



WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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June 2013

In our continuing coverage of the Civil War during these years of its 150th anniversary, we chose to include a letter from home. This one is from Jonas Miller who lived on West Princeton Road. Jonas and his wife Susan had four sons who served in the Union Army - J. Hervey, Edward, Cyrus and Charles. Two died from wounds in battle—an enormous tragedy for a family. This letter speaks to the fears and worries that all families face when their children are in military service.

(No name here—it just begins, but it is most likely written to J. Hervey.)

My principal object in writing to you at this time is to send you a copy of Charlie's letter which he wrote to me, soon after the battle at Roanoke Island, and the reason of my sending you a Copy is that the poor boy had nothing to write on by Scraps of Paper, and those he got of rebel Prisoners. You will see, by reading his Letter, that he had a hard time of it and was imminently exposed to the Enemy fire and death.



Jonas Miller is portrayed as a young man in a painting hanging in the Library.

This letter has been up to Gardner to Henry's (Jonas's oldest son) and when you have read it, please send it to Dana (likely a nickname for his son Edward's wife Mandana) and tell her we have been



Jonas's son, Lieut. Cyrus K. Miller, was a member of Company B, 28th Illinois Infantry Volunteers. He died in a hospital near Vicksburg, Mississippi on July 8, 1863 at the age of 25 years old.

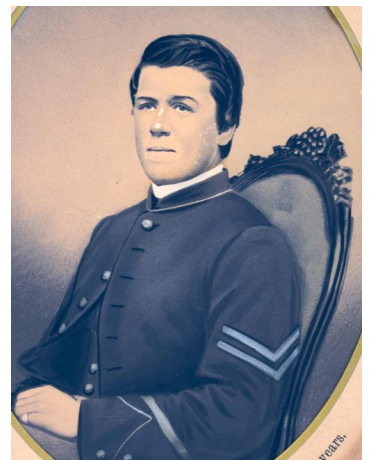
since the Battle which is 12 days. About all we do, outside of the House and Barn is to watch the Mail and read what we get from it.

We have strong hopes that Mr. Black will recover. (The Blacks lived on West Princeton Road also.) We all send our best respects to you.

From your Dear Father,
Jonas Miller

looking for her and little Louis this long time and shall continue to look for them till we see them.

We have lately seen by the papers that the Illinois 28th Regt. of Volunteers was in the Battle at For Donelson and you will remember that this is Cyrus' Reg. and if you have read an account of that dreadful Battle you will not wonder if we felt intense interest for Cyrus' safety especially as we have not heard from him



Jonas's son, Corporal Charles A. Miller, was a member of Company F, 25th Massachusetts Infantry Volunteers. He died of wounds at Hampton Hospital, VA. July 9, 1864 at the age of 23 years.

**2012-2013
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If you've ever had an interest in helping out on a committee or the Board, we're looking for additional members. Call Liz to talk about it.

MEETINGS

Meetings are held October 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,

Spring is here and the hope for a wonderful summer is around the bend. We did some spring cleaning in preparation for our Mother's Day Tea that took place on May 11. The front door and sign are freshly painted and an "Info Box" is located outside by the front door. It will hold registration forms and info that folks can pick up when the building is otherwise closed. Right now it contains Town Wide Yard Sale forms for those who wish to participate.

May has been a busy month, with the Tea with Vintage Fashions, the Annual Plant Swap, and a timely program on Beekeeping in Westminster, featuring Phil Young, our local bee expert. The Society will be giving year end awards to students who excelled in history at the Elementary and Overlook Middle Schools in June and a scholarship check to a senior at Oakmont on May 31. Our congratulations go to these three students for their hard work and interest in history this academic year.

On a sad note, the historical society has lost three long time, dedicated members due to illness. We honor these members In Memoriam and send our deepest condolences to their families.

Last, but certainly not least, is the Board of Directors on-going campaign for the Upton building. In particular, the Capital Campaign Committee meets at least twice a month to strategize ways to raise funds for the upcoming renovations. When you see the cupola come down from the rooftop, you will know Phase I of the renovation has begun.

Sincerely,
Roni Beal

IN MEMORIAM

Thomas Malloy III
John LaCoss
Roger McAdams

CURATOR'S CORNER

We are grateful for the following items which have been given to the Historical Society for preservation:

Donna Brownell: collection of clothing from the 1960s and 1970s

Karen Colageo: Town Hall stool and Westminster Elementary School beanie

Betsy Hannula: Lempi Aalto's Finnish costume, photos of Elementary School classes

Joyce Hannula: Girl Scout sash & Lions club 50 year pin

Rene LaPlante: ticket to 150th Anniversary of first settlement in Westminster dinner

Sandi Thibodeau: collection of photos

Roy Hurd Family: collection of newspaper clippings and archival materials about Westminster



This lovely child's pewter tea set, donated by Beulah Howard, had a place of honor in our display cabinet for the Tea Party.

The Collections Committee is happy to report that the Clothing and Textile collection at the Historical Society has now been 99% documented and that all the information has been put into the collections management program we use, called PastPerfect.

Every textile and piece of clothing has been photographed and every item is in archivally safe boxes or hung properly. We are so pleased to have achieved this long-time goal! It has taken hundreds of hours over the past four months and we thank Stephanie Boucher, Jessica Leger and Betsy Hannula for getting the job done.

This top hat with its original box was given by Minott family descendants.



WESTMINSTER FARMERS COOPERATIVE PROGRAM WILL HONOR FINNISH VETERANS

The June 18 Historical Society program will honor the Finnish-American members of the Westminster Farmers Cooperative Association who served in World War II. A plaque listing all the members will be on display in the Farmers Camp on Leominster Street that evening beginning at 7 pm.

Four persons are still living - George Engman, Toivo Maki, Harri Siitonen and Allan Waronen! They or the family members of those men and women who have died will receive certificates noting their service. On display will be the uniforms of four persons whose uniforms are in the Historical Society collections: Lempi Tuomi, Helvi Wintturi, Wilho Mayranen, and William Jamsa.

Families are invited to contribute any items they wish to help tell the story of their relatives. These are the Finnish American members of the Westminster Farmers Cooperative Association:

Arvo Aho, Aili Carlson, George Engman, Waino Friberg, Paul A. Friberg, Frank Friberg, Arthur Friberg, Donald Grahn, John Heimo, Paul O. Hokanen, Arthur Holm, Eino Jaaskelainen, William J. Jamsa, Otto A. Janhunen, Eli P. Kakhola, Leo J. Kangas, Oiva E. Karvonen, Ellen J. Karvonen, Waino K. Kinnari, Paul W. Kujanpaa, Einar A. Kurikka, Armas A. Laine, Paavo Leikkanen, Weikko Leikkanen, Toivo Linnus, Mauno A. Lindholm, Florence E. Lindholm, Eero Luomala, Tloivo K. Maki, Riisto Mattila, Wilho W. Mayranen, Tauno K. Nappila, George J. Niemi, Eugene E. Niemi, Urpo Nikki, Waino Noponen, Wilho K. Nygard, John Ojala, William A. Parnanen, Armas A. Roiha, John Sakkinen, Herman W. Sakkinen, Eino O. Savilampi, Rikhard Seppa, Harry Siitonen, Matti W. Sivula, Leo Stenberg, Fredrik Sutela, Lempi H. Tuomi, Allan A. Waronen, Reino M. Wasara, Lauri W. Wasara, Ernest C. Wilson, Howard W. Winter, Walter W. Wintturi, Helvi I. Wintturi, Harry B. Wintturi, and Anni Woremaa.

PERENNIAL PLANT SWAP

The annual plant swap is a great time to divide plants from gardens and swap plants. It doesn't cost a thing, but a little digging in the soil. There were many lilies and herbs, both which need periodic thinning out, and the lilies that were donated were quickly picked up by people.



Marion Knoll of Hubbardston helped a fellow gardener find just the right plant for his garden.

Next year, the Perennial Plant Swap committee plans to cluster plants in a few categories, such as plants that like sun or shade. It was a great day and those of us who participated in the swap had a wonderful time conversing with other gardeners.

Please remember the next to the last Saturday in May next year to get supplies of new and interesting plants for your garden!

WISH LIST

If you happen to have these items, we could use them at the Historical Society.

- Lawnmower
- Screen door
- Apartment size refrigerator

CIVIL WAR DVD STILL AVAILABLE

The DVD that Mark Landry created about men from Westminister who were in the Civil War is still available for sale for \$10 plus \$1 shipping. Entitled "The Soldiers of Westminister, Massachusetts at the battle of Antietam September 17, 1862," it is 53 minutes long and is very informative.

FLEA MARKET SEASON IS HERE!

If you're cleaning up at home and need to get rid of things, you're welcome to drop off items in the Historical Society barn for our Flea Market on Saturday, Sept. 28. Please bring things in boxes with covers since we do stack them, and we would appreciate it if you put anything broken right into the trash at home. Your left over yard sale items can be valuable to us! Thank you.

TOWN WIDE YARD SALE JUNE 15

The Town Wide Yard Sale is June 15. Maps are \$1 – a great way to find all the homes which have signed up. A list of unique items to be found at each home is on the back. The downtown is really hopping on this day, but make sure you visit all the homes in the outskirts of town. They're ready for a great day! So, join the fun!

UPTON SCHOOL UPDATE

One small project we had to take care of this winter was installing a small gas fired heater in the Upton School. This was required by Unitil because of a state law that mandates that any gas line that is not used after ten years must be disconnected. The gas line to the Upton School was installed when the new Elementary school was built ten years ago, so we were in a position of having to either have the line cut or actually install a unit of some kind to use gas. The Upton School Building Committee recommended to the Board of Directors that we install a small heater, and we're happy to say it got done! Meanwhile, the planning for fundraising is continuing. Stay tuned for more this year!

MOTHER'S DAY TEA WITH VINTAGE FASHIONS

On May 11 the Historical Society hosted a Mother's Day Tea, which included a display of hats, gloves, purses and dresses from the Society's collections. The parlor was turned into a lovely Tea room with lace covered tables, china tea cups and plates, and delectable treats prepared by members of the Tea committee and a few friends of the Society. Susan Taylor's baklava received rave reviews.



Roni Beal, Tea Party Chair, awarded Sophie Landry a prize for her beautiful hat.

The fireplace room had a wonderful exhibit of 1960s dresses and jewelry recently donated by Donna Brownell. There were also racks of hats from a variety of generations. Gloves, purses and other accessories were displayed in a tall, glass cabinet. Jeanne Keena lined up her collection of tiny tea sets on a shelf along the wall. One tea set was very tiny, but it included a teapot, cups, plates and even silverware.

The Tea Committee had a great time planning the event. Tea Committee members, Roni Beal, Melody Gallant, Betsy Hannula, Jeanne Keena, Karen Sargent, Julie Scapparone, Janet Sponagle, and Sheryl Vaillette are already planning next year's Tea for early spring.



Donna Brownell's collection of 1960s clothes were on display during the tea.



Jeanne Keena, Tea Party Committee member, enjoyed the Society's collection of hats on display.



Pat Lasky, a retired Westminster teacher, enjoyed seeing a former student, Julie Scapparone, who was on the Tea Party Committee.

MEMBERSHIP

If you're not yet a member, please consider joining today. It's easy. Just fill out the form below and send it along with your check to the Historical Society. Your membership support is essential to us.

Thank you if you have already renewed their 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! If you are 75 years of age, your membership is free!

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)	0

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 with newsletters and brochures.

Please send form to Westminster Historical Society, Membership Committee, P.O. Box 177, Westminster, MA 01473.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mark and Linda Landry marched in the Memorial Day parade for the Historical Society. this year. Thank you!



WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY GIFT SHOP

When looking for a unique gift for birthdays, anniversaries, and other holidays or special occasions, be sure to browse the WHS Gift Shop. Whether shopping for yourself or someone on your gift list, you are sure to find the perfect gift here. 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

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

Tapestries

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

Other

- New Wachusett Mountain* charcoal drawing 60.00
- Calligraphy sampler 12.00
- Cross stitch sampler Kit "Mosman" 36.00
- Cracker Factory* print. 45.00
- framed pen & ink of *WHS house* by Santora 28.00
- Map of Westminster 1855. 6.00
- Notepaper Westminster scenes, pkg.12 3.50
- Downtown Westminster 1831* 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

INTRODUCING VERIDIAN A GREEN ENERGY PROGRAM

The Historical Society has signed on to a unique opportunity to save money on its electric bill, and we're offering families and companies the same opportunity. It's through a company called Viridian.

Who Is Viridian Energy?



Viridian is a socially responsible energy company located in Connecticut. Viridian offers service in Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania in 20 utility service territories.

Viridian offers affordable, flexible rate plans that come from a minimum of 20% renewable energy. That means solar, wind, and hydro sources. The company also provides a Green-e Energy 100% renewable energy rate plan. For more about the company's energy service, visit www.viridian.com.

How can we get energy from a supplier other than our electric company?

Viridian is a third-party energy supplier. In markets where energy is deregulated—and that is Massachusetts—energy service is broken down into supply and delivery. This means that customers can stay with their local utility for service and delivery but select an alternate company as their supplier of choice.

With Viridian, the customer will still receive the same bill, and the same maintenance, reliable service and delivery of power from the utility, but will receive the Viridian's rate on the supply portion of their bill. The supply portion of the bill typically comprises about 2/3 of the total bill.

We were impressed by the professionals on the Viridian's leadership team. If you take a look at their web site, you'll be impressed too.

Why is the Historical Society involved with Viridian?

The Board of Directors learned about Viridian's goals and believe they are advantageous to our organization.

- We are able to choose our energy supplier and save money over time on our electric bill (and we're always looking for ways to save money!)
- This company uses "green energy" meaning it purchases 20% of its energy from local sources (wind, solar and hydro). We like being green and have actually spent time figuring out how we can be green as we renovate the Upton Building.)
- The Historical Society can benefit from a small residual income from every family that chooses Viridian for their energy supplier for their electricity. (We are always in a fundraising mode in order to pay for our operations, and any income is a benefit to us.)

How will this work?

The Westminster Historical Society has signed up with Viridian to get the energy portion of our National Grid bill supplied by Viridian. Our bill will still come to us from National Grid and all the electrical services will remain the same.

We have also signed up to be a Viridian Residual Fundraising Organization and by the end of June we will have our own customer enrollment website linked to the Historical Society website. Anyone interested in saving money on their electric bill, helping the environment by using green energy sources, and benefitting the Historical Society in a small way, can sign up with Viridian.

As the Westminster Historical Society looks at ways to fulfill our mission to save and share the past, we are also concerned about ways for our organization to be sustainable in the future. As a matter of fact we're concerned about how our town, our country and our world can be more sustainable. This concept of using more renewable energy sources seems a step in the right direction.

We'll keep you informed of our progress.

Westminster Historical Society
110 Main St., P.O. Box 177
Westminster, MA 01473

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DATES TO REMEMBER
Town Wide Yard Sale June 15, 2013
**Historical Society meeting honoring
Finnish American WWII veterans at
Farmers Camp June 18, 2013**

*Learn about a new program
for saving money on your
electric or gas bill—inside.*

HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROGRAMS THIS SPRING



Phil Young, local beekeeping expert, gave an excellent presentation about the fascinating life of bees in May. Phil maintains several dozen beehives in town and visits the children at the Elementary School every year with this demonstration beehive.

Eddie Snyder showed visitors his maple syrup operation in March. It is a remarkable ritual in the spring in New England—tapping maple trees and gathering clear sap—and then boiling it down to make a lovely amber syrup.



Bob Mason enjoyed a laugh with Eddie Snyder's mother, Leslie while two children examined the boiling operation which produces a lot of steam!