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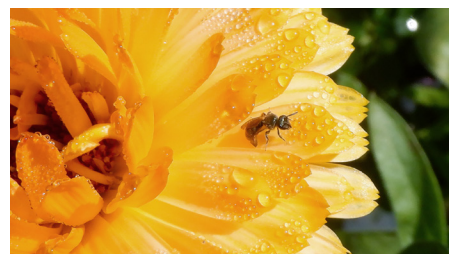
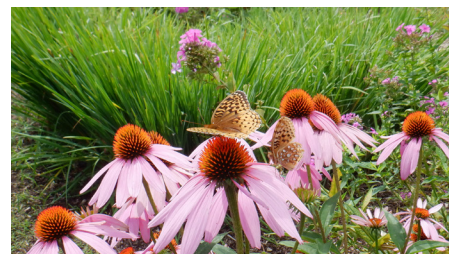
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Friends of the Morrill Homestead
State-Owned Site and National Historic Landmark
 POST OFFICE BOX 98 • STRAFFORD, VERMONT • 05072

GARDENS UPDATE

The grounds and gardens committee of the Friends is tasked with providing guidance on the maintenance of the Homestead's Gardens. We are fortunate to provide the site with a wonderful part time gardener, Barbara Paulson. She has worked with her team to repair some of the damage that occurred last summer after the flood. Recognizing our limited resources and global changes, the committee and Barbara understand that as stewards of the property, we need to introduce more sustainable gardening and landscaping practices that are in line with Morrill's philosophy. To that end, we would appreciate input from community members who have historical knowledge of the JMH grounds and gardens. If you have anything to share, please contact director@morrillhomestead.org and we will arrange a time to meet with you. The Homestead is a wonderful community resource and we hope to see it well maintained into the future.

Charlotte Faccio
 Board Member, Friends of the Morrill Homestead



Top photo by Cadence, bottom photo by Ezra

REPORT FROM THE STATE

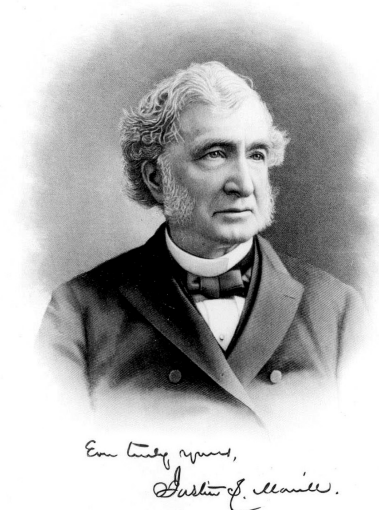
Visits to the Senator Justin Morrill State Historic Site have been great, with many guests touring the historic house since opening in late May. Admission has increased, documented by the comparison to previous years. This year we welcome six seasonal staff, who were excellent at guiding visitors and providing history of the property and Senator Morrill's life in Vermont. Some of the seasonal staff have been exploring the history of the site in greater detail, providing documentation related to Morrill's awareness of the source of the land grant properties and biographical information on the servants who worked and lived with the Morrills in Strafford and Washington, D.C. Work continues with regard to 2023 flood recovery with FEMA and the design and construction plans for the drainage project to be undertaken in 2025.

The Division for Historic Preservation put a hold on the search for the new Historic Sites Section Chief for the summer, allowing potential applicants to focus on vacations and address the unfortunate and ongoing challenges of flooding. In the interim, the title of the position was officially changed from Historic Sites Section Chief, which reflected the organization of the Division for Historic Preservation some 30 years ago, to the new title of Director of State Historic Sites. This new title better reflects the efforts of the position, which also qualifies as Vermont State Historian, stewards 25 historic sites — from bridges and monuments to Native American cemeteries to Revolutionary War battlefields — and directs a dedicated team of 3 full-time and 60 seasonal staffers. The position was posted at the end of August with a closing date after Labor Day.

Laura V. Trieschmann
 State Historic Preservation Officer
 Vermont Division for Historic Preservation



Photo by Archer



FRIENDS OF THE MORRILL HOMESTEAD

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Director
 David Webb
Strafford Historical Society
 Laura Trieschmann
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

The Justin Morrill Historic Site, one of ten State-Owned Historic Sites and National Historic Landmarks, is maintained and operated by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, which encourages the discovery and appreciation of the state's rich heritage through the stewardship and interpretation of the historic sites. In partnership with the Division, the Friends of the Morrill Homestead fosters an awareness of the life and legacy of Sen. Justin Morrill with programs, events, and public outreach to enhance the visitor experience.



Photo by Bix

morrillhomestead.org

The MORRILL HOMESTEAD Chronicle

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

Fall, 2024 VOL. 18 No. 2

SENSATIONAL SUMMER

The Friends of the Morrill Homestead were thrilled to host a full season of events starting this spring when the Homestead re-opened after the July 2023 flood closed the site. We eagerly welcomed our community and beyond to our beautiful grounds and gardens, tours of the house and carriage barn, and each and every event we hosted.



AppleFest Art

We kicked off our season with a well-attended Open House with families enjoying Organic Strafford Creamery ice cream and delighting in the No-Strings Marionettes Puppet Show. Senator Justin Morrill's dedication to aesthetics and nature was evident in our events featuring artisan and fine arts, from basket making and printmaking to watercolor and natural dye workshops. All were well-attended and taught by local artist educators.

The Friends' commitment to education within the natural world was reflected in workshops in Regenerative Agriculture, Tree Walks, and walks with a naturalist. The workshop presenters offered valuable information and resources to participants who came from near and far.

Gallery in the Garden, the Friends' major event during 4th of July weekend, brought a record number of guests together for the opening of "After the Flood," an art exhibition featuring Jennifer Brown and Celia Reisman showing 35 of their best works. Twelve other artists joined the show for a gala event. The night also hosted the kick-off of the successful Minis for Morrill auction.

The summer camps for children were exciting opportunities for connection between art and the natural world at the Homestead and in the Village of Strafford. Demand was so great that we added a second Art, Nature & Imagination Camp in August. Campers at the Photography Camp taught by Scott Miller of World Story Exchange ended their week with an exhibition of their photographs in the lobby of the Strafford Post Office. Look for their photos sprinkled throughout this newsletter.

We are grateful to all families who share campers with us and for families and community members who participated in our final big event, the 19th Century Apple & Cheese Harvest Festival, which always draws a huge crowd. The pies, Vermont cheeses, and apple cider, coupled with old-time basket



So many desserts!

making, music, wagon rides, and crafts are reasons why AppleFest has been named one of the top festivals in our state.

As we close out our busy season, we recognize that the Homestead will soon have to undergo extensive maintenance work by the Division for Historic Preservation. Our future plans are uncertain at the moment; however we're optimistic we can find a way to continue providing opportunities for education and connection for our community. Please stay tuned! And thank you for your much-appreciated support!

Kumari Patricia
 Director, Friends of the Morrill Homestead

WHAT ARE “FRIENDS” FOR?

At the Morrill Homestead, “Friends” are for just about everything. They supply the volunteers who staff our signature events, like the Gallery in the Garden in July and AppleFest in September, and they help maintain the site’s historic gardens and apple orchard. Moreover, they provide a significant amount of the funding that enables us to organize and host our classes, workshops, lectures, and tours throughout the season. We’re extremely grateful for this support, and indeed, without these loyal friends, the “Friends” would not be able to function!



Jeffrey Gale making baskets

If you haven’t already done so, would you consider becoming a friend of the Morrill Homestead by making a contribution today? A gift of any amount will help support our mission, events, and programs, ensuring that a wonderful community resource continues to serve our region. To donate, visit our website, morrillhomestead.org, or mail a check to PO Box 98, Strafford, VT 05072. By doing so, not only will you help a worthy cause, but you’ll also receive a tax deduction for your generosity and our heartfelt gratitude!

John Reese
Treasurer, Friends of the Morrill Homestead



Gallery in the Garden

TRIBUTE TO A FRIEND

On July 18, 2024, the Friends of the Morrill Homestead lost a devoted former board member, exhibiting artist, and a contributing naturalist who believed that the world held spiritual meaning for us. Mary Louise Pierson was a remarkable board member for many years and a friend for longer. We will miss her greatly.

Mary Louise was totally engaged in the historical and educational mission of the Board. She was always there, ready to volunteer, quietly donating her professional skills, and doing yeoman’s work at Homestead events. She was an accomplished painter, and her personal interests often had an art focus.

Mary Louise embraced the environment around her, and her love of nature, animals, and art were front and center. Using her skills as a photographer, she created notecards, including an especially beautiful one of Senator Morrill’s Library. When Mary Louise was our featured artist, many of her large photographs showed her ancestral home in beautiful light.



Summer Field - Mary Louise Pierson

She was a thoughtful and generous colleague. Her gifts to the Friends made possible many exhibits, events, and workshops. She painted a mini (4” x 4”) canvas for our auction every year, and in 2023 was a featured artist along with her good friend and also greatly talented artist Sherry SaintGermaine. Sherry has shared this tribute to her friend of 27 years:

“Mary Louise, Weezy to me, was an artist’s artist. She checked all the boxes and broke out of many. She worked with a speed and confidence I found impressive which made her an extremely prolific artist. We were featured artists together during last summer’s Gallery in the Garden, though we were flooded out that year and the show was cut short.

She never ran out of things to paint and boredom was unknown to us both. Her endless creativity and generosity of spirit made it a joy to spend an afternoon in her studio. We worked on our own projects (a bit), told outrageous stories (mostly), and had great fun together.

I learned a lot from her, too, as she was always willing to share what she knew. Weezy had a sharp eye and was an endless talent. She had so many more projects to share with us all, but it was not to be...

She came into this world with a paintbrush in her fist and I believe that she left with the same. She took all of my secrets with her and I wanted her to have them. She is greatly missed.”

Mary Louise will be remembered fondly by all of us who had the pleasure of her companionship.

Cameron Speth
Vice Chair, Friends of the Morrill Homestead



Photo by Elizabeth

MORRILL’S OLD TREES

In 2019, several large trees were removed from in front of Sen. Morrill’s house. The trees had been growing there since Morrill’s time, but had become a safety hazard in their old age. Wood from the pine trees was milled on site and stored in the Cow Barn. Last fall several large pine slabs were crafted by Strafford woodworker, Earl Silloway into a beautiful bench and picnic table. The table now graces the center of the Homestead grounds and the bench sits at the top of the orchard where visitors can take in the best view on the property.



Art campers at the new picnic table

HIGHLIGHT: ARTIFACTS FROM THE HOMESTEAD

In a tiny room upstairs next to Justin and Ruth’s bedroom, you will find a small child’s bed. This little bed was made here in Strafford at the R.A. Hatch Bedstead Factory which once stood right behind the Town House and shared water power with Morrill’s father’s blacksmith shop.



R.A. Hatch Bedstead Factory

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

It’s been an exciting Summer 2024 season at the Morrill Homestead, with record numbers at many of our events! We’re grateful to be open after the Summer 2023 flood and look forward to keeping the enthusiasm into 2025. Due to needed maintenance work at the site, the Homestead may need to be closed in Summer 2025, but we are developing alternative plans for our future programs and will share updates.

Education and community are at the heart of our mission. This season, our Education Committee made plans to support teachers and schools in understanding the importance of history and place-based studies at the Morrill Homestead. We are eager to introduce these learning opportunities to all educators and will be hosting an information table at the Upper Valley Place Based Collaborative Conference in November. We hope to share information about the value of science and social studies curriculum content that can be hands-on and ideal for place-based studies through what we have on site at the Homestead. Feel free to contact us if you are an educator and want to bring students for a study opportunity on site.

All we do would not be possible without the support of our many volunteers. We are especially grateful for their work with Barbara Paulson, our Master Gardener who keeps the gardens looking as beautiful today as in the time of Justin Morrill. Volunteers work with Barbara, and under her guidance, they are dedicated to the beauty

and original values of the Morrill Homestead. New volunteers are always welcome!

As always, we are grateful for all gifts and donations to The Friends of the Morrill Homestead. These donations, along with business sponsorships, help us provide the best in community events, programs, and children’s camps. We appreciate any support and we look forward to our work within this community, today and beyond in years to come.

Ingrid Webb
Chair, Friends of the Morrill Homestead



Photo by Finn



Photo by Jamie

Who’s Who on the Board...

CHARLOTTE FACCIO - RETIRED NURSE & ACTIVE GARDENER

Longtime dedicated volunteer, Charlotte Faccio joined the board in 2023. From volunteering her time and energy at the Friends’ seasonal events to leading the efforts of the Grounds & Gardens Committee, her work with the Friends is a reflection of her unwavering commitment to education, nature, and community – which is also evident in her professional life and her personal interests.

A long-time resident of Strafford, Charlotte is a recently retired registered nurse with a varied professional background that includes experience with hospital management, intensive care unit, general in-patient care, and, for most of her time in Vermont, school nursing. She especially found joy in her work with students and appreciated the unpredictable nature of her job.

Charlotte’s interest in Justin Morrill and his professional life eventually led to her contributions as a board member with the Friends. A gardener and nature-lover herself, she is also fascinated by the historic gardens at the Homestead and is active in efforts to protect them for future generations.

While it’s true that AppleFest is one of her favorite events hosted by the Friends, she’s quick to note that she also has a wonderful time at Gallery in the Garden. Regardless of the event or the season, she enjoys collaborating with the board and is particularly excited about the many educational opportunities available to the community at the Homestead.

Trish Palao
Board Member, Friends of the Morrill Homestead

