

PRESIDENTS' PAGE

A few of the Friends' many accomplishments this year...

- Eighteen Morrill Scholars from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and their faculty advisors spent several days in Strafford in September 2008. They participated in an archeological dig on Morrill's underground irrigation system and learned how this rural Vermont town shaped Sen. Justin Morrill's views on education and politics, and his shepherding of the 1862 Land-Grant Act, which revolutionized America's educational system. A second UNL group returns this summer.
- Co-Presidents Marie Ricketts and Mary Victor Giersch attended a two-day workshop on fundraising hosted by The Preservation Trust of Vermont.
- Continued participation in the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) thanks to a grant from the American Association of Museums and the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences. Involvement with the MAP demonstrates the Friends' commitment to excellence and dedication to responsible stewardship of the Justin Morrill Vermont State Historic Site.
- Rebuilt the Ice House Bridge thanks to a generous grant from the Woodbury Foundation.
- Erected a new sign post and sign on Justin Morrill Highway for the Homestead.
- Hosted a 199th Birthday party for Senator Morrill. We are looking forward to celebrating his 200th birthday in 2010.
- Garden clubs from Hanover, NH, Woodstock, Hartford and Quechee, Vermont, enjoyed a Victorian Tea. Additional tours have been enjoyed by gardeners from the Upper Valley and Central Vermont Master Gardener Program.
- Head Gardener Margie Carpenter attended a Farm-to-School workshop sponsored by NOFA, Vital Communities and Food Works to discuss opportunities for community involvement in our kitchen garden. Garden restoration continues under the direction of Margie with help from the UVM Master Gardeners and other volunteers.
- Hosted a variety of programs, including Wild Mushroom Hunt, Victory Garden Planting, Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop and 19th-Century Apple Festival.

Due to limited funding from the state of Vermont resulting in the cutback in the hours of operation, we are working to make the site accessible and enjoyable to visitors who may visit when the house is not open. With that in mind, we are seeking funding to erect signage with maps of the gardens and information about the barns.

We also need funds for the following projects:

Restoration of the Morrill's original Hot House is a long-term goal. In the interim, we would like to construct a hoop roof over the existing concrete foundation to serve as a cold frame, which would extend the short growing season in Strafford and provide programming as well as food for the local elementary school.

Garden restoration and removal of overgrown trees by a professional arborist

Education Programs

Please use the accompanying envelope, and thank you for your generous support!



Mary Victor Giersch and Marie Ricketts
Co-Presidents, Friends of the Morrill Homestead

NAME CHANGE Founded in 1887, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) recently changed its name. The Washington, D.C.-based organization, the nation's oldest higher education association, is now called the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. For more information go to www.aplu.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS . . .

Two important dates in Justin Morrill history are approaching:

April 14, 2010

Justin Morrill's 200th Birthday!

2012

The 150th Anniversary of Morrill's Land Grant College Act of 1862

Friends of the Morrill Homestead

National Historic Site

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FRIENDS OF THE MORRILL HOMESTEAD

Mary Victor Giersch
Marie Ricketts
Co-Presidents

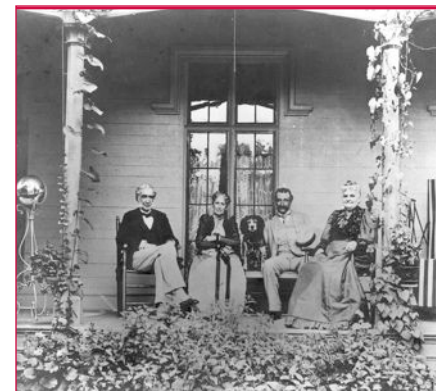
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Ex-Officio

Promoting an awareness of the life and legacy of Justin Morrill, father of the Land-Grant College Acts



Visit our website

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MORRILL HOMESTEAD
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Vermont's First National Historic Landmark
www.morrillhomestead.org

The MORRILL HOMESTEAD Chronicle

News and Information from Vermont's First National Historic Landmark
POST OFFICE BOX 98 • STRAFFORD, VERMONT • 05072

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"All the news that fits, we print."

A HAPPY 199th

Every year Justin Morrill, who served Vermont in Congress for 44 years, celebrated his birthday by inviting friends and colleagues to his Washington, DC, home. On Sunday, April 19, 2009, the Friends of the Morrill Homestead (FMH) welcomed about 40 friends and neighbors to the Education Center, a replica of Morrill's horse barn, to celebrate again, this time his 199th birthday. The FMH wished to honor their donors and say thank you to retiring board members. Among those stepping down was President Andersen Thorp, who has served the FMH community tirelessly for many years. Ann was presented with a gift of a painting of a Homestead scene commissioned from well-known Strafford artist Micki Colbeck.



Photo - Donna Hollinger

Guests enjoyed refreshments and a cake engraved with Senator Morrill's monogram, which was copied from one he had designed. Dr. Edwin Harvey, Director of the Justin Smith Morrill Scholars Program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, e-mailed greetings and requested that we remember "our heritage and our land-grant university mission," a fitting reminder to all who celebrate Senator Morrill.



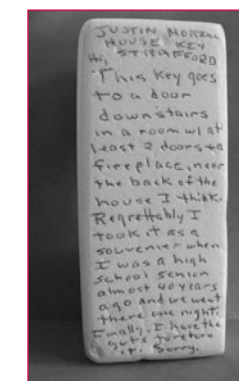
Photo - Donna Hollinger



A MYSTERIOUS PACKAGE

The oblong box arrived at the Strafford post office, without fanfare, on a bleak, raw day in early December. The return address read simply "A Donor, Main Street, Randolph, VT 05060." But when the box was opened, it immediately became clear that what it contained was no ordinary donation.

Inside was a styrofoam block. Nested inside was an ornate, four-inch-long brass key, and on the back of the block was this handwritten message:



Justin Morrill [sic]
House Key Strafford

Hi, This key goes to a door downstairs in a room w/ at least 2 doors to fireplace, near the back of the house I think. Regrettably I took it as a souvenir when I was a high school senior almost 40 years ago and we went there one night. Finally, I have the guts to return it.

Regrettably I took it as a souvenir when I was a high school senior almost 40 years ago and we went there one night.

Finally, I have the guts to return it.

Sorry.

One can only imagine the torments that this nefarious, but ultimately honest, prankster must have endured over the past four decades: the guilt that he or she must have felt every time the purloined key was viewed; the sense of relief when the package was finally mailed; and the knowledge that a wrong had been righted. Presumably, "A Donor" is sleeping better these days. Meanwhile, the Friends are still trying to locate the door that the mystery key unlocks. Watch this space for further developments.

GARDEN COMMITTEE REPORT

We will make progress in reconstructing Justin Morrill's mid-19th-century landscape this summer. We will complete planting his kitchen garden with unusual berry bushes and trial heirloom roses selected by Leonard Perry, a professor at the University of Vermont, and continue to add perennials and herbs from Morrill's original list. We will also be mulching and pruning the apple trees in the orchard and establishing a woodland walk through our shade-filled fernery. The arabesque beds in the pleasure ground will be filled with colorful annuals, and I hope to augment the greenhouse foundation with an enclosed hoop house to extend the growing season.

- Margie Carpenter

For more information contact Margie Carpenter at metcarpenter@mac.com or 802-765-9630.



During recent restoration work on the Homestead fireplace, workers made an interesting discovery. A wooden stick, approximately five inches long, was embedded in the cement behind the mantelpiece. Inscribed on the stick, in pencil, were the words "Harold Morse 1970." It's believed Morse did some work at the Homestead nearly 40 years ago and intentionally left this memento behind.

FRIENDS RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS GRANT

In 2008 the Friends of Morrill Homestead (FMH) were awarded a Museum Assessment Program (MAP) Grant. The Museum Assessment Program (MAP) is supported through a cooperative agreement between the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the American Association of Museums. It is designed to help museums assess their strengths and weaknesses and plan for the future. The program provides technical assistance for four kinds of assessments: (1) collections management; (2) governance; (3) institutional; and (4) public dimension.

In all MAP assessments, members of the museum staff and governing authority complete a self-study and receive a site visit by one or more museum professionals who tour the museum and meet with staff, governing officials, and volunteers. The surveyors work with the museum and MAP staff to produce

REPORT FROM THE STATE OF VERMONT

Even though hours of operation and staff at the Justin Morrill Homestead were reduced because of state budget restraints, much was accomplished at the State Historic Site during the 2008 season through the Division for Historic Preservation's Capital Budget.

Last spring the fireplace in the Homestead's library was restored. Over the past few years the marbled slate mantelpiece had begun to break away from the firebox. Damon Strong of DS Masonry in Poultney, VT, was hired under state contract to undertake the restoration. Mr. Strong had done excellent work for us at the Hubbardton Battlefield State Historic Site. After the fireplace was restored, Patricia Pierson of South Royalton repainted the room in a period shade of light pink (to be precise, it's a Benjamin Moore soft gloss latex called "Cial Bella.") While at Morrill, Strong repointed the mortar and applied waterproofing on



the library's exterior chimney and pointed up the Homestead's brick foundation. Strong also jacked up the Farm Shop and relaid the dry-laid stone foundation.

The second phase of a three-year project in repainting the Morrill Homestead was completed. This has been an expensive undertaking that involves the removal of a century's worth of lead-based paint on the original flush-board siding and conducting minor carpentry repairs prior to repainting the Homestead in Morrill's original shade of pink. This project is under state contract with Louis Marineau from Montpelier. The final phase will be completed during the 2009 season and will include the repainting of the eight barns and outbuildings at the site.

Another major project was the draining and dredging of Morrill's ice pond. The pond had been losing water due to a problem with the overflow emergency pipe outlet. While the pond was drained the iron cage around the fire hydrant outlet was rebuilt using a stainless steel cage to protect the line from debris.

The Division for Historic Preservation greatly appreciates the efforts that volunteers and members of the Friends of the Morrill Homestead have devoted to the historic site. We welcome your support and wish to hear your comments.

John P. Dumville
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www.HistoricVermont.org/sites

HOMESTEAD PROGRAM OFFERINGS - 2009

Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

RUSTIC FURNITURE

Rustic furniture is timeless and was incorporated into Justin Morrill's gardens. In this one-day workshop at the Morrill Homestead you will learn the basics of furniture design and an assortment of joinery techniques to create your own one-of-a-kind chair, bench or table from saplings. Seat finishing will be discussed. No woodworking experience is necessary. Presented by Mark Ragonese and the League of NH Craftsmen. To reserve a place please call 603-643-5384 or download a registration form from www.nhcrafts.org/hanover/fibers.html
Tuition - \$100 Materials included.

Sunday, June 14, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

RUSTIC TRELLIS

In this one-day workshop at the Morrill Homestead you will take saplings and with simple joining techniques make an outdoor trellis. The trellis may be as simple or as intricate as you choose and time allows. No woodworking experience is necessary. Presented by Mark Ragonese and the League of NH Craftsmen to reserve a place please call 603-643-5384 or download a registration form from www.nhcrafts.org/hanover/fibers.html
Tuition - \$100 Materials included.



Faith Hunt leading last year's Wild Mushroom Hunt

Sunday, July 19, 1 – 4 p.m.

"BARN TO BE WILD"

In the 19th century it took someone with courage and gallantry to have eight pink barns in the Vermont rural landscape. Nancy Boone of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation will lead a discussion on the unique functions of Justin Morrill's outbuildings and the agricultural heritage of Vermont barns. View a barn themed art exhibition, tour the historic gardens and grounds, hike the nature trail and make ice cream the old fashioned way. Lecture at 2 p.m. FREE



Our new wheelchair accessible bridge to the Morrill Ice House under construction this spring

August 16, 1 – 4 p.m.

CANNING WORKSHOP "PRESERVES TO PICKLES - YES WE CAN"

Canning and preserving are healthy and economical ways to save produce all year long. In our fast-paced, fast food society, the skills and techniques that grandparents and great-grandparents routinely used to store foods have been largely forgotten. Gardener Tina Tucker will lead a program on time-honored tradition of food preservation, canning, pickling, freezing, jam making & more.
Admission \$8

Sunday, September 6, 2 p.m.

A WALKING TOUR THROUGH JUSTIN MORRILL'S STRAFFORD

Take a walking tour through the historic Upper Village of Strafford with stops at Morrill's boyhood home, his general store, the Morrill Memorial Library, the Morrill Mausoleum, and a visit inside the 1799 Strafford Townhouse, one of the most photographed town meeting houses in New England.
Admission \$10 Rain or shine.



Mark Ragonese teaching Rustic Furniture construction

Sunday, September 20, 1 – 4 p.m.

WILD MUSHROOM HUNT

Autumn is the perfect time to hunt for edible mushrooms. Join mycologist Faith Hunt, who will teach which mushrooms can be eaten and which are better left alone on the forest floor. Afterwards, enjoy a "mycophagy"... an opportunity to taste a variety of cooked wild mushrooms.
\$25 Limited enrollment. Rain or shine.
Reservations required, please call 802-765-4964 or email: penelopejohnson3@gmail.com

Sunday, October 18, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

19TH CENTURY APPLE AND HARVEST FESTIVAL

Press cider in an antique press, sample cider, taste heirloom apple varieties, meet John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed), play period games, hike the nature trail, play Valley Quest, see traditional craft demonstrations and more.
Admission \$5, Family \$12, Under 12 free.
Rain or shine.

These programs are presented by the Friends of the Morrill Homestead in partnership with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

Making a List

We are compiling an e-mail list.
If you would like to be on it,
please send your e-mail address to

president@morrillhomestead.org