building. Thanks to all the members that have helped this past year with their time, funds and material donations. We wouldn't have had such a great year without you!

With a new year comes new challenges. Work is happening now to co-ordinate the first phase of work – stabilization of the Upton buildings structure - with the architects, capital campaign committee, building committee and volunteers. We have also embarked on a review of how we operate to see if there are things we can change so that we can position the organization for future generations.

Our Annual Christmas Open House will be held on Saturday December 1st from 9am – 2pm. We will be holding a special “members only” wine and cheese on Friday November 30th from 6 – 8pm. Come and enjoy conversation with fellow members around the fireplace, check out our vintage Christmas room and put in your chance to win a decorated wreath for your home! In addition, we will be offering a 20% discount (in addition to the members 10% discount) on our 2008 History Book. Now is the time to stock up on holiday gifts.

You will be receiving a letter in regards to our Annual Appeal within the next week– this is one of the many ways we support the operational expenses of the Society in addition to our fundraisers and annual membership dues. This year, we have added a number of special sponsorships for your consideration. Whether time, money or donated materials, we hope that you will take a moment to consider supporting the Society this coming year.

All of the members of the Board are looking forward to another challenging, but rewarding year. We hope you'll all participate in the journey with us.

Janice Swenor  
President

*Have you considered the Westminster Historical Society in your estate planning?*

## CURATOR'S CORNER

Thank you to the following people for donating items to our collections. They will tell the story of the people in Westminster long after we're gone.

*Claire Dube:* Ed Dube's Army uniforms, policeman's uniform, and V.F.W. jacket and hats.

*Phil Manseau:* pair of old roller skates

*George Lane:* collection of archives from Harriet Lane's house and an old settee.

*Flea Market:* Hamilton Mayo's Dartmouth graduation certificate with leather case

*Richard Miller:* gold headed cane which originally belonged to Jonas Miller and 3 1700s-1800s account books

*Bambi Azarian:* Lizzie Prentiss's journal 1864

*Mark Landry:* collection of class photos from Westminster Elementary School

*Gordon St. John:* collection of family artifacts, archives and books

*Charles Innis:* Blueberry God by Reino Hannula

*Darlene Johnson:* Judson Foster school record and record of books in the Library in 1895

*Mark Rudziak:* CD of photos of Rudziak family and Edith Rudziak's Finnish costume

*Marjorie Lane:* spinning wheel which was used in the Whitney Homestead

*Ann Noble:* collection of artifacts, archives and photos of early Westminster

*Bette Roy:* Elaine Nikki Waronen's wedding gown, photo, and collection of Girl Scout paraphenalia

The exhibits of unique items from school days: erasers for chalkboards. (Today's white boards aren't quite the same!) A six inch block of wood used in the 1960s when girls skirts were far too short for parents and girls had to kneel down on the floor and have their skirts measured. If your skirt wasn't six inches from the floor you had to go home to change! Oh my, how things are different today!

And, tours of the Upton School. The comments were treasures! Do you remember the lines to the basement (where the bathrooms were)? This room had my favorite teacher! And, oh yes, that's where the movie room was in the 1970s, and in the basement was where they had to put the 7<sup>th</sup> grade when we ran out of room in the rest of the school before Oakmont was built! The memories came flooding back.



*A big attraction at the 100th Birthday Party was looking at the albums of class photos from 1912 to 1993.*

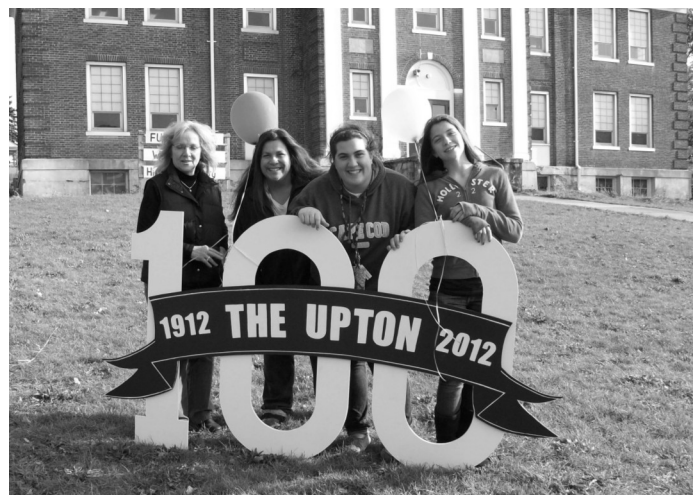
## 100 YEARS *(Continued from page 1)*



*The "Best Group" winner of the scarecrow contest was this lovely bejeweled model!*

sit in. And, Pat Lasky a veteran Westminster teacher ready to assist the children who wanted to learn how to write with a real ink pen – first dip the pen tip just far enough into the ink well to fill the tiny slot with ink, but not so deep that the black ink gets all over your fingers. Do you remember? They were fascinated!

There were lots of extras too. The wonderful baskets for a raffle with lots of winners. A Powerpoint presentation about our plans for the Upton Center.



*This group posed next to the 100 years sign created by Phil Young for the birthday party.*

## MILLER FAMILY DESCENDS UPON WESTMINSTER

The Miller Family came to Westminster this summer to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their first annual reunion in 1932. On August 19 descendants of Jonas and Susan (Bond) Miller gathered at the William S. Miller Legion Post Hall on Main Street. This Legion Post was named for one of their own



*The oldest persons in the Miller Family at the Reunion: were Frank Miller, Harriet Miller, Gale Miller Wright, Bob Miller, Dick Miller, Shirley Field Todd Gaboury, and Bill Miller.*

ancestors, William S. Miller, who lost his life as a soldier in World War I. Families came from as far away as Oklahoma, and in the 81 years they have been holding reunions, this was the second time they had their reunion in Westminster.

The first Miller in Westminster was Joseph who settled on West Princeton Road in 1740. Succeeding generations of the Miller family lived in Westminster for more than two hundred years later - until the 1980s. In fact, the Westminster Historical Society purchased its current home at 110 Main Street from Gerald Miller, the last Miller to live in town.

All the earliest Millers were active citizens and filled many important offices in town. They were also avid collectors of documents that recorded various historical events in town. J. Hervey Miller survived being a soldier in the War of the Suppression and then came back to Westminster and held many public offices including twenty years as an assessor. He also wrote a fascinating book describing his experiences during the Civil War. Frank E. Miller and other family members were also well known workers at the Westminster Cracker Bakery.

All the members of the Miller family present for their family reunion this summer were descended from Jonas who was born in 1798. Jonas was first married to Betsy Wood, who died a month after giving birth to their first child, who also died. Jonas then married Susan Bond in 1829 and had six children. One of Jonas' sons was J. Hervey Miller. Among Hervey's surviving sons were Frank E. and his half brothers Cyrus T. and Harry W. Miller. Cyrus T. Miller had a son, William S. Miller.

The occasion was a momentous one for the Miller families because of a special donation they made. It all started in 1879 when Jonas and Susan Miller reached fifty years of married life together. Townspeople got together and presented them with a gold headed cane in honor of their achievement. That cane has stayed with the Miller family through all these years, passing to every couple in which the Miller descendant reached fifty years of married life. Eleven couples received and cherished this cane. The last couple to receive the cane on their 50th wedding anniversary was Frank D. Miller and his wife Marion on February 18, 2011. Frank is the 4<sup>th</sup> great grandson of Jonas Miller.



*Harriet Miller giving our Curator the Miller family Anniversary cane.*

At this year's annual reunion the families chose to stop the tradition of keeping the cane in their homes and instead give the cane to the Westminster Historical Society for safe keeping. The Curator of the Historical Society, Betsy Hannula, was present at the Miller Family Reunion in order to accept this new donation. She remarked how delighted she was that the Miller Family was concerned about the future of the cane, and assured those present that the cane would be available for future generations of Miller family to view.

Past Historical Society President Roni Beal and Board member Darlene Johnson also shared in this event. We brought items from the Historical Society collections that once belonged to the Miller Family for everyone to view. In addition, Miller family members came to visit the Historical Society on Main Street to deliver the cane and 3 old account books to their new home

*(Continued from page 1)* **Civil War Soldier**

any single day in history with almost 23,000 killed, wounded and missing.

Henry was also in battle at Chancellorsville, VA and Gettysburg, PA where his regiment made an assault on a Confederate position at the base of Culp's Hill. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Massachusetts lost 42% of their men as casualties that day, including Henry, who was wounded around 11 o'clock that morning. He was also taken prisoner and taken to Stanton, then Richmond, VA, then Castle Lightning and finally to Belle Island, where he was stricken with disease and placed in a hospital. After 8 months, he was finally liberated in poor health on March 21, 1864. He traveled to City Point, Annapolis and on to Chattanooga, TN. His regiment was moving through Georgia with Gen. Sherman on his famed "March to the Sea", but before Henry could catch up with them, he was discharged from his service in the Union in May of 1864.

His brother, Amos, also served in the Civil War and died in a southern prison three months after being captured at the battle of Ball's Bluff.

According to Heywood's History, Henry was "an industrious farmer, horticulturist and mechanic; a man of good-standing and a deacon in the Baptist Church." He was also a Selectmen for two years. He married Martha Ellis of Westminster on January 15, 1865 and they had four children. He died February 1, 1909 in Westminster at the age of 65 years old and is buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.



Henry Partridge

## 2012 ANNUAL APPEAL

The 2012 annual appeal is underway. Details will be in your mail box very soon. We have a number of special projects that would benefit greatly from sponsors—including computer upgrades, web site design and hosting and our Scholarship Fund. Please consider these options.

**NEW** this year is the ability to donate by credit or debit card directly to the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts which holds the Westminster Historical Society Scholarship, Endowment, and Capital Campaign funds. 100% of your donation will go directly to the fund you choose. Their web site is [www.cfncm.org](http://www.cfncm.org).

## FLEA MARKET

What's it like to get ready for the Flea Market every September? Lots of work by lots of people! We're grateful to families who bring their yard sale leftovers or items from a house they're emptying to our barn all year long. They are the items we sort and put out for sale every year to benefit the Historical Society. The last Saturday in September we fill rooms in the house, the connector, the barn and two tents that the Lions Club puts up for us. Thank you to everyone who helps. It would not happen without your contributions or your hard work.



*Contributions to the Annual Flea Market. What a treasure trove of trinkets and "junk!" The Historical Society is lucky to have contributors and buyers at this annual sale.*



### WISH LIST

Snowblower

LCD monitor

## MEMBERSHIP

We're beginning a campaign to inform everyone who is 75 years or older that they can join the Historical Society for FREE. Our seniors are the ones who know the most about our history and we believe it's important that they know what we are doing to save the history they lived and share it with others. So, let us know if you would like this opportunity! You may also do this for any elderly person you know. It's easy. Just fill out the form below and send it to the Historical Society.

And thank you if you have renewed your membership this past year. If you are unsure of your status, just call Liz at the office (978-874-5569). You will want to be a member in order to take advantage of the ten percent discount on all items in the Gift Shop!

### WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

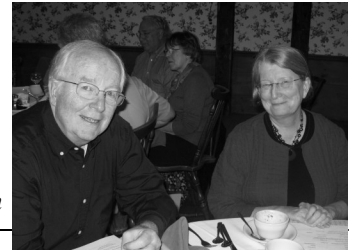
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
 e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Individual	\$25
Family	40
Senior (over 65)	15
Contributing	50
Friend	100
Honorary (over 75)	FREE

All members receive a 10% discount in the Gift Shop.  
 Please contact me about volunteering. These are some of my interests:

- Sorting, cleaning, and cataloging items.
- Putting data about items into a computer database.
- Helping out with events and activities

*John  
and  
Beth  
Bowen*



## ANNUAL MEETING

Thirty-three members at the Annual Meeting and dinner at the Old Mill on October 20 enjoyed an interesting program by Joyce Hinkley, an AFLA instructor at Fitchburg State University, "Myths and Realities of New England". She shared with us how the industrial revolution and a community's assets such as waterways and rail-



*Joyce Hinkley*

road access shaped how our cities and towns look today.



*Board member Darlene Johnson, Sheryl Vaillette, Past President Roni Beal and Collections Committee member Eileen Goguen enjoyed the Annual Meeting.*



*Janice Swenor, incoming president of the Historical Society presented Treasurer Linda Landry with a bouquet of flowers as a thank you for her ten plus years of service to the Society.*



*Ceil Burgess, Burt Gendron, and Phil Burgess enjoyed the WHS Annual Meeting dinner at the Old Mill.*

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**Saturday, December 1 9-2PM Christmas Open House** Find that special gift for the person who loves Westminster. Enjoy coffee or hot cider by the fireplace. Browse our “Back Room” vintage Christmas decorations. Get something home-baked.

**Tuesday, January 15 7 PM A Trip to the Pyramids—On the Road to Egypt** Photos of the pyramids with Joyce and Lloyd Hannula

**February—April Ice Out Contest** Look for the skier on Round Meadow Pond. Be the person guessing the day and time closest to when the skier falls into the water. Buy you chance at the Westminster Historical Society.

**Saturday, February 3 Time TBA Ice Fishing Derby with David Cormier** Your children can learn to ice fish with David Cormier and catch some prize winning fish with the experts.

**Saturday, March 17 1-3PM Maple Sugaring** Meet at Ed Snyder’s house, 258 West Princeton Road to watch maple sugar being made.

**Westminster Ski Day at Mt. Wachusett— TBA** Watch for info on this NEW event!

## CUB SCOUT FIELD TRIP

On a beautiful Saturday in November six Tiger Cub Scouts and their parents took a tour through the Upton School to fulfill a Scout requirement “to visit something old”. Now, to first graders, pretty much everything is old, but it was a lot of fun showing them what school was like one hundred years ago. They asked some terrific questions and were very interested in how the Historical Society plans to use the building after we’ve renovated the building. Peering into the old coal bin area was spooky, but they loved the big spacious rooms upstairs. A reminder: anyone who wishes a tour of the Upton School is welcome to call the Historical Society and someone will be happy to take you through. Individuals or groups are welcome!



*A den of curious Tiger Cub Scouts toured the Upton Building.*

## WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY GIFT SHOP

Buy Christmas gifts for people on your gift list here! We will send anything listed here to your home in time for Christmas—just give us time for mailing. Call us at 978-874-5569. The Gift Shop is open on Mondays from 7-9 pm and Fridays from 9 until noon and other times by appointment. Members receive a 10% discount on all purchases!

### Books

<u>Cemetery Inscriptions</u> . . . . .	25.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , 1832 by Hudson . . . . .	5.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , 1893 by Heywood. . . . .	96.00
<u>History of Westminster 2008</u> by WHS . . . . .	95.00
<u>History of Westminster</u> , by Tolman . . . . .	20.00
<u>Homestead Heritage of Westminster</u> , by WHS . . . . .	25.00
<u>Images of America</u> , by WHS. . . . .	19.99
<u>Olin Warner, Sculptor</u> , by Hyson . . . . .	4.50
<u>200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Westminster</u> , . . . . .	5.00
<u>Wajusett Gatherings</u> , by Sinclair (hardcover). . . . .	30.00
<u>Wajusett Gatherings</u> , by Sinclair (softcover) . . . . .	20.00

### Tapestries

Cotton afghan in green, navy, burgundy . . . . .	45.00
Tapestry wall hanging . . . . .	35.00

### Other

<i>New Wachusett Mountain</i> charcoal drawing . . . . .	60.00
Calligraphy sampler . . . . .	12.00
Cross stitch sampler Kit “Mosman” . . . . .	36.00
<i>Cracker Factory</i> print. . . . .	45.00
framed pen & ink of <i>WHS house</i> by Santora . . . . .	28.00
Map of Westminster 1855. . . . .	6.00
Notepaper Westminster scenes, pkg.12 . . . . .	3.50
<i>Downtown Westminster 1831</i> by Peckham . . . . .	30.00
Postcards . . . . .	3/1.00
Children’s books . . . . .	7.95
Paper dolls, Assorted . . . . .	5.00
Tobacco Shed pottery . . . . .	priced as marked
Tote Bags . . . . .	priced as marked

Westminster Historical Society  
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## DATES TO REMEMBER

December 1:  
Holiday Open House:

January 15:  
A Trip to the Pyramids

February 3:  
Ice Fishing Derby

Watch for details on the  
ICE OUT CONTEST!



## WACHUSETT MTN SKI TICKET SAVINGS PROGRAM SPREAD THE NEWS!

Do you, or someone you know, ski? If so, we're very excited to tell you about a new program at Wachusett Mountain that you AND the Historical Society will benefit from this winter. Here's how it works:

Any time you purchase a ski ticket on line before you go skiing at **Wachusett Mountain**, you can receive \$5 off your ticket price by clicking on the word "coupon" and then inserting this code: HISTSOC. This offer is effective from now until April 1, 2013.



The terrific part of this offer for the Historical Society is that when the season is over, Wachusett Mountain Associates will give the Historical Society \$10 for each ski ticket sold through this offer. What a fabulous benefit to support the Society!

So, please tell everyone in your family and all your friends about this program. Anyone can save the \$5 off your ski ticket, and then your ticket will count towards the benefit for the Historical Society. That's a WIN WIN for everybody!!

Members are invited to a  
**Wine & Cheese  
Christmas Open House**  
Friday, Nov. 30, 2013  
6-8 pm  
at the Historical Society.

Be the first to shop in the new  
Vintage Holiday Decorations  
& Christmas Flea Market Rooms.  
Members can take 10% off  
everything in the Gift Shop  
and an *additional* \$20% off  
our 2008 Westminster History

Take a chance on our  
new Wreath Raffle -  
lots to choose from!

Then, **Christmas Open House**  
for the public on  
Sat. Dec. 1  
9am-2pm.

