

# Milton Historical Society

## *Common Ground*

Winter 2009

### *Museum Reaches 1,000 Local Students in 2008*

By Kevin Kelly , *Chair of the MHS Education Committee*

It began as a conversation between two people. As with so many meetings associated with the Milton Historical Society and the Lydia B. Cannon Museum, Museum Director Melinda Huff was one of the participants. I was the other. We wondered what we could do to make the collection housed and displayed at the Museum more accessible to students and teachers, young learners and caregivers in the educational communities of the Broadkill Hundred and how we could use the items in the collection to directly support the curricula of our local school programs. In the grand tradition of democracies everywhere, we decided to create a committee. Melinda asked if I would chair the committee and we created a list of prospective founding members. And so was born the Education Committee of the Milton Historical Society.

In the days that followed, form and substance replaced ideas and concepts. It was determined that the committee would exist to establish the collection and resources of the Lydia Black Cannon Museum and the communities of Milton and the Broadkill Hundred as the focal points for educational programming. Further, the committee would seek to advance the Milton Historical Society's mission to interpret Milton and the Broadkill Hundred within the larger context of the surrounding natural, political, and cultural environment. And, especially, it would be the mission of the committee to create educational programs which integrated the assets of the museum with the instructional missions of neighboring educational systems and institutions, public and private. Since its inception the committee has met monthly to plan, develop, implement, evaluate, and revise museum centered educational programs offered by the Society. Sometimes these programs have taken place at the museum; sometimes off

museum grounds at a school or other instructional venue. Always, items from the Museum's collections have played a prominent role in our presentations. We have upgraded and expanded the type and variety of activities designed to be used by younger children during visits to the museum. Unlike activities of this type found at many museums which are primarily used to occupy children's time, the activities designed by the committee provide opportunities for our youngest visitors to experience and learn from the museum's collections. We have designed and implemented story-based hands-on activities for student groups in support of the *Milton Made Quilt Exhibit* and in celebration of such historically significant Milton industries as ship building and button making. (*cont. p. 2*).



**Over the summer, Milton Boys & Girls Club members used geometry to piece together their own quilt as part of the Milton Made quilt exhibition!**

## ***Education Committee (cont.)***

Often these activities have combined the resources of the MHS with other educational providers in the community like the Milton Library. In every instance when the student group involved attended a local public school the student activities were designed to support specific appropriate grade level standards for learning established by the State of Delaware. Most recently, members of the committee traveled to H.O. Brittingham Elementary School and to Milton Elementary School for a dramatic reading of the Grimm Brothers' children's classic, *The Elves and the Shoemaker*. The Committee's goal of connecting the events of the story with the history of Milton was accomplished by the display and interpretation of artifacts from the Museum collection directly associated with the history of the shoemaking industry in Milton.

In less than a year, the members of this committee, which include **Helen Camenisch, Sharon Davis, Judy Howard, Kevin Kelly (chair), Barbara McDonald, Eileen Redden, Mary Schwanky, and Mimi Walls** in cooperation with Melinda Huff, Museum Director, have provided exciting, instructionally sound, and Museum related activities to nearly ***one thousand children*** in our community. Future plans for the committee include the development of a Geocaching activity centered on Milton (in case you were wondering, Geocaching is a form of digital orienteering); the certification of Milton Historical Society docent training programs and Walking Tours of Milton as optional CHIP activities for teachers in our community public schools; a field trip offering of the *Between Fences* exhibit, developed by the Smithsonian; a look at the Milton economy, past and present; and during Fire Prevention and Safety Week, a commemoration of Milton's tragic Fire of 1909. In addition, as this new year progresses, we intend to expand our programs to include upper elementary education and, in following years, to reach student populations in Middle and High School.

The success of the Education Committee of the Milton Historical Society is due simply to the hard work of its self starting, cheerful, and collegial members. It is a great privilege to serve as the committee's chair, but it is mostly a great pleasure to be one of its members. The committee meets monthly at the Museum. If you are interested in joining the committee, or if you are an educator interested in our offerings, please contact the Milton Historical Society at [info@historicismilton.org](mailto:info@historicismilton.org) or at 302-684-1010.

[Editor's Note: *A resident of Milton, Kevin Kelly taught history for 35 years in Fairfax County Virginia school system, including courses in American Civilization, American Studies and AP History. He served as Department Chair for many years and was named the U. S. Capitol Historical Society/ Fairfax County Teacher Historian of the Year.*]

## ***WELCOME DEREK HENDRICKSON***

We are pleased to welcome Wesley College senior **Derek Hendrickson** to the museum to complete an internship towards his history degree. Derek is carrying out a study of historic fences in Milton as part of our upcoming exhibition, *Between Fences* (see opposite page).

### **Back for its 3<sup>rd</sup> Season!**

#### ***Magnificent & Modest: A Milton Walking Tour***

Join us for a walking tour of the town once known as "Head of Broadkill." Milton enjoys a rich architectural heritage, with 198 structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The tour will review the town's early history and include a lively discussion the ship captains and seafaring men who called Milton home. A broad range of architectural styles will be featured.

The tour lasts approximately 1 ½ hours and covers a little over a mile. Sturdy shoes, plenty of sun block, and hats are recommended. Weather permitting.

WHEN: Saturdays: May 16<sup>th</sup>, June 13<sup>th</sup>, July 18<sup>th</sup>, August 15<sup>th</sup>, September 19<sup>th</sup>, October 17<sup>th</sup>

COST: Members are FREE and non-members are \$5. For more information: (302)684-1010 or email: [info@historicismilton.org](mailto:info@historicismilton.org).



#### ***Did you know?***

**In addition to a strong collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century homes, Milton has many excellent examples of bungalows, such as this example at 303 Federal Street. Some bungalows were sold as ready-to-assemble kits and shipped via the railway. Popular from about 1900-1940, the bungalow style introduced a more modern and open floor plan. These homes also offered the latest in technology like: electricity, central heating, and indoor plumbing!**



***Delmarva Roots Film Series***  
**Held at the Milton Theatre**  
**Tickets are \$3, Showtime: 7 pm**

**Fri, February 20<sup>th</sup> *Flying for Freedom***  
 Following the experiences of Tuskegee Airmen, *Flying for Freedom* reveals the faces, the voices and the stories that go beyond the battlefields of this very special group of servicemen and their extraordinary legacy of courage. A discussion follows with Tuskegee mechanic Mr. James Otis Handy and John Porter Tuskegee Airmen Chapter member Mr. Henry Evans.

**Fri, March 20<sup>th</sup> *Flying Pumpkins***  
***The Legend of Punkin Chunkin***  
 Feature documentary that lives with 20 teams for one year as they build their dream machines for the annual "chunk." Meet the folks who started it all and the varied and passionate people of all ages, shapes and sizes who follow in their footsteps to make the pumpkin pilgrimage every November.

***Between Fences***  
**May 15<sup>th</sup> – July 11<sup>th</sup> 2009**  
**Opening reception: May 15<sup>th</sup>, 5-7 pm**



*Between Fences* tells the story of the settling of the United States, the establishment of its communities, and the building of its borders. Built of hedge, concrete, wood and metal, the fence skirts our properties and is central to the American landscape. Fences, like barns, are tools that embody a culture and its values. Discover the history and meaning of these ordinary objects--how tightly the fence is entwined with politics, industry, and daily life.

*Between Fences* has been made possible in Milton by the Delaware Humanities Forum. *Between Fences* is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Federation of State Humanities Councils.



Smithsonian Institution



***Upcoming Exhibits***

***17<sup>th</sup> Century Delaware***  
**February 19 – April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Opening reception: February 18<sup>th</sup>, 5-7 pm**

Discover Delaware's 17th Century legacy! This exhibit interprets Delaware's colonial establishment by pairing primary resources and first-hand accounts. Discover the legendary story of "The Burning of the Whorekill," and the infamous territorial dispute between William Penn and Lord Baltimore that helped forge Delaware's modern day boundaries. Learn about bounties offered for killing wolves and bringing their heads to court! View the pocket watch of Delaware's first permanent European resident, Helmanius Wiltbanck - which, according to tradition, was carried in his pocket when he swam ashore after his ship wrecked off the coast of Lewes around 1650!

Courtesy of the *Delaware Public Archives*.

***Milton's Great Fire of 1909***  
**August -October 2009**



Milton's most devastating disaster occurred 100 years ago. In August of 1909, a fire tore through the downtown commercial district, endangering lives and destroying property. Learn about the fire and its aftermath through period accounts, photographs, and antique fire equipment.

## We Want You!

We are seeking both new and long-time residents of the region to serve as volunteers at the museum. The first in a series of volunteer information and training sessions will be held on **Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>** at 10am.

Docents are the hosts at the museum, welcoming visitors and acting as guides and interpreters of the exhibit. Other volunteer needs include: assistance at special events, collections and archival cataloguing (must be proficient with computers), gift shop sales, and building and landscape maintenance.

The volunteer training program is a great way to learn about the fascinating history of the area and meet other individuals with similar interests. A total of four training sessions will be held. The other sessions will be held on **Saturdays March 28<sup>th</sup>, April 4<sup>th</sup> and April 18<sup>th</sup>**. All session will begin at 10am and conclude by noon.

To sign up for training call 302-684-1010 or email: [info@historicmilton.org](mailto:info@historicmilton.org)



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## <<<OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS >>>

**Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 12 pm-5 pm**

### **Salon Milton Benefit**

Salon Milton will mark its third year of operation on Sunday, February 8th with an afternoon of hair cuts, massages, manicures and a bake sale to benefit the Milton Historical Society. The salon will also serve as a drop-off point for canned food to assist Casa San Francisco throughout the winter. To sign up for a manicure, chair massage, hair cut or a make-up mini-consultation on February 8th, please call Salon Milton at 302-684-1880. All proceeds to benefit the Milton Historical Society. Salon Milton is located at 517 Chestnut Street in Milton, and parking is available on the street.

**Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7 pm**

### **Speaker 's Series: *The Name Game***

Learn how naming patterns can assist in tracking your family history, presented by Nancy Purchase of the Sussex County Genealogy Society.

**Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm**

### **Annual MHS Dinner at the Milton Fire Hall**

Join us for a catered dinner, Volunteer of the Year award and a short presentation.