

# History of **Milford Massachusetts**

**1780-1980**



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By Milford Historical Commission



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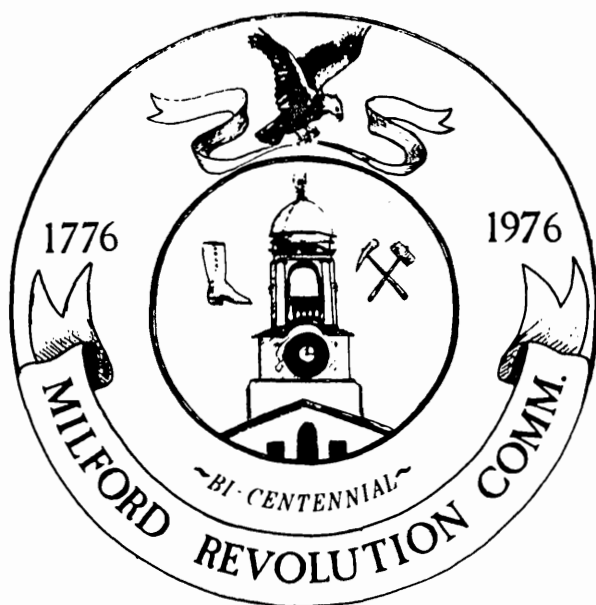
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### Town Seals

The Milford Town Seal depicts a man riding horseback over a ford in a stream near a mill, from which topographical feature Milford acquired its name. The seal, designed by Miss Evelyn Wires, was adopted on July 9, 1892. In 1976 a special seal was designed for the nation's bicentennial. It displays the Town Hall tower with a boot on one side and granite tools on the other. An outside ring contains the words "1776-1976 Bi-Centennial."

# Preface

The History of Milford was written by the members of the Milford Historical Commission and printed by Charlescraft Press of Milford. Printing of the book was made possible in the spring of 1979 when the town meeting approved the article for \$9,800 sponsored by the Historical Commission. This money was used to pay for the editor, photographer, typist, and printer. The generosity of the town will always be remembered.

The researching of material for this book has occupied members of the Commission for nearly three years. Such investigation proved to be more laborious than had been expected. The commission exhausted all possible sources of evidence, such as the writings of Adin Ballou and Ernest Bragg, local newspapers, and interviews. The commission is especially grateful to all those who contributed to the development of a composite picture of Milford. This history, while no means complete, includes as much information as the committee was able to collect and coordinate. Any errors or omissions are entirely unintentional.

Upon the completion of all research, the commission established a committee of four to write the book. This committee was made up of the following commissioners: Mr. Robert Matthew Andreola, chairman; Mrs. Roy Franklin Lovell, secretary; Mr. Robert Anthony Samiagio, treasurer; and Mr. Robert Austin Philbin.

Special thanks are extended to Miss P. Marie Colavita who served as the editor. The commission also expresses its appreciation to Gordon Hopper and Stanley Jones, who researched early transportation and sport articles respectively. The committee was also assisted by the relentless efforts of typist Miss Marguerite F. Hayes.

In an effort to preserve the History of Milford for future generations, the commission hopes this history will be warmly received by the residents of Milford.

Robert Matthew Andreola  
*Chairman*



Original Congregational Church dedicated December 23, 1743.

(Sketched by David Casey)

# Early History

## 1667-1828

Little did the Puritan Colonists of Braintree and Weymouth realize as they settled Mendon in 1667 that 113 years later there would be six separate entities existing in the area of their sparse settlement. One of these townships was to become Milford. The endeavor to establish a colony was a long and arduous one, yet in time, it was to provide countless benefits to many thousands of future inhabitants.

As the first settlers were traveling on route to Mendon with Indians for guides, they passed the Great Meadow, which is now the area between Routes 16 and 109. Prior to 1600, this spot was a large beaver pond that had drained. This change left fertile soil to produce choice hay that could be harvested three or four cuttings each season for the cattle. Adjacent to the Great Meadow were the majestic cedars surrounding Milford Pond. Early accounts state that our forefathers, on viewing these tall, majestic cedars, set them aside in common land (the entire eight square miles of the original grant was considered common land) for future Milfordians. These trees were compared to the cedars of Lebanon: They could be cut only to make cedar shanks or clapboards for homes. These shanks could not be sold at anytime; and if they were not used within six months of felling, a fine had to be paid.

As the pioneers were moving along the Sherborn Road (Main Street), they learned many of the Indian names for the places they passed. "Magomiscock" (Highland Street), being the highest point in Milford, had been given the name meaning "ground affording a grand view," and "Moshcock" (Bear Hill),

coming from an Indian tale, meant "a haunt for bears."

Other Indian names are "Maspenock," (North Pond), "a choice fishing place," and Nipmuck, "a country abounding with streams and ponds." Quinshipaug Plantation," the original name given the Mendon purchase, meant "pickerel pond." This area was purchased by an Indian deed dated September, 1662.

The original Indian deed given to Moses Payne and Peter Brackett reads as follows:

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### Indian Deed.

To all Christian people to whom these presents shall come, Annawassamauke, alias, John, and Quashaamit, alias, William of Blue Hills, and Great John Namsconont, alias, Peter, and Upanbohqueen, alias, Jacob of Natick, Sendeth Greeting, Know ye, that the said Annawassamauke, Quashaamit, Great John Namsconont, and Upanbohqueen, for divers good and valuable considerations them there unto moving and especially for and in consideration of the sum of Twenty four Pounds Sterling to them in hand paid by Moses Payne and Peter Brackett both of Braintree, the receipt whereof we do acknowledge by these presents, and thereof, and of every part and parcel thereof, doth exonerate, acquit and discharge them, the said Moses Payne and Peter Brackett, their heirs and Assigns forever by these presents, Hath given, granted, bargained, sold, enfeoffed and confirmed, unto Moses Payne and Peter Brackett of Braintree aforesaid,

their heirs and assigns forever, A Tract of Lands of Eight Miles Square, lying about fifteen miles from Medfield; and is bounded one Mile to the East of a small River which lieth about three Miles to the Eastward of Nipmug Great Pond, and so from the line of one mile on the East of that small River, is to run Eight Miles West, or westerly, and is to lie three miles to the South or Southward of the Path that leads to Nipmug Great Pond, and five Miles on the other side of that path, north, or northwards, together with all the trees and timber, woods and underwoods, standing, lying, and growing thereon, with all the Meadows, Swamps, Rivers, Ponds and Brooks, lying within the Eight Miles square, with all the privileges and appurtenances belonging, or any ways appertaining thereunto. To Have and To Hold the said Eight Miles square as it is bounded, together with all the Trees, and Timber, with underwoods standing, lying and growing thereon, with all the Meadows, Swamps, Rivers and Ponds, and Brooks lying within this Eight Miles square, as it is bounded, with all other privileges and appurtenances belonging or any ways appertaining thereunto, unto the said Moses Payne and Peter Brackett, their heirs and assigns forever, and to their only proper use and behoof of them the said Moses Payne and Peter Brackett, their Heirs and Assigns forever, to be holden in free Socage, and not in capite, nor by Knights Service.

And the said Annawassamauke, alias, John, and Quashaamitt, alias, William, Great John Namsconont, alias Peter, and Upanabohqueen, alias Jacob, doth promise and grant

by these presents, that they the said Annawassamauke, Quashaamitt, are the true and proper owners and proprietors of the said bargained premises at the time bargain and sale thereof, and that the said premises are free and clear and freely and clearly acquitted, exonerated and discharged of, for and from all, and all manner of former bargains, sales, gifts, grants, titles-mortgages, actions, Suits, arrests, attachments, Judgements, executions, extents or incumbrances whatsoever, from the beginning of the World, until the time of the sale and bargain thereof.

And the said Annawassamauke, Quashaamitt, Great John Namsconont and Upanabohqueen doth covenant, promise and grant by these presents, all and singular the said bargained premises, with the appurtenances, to warrant and defend unto the said Moses Payne and Peter Brackett, their heirs and assigns forever, against all Indians or English people, by, for or under them claiming any right, title or interest of, or unto the same, or any part thereof, forever by these presents.

And that it shall and may be lawful to, and for the said Moses Payne and Peter Brackett to Record and Enroll, or cause to be recorded and enrolled, the title and tenor of these presents, according to the true intent and meaning thereof, and according to the usual and manner of Recording Deeds and Evidences, in such cases made and provided.

In witness whereof, the said Annawassamauk, Quashaamitt, Great John Namsconont, and Upanabohqueen have set to, their hands and Seals, this twenty two of April, One thousand six hundred and sixty two.

The words "by, from or under them" in the sixth line, as also, that the Indians specified in this deed, together with their heirs forever, have liberty to fish, fowl, and hunt, so far as any law of this Jurisdiction alloweth in other places, notwithstanding any thing in this Deed. This was before the Ensealing hereof.

	his
ANAWASSAMAUK 3.	(L.S.)
	mark
	his
QUASHAAMIT X	(L.S.)
	mark
	his
NAMSCONONT S	(L.S.)
	mark
(No hand.)	(L.S.)

Signed, Sealed and delivered, the day and year above written, in the presence of us.

John Elliott, Senior  
John Elliott, Junior  
Daniel Weld, Senior

Great John set to his hand and seal and delivered the Deed to Moses Payne and Peter Brackett, this eighth day of September 1662.

As Witnesses,  
William Allis,  
Nathaniel Brackett.

The above is believed to be a true copy of the original deed as it is entered in the first volume of the town records of Mendon by the person who was especially appointed to enter the "public acts from the beginning of the plantation" and was transcribed as early as 1667, at which time the Quinshipaug Plantation received its charter from the General Court of

Massachusetts Bay Colony. The original was probably lost at the destruction of the town during the King Philip's War in 1675. June 7, 1667, marked the beginning of a township called Mendon. The deed shows how the plantation at "Netmook," first called Quinshipaug, then Mendham, and finally Mendon, originated; how the eight miles square of its territory was acquired from the Indian sachems; how the General Court ordered the incipient affairs of its settlement; and how Mendon became incorporated on May 15, 1667. Little is known from 1662 until the incorporation of the plantation as a town in 1667.

The settlers of this place held the farthest outpost of civilization in this territory. They were surrounded by Indians, who were daily jealous of the encroachments of a race who, since the landing at Plymouth, had taken no step backward. These pioneers were in the midst of a wilderness situated fifteen miles from the nearest town. Considering this circumstance, one can readily suppose that most of their time must have been occupied in providing themselves with suitable shelter, and in planting and gathering the crops upon which they mainly depended for a supply of food.

The last act of the Committee for "Nipmug" is recorded in the following words:—

"We the Subscribers do nominate and depute Colonel William Crowne to Enter the public Acts respecting Mendon from the beginning of the Plantation to this time, and to finish his work with speed, and make return to us under named,



The Committee Respecting the Prudential affairs of Mendon.

Eliezer Lusher,  
William Stoughton,  
William Parke,

Dedham, 2:2 '67"

Little is known about the settling of Mendon from 1667 to the return of the people in 1680 after the King Philip's War. The first allotment of land seems to have been made to Benjamin Albee in 1664 and consisted of an acre for a mill-lot. According to the records, this occurrence was the first attempt by an inhabitant of Mendon to move away from the center to the easterly section area before the land was officially purchased by the town of Mendon.

The first mill, built by Albee, was located in present-day Hopedale on the Mill River. It became clear that waterways furnished power for mills and provided good meadows for farming. Therefore, individuals seeking to establish grist mills, saw mills or even productive farms, felt compelled to migrate from the center of Mendon to a river valley in order to achieve their goals. Records also reveal that in 1670 a twenty-acre house lot was set off for John Sprague, who built the first dwelling house in the future Milford; however, this parcel of land was in Hopedale, which remained a part of Milford until 1886.

The pioneers experienced innumerable hardships and difficulties in their efforts to found a community; nevertheless, by the 1670's they were well on their way to establishing a thriving settlement. However, a terrible calamity, the

King Philip's War in 1675, almost swept everything out of existence. King Philip enlisted nearly all the Nipmuck Indians, as well as the more powerful neighboring tribes, into his warlike alliance. The speedy result of this coalition was the actual murder of six of these Mendon settlers, and the flight of all their survivors to the seacoast towns. In February, 1676, occurred the burning of every dwelling house. The first meeting house and nearly all the outbuildings shared the general devastation. With comparatively slight exceptions, the early inhabitants lost the fruits of twelve years' progress from their wilderness beginning.

When the war ended in 1676 by the overthrow of King Philip and a sweeping destruction of his confederates, the Mendon fugitives slowly returned albeit in a poverty-stricken condition and with a deep-seated dread of the savages that lingered in reduced numbers about the general neighborhood. Not more than half of the original settlers returned; but the heirs and assigns of the others, along with new adventurers, soon joined the old proprietors, so that the year 1680 witnessed a promising resumption of lands and corporate privileges.

On February 19, 1691 or 1692, Mendon acquired an additional three square miles of land from the Indians. This acquisition, which has always been designated "The North Purchase," marked the beginning of Milford. Next, this land had to be divided among the proprietors

wishing to settle the new wilderness. The prescribed rule set forth that the proprietary settlers should have a certain quantity of land set off to them before they could have a township. The man who then invested 100 pounds in the Plantation was entitled to 150 acres of land, a town seat, or house lot of thirty acres, ten acres of open natural meadow, and five acres of swampy lowland capable of being made meadow, and enough more to make up the 150 acre "Great Lot." The first considerable batch of house lots was assigned by lot so as to avoid all contention for the more desirable parcels of land. It would appear from the records that, although the proprietors were sometimes blended in action with the townsmen in allotting and voting common lands, yet the former still continued to be a distinct body with distinct franchises and distinct books so long as there remained any common lands to be apportioned.

First and last, the early settlers made eleven divisions of land. It is understood that they called their division of house lots their *first*. Thenceforth, they voted successive divisions relating to "Meadows" and "Great Lots." These they numbered second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh. Thus every parcel of land laid out is specified on early records as belonging to such or such a man's numerical division.

Readers cannot fail to understand that all the present Milford territory in its wilderness state was held primarily by old Mendon proprietors as their common land.

These regulations clearly indicated the general way in which our lands got into the possession of their first individual owners.

One of the earliest settlers on Milford land was Captain Seth Chapin, who settled on the Mill River, the area which later became Hopedale. Elder John Jones was a near neighbor of Captain Seth Chapin on the north. Jones, who had come to Mendon at an early age, was taxed on the rate bills for the year ending October 25, 1691. However, the Elder John Jones was not a permanent resident of Mendon, and this fact caused some problems. Early colonial communities placed much emphasis on residents sharing in community tasks for their very survival. Absentee property owners were looked upon with much disapprobation by fellow residents. For a period of thirteen years Jones was exempt from taxes, but the reason for his exemption remains unclear. This tax exemption came to an end in 1703 when the townsmen wanted to encourage Jones' permanent residency in the community. He was evidently an enterprising and executive man as well as an eminently pious and devoted church member. Tradition says that in clearing up his first acres, he daily came down from Mendon Hill, where he had his domicile, to the woods where, with only a dog for companionship, he plied his axe vigorously all day in felling the lusty primitive trees that studded the soil. Breakfast and supper he took at home; he prudently quit work in time to return home by daylight so as to avoid the wolves and other beasts of prey that then made night time travel perilous.

When his clearing was sufficiently advanced, Jones built himself a strong lot barrack and began to stay overnight on the premises. The spot was close by the river where the Draper factory stands today. The construction was completed in the spring of 1700. He soon built the first framed dwelling house in these parts at a site east of Neck Hill. He located his family in "the Dale" and provided himself with a small stock of cattle. His wealth rapidly increased, especially in lands. The proprietary records show that, year after year, through his long life, he was having parcels, here and there, laid out to him. Most of these were near his homestead, but some of them were miles distant in different directions in areas near the "Great Meadow," the "North Cedar Swamp," "North Purchase," and even in "Bungay." He lived to see Milford a thriving Precinct. He died in comparative affluence on March 28, 1753, in his eighty-third year; his wife Sarah had passed away about three years previous.

Not long after Elder John Jones had settled near the Mill River, Benjamin Hayward built his home on a hill near Second Bridge River (Charles River). This is one of the oldest homes left standing in Milford. Many older citizens may recall it as Dr. Marcus Knights' home on South Main Street. This farm was passed on to Hayward's son Benjamin Hayward, Jr., and it remained in the Hayward-Wood family for 166 years.

In 1708, Mr. Hayward, in consideration of a moderate annuity,

deeded his son a large farm situated on "both sides of Second Bridge River" (Charles River). This lot included a considerable northerly section of the lands his father had taken up out of common; it extended from opposite the old Mansion House down through Howardtown to the border of the South Milford district. The younger Hayward dwelt at what for the last fifty years has been known as the Nathan Wood place. He was one of the original members of the Congregational Church which was established here in 1741.

The next settlers were Ebenezer and Joseph Sumner. They were the sons of George Sumner. These brothers settled in the east end of Magomiscock Hill, which includes the present day area comprising West Street, Route 140, and Main Street. Whether the two Sumner brothers immediately set up a log-cabin on their premises is uncertain. They did not get married until three or four years after they settled in this location, but it is presumed they busily prepared their new home. It is likely that their first domicile was set up at the Dexter Walker place (site of the Milford Hospital). In the meantime, they had parcel after parcel of land laid out, some adjoining their "Great Lot," and others farther down the cart-path towards Holliston (the Sherborn Road).

William Cheney, the ancestor of all the Milford Cheneys, was not long behind the Sumners as a settler.

He was originally from Medfield. Tax records show that he was in Mendon-town as early as 1695, with his wife Margaret. He settled on a parcel of land between Captain Seth Chapin and the Sumners on April 13, 1706.

From 1710 onward, there was a steady increase in population in the North Purchase section of the territory. In 1722 Elder John Jones deeded 110 acres to his son, Nathaniel, who built the oldest recorded home in the North Purchase. This home remained in the same family for over one hundred years. From this home, Captain Samuel Warren left with his Company of the Mendon Militia for Roxbury on April 16, 1775, at the start of the Revolutionary War. The building of a home by John Jones Jr., in 1723 initiated the separation of the Easterly Precinct from old Mendon and the need of a meeting house closer to the families. Since colonial law required that the colonists attend the public worship of God as well as the town meetings, it became an inconvenience to travel the relatively great distance to the Mendon meeting house. Between 1727 and 1731 at least fifteen unproductive meetings were held on the subject; unfortunately, these meetings seemed only to polarize opinions as each faction refused to compromise at all.

It was on February 16, 1730, that the first petition "to set off as a par-

ticular town within 10 years, land on the East side of Mill River" was entered. It was voted down by the Mendon town fathers. Angry disgruntled residents of the Easterly Precinct now styled themselves "the Aggrieved Persons," and an alienation from their church and pastor began. They resolved to determine a separate corporate existence.

To accomplish their aim, they needed the approval of a majority of the town. The difficulty of their task and their degree of perseverance is measured by the record. Petitions for separateness were put before town meetings in 1730, 1731, 1735, 1736, 1737, 1739, 1740, and 1741. Mendon was stubborn in its resistance to separation, but the Mill River residents were equally firm in their unrelenting pursuit of this separation.

Thus, after so many years of opposition, "the Aggrieved Persons" boldly decided to form a church of their own. They petitioned the General Court to establish them as a separate precinct; they cited the great difficulty they were under "in attending the Public Worship of God at the Meeting House in said Town by reason of the distance and badness of the roads."

In colonial times only an incorporated town or precinct could have a church. The Mill River men were taking a back door route to township to circumvent opposition. They called an Ecclesiastical Council of Churches to which Hopkinton, Holliston, Uxbridge, and Upton were invited; Mendon was excluded. (Upton had broken from Mendon in

1735; Uxbridge, in 1727). Thus they obtained the necessary ecclesiastical approval and quietly withdrew support of the Mendon church. They also took upon themselves the burden of meeting the main stipulation of the General Court for the incorporation of a precinct. They would have to build their own meeting house within two years.

On April 15, 1741, the easterly section dissidents sent a petition to the Town of Mendon for permission to establish a separate township or precinct. After considerable deliberation, with Mendon's approval, these future Milfordians, John Jones, Josiah Adams, William Cheney, Nathan Tyler, Benjamin Green, Jonathan Hayward, John Chapin, William Sheffield, Nathaniel Nelson, William Cheney, Jr., John Binney, Jonathan Whitney, Abraham Jones, Moses Tenney, John French, Thomas Beard, Samuel Warren, Habijah French, William Hayward, Ephraim Daniels, Ebenezer Albee, Joseph Jones, Samuel Hayward, Benjamin Rockwood, Jonathan Thayer, and Benjamin Hayward, Jr., petitioned the General Court.

"To his Excellency William Shirley, Esq., Capt. General and Governor in Chief in and over his Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay, & c.; and to the Honble. the Council and the House of Representatives of said Province in General Court assembled this 25th d. November, 1741."

The petition of sundry Inhabitants of the Town of Mendon in said Province hereunto subscribing Humbly sheweth: That the said Town of Mendon, in answer to a petition of sundry Inhabitants on

the Easterly side of Mill River in said Town, did, at their meeting on Sept. the 22, 1741, Vote their consent That the lands in said Township lying on the Easterly side of Mill River to the Country Road by Sheffield's Mill, then bounding on said Road to Bellingham and Bounding on Bellingham, Holliston and Hopkinton, with all the Lands and Inhabitants who dwell on those lands within said lines, be a district and separate Township; — That the lands set off by the Town as aforesaid, with the polls and estates, rateable to the support of the Ministry, and being within said Boundaries, are not (your petitioners conceive) more than about one-third part of said Town, considered in respect to polls and estates; — That there are five families on the Westerly side of Mill River who choose to congregate with your petitioners and to be laid to them, whose lands also, at least some of them, will be much incommoded by remaining to the old Town; which families, if added to your petitioners, will, as your petitioners hope, render their charge of maintaining the gospel possible.

Your petitioners are nevertheless humbly of opinion that it would be more conducive to the peace and welfare of the whole, that your petitioners and others within the Bounds aforesaid, with the addition of those few families, be created a precinct, rather than a separate Township, and that the Ministry of both the Churches and Congregations in said Town may be supported by a Joint Stock, and every one attend the public ministry that is most convenient and agreeable.

Your petitioners humbly pray your Excellency and the Honble. Court, that the Inhabitants of Mendon, dwelling on the Easterly side of Mill River and adjoining as aforesaid to Bellingham, Holliston and Hopkinton, with their lands in said Township, Together with other lands on the Westerly side of said River up to a Road called the Eight Rod Road, and including Nathan Tyler's house and lands up to Upton line, may be created a separate Town, or a separate precinct, or that the public Ministry of both the Churches and Congregations in the Town of Mendon be supported by a Tax or Assessment upon the whole Town, as your Excellency and Honors shall judge most meet and convenient. And your petitioners shall ever pray, i.e.

Samuel Scammell.  
Joseph Jones.  
Ephraim Daniels.  
Moses Tenney.  
Joshua Underwood.  
Habijah French.  
James Godman.  
Moses Gage.  
William Legg.  
Ichabod Thayer.  
Dearing Jones.  
James Sumner.  
Josiah Chapin.  
Eliphalet Wood.  
Benjamin Hayward.

John Jones.  
William Cheney.  
Nathaniel Jones.  
John Binney.

Amos Binney.  
Nathaniel Nelson.  
Thomas Chaddock.  
Abraham Jones.  
John Chapin.  
William Cheney, jun.  
Nehemiah Nelson.  
Benjamin Hayward, jun.  
Samuel Hayward.  
Joseph Sumner.  
Ebenezer Boynton.

And we whose names are hereunder written (being the owners of the lands of the five families above-named) humbly pray that we with our lands may be annexed to the new Town or precinct, unless the Ministry be jointly supported.

Nathan Tyler.  
John Thwing.  
Thomas White.

Immediately following the decision of the General Court to allow the easterly section of Mendon precinct status as the "Easterly Precinct of Mendon," a meeting was held on January 18, 1742, to build a meeting house. Precinct offices examined possible sites for a meeting house until April 13, 1742, at which time the offices rendered the following decision:

"We are of opinion that the knowl or rising ground at the country road leading from Holliston to Mendon, where the cross-roads meet which comes from Habijah French's, and on the southwesterly corner of Joseph Sumner's lot in said Mendon Easterly Precinct, is the best place for a Meeting House to stand on, and will accommodate the inhabitants of said precinct with the families in the standing part of Mendon."

This place must have been in the vicinity of the present Congregational Church, perhaps a few rods southerly towards Water Street. Several meetings and fast days were observed at the home of Elder John Jones to decide on a pastor and a location for the church. On July 26, 1742, a vote was taken as follows: That the meeting-house "shall be built on a spot of ground northerly of Mr. Robinson's barn, where the Inhabitants this day set up a stake; provided those that subscribed to build a Frame shall prepare and have it ready to be raised by the 26th day of November; and provided that Mr. Robinson will give the Precinct half an acre of land for that purpose." The following is a verbatim copy of Robinson's deed, so far as concerns its description of the premises, as attested by the Register of Worcester Deeds: —

"A certain tract or piece of land "scituate" and lying and being in Mendon Easterly Precinct where the Meeting House for the public worship of God now stands, "buted" & bounded as followeth: Beginning at a heap of stones at the road that leads from Ichabod Robinson's to Sherbourn, being the Southeasterly corner; then bounded Northerly upon the road that leads from Sherbourn road to Ebenezer Boynton — "nineteen rod" and three quarters of a rod to a heap of stones, being the Northeasterly corner; then bounded Westerly upon Ichabod Robinson lands eight rod and a half to a heap of stones, being two rod & four feet from the Southwesterly corner of the meeting house where it now stands; then bounded Southwesterly upon

Ichabod Robinson land fourteen "rod" to a heap of stones by the said road that leads to Sherbourn; being the Southwesterly corner; then bounded upon Sherbourn road six "rod" & an-half to the first mentioned bounds, & said "peace" of land being six "rod" and — half wide where the meeting house now stands and it being fourteen rod from Sd meeting house to the road that leads to Sherbourn. The whole of Sd "peace" of land, containing half an acre & twenty four "rod" be it more or less."

WORCESTER ss. The above is a true copy of the description in the record of a warranty deed from Icabod Robinson to the inhabitants of the Easterly Precinct in Mendon, dated by acknowledgement Dec. 17, 1748, and recorded in the Registry of Deeds, Book 27, p. 507.

Attest: Harvey B., Wilder, Reg.

The meeting house was built, and the Reverend Amariah Frost was ordained on December 21, 1742, only two days within the time specified in the act of incorporation. The newly formed precinct was generally known as the "Easterly Precinct" or the Second Precinct of Mendon, and the church was designated "The Second Church of Christ in Mendon." After the incorporation of the precinct as a town in 1780, the church received a new name, "The First Church in Milford."

At this time, 1741, the Second Precinct of Milford had twenty homes with a population of 150 in-

habitants. Of these twenty homes, six remain standing.

Within a few years the people of the precinct realized they were not happy with a mere separation. The precinct was still subordinate to Mendon in many respects other than religion, namely, taxation, franchise and education. In 1753 a movement to organize as a town began again. There was a second lull of twelve years. In 1765 and 1766 a petition for district corporation was voted down. In 1767 a petition for township received a negative vote by a majority of seven votes. Finally at a town meeting held on March 1, 1779, Mendon agreed to a separation. A conference committee, representing the three Precincts then existing in the town of Mendon, of which Jonathan Jones, Seth Nelson, and Ichabod Thayer were members on behalf of the Easterly or Second Precinct, was appointed. On May 3, 1779, the committee agreed to the following: boundaries separating the Second or Easterly Precinct from the other precincts still part of Mendon, cost of land gained by the Second Precinct, share of school funds, share of Ministry funds, share of Town's stock of arms and ammunition, equal proportion of the poor maintained by the Town, payment of all charges within the town of Mendon prior to incorporation as a separate town, and drawing of a proportionate share of extra money after all bills of the Town of Mendon are paid.

This committee report sanctioned an Act of Incorporation by a vote during the following year. Hereafter and for all time, the Easterly Precinct in the Town of Mendon in

the County of Worcester, was formed into a separate town named Milford. On April 11, 1780, this act was adopted by the Great and General Court of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay.

### **Act of Incorporation**

An Act for Incorporating the Easterly Precinct in the Town of Mendon, in the County of Worcester, into a Separate Town by the name of Milford.

Whereas it appears that the Inhabitants of the Easterly Precinct in the Town of Mendon, in the County of Worcester, labor under many Difficulties in their present Situation, for Remediying of which they Earnestly request they may be incorporated into a Separate Town.

Be it therefore Enacted by the Council and House of Representatives in General Court Assembled, and by the Authority of the same that the Easterly part of the Town of Mendon, in the County of Worcester, bounded as follows, Vizt: beginning at a heap of Stones on Bellingham Line, on the North of the Country Road, then running West, and bounded South on said Road until it comes to a Road called the eight-rod Road, now reduced to a four-rod Road, then North, and bounded westerly on said Road, as it is now Stated by the Town of Mendon, until it comes to Upton Line, thence on Upton Line to Hopkinton Line, thence on Hopkinton Line to Holliston Line, thence on Holliston Line to Bellingham Line, thence on Bellingham

Line to the Bounds first mentioned. Be and hereby is Incorporated into a Town by the Name of Milford, and that the Inhabitants thereof by and they are hereby Invested with all the Powers, Privileges & Immunities which the Inhabitants of the Towns in this State do or may by Law enjoy.

And Provided Nevertheless, and be it further Enacted that the Inhabitants of the said Town of Milford shall be held to take and maintain their Proportionable part of the Poor of said Town of Mendon that are now maintained as such or that shall be hereafter Returned from any other Town as belonging to said Mendon before the said Town of Milford was Incorporated.

And Be it further enacted that the Inhabitants of said Town of Milford shall be held to pay their Proportionable part of all Town, County and State Taxes that are already raised, or granted, to be assessed on the Inhabitants of said Town of Mendon, or that shall be granted to be assessed on said Town of Mendon during the present Sitting of the Great and General Court and be held to repair & Build one-half of the Bridges and mend and repair one-half the Roads on which they are bounded lying in the Town of Mendon forever.

And Be it further Enacted that all the Proprietors belonging to the Propriety of the Town of Mendon, that shall be Incorporated into the Town of Milford shall hold all their Common Rights in the Common

and Undivided Lands in the Propriety of the former Township of said Mendon as though they had not been set off into a Separate Town – And their Proportionable part of the Ministry and School Money belonging to said Town of Mendon, that have accrued to them by the Sale of the School and Ministry Land.

And Be it further Enacted That Joseph Dorr, Esqr., be and he is hereby directed and empowered to issue his Warrant directed to some Principal Inhabitant of said Town of Milford requiring him to warn the Inhabitants of said Town of Milford qualified by Law to Vote in Town Affairs to Assemble and meet at some Suitable time and Place in said Town, to choose all such Officers as Towns by Law are Required and empowered to choose in the month of March Annually, and to Transact all other matters & Business necessary to be done in said Town.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES April 11, 1780. – This Bill having been read three several times, pass'd to be enacted.

JOHN HANCOCK, Speaker.

During the midst of struggles for incorporation, there existed a period of great anticipation for colonial separation from Great Britain because of her oppressive colonial policy dating from 1763. Despite the Revolutionary War, 1775-1783, which aroused national attention for

the Thirteen Colonies, the petition of incorporation as a separate town was never considered part of the national crisis. It remained a lesser concern. Probably the profound excitements and onward march of events developed by the Revolutionary struggle ripened public sentiment in all parts of Mendon for a municipal change.

In accordance with the provisions for the Act of Incorporation, Joseph Dorr of Mendon issued his warrant, dated April 25, 1780, for a meeting of the Town of Milford, to be held on May 1, 1780. At the meeting Joseph Dorr was chosen moderator; Caleb Cheney, clerk; and Lieutenant Jesse Whitney, Caleb Cheney, Warfield Hayward, Ebenezer Read and Stephen Albee, selectmen. Caleb Cheney was named treasurer. Lieutenant Jesse Whitney, Caleb Cheney, Warfield Hayward, Ebenezer Read and Stephen Albee were chosen to serve on a Committee of Correspondence. Adams Chapin, Ichabod Thayer, Jr., and Moses Chapin were assessors. Joseph Cady and Obadiah Ward were chosen Constables. Jonathan Jones and Josiah Chapin were appointed surveyors of highways for the First District, Levi Thayer and Samuel Davis for the Second District, Boyce Kimball for the Third District, and Dr. Elias Parkman for the Fourth District. Other position holders were Captain Gershom Nelson and

Captain Samuel Warren; tithing men; Captain Ichabod Thayer, Jr., Oliver Daniell and Joseph Jones, Jr., fenceviewers; Captain Gershom Nelson, sealer of lumber; Jesse Hayward, sealer of leather; Amos Shepherdson, Nathaniel Saunders, Caleb Boynton, Jr., and Ephraim Hayward, hog-reeves; and Deacon Abijah French, deer-reeve.

At the outset of the incorporation, Milford had a population of approximately 750 inhabitants. There were 110 families with 150 homes of which sixteen are still standing. The town had 150 voters, one small church, and no schools. Having just gone through the Revolutionary War with its mother town, it was in a very poor financial state with the exception of one or two grist and saw mills. The inhabitants occupied comparatively lowly dwellings, situated here and there on more than fifty legally laid town roads, ways, and bridle paths. Most of these were crooked and cheaply constructed lines of communication. At this time, the main thoroughfare through the center was known as "the Sherborn Road." It led from Mendon Town to Holliston, originally a part of Sherborn, and was a rustic bridle and cart path long before being sanctioned as a regular public highway. Until 1800 there were not twenty-five residences on this Sherborn road, yet it has always been the most populous road within the nearly nineteen square miles of territory.

Before the Revolution and for years afterwards, the inhabitants subsisted mainly on the products of their diligent husbandry. There were only a few mechanical craftsmen pursuing their respective vocations; they included blacksmiths, carpenters, tanners, shoemakers, tailors, and clothiers. The items they produced were so primitive and crude that smart wags of neighboring localities contemptuously nicknamed the Easterly Precinct "Broomshire," the implication being that it prospered by the manufacture and sale of splint brooms wrought Indian fashion from ash and birch saplings. But when these detractors saw Captain Samuel Warren raise thirty resolute minutemen and march them well drilled to Roxbury to serve through the war and when they saw Dr. William Jennison, a chosen delegate to the famous Provincial Congress, so fired with patriotism as to give the town of Mendon a brass field-piece, even "Broomshire" commanded their respect. It is clear that Milford never lacked martial patriotism or physical enterprise. So its nickname soon fell into oblivion.

The next event most worthy of note in the history of this society and church was the erection of a new meeting house in 1819. It was time to replace the old sanctuary with a new and more commodious one. A question arose concerning ownership of the structure: whether it rightfully belonged to the Town or to the Parish had to be determined.

Reverend David Long, leader of the Congregational Church and the worshippers thereof, in 1815, acting



under the advice of Seth Hastings, Esquire, of Mendon, organized themselves into a separate parish, and claimed all the rights of the old precinct before the incorporation of the town. In 1818, these members had voted to build a new meeting-house and to move away the old one, which they claimed belonged to them as successors of the Precinct. The members of other denominations denied the claim; they believed that the Town, not the new Parish, was heir to the Precinct and, therefore, inherited the meeting house.

Everybody still voted in town meeting on parochial affairs, but under the bill of rights only stated worshippers in the parish meeting house could be taxed for Mr. Long's support. The Universalists and the Methodists, who now comprised a majority, formed an allied opposition, and they voted parochial appropriations only on condition they should be released from paying.

On old Election Day in 1819, which was a holiday, a large and curious crowd gathered to see Elihu Perry put the old hallowed place of worship on rollers and move it off. Perry ignored all protests of partly a jolly and partly a cross crowd, as they belonged to one party or the other. Esquire Claflin's tavern was near at hand; the staple of New England flowed freely according to the custom of the times, and before nightfall many of the crowd of witnesses became mellowed in their views and forgot which side they were on. The Town Party immediately appealed to the law.

The Parish went ahead in the building of the new meeting house on the site of the old one. The members of the church set apart a season for special united prayer "in view of the unprovoked opposition and devices raised by many out of the Parish against building." Mr. Long saw "Divine Providence visible," as he records it, in the safe removal of the old building without accident. The Town party probably did not share the same view. Each morning, before the workmen drove a nail, they had prayers at the frame; and when they stopped work at night, they joined in a prayer and a hymn. After the building was finished, the sale of pews was opened with devotions, and the sum realized paid for the house and put \$3,000 in the treasury.

Esquire Hunt and his selectmen, the defenders of the Town's rights, now averring that these trespassers had carried off the town house, refused to accept as a favor a hall finished off in the old meeting house. They called a town meeting in June, mustered their forces, and carried a vote to build a new town house on a spot of ground opposite Darius Sumner's house, which the latter gave for a town house and common. They appropriated \$1,000 and appointed a building committee. Before the year 1819 closed, the brick town house was finished. Henceforth, the town house became the headquarters of the Town party, and the common and its neighborhood became their camp. As no headquarters could be complete without a base of supplies near at hand, a tavern was opened there that year by Colonel Sumner.

The Town party was thus victorious in town meeting; but when the fall came around, it was found that it was one thing to vote and assess taxes and another for Clark Ellis to collect them. The Parish party, after holding a council of war, refused to pay its taxes, a part of which were intended for building the town house. Ellis then placed an attachment on the horses and chaises of the Parish nullifiers; and the Parish common, at the time of the tax-sale, was filled with them. The Parish men, as a band of brothers, bid on each other's property. In one of the years of disputed taxes, Clark Sumner arrested Colonel Godfrey and Artemas Thayer for non-payment of taxes and transported them to Worcester jail. The prisoners drove themselves; the open wagon broke down, but the prisoners refused to escape. It was too jolly a frolic to lose. They had the key turned on them in jail; then, after the protest, they paid the taxes and costs, and prisoners and officer came home together, the best of friends. Then, of course, everybody sued the tax assessors. David Stearns, Henry Nelson, and James Perry, for trespass; and another batch of suits went into the law's mill to be slowly ground out.

Pearley Hunt and the Universalists of the Town party vowed that they would have a meeting house of their own on their own grounds. Pearley Hunt, Ebenezer Hunt, Ariel Bragg, Henry Nelson, Darius, Ellis, and Clark Sumner, John Corbett, Alexander Cheney, Caleb Cheney, Zebediah Flagg, and Otis Parkhurst associated themselves together as proprietors to build the church with Pearley Hunt taking one-quarter of

the stock. They were bound to outdo the Parish, according to their notions. This structure was a brick one, a fraction larger than the Parish structure, and it had a heavier bell. It was finished in 1820 and dedicated the next year with great pomp.

It was now the Parish's turn to do something to distinguish itself. So the next year, 1822, William Godfrey opened a line of stages between Mendon, Milford, and Boston, in connection with a line to Hartford. The central office was Esquire Claflin's tavern which became the scene of great excitement at the arrival and departure of the stage. As the driver tooted his horn, cracked his whip, and drove his horses up to the door with a gallop, the bar-room loungers and the small outdoor committee looked at him as a marvel. Mr. Godfrey was always promptly on hand as proprietor with a look of satisfaction on his kind face. Esquire Hunt, not to be long outdone, secured a post-office here in 1823, was himself appointed postmaster, and had the post-office at his store.

In the October, 1823, the Supreme Court in the suit of Milford vs. Godfrey and others, the court decided that the Parish owned the meeting house, and it gave a new trial in the suit of Thayer vs. Stearns and the other assessors. There was great rejoicing in the Parish. All sorts of technical points were raised in the suit against the assessors. In the following year the court decided in the favor of Thayer. As the assessors had been illegally collecting taxes for the town house and other purposes, seizing horses and chaises,

and taking people to jail, they were threatened with larger numbers of lawsuits.

The assessors commenced repaying these debts out of their own pockets. Their salaries did not warrant any such luxury, so their friends of the Town party flew to their rescue and voted to reimburse the assessors by an appropriation assessed in 1825. However, before the tax was collected, the Parish party mustered in such force that they carried in town meeting a motion to "reverse, revoke; and repeal" the vote to reimburse the assessors. The collector, however, went ahead. Some of the Parish refused to pay, as before, and arrest and distraint followed as before. Esquire Claflin and Artemas Thayer were arrested by the constable in the March, 1826, town meeting as they were going to vote. It was a close election. The two dickered with the constable, proposed to pay at Claflin's store, and slipped in their votes. All three went to the store. Young William Thayer was sent on the dead run up to the old homestead for his grandfather's moneybag. Claflin turned out all his silver, which was legal tender; a hundred-dollar bank bill would not do. The assessors kept the constable deliberately occupied counting fourpences and sixpences and waiting for Thayer's silver, until the ballot box was turned in at town meeting. For the first time in several years, Esquire Claflin and his party were elected to most town offices, including the all-important selectmen posts, by one majority. The constable, a member of the Town party, had lost his vote, so Mr. Carmel Cheney, the constable, was soundly outwitted.

In the spring of 1828, the Parish scored one more victory: William Godfrey, John Claflin, Jr., Nathan Wood, and their associates were incorporated as the Milford Academy, Milford's first place of higher learning. The edifice was located next to the Congregational church.

In the fall of that year, the court decided the suit of the assessors against the town in favor of the assessors; and Henry Nelson, the only survivor, recovered his money. It was some years, however, after outward hostilities ceased and before the effects of the strife passed away. Documented accounts show clearly the intense feeling and hostility that prevailed. One party completely ostracised the other; and, as a rule, there was complete non-communication, socially, religiously, and politically.

Bitter sentiments existed between the two parties. Two sons of Parish leaders used to go about the streets it is said, shouting "Heaven for the Parish, Hell for the Brick!" which was an anathema, not only on the Universalist party, but on their theology as well. More than ten years after the Nelson case was decided, it was the duty of a lower-village boy to be a Universalist and a Democrat, to believe in the brick meeting house, Colonel Sumner's tavern and the lower common. It was just as much a test of village loyalty to regard the parish meeting house with great pride, although it was wooden had a lighter bell than the Universalist Church.

This brief review of Milford's early history reflects the character, the individualism, the industry, and the foresight which led to the development of the town of Milford.



**Congregational Church on Congress Street around 1900.**

# Religion

## The First Congregational Church of Milford

The history of the town of Mendon proves that Church and State decided all matters of common import. Only Church members could vote on Town affairs, but the Town supported the Church and the town meetings controlled the appropriations. The plan worked perfectly as long as the Church members were of one mind. When they differed, there was apt to be trouble, as the story of the Mendon and Milford Churches proves.

The Mendon colonists were sturdy, resolute men. Their struggles against the Indians and the encroaching wilderness, along with all the hardships attendant upon building new homes in a strange land, fostered self-reliance, deliberation and a tenacious clinging to their own opinion. As the years passed and the settlement grew, the younger men moved away from the safe center into the wilder Mill River Section to build their own homes and live their own lives.

They had inherited many of their fathers' qualities, and in 1727, when Mendon proposed to build a new Church on the old site in the center, Mill River residents protested with one voice. They insisted that if they were to be taxed for its support, the new building must be nearer to their homes. Both parties were too much alike to yield without a struggle of wills. The dispute lasted for four years, and fifteen town meetings debated the question before the vote to build on the old site was carried in 1731.

Thereupon the indignant and defeated "protestants" organized themselves into the "aggrieved" party and moved for a separation from the mother town. As a first step in carrying out this purpose, they demanded a "separate existence" as a Church. Repeated refusals failed to discourage them, and in April of 1741 they succeeded in calling a council of the neighboring Churches. A covenant was drawn up granting them this separate existence. In the home of Elder Jones in the "Dale" (Hopedale), this famous covenant was signed by twenty-six men who thus organized themselves into a Church State. Two Elders, a Deacon, and a Scribe were chosen, and the Second Church of Christ in Mendon was founded.

It is interesting to note that a little more than a hundred years later in the same West Parlor where this covenant was signed, the Hopedale Community was organized under the leadership of the Reverend Adin Ballou. In 1780 the Easterly Precinct became the Town of Milford, and the Second Church of Christ in Mendon became the First Congregational Church of Milford.

Much toil, self-denial and sacrifice went into the building of this first Precinct Church, the predecessor of the present place of worship. It stood on the Common (General Draper Park) on land given by Ichabod Robinson. Mr. Amariah Frost was its "learned and orthodox minister" for forty-nine years. The church was completed in 1743, just within the two years of grace. By 1748 it was suitably furnished for Church services, and the Congregation ceased meeting in the members' homes. It is pleasant to record here

that all bitterness and injured feeling between Mendon and the Easterly precinct had now disappeared and that the Mother Church of Mendon presented a pewter communion set to the church. After Mr. Frost's death, the church was ten years selecting a successor. There is a tradition that forty candidates were heard in 1801 before the lot fell upon Mr. David Long.

Following the then usual procedure in such cases, the Church requested the selectmen to concur with it in calling Mr. Long to be its pastor and in fixing his salary.

When the Precinct became the Town in 1780, the Town inherited the Precinct Church and was responsible for its support. However, since 1780, Baptists, Methodists and Universalists had settled in Milford and formed their own societies. Naturally they disliked paying taxes for the support of other than their own churches, and the dissatisfaction came to a head when the matter of Mr. David Long's settlement became an issue. In deference to such pronounced and definite objection, the Town Meeting voted that all other denominations should be exempt from taxation either for the cost of settlement or the salary of Mr. Long.

It also voted that the Town would "join with the Church in giving Mr. Long a call to be their Pastor and Public Teacher of Piety, Religion and Morality." For his "encouragement" to settle, Mr. Long was offered \$750 to be paid in two years and an annual salary of \$450.

It was not exactly an auspicious time to enter upon a new ministry. The other denominations were not satisfied with the exemptions from

its support of the Congregational Church and continued to agitate against any connection between the Town and the Church. To quiet this resentment and unrest, the Congregational Church organized itself in 1815 into a separate Parish, thereby receiving all the rights of the Precinct Church and renouncing support from the Town.

But even this action failed to end the controversy. When the Church decided to build a new Church on the same site and to remove and sell the old Church, the storm of protest broke in all its fury, and the bitterness and feeling engendered between the two parties, Town and Parish, inflicted scars which were many years in healing.

The Town party argued that the Town had inherited the Church from the Precinct, that it therefore owned the building and the site, and that the old building could not be sold or moved nor a new Church built on the old site without the consent of the Town. In other words, if any money were to be gained in the transaction, it would belong to the Town.

But the Parish, though in the minority numerically, was composed of able, determined, resolute men united in a cause they held dear. They remained undeterred by threats and law suits. The old Church was dismantled in the spring of 1819, the shell sold, and on Election Day the old hallowed place of worship was moved off without accident to anyone. This safe removal was, plainly, in the words of Mr. Long, "a case of Divine Providence."

The work on the new Congregational Church went on a pace at the same site on the Common. Each day's work opened and closed with prayer. The structure was raised in June and the spire in August, and on November 25, 1819, the House was dedicated. The pews sold for \$7,000, and a balance of \$3,000 was left in the Treasury. The completion of this second meeting house marks a definite point in the growth and development of this Church. Its days of poverty, hesitation, doubt, and sometimes almost despair were ended, and it could face the future with confidence and faith.

So satisfied was the congregation with their Church that only minor changes and repairs were made before 1868, the removal of the high pulpit in 1848 being the most important one.

In 1868 the building was entirely reconstructed. It was moved several feet toward the west, and Congress Street was extended past its front. The church was lengthened by thirty feet, and it was raised to provide for vestries and kitchen. New pews and windows were installed, the galleries were removed from the side walls, and the organ was rebuilt and placed behind the pulpit. The necessary exterior and interior repairs were made from that time on. In 1898, the interior was redecorated under the supervision of Mr. E. L. Wires, and a new organ was installed.

After 1898 no radical improvements were made until the hurricane of 1938 necessitated the rebuilding of the Spire, and the passage of the years made the renovation of the interior imperative.

The First Congregational Church of Milford has been prominent in the denomination for several far-reaching movements. In 1815 Rosalinda Nelson and Roxanna Rawson, moved by missionary zeal, founded the Female Charitable and Benevolent Society. It was both a home and foreign missionary society. It ranks among the first women's societies in the country. About this same time Miss Rawson was teaching in the day school and also instructing the children in their catechism after school. Then she met with them at five o'clock every Sunday afternoon. Thus in 1817 was laid the foundation for one of the first Sunday Schools in the country. By 1820 the School was well organized and has had a steady and healthy development ever since. Later the Female Charitable and Benevolent Society became the Ladies' Benevolent Society, and it had a continuous existence under that name until 1933. The Ladies' Association then joined it, and later the name was changed to the Women's Society.

This Ladies' Association was formed in 1881 for the primary purpose of helping lift the long-standing debt then resting on the Church and Parish. It continued to give generously of its time and strength in improving the social and financial condition of the Church until its merger with the Benevolent Society in 1933.

The Church is proud of a flourishing Christian Endeavor Society, organized in the early years of that movement, and of the Thalia Club, a young women's group which

combines social functions with charitable activities. More and more, the Church is relying upon these younger members and is depending upon their co-operation in developing and expanding the life of the Church.

Some distance from the Church is the Parsonage on Claflin Street; it was built on land given by Charles F. Claflin and Augustus Wheeler. It is a modern, comfortable dwelling and has proven adequate for a pastor's needs.

On the two-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Milford Congregational Church, the Restoration Committee after the great hurricane of September, 1938, had destroyed the spire, made the following report to the Church people and all friends of the Church:

"The project was to cover the period from February, 1939, to the end of 1941. At the Anniversary in April, 1941, the committee planned to hand over to the rising generation for maintenance and support a Church building free of debt and in good order for Church activities. Over \$13,000 has been raised for this work in the two and one-half years. Our own Church people and many who made this their Church home when living or visiting in Milford have contributed liberally. Miss Lucy E. Day has the honor of being the first contributor in February, 1939. In Milford and neighboring towns many generous friends, never connected with this Church, but who have felt the restoring of the spire was a community responsibility, have made substantial gifts."

## **The Universalist Church**

The first Universalist Society in Milford was organized in 1781, eleven years after the arrival of John Murray, "a persecuted follower of James Rely," a Founder of Universalism in England.

At this time, it is believed, the Milford people and others in the vicinity, interested in the new interpretation of the Christian faith, heard Mr. Murray preach at the "Green Store," a building (now called a Chapel), still standing at the corner of Hartford Avenue and Route 140 in South Milford. It was from this contact that a society was formed in 1781; it was known as The Independent Christian Society in Milford, Massachusetts.

The earliest places of meeting were in the homes of members; the most frequent gathering place was at the home of Noah Wiswall. This house, recently remodeled, is still standing on East Main Street near the corner of Cedar Street.

The first minister of the Milford Church was the Reverend Adams Streeter of Douglas, Massachusetts, who, with his family, was invited by Noah Wiswall to make his home with the Wiswall family until he had become established and until a Church edifice had been built. Mr. Wiswall himself, though not without the sad fault of intemperance (common in those days among even orthodox church-members and respectably good men), was a generous-hearted, enterprising, public-spirited, and charitable citizen. These traits account for his opening his house and making a home for Elder Streeter's family. Without a doubt, Mr. Wiswall had a

high and warm regard for his minister, who, in that unpopular stage of Universalism, must have stood sorely in need of friends.

Following the meetings in the private homes, the Town granted permission to the members to meet in the Old Town Meeting House on the new Common. Official record was worded as follows: "Jan. 24, 1791, voted to let the people of the Denomination called Universalists have liberty to meet in the Town's Meeting House on weekday when otherwise not wanted."

The Universalists have built three Church edifices in Milford: the Brick Church, the Pearl Street Church, and the Pine Street Church.

The first church was the Brick Church, located at the corner of Main and Pearl Streets. The edifice included a bell tower, sixty feet in height, rather than a spire. Built during the ministry of Zephaniah Lathe, it was completed in 1820. At the dedication of this church on January 10, 1821, the celebrated Hosea Ballou of Boston preached the sermon.

In 1824, the Milford Society was incorporated under the laws of Massachusetts, and it took the name which is now its legal name. "The First Universalist Society in the Town of Milford, Massachusetts."

On May 8, 1837, a Sunday School was organized in the Brick Church. Several years later, this Church building was partly demolished and became known as Church Block; it was then used for commercial purposes. The bell was given to the Town of Milford to be hung in the belfry of the Town Hall.

About 1850, the Second Church, known as the Pearl Street Church, was built in Colonial style architecture on the opposite corner to that of the Brick Church. The architect was Thomas W. Silloway of Boston, the architect of the Town Hall. The Church was built by Orrin Whipple of Newton; the total cost, including the land, was \$9,400. This sanctuary was dedicated in 1851. The Dedication Sermon was delivered by the venerable Hosea Ballou, then 81 years of age, who had preached the Dedication Sermon in the Brick Church in 1821.

Through the years up to and including 1879, a total of twenty ministers had been called to the Milford Church. The Reverend Adin Ballou, the Founder of the Hopedale Community and author of *The History of Milford*, should be noted among the number.

The Reverend Elbert W. Whitney, 1893-1909, labored for the building of the Pine Street Church, the cornerstone of which was laid in 1898. This church was built of Milford pink granite and contains memorial windows said to have been made by Tiffany of New York. The architect of this church was the late Robert Allen Cooke of Milford.

Associated groups have been the Ladies' Aid, the Mizpah Club, the King's Daughters and the Men's Club. Social events sponsored by the church and remembered by many of the community today have included the annual three-day fairs, originally held in the old Washington Hall at the corner of Main and Central Streets and later in the Town Hall, the annual lobster salad suppers, and a recital about 1915 by Roland Hayes, the black singer who later

**Church Block corner of Main and Pearl Street. Old Universalist Church on the right, built in 1819.**



became renowned in Europe and America.

In 1941, the Universalist and Unitarian Churches merged into an association with the proviso that each church would retain its own identity and autonomy.

### **The Methodist Church**

The Methodists were organized in the North Purchase schoolhouse on August 28, 1811. The first meeting house, measuring thirty-four by thirty feet, was built in 1815 near the present firehouse on Purchase Street. It was furnished only with benches; there were no cushions, carpets, or stoves, but there was plenty of ventilation through the cracks in floor. Cold and ice were considered harmless to a Christian whose heart was warm. There was always a great controversy over the camp meetings to see who could provide the best facilities. The greatest conflict was between Father Claflin and Father Parkhurst, as each would try to outdo the other.

The last meeting in the North Purchase was on March 5, 1843. On October 23, 1860, the church burned. The remaining members were happy to join with their brethren in Milford Center. After meeting a short while in private homes, they obtained the use of the old Town Meeting House. At length, they appealed to their wealthy and liberal brother, the Honorable Lee Claflin of Hopkinton, formerly of Milford, to get regular sabbath services established, and later to erect their house of worship on Exchange street, at the corner of Fayette Street on land donated by Aaron and Horace Claflin. The society was legally



**Pearl Street Universalist Church built in 1849.**



**Universalist Church built in 1898 on Pine Street.**





**United Methodist Church on Exchange Street built in 1849. This is the oldest church in Milford on its original foundation.**



**Pine Street Baptist Church with the original spire, built in 1861.**

organized in 1840. The church and the parsonage was built in 1849, the latter being wholly the gift of the Honorable Aaron Claflin. The church was enlarged in 1864; by 1869, it was free of all debt.

The church had many ups and downs through the years. In June, 1887, it was voted to relocate the old parsonage situated behind the church. A new one was constructed at a cost of approximately \$3,200. This new structure was joined to the present church for the Sunday School wing. This was the first church to hold Sunday School year round. The old parsonage was rented for several years, but in the early 1970's it was torn down and the area made into a playground for the neighborhood children. In 1888 the New England Conference was held in Milford for the first and only time.

Through gifts and subscription the lovely stained-glass windows were added in 1890. In 1896 the Church sold its large Framingham campgrounds and in 1946 the cottage at Sterling campgrounds. In the early 1960's the church bought the Thayer estate on West Street to accommodate the growing Sunday school and church, but as time went on it proved better to remain in the original church on Exchange Street.

### **The Baptist Church**

The Baptist Church was established in Milford as early as 1792. Old records contain certificates of exemption from taxation to the Congregational order. One such statement reads as follows:

"These may certify that Ens. Michael Madden is of and belongs

to the Baptist Society in Upton, and attends the public worship there, and assists in supporting the preaching the Gospel in said Society.

Simon Snow, Pastor  
Upton, April ye 2nd 1792"

By 1801 the Baptists had formed a Baptist Society and were objecting to paying taxes for the support of any church other than their own. On February 15, 1853, agreeably to a public invitation, a number of members of different Baptist Churches now residing in Milford met at the house of Brother Amasa H. Fisher on School Street and voted "that we hereby form ourselves into a Baptist Church." It was also voted to take the name Central Baptist. Brother James W. Russell was instructed to arrange services and extend an invitation to members of sister churches to commune together.

The church continued to worship in various halls up to 1859 but was without a pastor or the ability to provide support for one. By 1860, the society had purchased a lot for \$800. Several hundred dollars had been obtained by subscription from other churches and wealthy persons in Boston. Milford residents, who were not Baptists, had promised \$1,000. Deacon Amasa Fisher, in whose home the Baptist Church was organized in 1853, had made himself responsible for the contractor's claim of \$4,000 under forfeiture of \$800 in order to finish and fully furnish the building. The Reverend Joseph Ricker became the pastor on December 25, 1860, and the new church was completed and dedicated on July 18, 1861.

On October 13, 1869, it was voted that the name of the church be changed from Milford Central to the Pine Street Baptist Church. The church was legally organized and established as an existing corporation under "an act to provide for the incorporation of churches" on May 20, 1890.

The church building was partially destroyed by fire on March 9, 1902; rededication and a Golden Jubilee took place on February 15, 1903. The steeple was removed in 1921 following a fire caused by lightning; however, the bell tower still remained. A new steeple was installed in 1979.

## St. Mary's Church

As the first Irish immigrants arrived in Milford around 1830, they established their homes in the plains section of town. Through their sacrifices and deep faith they built their first church in 1848. This church was located on East Main Street on a small knoll of land beside Pyne Florist. A bronze plaque in the stonewall there marks the place. From 1850 to 1853 the church had its first resident pastor, the Reverend George A. Hamilton. Before the church was built, Father Fitton of Boston had ministered to the religious needs of the members. He said the first mass in Milford in the home of Edward McGovern on Cedar Street. Masses were held regularly in homes and the Town Hall.

When Father Patrick Cuddihy was sent in 1863 to be pastor, he purchased the land on Winter Street

along with a granite quarry on Cedar Street and built the present church. The first stone was laid on June 1, 1866, and it was opened for public worship on December 25, 1870. The granite was hauled by oxen from the Rocky Woods section of Milford.

The Stations of the Cross and a large Crucifixion painting were brought from Italy. The organ, purchased from the Old South Church in Boston, was dedicated on October 23, 1910. Professor John A. O'Shea, a Milford native, gave the recital. On April 27, 1890, the bell, weighing about 5000 pounds and cast in Baltimore, Maryland, was installed in a temporary belfry.

In 1880, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Nanur started teaching in a structure on the corner of Main and Sumner Streets. They had two hundred female pupils. This school was called St. Mary's Academy; it formerly was the Cook mansion. The first commencement exercise for the school was held on June 14, 1886.

On April 2, 1894, Father Cuddihy started to build the granite school on Winter Street. He also developed and enlarged St. Mary's Cemetery and erected the Irish Round Tower in the cemetery to bring a touch of Ireland for the immigrant parishioners. The Milford Round Tower is believed to be the only such structure outside of Ireland. It was completed by Father David F. McGrath, a native of Milford. When Father Cuddihy died on December 8, 1898, his remains were entombed in the tower of the church he built.



**St. Mary's first church on East Main Street built in 1848.**



**St. Mary's Church without the tower that was added in 1890.**



**St. Mary's convent and school.**



**Present St. Mary's Church on Winter Street.**

Father McGrath purchased the house on Pearl Street from Gustavus B. Williams for a rectory. The old rectory on the corner of Sumner and Main Streets, formerly the Catholic Women's Club building, was used as a convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph, who replaced the Sisters of Notre Dame de Nanur. When the Sisters of St. Joseph began to teach in 1904, boys were admitted as students. Father McGrath completely renovated and redecorated the church. He enlarged the sanctuary and vestibule by removing pews, and he installed the beautiful Munich windows depicting the life of Mary. Artistic frames were installed for the paintings of the Way of the Cross, and the Carrara marble holy water font was set in the tower vestibule. In 1904 the parish was divided, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus chapel was built to serve the Italian-speaking parishioners.

In September, 1922, the Reverend William F. Grace was named pastor. During his pastorate the three sanctuary windows were installed, and the large window over the altar was dedicated to St. Mary's of the Assumption, patroness of the parish. Father Grace started to build the new academy, which was completed in 1925. The Reverend Jeremiah A. Riordan renovated the upper church, paved the cemetery roads, and added stucco to the convent and rectory.

In 1943, Reverend William J. Foran redecorated the lower church, adorned both upper and lower sanctuaries with beautiful oriental rugs,

and erected shrines in the lower church. He also personally gave the two beautiful marble altars for the upper sanctuary.

On February 23, 1953, St. Mary's had a serious fire, which caused considerable damage to both upper and lower church and to several stained glass windows in the chapel. While the repairs were going on, Mass was said in St. Mary's High School hall. The upstairs church had to be completely renovated. Renovation and expansion of the parish continued with the building of the present convent in 1959 and an annex to the Academy in 1963.

In June, 1973, the change was made to co-pastors with three serving. At this time family picnics were held at Hopkinton State Park to bring the parishioners together as a community, and a parish fair was held yearly on the Church grounds. Around 1960, the Academy became known as St. Mary's Central Catholic High School. In June of 1973, the last commencement was held from there. The elementary schools, however, continued for a few more years. By 1976 Sacred Heart and St. Mary's elementary schools had merged at Sacred Heart school. In 1976, St. Mary's school complex was sold to the town for \$750,000.

The convent was rededicated on August 14, 1976 as a Parish Center by Bishop Flannigan. Religious instructions and parish meetings are held there.

### Trinity Episcopal Church

In 1863 the Rector of St. John's, Framingham, started to hold ser-

**Trinity Episcopal Church on the corner of Congress and Exchange Street built in 1871.**

vices in Irving Hall; attendance was between 100 and 200. The next year Trinity Parish was organized and incorporated by act of the Great and General Court of Massachusetts. After the organization the church maintained regular religious services in Washington Hall until the erection of its sanctuary, situated on Congress Street at the corner of Exchange Street in Milford. The land and edifice, costing about \$9,000, were paid for by subscription from members of the parish and congregation and outside friends, in sums ranging from \$5 to \$3,000. The church was consecrated on March 21, 1871.

Around 1880, a new tower was erected, and various interior improvements were made at a further cost of \$1,500. The church still has its first organ, which is a lovely antique.

A series of rectors followed in quick succession. Charles Dove, the Senior Warden and Church School superintendent, ruefully reported at the diocesan convention of 1869 that "the Parish would increase its numbers if a wise and zealous pastor could be secured." But such was not to be the case for some years at least; none remained long enough to build up the parish. In his twenty-one years in office, Mr. Dove saw eleven priests come and go. Finally, in 1884, his hope was realized. A rector came and stayed for ten years, and Trinity Parish flourished and became self-supporting. In 1897 the chancel was remodeled and new furnishings added: an altar and re-



**The first Sacred Heart Church in 1905.**



**Sacred Heart stone church built in 1910.**



**Present Sacred Heart Church built in 1946.**

redos, a pulpit, a litany desk, and a processional cross.

Murray Elliot, one of the rectors, is credited with reaching out into the community and attracting many Armenians who eventually formed a substantial part of the Church, the school, and the congregation. Other rectors started organizations for men, women, and young people and

also established weekday religious education classes for school children.

An exciting development in recent years with great promise for the future is the formation of an Ecumenical Committee composed of Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, lay and clerical. With the wholehearted approval of both

bishops, Trinity Church and St. Mary's Catholic Church entered into a covenant as "Sister Churches" at a great service in Trinity Church on Sunday evening, April 30, 1972, with both choirs participating and with the church filled to overflowing.

Off to a good start in its second century, Trinity Parish seems to have broken the curse of short rectorates that proved to be such a handicap in its earlier years.

### **Sacred Heart Parish**

The Sacred Heart Parish dates from 1880 with the settling of Antonio Lazzari in Braggville, followed closely by Carlo and Mariannina Ferrari in the Plains section of Milford. These families formed the nucleus of the new parish. Mrs. Ferrari soon became a friend of Miss Elizabeth Supple, a great benefactress of Sacred Heart.

A few years later, a small group of Italian-speaking women, Marianina Ferrari, Giovanna Riva, Maria Cenedella, decided to call an Italian-speaking priest from Boston to Milford. The first Mass in Milford for the Italian people was celebrated in 1890 in the Stone Castle on Read Street. A group of men called "Veroneci" sang the Mass.

Active efforts on the part of the Italian-speaking people of Milford to have a Church of their own were started on October 21, 1894, when a meeting was held in the Town Hall. A permanent organization was established with Mr. Giacomo Cenedella as President and Raphael Marino as secretary. These Italian pioneers made their first attempt to

establish a church after the idea had received the support of the Reverend David McGrath of St. Mary's Church, Milford, and the approval of the Bishop of Springfield.

From 1894 to 1905, the Italian pioneers attempted to organize a parish and build a church. On May 31, 1895, the land near the Street Railway car barn on East Main Street was acquired from Samuel W. Hayward. On April 3, 1900, the real estate was transferred to the Milford, Holliston, and Framingham Street Railway Company for \$1,012.66.

Early in the year 1905, the Reverend Rocco Petrarca came to Milford to care for the Italians. He conducted services in St. Mary's Church, but at the same time he worked to secure funds for a church. A meeting at which Mr. Raphael Marino presided, was held in the Town Hall and a Church Committee was appointed and empowered to buy property for the purpose of establishing a church for the Italian people of Milford.

On June 10, 1905, Annie J. Miett deeded to the Church Committee the land known as the Miller property which was located on East Main Street. At this site the first church was created. The dedication took place on August 13, 1905, with the Reverend Rocco Petrarca officiating. For the dedication of the Church, Miss Minnie Murphy donated the first organ.

In 1910, work was started to build in front of the Church a granite tower with a new bell named "Santa Maria." This project produced the second church. As a remembrance of this dedication, there still stands a

plaque with the inscription "Dei gratis fecit populique auxilio, Rev. Rocco Petrarca A.D. 1905" ("By the grace of God and with the help of the people, Rev. Rocco Petrarca erected this church in the year of Our Lord, 1905").

In 1913, the Stigmatine Fathers came to Milford. The Reverend Erminio Lona was the first Stigmatine Father to take over the duties of the Italian Parish in Milford. It was during his pastorate that land between the Supple tract and the Zurlo tract was acquired from Frank Consoletti.

On Christmas Eve in the year 1919, four Sisters of the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy came to the Sacred Heart Parish to devote themselves to the religious instruction of the children of the Parish. The convent and the first school was made by renovating the old house purchased from Mr. Consoletti. The Sisters cared for the kindergarten, held classes in religion and Italian, and taught sewing for the older girls. In 1928 Sacred Heart Parochial School was opened. The Church continued to expand, but the priests of the parish did not have a rectory; they made their living quarters on top of the Sanctuary of the Church.

A great benefactress of Sacred Heart was Miss Elizabeth C. Supple. She had one sister, Mrs. Gloria McCormick, and two brothers who were priests, the Reverend James and the Reverend Michael Supple. Because of her generosity, the present development and the residence for the priests were made possible. In her will, dated March, 1923, she

left all her property for the purpose of erecting a Roman Catholic Church. The will stated "If the said Bishop considers a Church building is not required, then the same shall be used as a Parochial School for boys under the direction of the Stigmatine Fathers, as a memorial to my brothers: A tablet to be erected in 1937 on said premises commemorating the same."

In 1924, realizing the insufficient accommodations of the old granite church, the parish built the lower church and dedicated it on December 18, 1927. On September 6, 1927, the Pastor, Reverend Louis Fontana, and Sisters from the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy opened the first class of the Sacred Heart Parochial School on the Consoletti property. The first year forty-five children were enrolled in the first grade. The following year the second grade was added, and from then on a new grade was added each year. At the end of eight years, the Sacred Heart Parochial School had an enrollment of 260 pupils.

In 1933, the increasing number of classes made it imperative for Father Raymond Dalla Porta, the pastor at the time, to provide new accommodations; hence, the upper floor of the school building, which had been used as a hall, was converted to three classrooms.

With the opening of the new lower church in December, 1927, the parish had the old church building available as a hall and little theatre, named Garden Hall. Bowling alleys were opened in the basement on October 18, 1931. The Reverend Julius



**Salvation Army Citadel established in 1906.**

Valentinelli arrived on April 1, 1933. One of his projects was to give the Italian parish of Milford a cemetery of its own. On May 26, 1937, a meeting, open to all parishioners, was held in the Town Hall, and it was voted to establish a cemetery on Medway Road.

Fifty-five acres were purchased for \$5,500. On May 29, 1939, the cemetery's beautiful Calvary monument was dedicated. The Calvary monument, built of granite from the Milford Caves, stands eighteen feet high in the middle of the cemetery.

In November, 1939, Father Valentinelli announced that a drive would start to burn the old mortgage of \$35,000 to enable the parish to build the upper church. The goal was accomplished by 1942, but the war prevented the undertaking of any work at that time. By 1946 Father Della Porta had saved \$100,000, and he started construction of the upper church on March 18, 1946, at a cost of \$300,000. On July 20, 1947, the upper church was officially dedicated.

The church, constructed of face brick and limestone trim in Romanesque style, is one of the outstanding edifices in this part of Massachusetts. It is dressed with a beautiful monumental Milford pink granite staircase. The main doors are constructed of heavy oak and are finished in an antique tone. The high Lombard tower can be seen from outlying distances. The unique tower, flanked with flying buttresses and arches, creates an impressive landmark in this area. The roof of the church and tower is of Mission tile in a variegated red blend that harmonizes with the brick walls.

Father Dalla Porta's artistic taste was an important factor in the beauty of the church.

Since the completion of the upper church in 1947, Sacred Heart Parish has undertaken three more construction projects. In 1951, a new school, comprising of rooms for eight grades as well as a kindergarten, a library, a convent, a cafeteria, and clubrooms was built. In 1961, a new rectory was constructed and the interior of the upper church was renovated in accordance with Vatican II. It is noteworthy that the school and rectory follow the architectural setting of the church. To this day, the town of Milford has a beautiful religious parish addressing Supply Square.

### **Grace Church**

Grace Church was organized with a membership of forty-three in 1894 as an independent body, the nucleus being members of a branch of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. It was incorporated in 1910 and became affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1919.

On March 26, 1915, church members built a new portable building on Congress Street on the site of the present Division of Employment Security. The building was then moved to Main Street on land purchased from the late Grace Gibbons and is now a residence. The church was dissolved June 9, 1950.

### **The Salvation Army**

March 30, 1899, marked the official opening of the Milford Corps of the Salvation Army. The first meeting was held in the second floor of a building at 123 Main Street near the corner of Jefferson Street.

In the early days, meetings were held nightly, and large crowds were in attendance. From 1899 to 1906, the Army had no permanent location; the Corps moved from Main Street, to Walnut Street, to Pine Street, and back to the Main Street. In April, 1906, construction of the present Citadel on Spruce Street was started.

Milford has seen several of its members go on to be officers in the Army and serve people everywhere. Christmas for many children would be very sad without the charitable work that goes on each year. Many unfortunate people have benefited from the kindness of the Salvation Army.

### **The Jewish Synagogue: Beth Shalom**

In 1905, the heads of ten Jewish families in Milford met and decided to have a Synagogue. A permanent organization was effected with Joseph Marcus, president, and Isadore Wyzan, secretary.

The cornerstone of the Synagogue on Pine Street was laid on January 19, 1913, with suitable ceremonies. Dedication ceremonies took place in September, 1913. The first Rabbi was Nathan Fletcher. On January 28, 1917, the first marriage to be solemnized was that of Frank Plotnick and Frances Kulwensky. The Jewish Community also acquired the old Tarbell home on Pine Street for a community house which was used for social gatherings and as a school for the instruction of children in the Hebrew language and faith. In 1949, the new Rosenfeld Hebrew School was built and dedicated; in 1952, a home at 64 Pine Street was purchased for a parsonage.



the new Rosenfeld Hebrew School was built and dedicated; in 1952, a home at 64 Pine Street was purchased for a parsonage.

Around 1920, the B'nai B'rith Hadassah Sisterhood was formed. These women devote themselves to helping serve their Synagogue and community.

### **Swedish Congregational Church (Community Covenant Church)**

In the year 1906, the Reverend Ludwig Akoson of Worcester wanted to form a church in Milford for the large number of Swedish immigrants, mainly granite cutters, in the town.

Most of the Swedish people had been confirmed Lutherans, but through influence a Mission church was founded. The first meeting was held on May 16, 1907, in Grace Church Hall at 224 Main Street for the purpose of organizing the church. The Reverend Ryden preached the first sermon. Forty members were present and twelve agreed to join; thus, the Swedish Congregational Church of Milford was formed. The Congregational connotation to the name was due to the fact that the Reverend Dr. Warfield of the Congregational organization was present and gave the new church a \$500 grant. A Sunday school of fifteen children was also formed simultaneously.

The first Christmas service, held in 1907, was called "Jul Otta" This type of service was continued until 1965 at which time it was changed to a candlelight service. Even though the church had changed to the use of the English language, much of the

Christmas service was Swedish in song and the spoken word until 1965.

In 1908, Mrs. Elizabeth Greenwood donated a piece of land on West Street for a church. The West Street lot was sold in 1912 for \$150, and a lot on Grant Street was purchased for \$100. Waters and Hynes was contracted to build the church for \$3,500, including fixtures. The Church was dedicated on December 14 and 15, 1912.

In 1921, since there was difficulty in finding a pastor, Roy Daniel Gytzell of Mendon volunteered to fill the pulpit. He held the position for about thirteen years. At his resignation, the feeling was prevalent that maybe the church should dissolve; but the early faith held fast; and with the coming of the Reverend William Thornberg in April, 1934, new life was reborn in the church. The pastor formed a Young Peoples' Society which, up until 1977, did much to keep the church. In 1955, under the leadership of the Young Adults, a parsonage was purchased at 10 West Pine Street.

On May 3-5, 1957, the church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The Milford church was sold in 1973 and a new one was built in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. It is known as the Community Covenant Church.

### **First Church of Christ, Scientist**

In March of 1914, a group of Christian Scientists assembled in a private home and held the first services of what is now known as First Church of Christ, Scientist, Milford. In October, 1915, services



**Temple Beth Shalom built in 1913 on Pine Street.**



**Swedish Covenant Church, on Grant Street built in 1912.**



**First Scientist Church, originally the Lafayette Huntoon home built in 1850.**



**Kingdom Hall, East Main Street.**

were moved to a public hall on Main Street. On August 9, 1922, the Society held its first annual meeting as a recognized branch of the Mother Church. On September 16, 1923, the first Christian Science lecture was given in Milford.

In July of 1938, the Society was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth. In January of 1942, the property at 345 Main Street was purchased for the church. Renovations were completed in about four months, and the first service in the new edifice was held on May 24, 1942. Within the next fourteen months all debts were paid. Dedicatory services were held on November 7, 1943. Construction of a new Sunday School wing began in 1966 and was completed in March of 1967. A parking area in the rear of the building was added in 1975.

### **Jehovah's Witnesses**

The local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses was formed in 1940 by a group of twenty-five Bible students who had met with the Framingham congregation and had had Bible studies at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ezra Mailing at 2 Cemetery Street in Hopedale. The Congregation met in the two front upstairs rooms at a location formerly known as the Niro Block. For a brief period, members met on the third floor over the Soda Shop, but then they went back to the Niro Block.

In 1955, as the congregation grew, a machine shop at 200 East Main Street was purchased and remodeled into a Kingdom Hall. The building was completed and dedicated in the

summer of 1956. It was one of the first Kingdom Halls in New England.

In 1958, seven of the congregation helped start the Oxford Congregation. In 1965, some from the Milford Congregation and the Marlboro Congregation formed the Northbridge Congregation.

In 1975, because of the expanding congregation and lack of parking space, it was found necessary to sell the Hall at 200 East Main Street and build a new one at 204 East Main Street. The dedication took place in May of 1976.

### **Bethany Assembly of God**

The growth of Milford in terms of population has also witnessed growth in religious services in the town. One of the most recently established houses of worship is the Bethany Assembly of God, located at 7 Grant Street. The Milford Church is affiliated with the Southern New England district, Assemblies of God.

In November of 1973, the present church building was purchased from the Evangelical Covenant Church. The Reverend Raymond D. Shepherd is founder of the church, which started in Franklin and expanded to Milford. In February of 1974, renovations were completed. The first service and dedication was held at the Grant Street location on March 16, 1974. In January of 1976, Carl Paulson of Upton installed a stained glass window. The window depicts the descending of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. In August, 1978, a new organ was installed. There are various youth activities at the church.



**This is the interior of the Congregational Church before it was redecorated in 1940.**



**The interior of the Methodist Church before memorial windows were installed.**



**The early interior of the Pine Street Baptist Church.**



**The interior of St. Mary's Church before Father Riordan redecorated it.**



**This is the interior of the Episcopal Church with gas lights.**



**The interior of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church.**

# Historical Buildings

## Town Hall

Milford is fortunate to have its Town Hall listed in the National Register as a national monument. This building, a beautiful structure of Renaissance revival, is a credit to the forethought of Milford leaders of over 100 years ago who designed a building of exceptional beauty.

The Town Hall rests on the site that was given to the town by Darius Sumner in 1819 for Milford's first public town meeting house outside of the Congregational church. This first town meeting house, a brick structure built in 1819, was situated at the site of the 1900 addition to our present town hall. The building of this town hall caused the first break of church and town government in Milford, and this situation resulted in a long bitter battle in the town until 1828. This building was razed to make room for the 1900 addition.

The front portion of our present day Town Hall is the original building; it was designed by an architect named Thomas W. Silloway. This ornate building was built in 1854 and enlarged in 1900. It is graced with a beautiful ornamental frieze and cornice. Each bay window of the building is separated by a pilaster, fluted and molded at the base; and ornate capitals support the buildings flat architecture. The top of the building is accented by an elaborate cupola nearly 50 feet high, housing a large clock. This clock, made especially for Milford in Manchester, England, was donated by Esquire John Erskine. A replica of the original handcarved wooden eagle that stood sentinel over

Milford for many years was placed on the top of the tower. The original eagle is on display in the main hall.

To accommodate an increasing population, the town meeting members voted in 1900 to provide an addition to the original building of 1853. Robert Allen Cook was the young architect from Milford who took charge of this project.

For many years the basement of the Town Hall was used for the Farmer's Market. On the second floor are located our town government offices. The third floor contains a large assembly hall where many local functions have been scheduled and where town meetings were held until 1973. Town meetings are now held at Milford High School.

## Memorial Hall

For several years following the Civil War, several prominent citizens of the town were in favor of erecting a memorial hall. George Draper was opposed in particular to the erection of a soldiers' monument. However, he did favor a memorial hall that would stand as a monument to the cause of patriotism, a free public library, and a Grand Army of the Republic Hall. In January, 1883, H. B. Thayer, a past commander of Mayo's Fletcher Post 22, G.A.R., circulated a petition asking that the Massachusetts legislature to pass an act enabling the town to proceed. This bill, approved by Governor Benjamin F. Butler, was passed on April 7, 1883. The original document reads as follows:

Acts of 1883, Chapter 119

Section 1. The Town of Milford is authorized to erect, furnish and maintain a Memorial Hall in memory of its soldiers and sailors who died in the military and naval service of the United States during the late war; provided said town shall at a legal meeting called for the purpose at any time within two years from the passage of this act, vote so to do by a two-thirds vote of the voters present and voting thereon.

Section 2. For the purpose aforesaid, said town is authorized to borrow a sum not exceeding \$20,000.00 for a period not exceeding five years, which sum, with the interest thereon, shall be provided for by taxation and paid at maturity.

Section 3. The provision of Chapter 29 of the Public Statutes shall apply to said Town except so far as they are inconsistent herewith.

Section 4. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Approved, April 7, 1884

Signed by

Benjamin F. Butler, Governor

At a town meeting held on March 5, 1883, a committee of five was appointed to a building committee: the group consisted of General William F. Draper, George W. Johnson, Philip A. Gleason, Fred Swasey, and Thomas C. Eastman.

At the next town meeting on April 23, the above committee reported in favor of building, and Thomas G. Kent, James F. Stratton, Ephraim



**Milford's first Town Hall built in 1819.**



**Milford's picturesque Town Hall built in 1854.**

L. Wires, George Draper, and James McGinty were added to the committee. When Kent and McGinty left town, John P. Daniels and Patrick Lynch were chosen to fill the vacancies.

On November 7, 1883, the committee submitted a unanimous report recommending the construction of an edifice on the vacant lot at the corner of School and Spruce Streets. This land was owned by the Town and known as the old Cemetery lot.

The plan was approved with the full understanding that the cost of the fully completed building would not exceed \$20,000. Fred Swasey, the architect, took the contract for that sum. The final appropriation was \$22,000; the town appropriated 2,000 and bonded the other \$20,000 to be paid for over the next five years.

Memorial Hall is designed in the French Gothic style. The granite came from the Milford Granite Company's quarry. Long Meadow brown stone was used for the gables, cornices, windows, and floor trimmings as well as the large semicircular arch over the main entrance. This arch is supported by two polished granite columns, and the steps are made from cut granite. The entranceway is the main architectural feature of the building. The large Memorial vestibule has a circular staircase at one end. There are 22 polished Milford granite steps leading to the second floor; they are inscribed with 22 of the principal

battles of the Civil War. The following men donated them: George Draper, Hon. George W. Johnson, General William F. Draper, Ephraim L. Wires, John P. Daniels, Charles F. Claflin, Amariah A. Taft, Moses Joy, Jr., Ethan C. Claflin, Joseph B. Bancroft, John Stratton, Charles W. Shippee, George A. Draper, Frank J. Dutcher, George M. Greene, Eben D. Bancroft, Eben S. Draper, Rimmell C. Fay, Fred Swasey, Bartlett & Ellis, Alvah S. Pickering and James H. Barker. The battles commemorated are Baltimore, April 19, 1861; Roanoke Island; Pittsburg Landing; Williamsburg; Fair Oaks; Malvern Hill; Chantilly; South Mountain; Antietam; Fredericksburg; Jackson; Gettysburg; Knoxville; Lookout Mountain; Wilderness; Spottsylvania; Petersburg; Mobile Bay; Cedar Creek; Five Forks; Vicksburg; and Surrender of Lee, April 9, 1865. These gentlemen donated \$840 for the steps. It is interesting to note that the time occupied in soliciting this amount was only four hours and that the money was given cheerfully.

Exactly opposite to the center of the staircase is the Memorial fireplace. The mantle is richly paneled and appropriately ornamented. Spaces for the honor roll tablets of Civil War Veterans are arched in the same manner as the Memorial staircase. The staircase leads to the quarters that were set aside for the G.A.R. The ceiling is timbered oak.

During the hard struggle that the country experienced, Milford was eminent as being one of the most



**Milford's Town Hall with the 1900 addition.**

patriotic towns to support the cause. Milford sent 1,142 men, nearly one-eighth of its entire population, into the ranks of the army. This number represented a recruitment of 147 over and above all demands; 35 were commissioned officers. During the war 50 officers and men were killed, 76 died of wounds and disease, and 180 were discharged because of disability. The fact that Milford sent 147 more than its quota, was the cause of Zibeon C. Field and Albert T. Wilkinson going to Washington for an interview with President Abraham Lincoln. The following document is of special interest to the town:

**TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
UNITED STATES:—**

The undersigned in behalf of the citizens of the town of Milford in the 8th Congressional district in Massachusetts, respectfully represent that the town had raised and sent into the field, under the authority of the state, a surplus of 147 three-years men over all quotas assigned them, previous to July 15, 1863, said surplus being credited said town at the office of the Adj. General of Mass., July 27, 1863. The said town of Milford is paying annually a large sum of money as aid to the families of the soldiers composing said surplus, for which it is not reimbursed by the state.





The assembly hall on the second floor of the Town Hall with the original chandliers and wooden eagle in the background. The chairs are arranged for town meeting.



Memorial Hall around 1890, built in 1884.

And the said town has never been credited with this surplus on any quota assigned them by the government since, but the said surplus has been credited to the state at large, as we learn from Provost Marshal Frye; and having been led to believe by Your Excellency's Proclamation "that districts and subdistricts were to be allowed for all men actually furnished and not heretofore credited," and having been unsuccessful in our application for the same to the Provost Marshal General, we most respectfully submit whether we are not justly entitled to be credited with the above-mentioned surplus of 147 men on the quota assigned us under the calls of Your Excellency since Oct. 17, 1863.

Humbly Praying Your Excellency will give the above matter your candid consideration and that justice will be the result, we are most respectfully,

Your Obedient Servants

Zibeon C. Field,

A. T. Wilkinson

Washington, April 12, 1864

The following letter is President Lincoln's reply:

"As a special case, and to be no precedent, let the town of Milford be now credited with the 147 men, and as the state has already been credited with them, let her be charged with them in the next draft.

A. Lincoln

April 13, 1864

The history of this document is one of the most interesting chapters in the war record of Milford. In the beginning of the war the recruiting of soldiers for the General Government in the state of Massachusetts was carried on by state officers. In 1863 some of those subject to military duty in Milford were uneasy and wanted some townsmen in charge of recruiting. At the caucus for town officers in 1864, it was decided that Mr. Zibeon Field and Mr. John S. Mead would look into the recruiting and the crediting of men to Milford. After alternating attendance for a week between the Adjutant General's office at the state house, Boston, and the Provost Marshal's office, Mr. Field came to the conclusion that progress in that direction was blocked. He then got a statement from the Adjutant General's office, over the signature of Governor Andrew that Milford has a surplus of 147 men. Mr. Field accompanied by Albert T. Wilkinson, was instructed to proceed to Washington and do what he could.

On May 13, 1861, a committee was appointed to consider a procedure the town should adopt in respect to the war. The Honorable Aaron C. Mayhew was chairman. The committee reported that "the town should appropriate \$3,000 to equip the soldiers who had enlisted, \$2,000 for a contingent war fund, and \$10,000 for state aid to soldiers' families. Company A members were allowed \$1 a day while drilling." Provisions were made for paying state aid to families of soldiers, the amount not to exceed \$20 per



month. On December 9, \$6,000 was appropriated for state aid to soldiers' families. In the following March, \$20,000 was appropriated. At this meeting resolutions praising the conduct of Company B, 25th regiment, were passed. This company was the first to raise the flag of the Commonwealth on the batteries of the enemy at Newbern, North Carolina. On July 21, the town voted to pay a bounty of \$125 to all three-year volunteers. Later on, the bounty was given to the Milford men who served for nine months. This payment to the families of those who were in service was one of the most liberal ones in the state although Milford valuation was low in proportion to the number of inhabitants. Milford ladies also contributed many articles for the comfort of soldiers and for hospital use.

Construction of the Memorial Hall was started on April 30, 1884, and on Saturday, May 31, 1884, the cornerstone was laid with imposing and appropriate ceremonies. The day was a general holiday, and there was a large number of out-of-town observers as well as local celebrants. Each incoming train brought additions to the already large crowd. Most of the local stores remained open, and nearly all of the factories were closed for the occasion.

In the morning Reeves band from Providence gave a concert in front of the Mansion House. Later, in the afternoon a parade of over 1,000 men formed and marched over the following route: Main Street to Chapin, Forest, Grove, Franklin, Main, Pearl, Walnut, Congress, and Main Streets to the Memorial lot,

where the cornerstone dedication ceremonies were performed. While the parade was forming, it was noted that the Grand Army and the fire department occupied the entire length of Pearl Street.

The Wide Awake Hose Company carried Memorial fans along the procession route. The ceremonies of laying the cornerstone were simple and brief; they were in charge of the Grand Lodge of Free Masons.

The cornerstone is of Milford Granite; it was contributed by the children's choir in Hopedale, the amount having been raised by a concert. It was cut in Albert C. Kinney's Marble Works; and while it was in the yard it was damaged and had to be cut again. In the 2½ x 2 x 1 foot cornerstone is a copper box contributed by Emory D. Lothrop, a member of Company E, 26th Massachusetts volunteers. Contained therein are plans for the new building, the official votes of the town authorizing the building of the structure, the names of the building committee, the names of the Hopedale choir and the program of their concert, the original subscription to the Memorial stairway, a G.A.R. badge, a list of members of Fletcher Grand Army Post 22, a copy of the G.A.R. post charter, a badge and the roster of the Sons of Veterans, the roster of Company M, a copy of the town report, a list of members of Montgomery lodge of Free Masons, and a list of grand officers of A.F. & A.M. in Massachusetts. Also included were a postal card containing call of the Commandery; a postal card containing the names of all the Lodge, Chapter and Commandery officers; a list of town officers for

1884-1885; a list of the Board of Fire Engineers and officers of the various fire companies; a list of officers of Milford Mutual Fire Insurance company; a list of officers of the Milford Savings bank; a copy of rules and regulations of the Milford Water Company, a blank first mortgage bond, and the water company act of incorporation; a sample postal card; and the names of trustees of the Town Library. Additional items enclosed were the names of the Music Hall company members, a card of box maker Emory Lothrop, business cards, a list of members of the executive Department of the state, a 1802 coin contributed by Mrs. C. A. Sumner, two postage stamps, copies of the *Milford Gazette* and the *Milford Journal*, a copy of the *Boston Journal*, of May 19, 1884, containing a description of the building.

Immediately after the ceremonies, the line of march was formed again and marched up School and down Pearl Streets. At the junction of the two streets, the line was reviewed by the chief marshal and staff. Following the parade, visitors were entertained by the Grand Army Post at Town Hall, the Knights Templars at Washington Hall, and at the Montgomery lodge of Free Masons in the banquet hall above Masonic Hall. Camp 18, Sons of Veterans, of Ashland, and William H. Hovenden, Commander, were the guests of Johnson Camp, Sons of Veterans.

One of the most pleasant features of the day was the presentation of a handsome silk flag to the Grand Army Post. Mrs. Henry J. Bailey, Mrs. Edward McKay and Mrs. William F. Reynolds collected a sum sufficient to purchase the flag and

provide side arms for the officers of the post. The flag was appropriately inscribed "Post 22, G.A.R., Milford, Mass." The presentation was made by George Draper, Esquire, who delivered the address written by the Honorable George W. Johnson, whose sudden death the day before had saddened the great occasion.

On February 26, 1886, the G.A.R. headquarters was turned over to Commander Henry J. Bailey of Post 22 by Joseph B. Bancroft, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen of Milford.

On February 16, 1897, the Post 22, G.A.R. was notified that it would receive two parrot cannons and a supply of 10-inch shells to be used as lawn ornaments. On July 13, 1907, a tablet to heroes was presented to the G.A.R. by Hose Company 2, Milford Fire Department. The aged, marble tablet was made as a memorial to the members of the old Washington 1, who lost their lives on the battlefield. On the base of it, C. L. Fair carved this inscription: "Presented to Post 22, G.A.R. by Hose 2, Milford Fire Department, July 17, 1907." The top portion, which contains the names of the eight deceased soldiers, has a four-gabled roof. The four sides are carved to represent a trumpet, a shield, a hydrant representing Washington 1 Company, and an American eagle. These are the men whose lives are remembered on the marble sides: George H. Ellis, Private, Co. F., 36th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, killed at Jacksonville, Mississippi, July 11, 1863, aged 24 years; Deacon Hiram Carpenter, Corporal, Co. F., 36th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, died in Milford,

January 13, 1863, aged 40 years; William W. Hoyt, seaman, *USS Preble*, died December 21, 1863, aged 24 years; Thomas R. Cassett, Co. K, 13th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, killed at Antietam, September 17, 1862, aged 20 years; Amos Hoyt, Private in Co. F, 36th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers killed at Jacksonville, Mississippi, July 11, 1863, aged 21 years; George E. Fletcher, Private, Co. B, 25th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, died of wounds, June 27, 1864, aged 19 years; James D. Gleason, Private, Co. F, 36th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers, killed at Petersburg, July 25, 1864, aged 34; and George W. Barber. Sergeant Co. C, 12th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, died July 17, 1862, aged 19. A new flagstaff was donated on May 30, 1909. On November 12, 1931, a German howitzer, one of the trophies of World War I, was presented to the town by Sergeant John W. Powers Post. This relic was captured in the Argonne Forest in France. The bronze tablet of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was dedicated on May 30, 1935.

Another step in Milford's progress was achieved with the completion of Memorial Hall as space within the building provided at permanent place for a free public library in 1884. As of 1858, Milford was comparatively ill supplied with anything fit to be called a library. A few families had small private libraries. At this time several influential citizens proposed to establish a reputable library on a "stock-company" basis. Mr. Edwin Battles urged these interested

members to change their plan and use their influence for a free town library, in accordance with a then recent statute of the State passed in 1842. The joint-stock library was established, but Mr. Battles and his sympathizers held a meeting in the police court room in behalf of a free library. A committee was appointed, of which Mr. Battles was chairman to push the matter; it petitioned the selectmen to call a town meeting, and it prepared a series of motions to be submitted to said meeting. At a town meeting held on August 30, 1858, it was established that the town maintain a public library. Thus the Milford Town Library came into existence, this library was located on Main Street opposite Spring Street. The catalogue for this library credits the town with around 4,000 books and papers.

### Milford Military History

The inhabitants of Milford before and since its incorporation as a town have always been eminently patriotic and loyal. The military spirit has always been conspicuous, as various records demonstrate. The great agitation which culminated in the American War of Independence finds Mendon and its three precincts (Milford was a part of Mendon) in the front rank of the conflict. Its population kindled the beacon fires of liberty and re-echoed the protests against Britain. Four companies were sent from Mendon, two (came from the Second Precinct) called the Mill-River Companies and officially known as the Fourth and Second Companies of Mendon.



**Picture of Memorial Hall from lower Spruce Street with cannons and balls decorating the grounds.**

One of the outstanding members of these minutemen was Sergeant Adams Chapin, Esquire who was born in 1750. At age fifteen, Chapin was chosen as a schoolmaster by Moses Chapin, his uncle and a member of the Mendon Company. When the news arrived of the battle of Lexington, most of the company rushed to the scene. Sergeant Chapin, outside the Milford Precinct and working on a stonewall, was the last to receive notice. Upon hearing of the battle, he immediately discarded his wool apron, rushed back home to the Easterly Precinct, snatched up his arms, and hastened to Lexington. He hesitated only for a moment at his fiancée's home to bid her a short, sad goodbye. After serving in Washington's army, he returned home to marry his fiancée, Olive Sumner.

*The History of Worcester County* says "Men of Mendon fought at

Bunker Hill, marched to Canada with Arnold and were at Long Island, Valley Forge, Bennington, Saratoga and Yorktown." This well-documented source also notes that 1,205 men from the Mendon area fought for the cause of independence.

To do their part for the cause, ladies of the town formed committees and held community work socials. From the youth of the Easterly Precinct, a group called the "Milford Cadets" was formed. These lads, between fourteen and eighteen, performed escort duty on various occasions.

In addition to Chapin, Milford had its own Revolutionary War Hero, General Alexander Scammell, who was born in 1744. In 1771, two years after he was graduated from Harvard College, he traveled to New Hampshire where he explored

and surveyed land and timber for the Royal Navy. On December 14, 1774, Scammell assisted in the capture of William and Mary Fort, one of the first overt acts of the Revolution. Scammell and his comrades secured the fort's store of arms and 96 barrels of powder. During the Revolution, Scammell fought under General Gates in the northern campaign of 1776 and 1777; he was wounded at Saratoga on January 5, 1778. He was appointed adjutant general of the American Army and became a member of Washington's staff. Anxious for action, General Scammell was given command of an elite force of light infantry in March of 1781. At the siege of Yorktown, as officer of the day, Scammell was captured by Hessian Troops while scouting the British position. General Scammell was inhumanely wounded after his surrender and, on the request of Washington, was permitted by General Cornwallis to be taken to Williamsburg where he died on October 6, 1781.

In 1784, Milford organized one company of infantry for the Second Regiment of Militia, and each year the records show that money of varying amounts was raised for its support. *Ballou's History of Milford* gives the following interesting resume of the famous artillery company whose fame has been handed down to the present generation;

"Early in 1803 the long famous artillery company was organized, Perely Hunt, captain, John Claflin, Jr., first lieutenant and Levi Chapin, second lieutenant. The elite of the town eagerly enrolled themselves in its ranks. It was furnished with ten handsome brass field pieces and the

necessary accompaniments, and was attached to a distinct battalion, commanded by a major and staff. It attracted to its banners the ambitious chivalry of the town, with generally a sprinkling of kindred materials from adjacent towns. It was the pride of the vicinage, and was seldom outvalled in the brigade by any independent company. It waxed and waned through various seasons, more or less prosperous, till its disbandment in 1846."

The company numbered 44 men, including officers, 4 musicians and 8 drivers. In 1814, when the British fleets threatened Boston, the company marched to the hub and encamped at South Boston. The men remained there for two months and came home heroes. They were enthusiastically received and attended church in a body. The ministers congratulatory sermon was printed. Milford was bound to show its patriotism. On July 4, 1827, the ladies presented the company with a standard of colors. It is said that this occasion was the most important celebration which had ever occurred in town up to that time.

In the spring of 1826, the Lafayette Guards, a light infantry company, was organized; for a score of years it shared the military honors with the artillery men. In 1840, the state reorganized its militia, and soon after, all the independent companies were dissolved. Some of the companies retained their membership; in the form of associations, which existed until the turn of the century. In 1853 a volunteer company of infantry, known as Company A, was organized, which kept intact until the breaking out of the rebellion. Just before 1861, the

Davis Guards, an independent company, was organized; it was commanded by Captain Robert Peard, whose portrait hangs in the Historical Museum in Memorial Hall.

At the outbreak of the war in 1898, Captain John F. Barrett of Company M Militia issued a call to all ex-militia men and others fit for military duty. Company M, ordered to mobilize on May 7, 1898, was given a public reception in the Town Hall, and George A., Eben S., and George Otis Draper offered to equip the men with all personal effects not furnished by the government.

On May 4, 1898, Milford's patriotism was aroused. Hundreds of flags adorned business blocks, factories and residences, and the motto "Remember the Maine" was much in evidence at this time. Milford citizens honored Company M with a big public reception in Town Hall. The company was escorted from the Armory to the Town Hall by Milford's brass band. Upon the departure of Company M to Washington from Framingham, hundreds of Milford's citizens gave the men enthusiastic support. The Milford High School Cadets assisted in the ceremonies.

A volunteer Ladies' Aid Association to assist the State Association in caring for needy soldiers was organized in Memorial Hall. Mrs. Clarence Sumner was chosen president.

Milford's first soldier to die in the Spanish-American War was Arthur L. Wilkinson; on September 6, 1898, he succumbed at Puerto Rico to disease. A notable incident is that his uncle, Walter Wilkinson, was the

first Milford soldier to lose his life in the Civil War. Two days later on September 8, 1898, Sgt. Asa B. Trask was the second Milford Soldier to die in the Spanish-American War. On October 27, 1898, Milford gave a rousing welcome to Captain John F. Barrett of Company M and his command on their return from the Spanish-American War. A big street parade was held, and a reception followed in the Armory.

On March 8, 1899, the Town meeting voted to place in Memorial Hall building a marble tablet containing the names of all the Milford men serving in the Spanish-American War.

On March 30, 1917, Captain William Pond of Company M was ordered by the government to get his command mobilized in the State Armory on Pearl Street; 92 men answered the call to arms for World War I. On April 4, 1917, the biggest demonstration in Milford since 1898 was given to the boys of Company M. Eight hundred persons participated in a street parade. Appropriate exercises were held in Town Hall. News was received on April 6, 1917, that Congress had declared war on Germany; and on April 10, officers and members of Company M left Milford amid a big demonstration for war duty.

Milford's registration of men between ages of 21 and 31 under the selective conscription plans for war duty during World War I totals 1,239. On July 20, 1917, Leo Edward Connors, 98 Prospect Heights, Milford, had the distinction of being the first man in the entire United States selected as a soldier to serve in the United States National Army.

His number was 258, and it was drawn by Secretary of War Newton Baker at Washington. Connors was 22 years old and the son of Mr. and Mrs. Patrick J. Connors. George E. Fricker, also of Milford, who resided at 118 West Street, was the second man picked for service by Secretary Baker. It was reported in May of 1918 that Milford's draft board was the only one in Massachusetts that did not fail in sending its quota. This board is also credited with being the first to report its records and accounts. This record was achieved on February 14, 1918. A great celebration was held to commemorate the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918.

On July 24, 1922, the Selectmen decided that all Milford public squares were to be renamed in honor of veterans. This tradition has continued after each conflict. Most of the squares are named for those who gave the supreme sacrifice, while others have been for men who have received high honors. There were 632 Milfordians serving during World War I; of these 18 were killed.

On December 7, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt mobilized all American forces as result of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. This incident marked the beginning of America's entrance into World War II, which lasted until August 15, 1945.

Milford's contribution to this War was 2,570 men and women into the four branches of the armed services. Of these people there were 55 men who gave their lives.

The Korean conflict lasted from June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953. The

United States sent a force of 350,000 men at a cost of \$18 billion. There were 600 men from Milford serving in this time of duress; of these 5 gave their lives.

The most recent critical encounter which faced our nation was the Vietnam War. From 1961 through 1975, 56,555 United States soldiers died and 303,654 were wounded. Milford's military contribution of men and women was 495; of these 7 lost their lives. In April of 1973 the last United States troops were withdrawn and on April 30, 1975 the Vietnam war finally ended with the surrender of Saigon forces.

### **Milford Armory**

Milford's "armory" was in a hall in the Church Block adjacent to the present day armory prior to 1894, when the headquarters was moved to Washington Hall. When a fire destroyed this building in June, 1906, a move was made to the Raftery block. Six years later, efforts were made to provide Milford with an armory.

John F. Keating from Westboro got the contract to construct the armory on Pearl Street. It was built of Milford granite selected from Ardolino's Quarry on East Main Street. The state paid the entire cost of \$50,000. Captain William G. Pond, through public subscription, acquired the \$2,000 necessary to improve the site.

The armory, built with the military style of the time, presents an imposing and military appearance. It includes a tower on each side of a head house along with battlements occupying 1 1/3 acres of land.

Offices for a captain, lieutenants, first sergeant, non-commissioned of-

ficers and the armorer are located inside the main entrance of the head house. A large company room, cloak room, and reading room are located opposite to the office areas. The large basement area contains a boiler room, a spacious kitchen, and a mess room with a 300 person seating capacity.

Dedication of the new building took place on the evening of May 3, 1912. Lt. Governor Robert E. Luce turned the armory over to Captain William G. Pond. Captain Pond accepted and carried out the trust for many years.

### **The Irish Round Tower**

One of the most unusual sights in the United States is the round tower in St. Mary's Cemetery, in Milford. The structure is a replica of the hundred and ten foot tower that dominates the ancient monastic ruins at Glendalough in County Wicklow, Ireland.

The round tower at Glendalough is a prized relic of the days when Ireland was truly the land of saints and scholars. Dating from the sixth century, it recalls the glories of St. Kevin and monastery that was once Ireland's most renowned seat of learning.

The Milford round tower, believed to be the only one outside of Ireland, dates only from the turn of the century, but the spell it casts is comparable to that of the original. The round tower in St. Mary's Cemetery was the dream of Father Patrick Cuddihy, a native of Clonmel, who came to the United States in 1852 and to Milford as pastor in 1857.



**The National Guard Armory on Pearl Street.**



**Irish Round Tower in St. Mary's Cemetery, this is the only known tower built outside of Ireland.**

Granite had been discovered in Milford, and Father Cuddihy owned a quarry, located in the area known as Rocky Woods. This granite was used in the building of St. Mary's Church and the St. Mary's Grammar School on Winter Street. It also went into the construction of the round tower, the last of Father Cuddihy's great projects and seemingly the only one he never saw to completion. The tower was completed under the supervision of Father David F. McGrath, and in it rests a piece of unchiseled pink granite as a tribute to Father Cuddihy.

The following poem by Mrs. Tessie M. Drown, a former Milfordian, is a fitting tribute:

### **THE IRISH ROUND TOWER**

**By Tessie M. Drown**

Father Cuddihy was homesick,  
Homesick as a man could be  
For that "little bit of Heaven  
That fell into the sea."

He missed the green, green hillsides  
And the blue lakes of Killarney,  
Missed the grand old river Shannon  
And the castle walls of Blarney.

The love he bore old Erin  
Had a warmth and depth and glow,  
An intensity of feeling  
Only Irish hearts can know.

And he loved Milford also;  
But memories were so dear,  
He wished a bit of Ireland  
Could be planted over here.

Now he could not bring a mountain  
And he could not bring a lake,  
And a fairy or a banshee  
Would be very hard to take.

So when he thought of round towers,  
At once was born a plan  
That was big and bold and daring,  
Like the spirit of this man.

"I will build an Irish Round Tower.  
I will plan its height and girth.  
It shall be of Milford granite,  
Freshly quarried from the earth.

"I will build it like the pattern  
Of the towers over there.  
I, myself, will choose the workers,  
As I choose each stone, with care.

"In St. Mary's cemetery  
It shall silent vigil keep,  
As it stands for generations  
Watching over them that sleep."

Milford mothers, when your children,  
In the quiet bedtime hour,  
Beg of you to tell a story,  
Tell Them of this Irish Tower.

Tell them of the priest who built it,  
Help them understand the man  
That could carry out a project  
Like the Irish-Round-Tower plan.

Show them how his heart was blended  
With the granite that they see.  
That the Tower is a symbol  
Of Father Cuddihy.

# Business and Industry

## Transportation

### Stage Coach

Milford's first public transportation involved the use of stages that traveled to Boston, Hartford, New York and local area towns over the so-called turnpikes. The closest turnpike to serve Milford until 1800 was the Middle Road, at which time it was incorporated as the 9th Massachusetts Turnpike. It was better known as the Boston and Hartford Turnpike, and its nearest connections were at Mendon and Upton.

William Godfrey opened a stage line in 1822 between Mendon, Milford, and Boston in connection with another line that ran to Hartford. Another early Milford stage was owned by G. A. Sharpe. Around 1848, the Tilden Stage and Express ran a single stage between Uxbridge and Milford. Its three horses were driven by James D. Perry. The line was discontinued around 1866. Elijah Ward drove a coach between Milford and West Upton for many years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. At the end of the war, he continued the stage line into the 1870's.

### Boston and Albany Railroad

Realizing that Milford was fast becoming an industrial town with its extensive manufacturing of shoes and the quarrying of granite, the Boston and Worcester railroad management obtained a charter around 1847 to build a twelve-mile branch from their main line in Framingham. This railroad was the first of four to serve Milford and the second to be abandoned.

The coming of the railroad contributed much to the economy of

Milford. The shoe and granite businesses expanded, and many people found employment. With the increase in population, many new homes and streets were built. This expansion was one of the most important events in the history of Milford and probably the greatest contributor to the civic growth, development, and material prosperity of the town. In addition to its operating personnel, the railroad employed 75 to 200 men in Milford, in two granite quarries which it owned. Much of the first quarrying was for the railroad, which used granite for their bridges. A tremendous amount of granite was quarried by this railroad between the years 1850 and 1930. Few signs remain today where sidings once ran to several granite quarries.

A gala celebration, called the Railroad Jubilee, was held on July 1, 1848, the day that the first scheduled train arrived at the new wooden depot on Central Street in Milford. For the occasion, the ringing of bells and the playing of music by the Milford Band at 12 o'clock greeted the arrival of railroad cars carrying passengers from Boston. A formal reception took place inside the depot, and an address was delivered by the Hon. C. C. P. Hastings of Mendon, president of the day. Following the speeches, a procession was formed. It then marched to the new Washington Temperance House, owned by L. B. Felton. About 200 people partook of an elegant dinner, more speeches were heard, and music again was supplied by the Milford Band. After the dinner, several Milford residents en-

joyed a round trip to Framingham on the train.

A tower on the original depot contained a bell that was rung by the ticket agent each time a train was scheduled to leave the station. Following a fire in 1854, the tower was removed. From this depot Milford's old Company A of the Davis Guards, Company B of the 25th Regiment, and Company F of the 36th Regiment, marched on the station platform when they departed for Civil War duty.

In 1867, the name was changed from the Boston and Worcester Railroad to the Boston and Albany Railroad. Business on the Milford branch was very good, and by 1904 there were eleven trains running out of Milford each day.

In 1909, the large wooden building that had served as a car shed was separated into two sections. One was sold and moved to the Milford Grain Company on Beach Street, and the other served as a two-stall engine house for the next forty years.

A fine new granite depot was erected in 1909 at a cost of \$20,000 by the J. W. Bishop Company of Boston under the supervision of Edward "Gaffa" King of Jefferson Street, Milford. King was awarded the contract to supply granite for the new depot; the granite was taken from the Webb quarries off Dilla Street. The freight house and the old depot were moved to a nearby point on Central Street near Z. C. Field's lumber sheds. A fire at the lumber yard destroyed the freight house





**Boston and Albany steam engine and wooden passenger car at depot between 1880 and 1890.**



**Front view of Boston and Albany engine house with turn table visible in foreground.**

during the 1960's; part of its granite foundation blocks are still visible near the sidewalk on Central Street. A 160-foot long granolithic platform at the depot is still in place today as is the stone depot.

On the morning of December 24, 1909, the first train arrived at the new depot. It carried twenty men from Holliston to work in Milford; the crewmen were A. J. Bussell, engineer; C. Fantry, fireman; A. G. Plant, conductor; William Rhodes, baggagemaster; and William Snow, brakeman. The first train to leave the new depot went to Framingham.

Its crew included W. B. Holmes, conductor; W. L. Holmes, engineer; George Bussell, fireman; John Pinkerton, baggagemaster; and Frank Lovely, brakeman. Passengers were Henry Antrobus, Alice Byrne, Bertha Caldicott, S. S. Connors, Catherine Crotty, P. S. Graves, Arthur Keefe, T. J. Lyons, John McManna and a representative from the *Milford Journal*.

Leon Foster was the first man known to have worked in the engine house. He was followed by George H. Sherman, who worked there during the summer of 1910 or 1911. He was succeeded by Herbert Sherman who ran it for the next two years. George M. Sherman of 2271 Washington Street, Holliston, took over on May 1, 1913, and remained there until its closing on May 1, 1950.

There were two crossing gates at Beach and Mt. Pleasant Streets around 1913. Harry Cook operated these gates from a so-called "lever house." This was a platform located between the two streets, and he could raise and lower either gate. Later, Cook was the flagman at the Medway Road crossing. This had always been a dangerous crossing, so there was a flagman at this spot from 1899 until 1937, at which time a concrete bridge was erected over the tracks.

Later on, Frank Conway operated the manual cables that replaced the levers for the gates. He performed this duty until the end of the Boston and Albany service. Ray



**A rare photograph of the lever house in the Boston and Albany yard. Beach and Mt. Pleasant street gates were operated here. Box at left held coal for gateman's stove inside the small building.**



Edwards was the last ticket agent in Milford, and then for several years he helped with the freight business.

Prior to 1920, there was a manually operated turntable. The Boston and Albany work crews replaced it with an eighty-five foot motor-driven turntable from South Boston. One can still see the four concrete flush footings along with some brick forming two ashpits of the old engine house that was sold and demolished in 1950.

The term "Rawhide" is still familiar to many Milford people. It was the name assigned to a nightly freight train which arrived in Milford usually around midnight. A small passenger shelter at Rocky Hill was erected near Beaver Street in 1888 as a convenience for men working at the nearby Norcross granite quarry. It was discontinued in 1954. On a snowy afternoon, March 27, 1959, the last passenger train pulled into the depot with only four passengers. A farewell whistle sounded as it arrived from Framingham. It was a far cry from the happy, jubilant crowd that greeted the first train to arrive 111 years earlier. Freight service continued until the removal of the rails in 1974.

#### **Milford and Woonsocket Railroad**

The second railroad to provide service to Milford was the Milford and Woonsocket Railroad. On August 1, 1868, this railroad started making regular runs between Milford and Bellingham junction at a distance of slightly less than four miles. It was operated by the Providence and Worcester Railroad Company until 1883. From 1883 until 1898 it had three owners: the



**Boston and Albany Rocky Hill shelter, looking toward Holliston with Beaver Street in background.**

Milford and Woonsocket Railroad Company, the New York and New England Railroad Company, and then the New England Railroad Company. The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company purchased it on July 1, 1889, and owned it until it went out of operation a few years ago as a part of the Pennsylvania Central. In 1899, Milford selectmen directed the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad to install and maintain a set of gates on the Main Street crossing.

In June of 1910, a new unloading platform was built in the freight yard. Located near the tracks that led to the Swift & Company's refrigerator, it could accommodate

two cars. At the same time, extensive modifications were made inside the freight house and at the platform area. It had an automobile run on the north end and a cattle run on the south end. The railroad yard was located on the south side of Central Street, and the street provided a buffer zone between it and the Boston and Albany yard.

A spur line still runs from the yard to the Milford Industrial Park; another leads to Foster-Forbes Glass Company on National Street. Although the depot was destroyed by fire several years ago, this railroad, now operated by CONRAIL, continues to provide Milford with freight service.



**Boston and Albany depot built in 1909 from Milford granite.**



**Electric cars at car barn on East Main Street, probably between 1910 and 1920.**

### **Hopkinton Railroad**

On May 9, 1867, the Hopkinton and Milford Railroad Company received a charter to build a railroad between Milford and Hopkinton. Hopkinton Branch Railroad Company No. 2 was incorporated on May 26, 1869, with authority to build a railroad between Hopkinton and Ashland. These two companies were consolidated on June 1, 1870, under the name of Hopkinton Railroad Company, and the line was built during 1871 and 1872. The first passenger train started on December 25, 1872. Following the failure to pay off a large mortgage in 1883, the railroad was purchased by George Draper at a public auction and deeded to the Milford and Woonsocket Railroad Company in 1884. The New York, New Haven and Hartford Company was the last company to operate the railroad.

Although the railroad was used primarily as a freight line, passengers were carried between 1872 and March 31, 1912. Sidings were built to serve four of Milford's granite quarries: The Fletcher Quarry, the Massachusetts Pink Granite Company, the George H. Cutting Quarry, the Bay State Quarry, all on Cedar Street, and Webb's Quarry on Dilla Street. There was a siding at the Milford Water Company pumping station on Dilla Street. It is believed another spur ran to Macuen Ice Company on Dilla Street. Tracks started in the yard near Central Street, crossed Main Street, ran adjacent to Cedar Swamp Pond continued past Wildcat Pond, crossed the Charles River and Cedar Street and from this point, traveled in the woods to Hopkinton. The sec-

tion between Hopkinton and Ashland closed down around 1937, and the rails were removed prior to World War II. Freight, mostly coal, was carried to Hopkinton until 1954 when the bridge at the northwest corner of Cedar Swamp Pond washed out and was not replaced. The memorabilia left of this railroad includes much of the original roadbed, two sets of bridge abutments over the Charles River, one whistle post, and several sidings, roadbeds and two bridges.

#### **Milford, Franklin and Providence Railroad**

On August 1, 1883, another railroad was started that ran between Bellingham and Franklin. This was called the Milford, Franklin and Providence Railroad. Passengers could already travel from Milford to Boston; now travel was also possible to Providence and New York City. Engine No. 26 was a familiar sight in Milford between 1888 and 1895. It continued until 1909. Eventually, the company was acquired by the Milford and Woonsocket railroad and remained in operation until 1954.

#### **Grafton and Upton Railroad**

Early in 1889, a contract was awarded to contractors Newell and Snowling to build an eight-mile extension to the Grafton and Upton Railroad between West Upton and Milford. A few of the construction crew were Irish, but most were Italian. These workers laid tracks to the yard on Depot Street at the rear of the now Pheasant Run Apartments. The first carload of freight arrived in Milford in February, 1890. It was delivered to the elastic

fabric mill. Weed Brothers and Lent built a manually operated turntable in the yard, and Brigham Brothers of Grafton built a 5,000-gallon wooden water tank as well as a two-stall engine house.

A special train, carrying thirty-five people as guests of the new railroad, left Milford on May 16, 1890, at 8:45 a.m. One of the reasons for this trip was a careful inspection of the roadbed. As a result of an injunction against the Grafton and Upton, its tracks stopped half a mile short of the New York and New England depot. This situation necessitated the building of a temporary ticket office near Depot Street.

On opening day May 17, 1890 at 7:30 a.m., a passenger train started from North Grafton and one left Milford at 7:40. These trains met at Upton Center. No enthusiasm was evident at either Hopedale or Milford as the thirty or forty people boarded the train. As the train left Upton Center, the train was packed. The North Grafton Brass Band played a concert at Grafton.

Seven trains ran each way on the first day. A round-trip ticket admitted the rider to the Worcester theatre to see the move *Little Lord Fauntleroy* or to the Music Hall in Milford where Annie Ward Tiffany starred in *The Step Daughter*. Another feature of the day was a baseball game between Milford and Natick.

The railroad's first schedule showed four trains running each way each day. Passengers were carried on Grafton and Upton steam trains from May 17, 1890, until June 23, 1902. Records dated October 8,

1900, show that 600 passengers were carried on the trains. Between 1905 and 1913, a two-room business office was maintained on Main Street at the corner of Exchange Street.

Following a fire in March, 1914, which completely destroyed the engine house, the main yard was shifted to Hopedale adjacent to the Draper Company buildings. This yard has been rebuilt twice and serves as the Milford interchange. It is capable of holding forty-five of the fifty-foot length cars. All American railroads were taken over by the government during World War II. Activities of railroads in Milford during recent years have been limited to the hauling of freight by CONRAIL, the government-operated system coming from Boston via Franklin on the old New York, New Haven and Hartford line. The industrial Grafton and Upton Railroad still provides service between its terminals at Milford and North Grafton.

#### **Battery and Electric Street Cars**

The first street cars to operate in Milford were battery operated; no overhead wires were used. Six cars owned by the Milford and Hopedale Street Railway Company started business on April 13, 1891. The first car to operate carried newspapermen and other guests. The cars proceeded up Central from the powerhouse that was located at the corner of Central and Beach to Main Streets. It was noted how well cars were able to make the sharp turn from Central onto Main. This



**North Milford Transportation Company with John Sjoström on the left and P. Eugene Casey on the right.**

first run started at 10:45 a.m. and moved down the Main Street at a slow rate with the hope that the horses would become used to the cars. Upon reaching East Main Street, the conductor increased the speed to fifteen miles per hour until the end of the line on East Main Street. This company operated on East Main Street, School and Purchase Streets to Dilla Street and extended its run to Hopedale. A large electrical manufacturing company, seeing the possibility of a powerful rival, was able to crush the local company by legal methods during 1894.

In 1895, when Milford, Holliston, and Framingham Street Railway Company took over, a line was extended to Framingham. On May 14, 1896, a special run was made over the new lines with regular service commencing on July 1, 1896. On May 22, 1899, a switch was installed at the intersection of Cedar and East Main, and service was started to Pine Grove Cemetery and Driving Park; and around 1901, a branch was extended to Hopkinton. With a change of ownership in 1901, extensions were made to Medway and Uxbridge, and it became the Milford and Uxbridge Street Railway Company. Later, with the availability of the Grafton and Upton tracks between Hopedale and North Grafton, service was started to North Grafton.

On September 6, 1900, the Milford, Attleboro and Woonsocket Railway Company started service between Milford and Woonsocket. One hour was required to travel to Woonsocket by way of Bellingham. Milford's trolley terminal was a row of wooden benches in the rear of a

confectionery store at Lincoln Square. The car barn was on East Main Street. The building was remodeled in 1978 to become Midas Muffler shop.

By 1920, passengers had stopped using electric car lines. Electric car companies introduced one-man cars, cut their schedules, and sold right-of-ways in an attempt to reduce expenses. After twenty-five years of service, the Milford, Attleboro and Woonsocket Street Railway Company went out of business on October 4, 1924. The rails were removed on September 1, 1925. In April of 1928, the Milford and Uxbridge Street Railway Company was sold to Citron Byer Company. The last run was made on the night of July 22, 1928. Edward J. Sullivan took the last car from Milford to North Grafton on August 31, 1928.

#### **Buses**

A new era began on July 3, 1928, when the Milford, Framingham and Uxbridge Bus line initiated runs between Milford and Framingham. The Johnson Bus Lines opened service in Milford in the spring of 1928 from Milford to Woonsocket, Bellingham, Franklin, and Wrentham. Service was provided to Worcester in September, 1928. Direct bus service between Milford and Park Square in Boston, began in 1931. In 1941, Johnson Bus Lines bought out the Milford, Framingham, and Uxbridge Bus Line.

The North Purchase Transportation Company was organized on July 29, 1915. In the early days, it utilized trucks such as Republic, Studebaker, and Ford, which had been converted into jitneys.

Businessmen and residents in the North Purchase section formed this company to transport workers to the Draper Corporation in Hopedale. Later, the service was extended and school children were transported. James DiSabato acquired this line in 1947, and its schedule included six daily round trips between Lincoln Square and the Draper plant in Hopedale. Short Lines took charge in 1960, and in September, 1968, the Gray Line of Boston succeeded the Short Lines. The Draper runs were maintained until 1969. Mr. Robert P. Winterhalter bought this company and acquired a franchise. Today, the Big W Transportation, Inc., provides two daily round trips between Milford and the Rockwell International Draper Division in Hopedale. One trip runs between the Milford-Hopkinton townline on Purchase Street and the Hopedale plant. The other trip starts in the Plains section, passes through downtown Milford and goes to the Rockwell complex. The future of these two trips is uncertain since Rockwell International is being phased out.

The Milford-Framingham Bus Line operates six runs daily from Lincoln Square to Shoppers' World in Framingham. A bus terminal at Lincoln Square, with Mrs. Mary Trottier as its last manager, remained in operation until November, 1966. It included a lunch counter and tables, and it operated as a ticket agency for the Short Lines. The building was torn down, and its location is now the site of a Dunkin Donut concession. Daily bus service to Park Square in Boston

is presently provided by the Brush Hill Transportation Company of Dorchester, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Plymouth and Brockton Street Railway Company.

With the arrival of Milford's anniversary year, public transportation by bus remains available to Boston, Worcester, and Framingham.

### **Boot and Shoe Industry**

The boot and shoe industry had its beginnings in Milford in 1795 when Colonel Ariel Bragg, a custom shoemaker settled here. The development of this trade gave a new dimension to what was primarily a farming town. From this simple beginning, Milford assumed a leadership role in the manufacturing of quality shoes.

In 1792, Bragg heard about Jonas Tolman of Brookline hiring someone to work for him at shoemaking. This was the first intimation Bragg had that one shoemaker employed another. There was not a shoe store in the town of Boston at this time. After calling on Tolman, who was then in need of a man, Bragg began work. He was paid by the item. The pay was four shillings for making shoes and twelve cents for tapping and heeling. Bragg's first shoes were those made from remnants for the poor. Within eight weeks Bragg was able to suit Tolman's most difficult customers. By working hard, he could clear seven dollars per month.

In April, 1793, after settling up with Tolman, Bragg set out for Holliston. He hired a horse from Abel Fisk of Hopkinton and went to Brookline. He paid \$2.50 for tools



**Milford Shoe Company, corner of Central and Depot Street.**



**Greene Bros. factory on the corner of So. Bow and Central Street.**



**Lapworth and Sons Elastic Company on Depot Street.**

and bought 40 pounds of sole leather on credit. Upon his return, he boarded with Asa Rockwood. He bought one calf skin off Simeon Cutler and three skins from Cutler's son for a total of \$7.00. From these, he made twenty-two pairs of shoes in three weeks. He hired a horse for fifty cents, bought a bag of hay for ten cents from John Claflin, and with his twenty-two pairs of shoes in saddle-bags and with his hay bound on behind him, was off for Providence before sunrise. North of Providence Bridge, he stopped and

fed hay to his horse. Then with one pair of shoes in his hand and the saddlebag on his back, he marched on.

As he was going onto the bridge, he met two men, one of whom offered him \$21.50 for the entire lot of shoes. Bragg took the money and rode to Mr. Draper's in Attleborough where he bought six calf skins. He arrived home one hour after sundown on the same day. He paid three weeks' board and ex-

penses for his horse and had eight dollars left, far better pay than the seven dollars a month in Brookline, where the inhabitants thought it beneath their dignity to hold conversation with their hired help. By October of this same year, Bragg found out that his business had grown too large to handle alone, so he hired Bethuel Ellis for one year for the sum of eighty dollars.

Six months later Bragg increased his business by one-third when he hired Jonathan Bryant for one year for ninety dollars. In October, 1795, he moved to a house belonging to Aaron Phipps; this house was the first one in the northeastern part of Milford on the County Road leading to Boston.

Here then, in absence of any contradictory information, was the beginning of the wholesale manufacture of boots and shoes in Milford.

On March 8, 1803, Bragg bought a farm from Captain Perry Daniels. This farm was in Milford across the road from the Phipps place, where Bragg had first lived when he came to Milford. As business improved, his little shop became crowded, so he moved it across the road to a new location on the east side and added six feet to its length.

In 1809, his force had increased to six men excluding himself. In this year he curtailed his business to supervise the building of a large new residence on his farm. When this residence was completed, he resumed business. He now boarded his workmen in his new home.

This arrangement worked well until 1819 when the business had grown so large that a new and larger

shop was necessary both to accommodate his help and to allow for later expansion. This new shop was 20 by 30 feet and two stories high; it was the largest shop in Milford at that time. The cost for this structure was \$250.

Not long after the completion of the Colonel's new home, his journeymen began marrying and establishing homes of their own. It may be assumed that the turn to homemaking and the fact that people living on a small farm could devote time to shoemaking were the underlying reasons for the little home, workroom, or shop where boots and shoes could be made up in connection with the performance of home duties. Much of the early boot and shoe business was done in the little home workshop. Just when this practice began is probably one of the happenings which can never be definitely established, but by the late 1880's there were over thirty such little shops in operation.

When Colonel Bragg first saw the process of crimping boots, he immediately set out to develop the process by inventing a boot tree for a crimping form. To cater to the demand for boot trees, Colonel Bragg's process was adopted by Estabrook and Wires of Milford. During the Civil War period, the inability of this firm to keep up with demand caused a serious handicap in the manufacture of army boots.

The coming of power machinery was the cause of the passing of the little home shop and the beginning of a new era in the shoe and boot business. The early method of operation was, in many ways, a very practical method. The upper leather

**Benjamin Spaulding Straw Shop, on Pearl Street.**



**Regal Shoe Company former Carrol, Hixon, and Jones Straw Shop, presently Little Gents Footwear.**

was cut in the factory and arranged in case lots, ready for the workmen, who took these parts home to sew. The hand methods of manufacture continued in some factories long after power machinery came into competition. A first class workman could produce as much work as the machine.

In this period, records indicate that two men manufactured \$671.00 worth of shoe pegs in one year. These pegs, pointed at one end, were made of hard wood, such as birch or beech, and were of varying lengths, and were about one sixteenth of an inch square. It is believed the shoe peg was invented by Joseph Walker of Hopkinton.

Around 1800 there already was a tannery on the Holliston Road. Around 1813, Mr. Lee Claflin established a tannery in the North Purchase. At a later date this business became the property of John Goldsmith. In 1837, 5,000 hides were curried by five employees.

The earliest statistics available in 1837 report the manufacture of 128,000 pairs of footwear. In 1846, the output had risen to 243,890 pairs of shoes. In 1856, the figures rose to 1,042,944 pairs of boots and 4,048 pairs of shoes, all of this the work of 2,951 males and 447 females.

In the days when calf boots were worn by every man and boy in the country, Milford was the leading



boot town of the United States. The Samuel Walker Shoe Shop built around 1846, that stood on the corner of High Street and West Street, was one of the biggest and most prosperous shoe and boot factories in New England at the close of the Civil War. That shop was put up by a manufacturer named Walker. It was a shop in which all hands made a good sum of money; it was not uncommon to earn as much as \$5 or \$6 a day in many departments.

About this time a guild, the old Knights of St. Crispin, started to do business in the shoe factories of the country. Mr. Walker had a gardener or coachman, and according to a report, he wanted this man to have a job in the treeing room where he could make \$5 or \$6 a day, instead of \$2 or \$3 working outside. The pay was \$1 a dozen for treeing kip and split boots in those days, and it is likely that still more was paid for working on calf. At any rate, it was a fine job, and a number of treers used to arrive as early as 5 o'clock in the morning and would work until 9 o'clock at night.

It has always been the central idea, in all forms of trade unionism; to keep the number of men learning the trade down to the minimum, and keeping this idea in mind, the treers refused to let the new man in on the job. Mr. Walker took the stand that either his man would go into that treeing room, or the shop and Knights would go out of business and he would go out with them.

In short, that is just what happened, Walker closed his doors. The American flag was run up to the masthead, there to stay until one man had as much right as another in that shop, and the flag stayed there until all came to see the truth which it represented.

But by the time the Crispins had come around to Walker's way of thinking, it was too late to do any more business in that factory. It never started up again.

By 1856, Milford had eleven shoe manufacturing firms. Many people were employed in the factories, which were situated mainly on Purchase, Central, Jefferson and North Bow Streets. These areas were near the railroads with convenient shipping facilities nearby. The increased demand for shoes necessitated larger buildings. More importantly 1891 saw the introduction of new sewing and lasting machines. The quality of shoes from this point on could not be compared to those previously made by the hands of the craftsmen. The mechanized shoe industry was now the source of employment for many Milfordians.

Through solicitations of Milfordians, the factory of Clapp, Huckin & Temple on Depot and Charles Street was built by public subscription. The sum of \$20,000 was raised by this subscription. This particular factory closed in 1896 after suffering a labor dispute with the Boot and Shoe Worker's Union. From 1896 to 1930, a variety of companies operated in this building for short periods. The firms that remained the

longest were The Publix Shoe Company, 1930-1940; the Derman Shoe Company, 1940-1954; and the Bickford Shoe Company, late 1954 to August, 1976. This building burned in 1979.

One of the leading manufacturers of quality men's shoes was the Milford Shoe Company, which operated from 1890-1961. It sold shoes to the most prestigious men's stores and department stores in the country. It employed over 200 workers. This factory was located on the corner of Central and Depot Streets; it has since been razed.

The shoe industry in Milford continued to expand with the opening of the Friendly Shoe Company in 1929. This factory, located adjacent to the Railroad Depot on Central Street, closed in 1935. It was purchased by the Porter Shoe Company in 1936. It specialized in the manufacture of mens' and boys' footwear. Porter Shoe Company expanded its operation with the purchase of the Milford Shoe Company in 1961. Porter Shoe Company sold its business in 1969 to Morse Shoe Company of Acton. This business is known as Milford Shoe, Incorporated. As of 1978, it is the only shoe business left in Milford. It operates in the former hat shop buildings on North Bow Street.

With the onset of the industrial revolution, Milford contributed many innovations to the shoe industry. During the period from 1880 to the 1940's, many drastic changes occurred in the production of shoes. Milford led the way for many industrial support factories. The Milford Paper Box Company, located in the Lapworth Elastic building at the rear of the Bickford



Shoe, made the boxes to pack the shoes for delivery. Another accessory factory was the Toby factory on South Bow Street, which made pieced heels. Also Green Brothers was a well-known heel-making company.

Until a changing business climate brought a decline to the business around the 1950's, Milford was a leader in the shoe manufacturing industry.

### **Straw Hat Industry**

Milford's straw industry had its inception about 1810 when Samuel Penniman, Jr., conducted a small shop here. His establishment was a central depot for straw braid to supply the wants of a wide circle of residents. Penniman also manufactured straw bonnets. After his death he was succeeded by his sons and Samuel Leeds. Later, John Claflin and his son Aaron carried on the business to some extent.

In the mid-1860's Benjamin H. Spaulding established a straw business manufacturing women's hats. Within a few years the shop employed over 400 workers. This shop, formerly located on the corner of Pearl and Lincoln Street, was twice destroyed by fire, once in 1873 and again in 1890. In 1898, the company was sold to the Carroll, Hixon and Jones Company of Milford. Business continued as usual at the Pearl and Lincoln Street location for many years until another fire destroyed the factory in 1924. The company then moved to Medway; but through the tireless efforts of local businessmen, it returned in

1928 and occupied the large North Bow Street factory that was formerly used by the Smith Mills Company (now the location of Milford Shoe Company). The ownership of the firm changed several times, and eventually it was taken over by the Lish Company, which eventually relocated in Framingham, where it also engaged in the garment business. In the 1950's Kartiganer Company assumed control of the Milford operation prior to its removal to its main plant in Upton, Massachusetts.

There were several other smaller straw manufacturers in Milford worthy of note. At the corner of Central and North Bow Streets stood the straw establishment of Isaiah R. Spaulding, brother of Benjamin H. Spaulding. The firm began business in 1882 in the building of the former Walker Shoe Factory, and by 1885 employed 300 skilled workers engaged in making mens' and boys' straw goods. It is believed the company ceased operations when the building was sold in 1890 to Thomas F. Flanigan, who engaged in the leather remnant business there. This factory was demolished in the hurricane of 1938, and the site is currently occupied by the Clark-Shaughnessy Oil Company.

Jones and Wilkinson operated a small men's hat manufacturing shop also in the Central Street area. In the early 1900's it was the site of the Rockingham Hotel; then it was occupied by Stone Furniture Company until 1978.

One other little known straw shop was located on Pine Street. In a *Milford Journal* of 1870 there is

mention of a Mr. Bose who was apprehended in Chicago and brought to trial for allegedly burning down his shop and defrauding the insurance companies. A further search of the *Journal* has yielded no further mention of this company.

One has only to glance through town directories of sixty years ago to realize how often the straw operator category was listed as an occupation. At a business peak over seven hundred straw operators were employed by the straw industry in Milford. The work force was approximately two-thirds women. These operators wove and sewed the straw used in various styles of hats of the times. The milliners were skilled workers that made a significant contribution to the fashion industry in the United States. Milliners also trimmed and blocked hats. One of Milford's last hat blockers was Archie Kalpagian. Many women who could not work full-time worked part-time at home. In the busy seasons this homework was a welcome source of income for many families.

The millinery industry depended greatly upon the season. Summer straw hats were made in the winter, and the wool and felt hats were made in the summer to correspond with seasonal fashions. Milford, Medway, and Upton were for a number of years leaders in the millinery trade in the United States. Up until the late 1950's, the trade was fairly prosperous. Changes in fashion and technological advances in synthetic fibers in the past two decades have caused the demise of most of these shops.

## Cigar Manufacturers

As of the year 1880, there was only one cigar manufacturer in Milford, but this was a steadily growing industry. Soon there were twenty firms, which were in existence for fifty years. The business reached its peak in 1887; in that year 2,216,525 cigars were manufactured. The advent of the machine-made cigar produced such competition that the local manufacturers disappeared.

Older residents long remembered the wooden Indian which stood in front of the William Hale factory on Main Street. Rumors say that just after the owner had destroyed the Indian, he could have sold it for \$1,000.

## Granite Quarries

Milford's local granite legends attribute the discovery of pink granite to James and William Sherman at the site known as the Rocky Woods (presently where Route 495 crosses Route 16, adjacent to the former Filosa residence). In searching for a new quarry site, the Sherman brothers split open an immense boulder and found the pink-colored granite which was destined to bring Milford to the forefront of the granite-cutting and granite building industry around the world.

From this humble beginning, Milford's granite industry grew until it reached a point never approached by any other local industry. Prior to the discovery of pink granite in the early 1870's, granite-cutting was a small business carried on by small independent stonecutters and builders of Milford to meet the demands of the town. A list published in 1845 notes the employment of six



**This is Lincoln Square with Hale's Octagon Cigar Factory.**



**Milford Iron Foundry that once stood on Fino Field.**

men having the difficult task of quarrying granite; in 1855 sixteen were employed. From 1855 until 1875, the granite industry assumed greater importance; and in the last twenty-five years of this century, 200 men were employed in two granite quarries here.

The earliest of these quarries was the Railroad Quarry, located near Adams Street, in the Braggville section of town (site of the former Porthole Restaurant). The state was desirous of building a canal through northern Worcester county, to the Hudson River near Troy, New

York. For the late 1820's, this project was deemed a very ambitious one. Local newspapers were quoted as stating the public was not favorably impressed by the idea. So a railroad was proposed, and in 1834, the Boston and Worcester Railroad (later called the Boston and Albany) was granted a charter to build a railroad between Boston and Worcester. In 1847, as the railroad construction approached Milford, a Mr. Barker, who operated a small quarry in Braggville (site of the former Braggville school), furnished the stone for the bridges and culverts.

Realizing it was more economical to own its own quarry, the Boston and Worcester railroad bought the land of Alpheus Perry and Dexter Brown, but as the railroad neared its completion and the demands for granite decreased, the sites were abandoned around 1877, the Boston and Worcester Railroad ceased to be in the granite industry. There now remained only a few men engaged in the granite-quarrying business.

After the shutdown of the Railroad quarries, James Sherman, one of its former superintendents, established his three sons in their granite business. It is believed that two of his sons, James and William, were located in the Braggville section. Theodore was located off Cedar Street, where he was busily engaged in cutting granite for many years. In addition to street curbing, the William Sherman quarry supplied the front granite steps of the Milford Town Hall in 1916.

James and William Sherman merged and formed the Sherman Brothers Quarry. It secured a



**Workmen in Dodds Quarry, East Main Street.**



**Milford Pink Granite Quarry with the largest pillar ever quarried in Milford. It was for the Citizens Bank in Cleveland, Ohio.**



**This huge column measured 28 feet long, 4 feet 9 inches in diameter. It was cut from a block weighing 1,000 tons.**



**Pink Granite Shed showing the eagles for Pennsylvania Station.**

\$12,000 contract for the Norton Town Library in 1887.

The Sherman Brothers quarry probably ceased its Braggville operations in the early 1900's. The site was eventually sold to Logan and Judge, a small monumental business

on lower Spruce Street. This company was fairly inactive and was bought out in 1914 by L. Luchini and Sons. The new firm was now busily engaged over a period of years in supplying the granite for the Naval War College and the Na-

tional Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at the Catholic University of America. It is not known when L. Luchini and Sons ceased their stonecutting operations.

In June, 1892, William Sherman and Sons opened a new quarry in the North Purchase Street area on the former Monroe Goldsmith place (location today of Shadowbrook). It has not been determined how long this company remained in business. Today this quarry can be seen at the far end of Eben Street by Route 495.

Another early firm was that of Carroll Brothers. Richard Carroll purchased two parcels of quarry land from Isaac Claflin in July of 1873. These quarry lands were located in the woods off Dilla Street (behind the building which now houses the Industrial Oil and Chemical Company). The firm completed many contracts, among which were the Claflin tomb and other monuments located in the Pine Grove Cemetery.

In January of 1883, because of ill health, Carroll sold part of the firm to Fred Swasey and J. B. Bancroft, owners of the Milford Granite Company. Carroll's brother William remained in the granite business under the Carroll Brothers' name.

In the late 1880's, Charles W. Carroll, William's brother, became associated with Timothy Shea and others in the granite business. Later in the same year he was engaged in establishing a quarrying company near the Milford Water Company on Dilla Street.

By August, 1890, a crew of eight men was employed. During the next ten years the firm provided quality materials for a variety of projects.

Records show that the firm furnished curbing for the city of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, and also supplied the granite for the Times Building in Hartford, Connecticut.

Mr. Carroll sold the company's holdings to Peter Ross, who in turn sold it and other adjacent quarry lands to the Webb Pink Granite Company of Worcester in 1905. Mr. Carroll was retained as superintendent at the Webb quarry. In the fall of 1905, he and his family moved to Worcester.

In 1879, a few of the smaller quarries had merged together. A majority of these were located in the Dilla and Cedar Streets section of the Rocky Woods. The Milford Quarry Company commenced granite-cutting operations in 1879. The incorporating officers were General Orison Underwood, Horace S. Claflin, Richard Carroll, and F. Rafferty. It is believed that the company's sites were worked a few years and then sold piecemeal to the new generation of granite men.

The so-called "Claflin Ledge," located near the Pine Grove Cemetery, was purchased by Timothy Shea from Horace S. Claflin in 1888. The remaining properties were purchased by J. B. Bancroft, a Hopedale businessman, who in partnership with Fred Swasey formed the Milford Granite Company in 1883. This quarry was located in the woods behind the present Industrial Oil and Chemical Company on Dilla Street; in the 1880's it was adjacent to Carroll Brothers. Its granite was used to build the foundation of the Draper factory offices in Hopedale in 1889 and for many houses in town. This

quarry also supplied the granite for the completion of the Milford Music Hall in 1880, located on the corner of Main and Pine Streets, and for Memorial Hall in 1884 situated at the corner of School and Spruce Streets.

In 1888, Joseph B. Bancroft bought out Mr. Fred Swasey's, interests and by late 1901 a New York firm bought it. The Milford Granite Company now became known as the Milford Quarry Company. J. B. Richardson, Harry Stone and George Sibson comprised the board of officers. As it was common practice for contemporaries to name a quarry after its forman, this quarry was generally known as Sibson's Quarry. This company furnished the stone for numerous buildings and houses in Massachusetts, the Museum of Art in Brooklyn, New York, and the Carnegie Library in Ashland, Massachusetts. In 1904, the quarry went into receivership, and by 1905, the property was purchased by Peter Ross, who then sold it and other quarry land to the Webb Pink Granite Company.

Among the first of the new generation of granite men was Timothy Shea. He was a subcontractor on the building of Memorial Hall. In 1886, he was the superintendent of the newly established Milford Pink Granite Company on East Main Street. Around 1887, he purchased quarry land on Cedar Street. This site, known as Haskel's, is divided by Route 495 where it intersects with Route 85. Work was brisk with numerous orders. The Shea quarry had in operation two 72-foot wooden derricks with a 25-ton carrying capacity, the largest of their

kind in town at that time. Shea's furnished granite for the Longfellow Associates Library in Cambridge, and the Odd Fellow Building in Waltham. In 1888 he purchased another tract of land, west of the Norcross Brothers' quarries and near the Hopkinton line, the so-called "Claflin Ledge."

Increased business demands in 1897 necessitated the building of a new 800-foot spurtrack in the quarry area to connect his two quarry sites. However, later on in this year, Mr. Shea, for unexplained reasons, auctioned his personal property. In 1898, Shea's quarry was contracted to provide granite for the Hopedale Memorial Church and the Universalist Church on Pine Street. The Darling Brothers' Quarry Company, located across from the Pine Grove Cemetery, merged with Shea's firm in 1900 to form the Bay State Granite Company. Darling Brothers commenced its quarrying business by purchasing the Rocky Woods granite quarry in August of 1890. They immediately modernized the site by the installation of a new polishing machine and an engine from the factory of E. Kendall of Cambridgeport, which at the time was the largest in the country.

The company furnished granite for a turntable and round-house for the Boston and Albany railroad at Cottage Farm, and it supplied granite for the Rhode Island Hospital Trust building. Also numerous buildings in New York and Philadelphia were built with granite from this quarry.

In May of 1891, quarrying operations ceased because of a crippling strike and lockout which closed all the Milford quarries until 1894. As a

result, in February of 1892, the business failed. The property was sold to the White Granite Company of New York, which attempted to reopen as a "free yard." However, because of union pressure, the strikebreakers honored the current strike and the quarry remained closed.

Old company records show the company was in operation again in 1897 with a contract for two immense watering troughs at Watertown. The company continued in business until 1900.

Articles of agreement were signed in March, 1900, by representatives of the Draper Company of Hopedale and the Darling Brothers of Worcester. The result was a consolidation of the Darling Brothers' interest, the Shea Pink Granite Company, which was now owned by George Draper, and the Milford Pink Granite Company. Also the Damerall Brothers business and the Keefe quarry, both adjacent to the Cedar Street quarries, were soon acquired. Now known as the Bay State Pink Granite Company, this new firm had control and ownership of 800 acres of valuable quarry land between Cedar and East Main Streets. Newspaper accounts from the period, however, still listed the quarries by their former names.

One of the first problems facing the new company was a strike over wages and hours, but settlement came about quickly as all the quarry owners yielded and granted a 35-cent minimum raise for an eight-hour day. The Bay State Pink Granite Quarry continued in business until 1905 when it was merged to become part of the Milford Pink Granite Quarries.

The earliest newspaper story on the Milford Pink Granite Company appears in the June 13, 1888, edition of the *Milford Journal*. The firm is mentioned as being located on East Main Street at the site recently known as Dodds Quarry. The story concerned one of the strikes which were to be common to the local granite industry. A spokesman, Timothy Shea, states ". . . it (the strike) may affect adversely the project of opening up the quarry . . ." The company survived the strike and ultimately led Milford to the forefront of the granite industry. The firm was owned by Woodbury and Leighton of Boston.

From 1888 on, the company was constantly involved in expansion. It had two quarry sites, one located on East Main Street, the East quarry, and the other on Cedar Street, the West Quarry (now commonly referred to as Haskel's). By 1890, a new 40-foot cutting shed was added; blacksmith shops and a new steam locomotive were added in 1893. In the following year new sheds were built, and further expansion was made of the yard tracks to new sites. Since the company was located near the main line of the Boston and Albany Railroad, two spur lines were built across East Main Street to the cutting yards in order to facilitate shipping. These lines and other railbeds are still discernible today throughout this area.

Records of the Milford Pink Granite Company reveal a long list of most notable building achievements. In 1888, the firm had the contract for the Public Library building in Boston. (In the early 1970's the quarry was re-opened by Castelluci Construction Company

of Providence to supply the granite for an addition to the building.) In the 1890's the firm provided the granite for the Boston Chamber of Commerce building; the Eliot Church at Newton, Massachusetts; the Cullum Memorial building at West Point, New York; and the subway station in Scully Square and Adams Square in Boston. In 1898, the Milford quarry supplied the granite for the Cleveland, Ohio, Citizens Bank; for this project workers quarried the largest pillar ever to be cut from Milford granite. It was a huge shaft measuring 28 feet in height and 4 feet, 9 inches in diameter. It was cut from a block weighing 1,000 tons. Many fine mansions throughout the country used granite from this quarry.

In October of 1900, the newly formed Bay State Pink Granite Company secured the Milford Pink Granite Company's properties for a stock interest in the new company. All of these companies continued to operate under their former names. Milford Pink Granite Company now controlled over 1,800 acres of quarry land. One of the first tasks undertaken was the possible connecting of the East Main Street plant and the plants located on the Hopkinton road with a spur track. It is possible that the quarries on these two streets may have been connected by a set of railroad tracks, although this has never been documented. In 1905, the company merged with Norcross Brothers and the G.H. Cutting Company under the name of the Milford Pink Granite Quarries Company.

Norcross Brothers was another firm to have a long association with

Milford and its granite. James A. and Orlando W. Norcross of Worcester were the unrivaled building contractors of the 1880's. *The Milford Gazette* mentions the firms as early as February, 1884, as having purchased a portion of the Felton farm on East Main Street. The granite was to be used for a new depot in South Framingham. By early 1885, this firm acquired quarry land from William Bartlett, a former superintendent of the closed Railroad Quarry. The owners secured the contract to furnish the granite and to build a \$2,000,000 Court House at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. All of the granite came from these Braggville quarries. Material was supplied for the stations for the Boston and Albany Railroad at Ashland, Wellesley Hills, Chestnut Hill, Newton Centre, and others, many of which are still being utilized by the Massachusetts Transit Authority; the Holy Trinity Church, New York; and the Rhode Island State House.

However, success did not come easily. In August, 1885, very shortly after the business started, the management threatened to close down the quarry and leave town because of the overabundance of saloons between the center of town and the quarry. A compromise was quickly reached between the town and the quarry, and the problem was temporarily settled.

Norcross Brothers was the first Milford quarry to introduce an electric railway system in 1896 as a move to reduce expenses. In 1905, Norcross Brothers, along with the G. H. Cutting Company merged with the Milford Pink Granite Company and formed the gigantic con-

glomerate of Milford Pink Granite Quarries Company. The G. H. Cutting Company was located in the Deerbrook section of Milford (now Fletcher's quarry). In March, 1901, Worcester newspapers announced the formation "of a big granite quarry," which was to operate in Milford. The Cutting & Bardwell Company had for a number of years quarried quantities of Milford granite at Peter Ross's Deerbrook quarries, which were well known. Covering nearly 300 acres, the Ross quarries were part of the holdings of Peter Ross, a granite pioneer and promoter who did more than any other individual to place Milford granite in the forefront of building materials.

The consolidation of the three big quarries in town, the Milford Pink Granite Company, Norcross Brothers, and the G. H. Cutting Company in 1905, was the pinnacle of Milford's granite industry. This move was necessitated by the desire to secure the \$1.6 million contract for supplying the granite for the construction of the Pennsylvania railroad station in New York City. Once secured, the company pushed the quarries to their fullest production capacity, employed over 1000 men, and made extensive renovations and modernization to their quarries.

For a while work progressed smoothly. As the granite was cut and readied for shipment, a facsimile of the huge depot was made with wooden blocks to afford the architects the unique opportunity of observing their own handiwork and as an aid to the cutters. Business practices of the times deferred pay-

ment to the company until the stone was in place. The deferral of payments caused a delay in employee wages. Forced to borrow to meet expenses, the company eventually passed into receivership. With constant strikes, the increasing popularity of newer and cheaper building materials and soaring granite prices, the Pennsylvania Railroad Station was the last large project to be quarried locally.

The contract was eventually completed in 1908. In the mid-1960's the Pennsylvania Station was demolished. The proud eagles that adorned the building, cut and carved by hand by Italian stonecutters, were dumped into New York Harbor. Only a handful were saved.

In May, 1905, Peter Ross, a Milford granite contractor, sold his Deerbrook quarry land to the Milford Pink Granite Quarries Company, which had just been formed to furnish the granite for the Pennsylvania Railroad Station. One month later he promoted a deal for the organization of a new company to operate quarries owned by the Carroll, Reynolds, Hogan, Shippie and others in the Dilla Street section of the Rocky Woods. The site more commonly referred to as Clere's is located behind the Shadowbrook Apartments. The name of the new corporation was the Webb Pink Granite Company. This operation used electricity as a source of power. Equipment included eight 40-ton derricks, over a mile of standard gauge railroad track, a 30-ton traveling crane and two cutting sheds, 60 by 300 feet (located on the Sabatinelli property on Dilla Street). The company's power house is still





**This large pink granite slab was quarried in Milford. It weighed 8000 tons and measured 90 x 35 x 30 feet.**

in use today as the Industrial Oil and Chemical Company.

The railroad was extended from the main track of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad through the cutting yard on Dilla Street and across the road into a clearing. From there the company used its elaborate electric railway system to connect these quarries. It also introduced the use of electrically operated derricks. By the spring of 1906, 300 skilled workmen were employed by the company.

The Webb Granite Company furnished the stone for the John Hancock Life Insurance Company building in Boston; the Union Station in Baltimore, Maryland; the New York Post Office building, and the George E. Stacy School in Milford in 1916.

With the death of George Webb in 1916, the company eventually ceased all operations. In December of 1926, the former Webb quarries were bought by the Minter Granite Company. In June of 1927, this new firm provided the granite for the trimmings at Hopedale High School, at the Medway High School and at the Schraft Chocolate factory at Winchester, Massachusetts. The company ceased operations in the early 1930's.

Early records do not reveal any particulars about some of the smaller Milford quarries. Many of these smaller firms were located at one time off Cedar Street at a site between Hamilton Street and Route 495.

The first company on record is that of Cuddihy and Keefe. It is

believed that this quarry was operated by Father Patrick Cuddihy of St. Mary's Church. It was located in the "Granite Grove," as it was called in 1875. It is now the new St. Mary's Cemetery. The granite cut from this "cemetery quarry" was used in the building of St. Mary's Church on Winter Street and the Irish Round Tower in St. Mary's Cemetery. When Father Cuddihy died in 1898, the quarry was bequeathed to his nephew in Boston, and the Keefe interests eventually became part of the Bay State Granite Company.

The Damerall Brothers also operated a quarry in this same general area. After a short time the company became a part of the Bay State Granite Company. Building ruins and signs of steam-powered drilling are still visible. The main entrance, now overgrown with brush, is the first side road north of the cemetery on Cedar Street. Often referred to as the "Old Still Road," it winds its way through the woods and various quarries until it meets Route 495. All the quarries in this area are believed to have been interconnected by a narrow-gauge rail system.

In 1904 Hogan and Ross (son of Peter Ross) were in business in this locale. It is believed that Daniel Hogan bought out his partner's interest because records show that Hogan's quarry furnished the granite sills and doorsteps for the Pennsylvania Hotel in New York City.

Around 1918, Edward M. "Gaffa" King purchased the quarry. As early as 1910, King had supervised the construction of the Boston and Albany Railroad Depot on Central Street in Milford. King owned a



granite machine shop on Jefferson Street from where he developed a granite-cutting machine. His Cedar Street quarry was the test site for this invention. King was a designer of many cemetery memorials and was considered to be an excellent draftsman. Mr. King probably ceased his operations in the early 1950's.

By 1908 the large combine of the Milford Pink Granite Quarries Company went into receivership. For some time after the disastrous failure resulting from the Pennsylvania Railroad Station contract, which involved the majority of Milford's quarries, the granite industry remained at a standstill. The Milford Pink Granite and the G. H. Cutting Quarries never resumed operations. Only Norcross attempted to start business again. The firm opened a new quarry in the Echo Lake area in Hopkinton and did a small amount of business for a few years as the Milford Stone Company.

The former Pink Granite Company and Norcross plants were purchased by George C. Dodds and Sons Granite Company of Keene, New Hampshire, in February, 1914. The company was engaged chiefly in providing granite for cemetery monuments. The firm owned the quarries of the Victoria White Granite Company of Xenia, Ohio. In 1918, the firm transformed the unsightly group of abandoned buildings and sheds of the former quarry into an attractive business property. A new cutting shed, 700 by 60 feet in size was erected, and a 25,000-gallon capacity 90-foot water tower was built. The new plant included 158 acres of granite land,

connected by over three miles of steel rail tracks which ran from the Boston and Albany tracks into the quarries and then looped back again to the Boston and Albany main line. The plant was expected to be ready for operation by the summer of 1919, to have a payroll of \$4,000, and to employ over 150 people.

On January 31, 1919, a disastrous fire destroyed most of the newly completed renovations. The new shed was destroyed, as was the engine house with two boilers, the air compressors, and a stone-crushing plant. Damage exceeded \$200,000. By 1925, the company was again in operation. It furnished the granite for the Connecticut General Life Insurance building in Hartford Connecticut. The company continued in business until the mid-1950's. By then, however, the only work being done was an occasional piece of granite for monuments or curbing.

Around 1960, the company was sold to Castelluci and Sons of Providence, Rhode Island. The once thriving business was again turned into a large scale operation. In 1969, the new company removed 40,000 cubic feet of granite from the quarry, much of which was intended for the new addition to the Boston Public Library, which was originally built with pink granite supplied from this same quarry.

By this time, twentieth century technology had entered the quarrying industry. In the early days workers used a half round and wedge to split the stone, explosives, and steam drilling saws. The newest method involved the use of jet

torches burning fuel oil. These torches allowed granite to be cut at a profit and eliminated stonecutters' silicosis, the scourge of the early quarry workers.

In the early 1970's, Castelluci and Sons phased out operations at the quarry. In 1975, the firm revealed its plans for an industrial park at the site, but by 1979, nothing had materialized, and all derricks and machinery were removed and the buildings razed. Today access to this quarry is easily gained by following the old railroad bed in from Route 16. All that remains are the old powder house and immense mountains of grout.

Unlike the old Pink Granite Company and the Norcross quarries, which had reopened within a few years after 1908, the Cutting quarry remained inoperative for a number of years. Around 1935, the H. E. Fletcher Company of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, purchased the quarry. No record of this firm's quarrying work has been found. It is known that the company did furnish the granite for the 1938 addition to the former Milford High School and quarried the stone for the United States Archives Building in Washington, D.C. In the mid-1950's, the quarry fell into disuse; only occasionally did it yield granite for curbing or cemetery markers. In the later years, the quarry became a popular swimming hole and also a dumping spot for automobiles. The water is estimated to reach a depth of 170 feet.

In April of 1931, the old Bay State Quarry on Cedar Street was sold to S. Haskel and Sons of Brooklyn, New York. The Haskel Company transformed the abandoned quarry

into a fully modernized plant. The firm completed a new 2,000-foot spur track extension and erected new cutting sheds. By this time, the former Darling Brothers' quarries had evolved into two quarry holes, an upper and a lower (called the Horse Ledge). Using flood lights, the company had two shifts working and eventually added a third shift. The Haskel quarry furnished the granite for the Roosevelt Memorial in New York City.

In 1940 the Haskel and Sons quarry was shut down, and the property was disposed of at a foreclosure auction. Only one person from Milford, the Reverend Julius Valentinelli of Sacred Heart parish, was interested in the sale. He purchased a quantity of rough pink granite which was used in the erection of the chapel in the Sacred Heart Cemetery.

Another quarry located on Cedar Street was the Massachusetts Pink Granite Company. Originally operated by Peter Ross and T. M. Perry, it was part of what was referred to as the Ross Quarries. Some confusion persists to this day as to its exact location. Some accounts indicate that it was on the Milford-Hopkinton town line, and other versions place it adjacent to the Cutting quarry. This location was also called the "Hearing Spot" quarry, but it is believed that the firm operated from both sites by the time of its closing.

Theodore Perry and his sons bought out Peter Ross' interests in October of 1903. After refitting the plant in the following year, the company furnished the granite for the Pittsburgh Jail; this contract was worth \$60,000. No other records are available to show the stonecutting

accomplishments of this firm, and in 1909 the quarry was leased. After a few more years, the Massachusetts Pink Granite Company closed down its operations.

Records indicate existence of another little-known quarry located on East Main Street. It was situated adjacent to the former Dodd's and Sons quarry, and to the rear of the site of the former Ardolino quarry (known now as Curran's). Access to this quarry is gained by following a long former railroad bed. It is also believed that Logan and Judge originally owned this quarry but no positive proof has been found. Charles Ardolino, a foreman at the former Massachusetts Pink Granite Company, purchased the site around 1910. In 1912 he supplied the granite used in the construction of the Milford Armory. Mr. Ardolino also furnished the stone for the Erickson Memorial in Washington, D.C., in 1925. However, his firm soon went out of business, probably in the early 1930's.

The quarry known as Quirk's ledge has become a swimming hole. For years after closing, two huge wooden booms, one of which towered over the surrounding trees, were landmarks in the area. The booms, 90 feet and 70 feet high respectively, were the last original vestiges of a great industry. In August of 1977, they were felled by salvagers attempting to collect the massive metal plates attached to them. With this act of vandalism, the last memorial to the granite industry passed into history.

Prior to the rapid expansion of the local quarries, most workers were restricted to working in Mil-

ford's large boot and shoe industry. But as business began picking up, there was a demand for more skilled stonecutters. A floodtide of immigration in the mid-1880's, coupled with George Draper's service as ambassador to Italy, placed just such stonecutters in Milford and greatly enlarged its Italian community. With the hope of a better life, whole families, which for generations had worked the quarries of northern Italy, settled in the Plains section of town. Although they were strangers in a new land, they were right at home in the quarries. They knew the way of a seam and how to take advantage of a rift, an obscure microscopic cleavage in the granite which greatly eased the work of cutting. It is estimated that more than a million and a half tons of granite were taken from the quarries. However, the granite industry was more than just the quarrying of stone to Milford. It was people. It was an industry shared by all nationalities and religions, Irish, Italians, Swedes, Catholics and Protestants, who worked side by side, lugging and lifting, sharing together in the pride of their work. The granite industry was a rough, tough, competitive one, and it was beset by problems which affected both the workers and the owners. A combination of factors, bitter winter weather, a series of strikes with resultant loss of contracts, and modern technology finally forced the companies to shut down the quarries.

Structures and monuments constructed of local granite can be found near and far; and wherever they are, they serve in every sense as memorials to Milford and its beautiful pink granite.



**Brick School on Purchase Street. Built in 1832 this is the oldest schoolhouse left standing in Milford.**

# Education

Education is a vital part of any nation's progress, and in the United States we can be especially proud of our public education system. Like much of the rest of the country, Milford, after a slow start, progressed systematically in meeting the educational needs of its community.

Adin Ballou, the person responsible for many innovations in our public school system, wrote the *History of the Town of Milford*. In this work, Ballou noted that there was no positive evidence of a single schoolhouse within the boundaries of Milford at the time of its incorporation. However, Ballou mentioned that one of the earliest schools in Milford was on Tyler Street.

In the early years of Milford's history, the only schools that existed were private schools, usually housed in private residences. One of the earliest of these was probably located in what is now the town of Hopedale. The schoolmaster, Alexander Scammell, was later to be an adjutant general who died for the cause in 1781 in Washington's Continental Army. This particular schoolmaster was evidently a well-liked person. From his research, Ballou reveals that Alexander Scammell was a paragon and a star of the first magnitude who was worshipped by his pupils.

The earliest schoolhouse in Milford was near the junction of Spruce and Congress Streets in the first district. Around 1882 it was moved to the west side of Purchase Street, a

little north of the George Howe place, which was right on the bend starting up Purchase Street. Between 1800 and 1810, a school was built on the site where the present Purchase Street fire barn now stands. Adin Ballou taught in this school from 1824 to 1828.

Ballou makes references to teaching in this school when he first came to town, and he notes how each child wanted to sit near the stove and put the wood on so as to be close to the only warm spot in the schoolhouse. It was the schoolmaster's duty to come to school early enough to light the fire before the children came.

Several schoolhouses were built around 1832. The only school that is left from this era is the brick school on Purchase Street. This school land was given to Milford by Joshua Ball on July 4, 1832, with the stipulation that this land could be used for a school only if the privy were not built on the north side. The reason for this was that the donor's home was just north of this school.

The school, measuring 31 by 24 feet, cost the town \$524. It was in continual use until the early 1900's. In 1837, the Deer Brook School was built on Cedar Street. The town purchased this land from John Hero for \$10. This building is now a private home.

The Milford Academy, primarily a secondary school, was established in 1828. Milford residents wanted to provide their children with a higher education, and the only possible way to do this was to send the children to schools outside of

Milford. The Milford Academy thus provided private higher education for those children who were financially able to attend. The Academy itself was in operation for only thirteen years, however, as it was sold to School District 3 in Milford for \$825 in 1841. Interestingly enough, the town bought the old Academy from the school district in 1845 for \$1,500.

In the early history of our nation, the most educated persons were traditionally the clergymen. The Protestant clergymen prior to and after Milford's incorporation were a good source of teachers. The Reverend Ballou himself offered private instruction in the early 1800's.

The Reverend David Long and the Reverend Jacob Frieze were also involved in teaching students on a private basis. Many of the pupils of these teachers later became prominent townspeople. Not everyone was allowed to attend these schools; the pupils, carefully selected by the school masters, usually came from prominent families who could afford the fees.

It is very difficult to ascertain exactly where the private schools were located. These small schools consisted of no more than a half-dozen students receiving instructions from a clergyman or some other educated person in the town.

In the early 1830's, Catholicism was just beginning in Milford with the migration of few families from

Ireland. By the late 1840's as the potato famine peaked in Ireland, there was a great influx of Irish people to Milford as well as to other areas of America. With the increasing number of Irish-Catholic families in Milford, a parochial school was established. In the mid-1870's, under the Reverend Father Patrick Cuddihy, a primary school came into existence.

The Reverend Cuddihy played a most prominent role in the development of the St. Mary's Parish in Milford, and he opened the first official parochial school in Milford in 1880. This building was located at the corner of Main and Winter Streets and was once part of the Erskine-Clark Estate. Increased school enrollment prompted Father Cuddihy to move the grammar school to its present site on Winter Street. The well-known granite building was completed in 1897.

As for public education in Milford, the changes were a process of evolution, not revolution. In the 1700's, colonial towns were divided into school districts which were based on the size of the town and its population centers. Mendon, our mother town, contained eleven school districts; four of them were located in the area that was to become Milford in 1780. Milford's earliest schools were individually maintained by each district. The residents of the district paid the school master's salary and provided quarters for him. In General Underwood's oration in 1880, the

**Deerbrook School on Cedar St. built in 1837 is now a private home.**



princely sum of three to seven dollars for male teachers and one to two dollars for female teachers is mentioned as the 1801 weekly salary standard. These itinerant teachers were themselves poorly educated and oftentimes did not last the year. The students differed widely in ages and abilities. It was up to the various districts to establish the length of the school year. The year usually consisted of a winter term, as the planting and the maintenance and harvesting of crops kept the students busy the rest of the year. The curricula of the schools were very basic: reading, writing, arithmetic and scripture. A minister supervised the education in each district, and only under Horace Mann's Public School Law of 1837 did this rather inept district system dissipate.

The Town of Milford was satisfied with the four-district system for a few years, but in 1784 a specially appointed town committee changed the original four districts into eight. The locations of these specific districts are recorded in detail on the 1829 map. The locations are just about incomprehensible if one attempts to compare them to present-day Milford. References are often made to particular geographical locations and sites which do not exist today in their original form.

These districts were not meant to be permanent. As the population



**Bear Hill School built in 1859, now a private home.**



**Braggville School built in 1859 on East Main Street.**



**Chapin Street School built in 1867.**



**Park School, corner of Walnut and Grant Street built in 1864.**



**Purchase Street School built in 1864.**

grew, new buildings and streets were added. At these times, the districts had to be changed accordingly if the residents were dissatisfied with the districts, and changes were made in the following years: 1802, 1824, 1829, and 1841. The 1841 redistricting was important because it indicated the size of Milford, which at this time necessitated a total of eleven districts.

It is interesting to note that these districts were quasi-independent from the town. Committees were established in each district, and these committees, for all intents and purposes, managed the educational affairs of their own districts. The individual committees, though fairly autonomous, still had to conform to the laws of Milford and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These school districts were in operation for approximately the first seventy years of Milford's existence.

By 1850, Milford was expanding in all areas, especially in school population. Townspeople were aware that changes were happening in education on a national scale. The citizens of Milford wanted to keep pace with the progress that was being made in the field of education in the late 1840's and the early 1850's. Schools that existed in the district operation were the Bear Hill School (1820), the Silver Hill School (1841) and the Fountain Street School (1841). A two-story brick school was built in 1841 next to the brick church. Portions of this building are now the Spruce Street fire barn, which has passed to the Town of Milford in 1854.

April 3, 1854, was an important day for public education in Milford. On this particular day the school district system was abolished, and the town of Milford assumed control of public education. Not only did the system of education come under the control of the town but also all existing school buildings were to be appraised and the proper reimbursements made to the districts and their inhabitants.

The general school committee saw the need of increasing educational time to the outlying school areas. The Sixth resolution drawn up by Adin Ballou for the town meeting assembled on April 3, 1854, reads as follows:

*"That in abolishing the school districts, and assuming for itself the entire management of education affairs, the Town ought to guarantee to all the exterior school localities a larger amount of schooling than they have heretofore enjoyed under the district system so that the very smallest of them shall be provided with a good school for at least twenty-four weeks of five days each in every year."*

The town of Milford then had to purchase the school building from the districts. The eleven school-houses that existed in 1845 were appraised for a total of \$6,591. Much credit has to be given to the inhabitants of the school districts, as oftentimes individuals donated land and participated in the construction of these school buildings.

The first public high school for Milford was erected in 1850 on School Street. This school was a wooden structure of the Greek revival architecture. It served Milford from 1850 until 1900 at which time there was a fire. High school classes were then held in the Universalist Church which was then located on Pearl Street. This arrangement lasted for only a few brief months.

The old Milford High School, which is now the Middle School, was built in 1900 with an addition in



**Plains school built in 1905.**



**South Grammar School corner of Fruit and Main Street built in 1858.**





**St. Mary's Parochial School, Winter Street built in 1895.**



**Spruce Street School built in 1895.**

1937 when the top portion of it was destroyed by fire. In 1916, a sister school also made from Milford granite was built next to it in the same architectural style. This building served the town of Milford from 1900 until 1973. After a long period of planning, a magnificent spacious building for a new high school was built. Completed in 1973 after a two-year construction period, it offers a comprehensive program in one of the newest and most modern secondary schools in the area.

The following list shows the year of construction, the name, and the cost of the schoolhouses erected in Milford since the abolition of the school districts:

*1850	Milford High School	\$5,790.00
*1858	Grammar South House, Corner of Fruit and Main Streets	\$4,577.43
*1858	Primary School House, Hoboken	\$1,060.37
1859	School House, Bear Hill	\$ 800.00
1859	Braggville	\$1,000.00
*1860	North Grammar School, "Plains"	\$6,000.00
*1860	West Street	\$2,000.00
1864	North Purchase	\$2,607.13
*1864	Park Street School	\$10,355.08
*1867	Chapin Street, "Sandbank School"	\$5,000.00
*1870	Plains School House, "On the Plain"	\$4,550.03
*1871	Claflin Street School	\$15,137.50
1895	Spruce Street School	
1901	Milford High School (Middle School)	\$60,000.00
1904	Oliver Street School	\$12,000.00
1905	New Plains School	
1916	Stacy School	\$80,000.00
1935	Milford High School Annex (P.W.A.)	\$250,000.00
1959	Memorial School, Walnut Street	\$860,000.00
1973	Milford High School	\$14,500,000
1976	Woodland	\$3,200,000
1979	Brookside	

*\*Buildings no longer exist.*



**Silver Hill School once stood near Violet Circle.**



**Milford's first school bus driven by Mrs. Phoebe Newton.**



**Oliver Street School built in 1907. Now used as a Senior Citizens Center.**



**Fountain Street School with children and Miss Inman their teacher.**



**The Jewelers Institute, 16 Congress Street, this was one of only two in the nation. It opened after World War I.**



**Claflin School built in 1871, it stood near the corner of So. Bow and Claflin Street.**



**Old Milford High School built in 1850, it burned in 1900.**



**Milford High School built in 1900.**



**Stacy School built in 1916, now part of the Middle School.**

# Municipal Services

## Fire Department

Since 1780, Milford has never lacked a united body of fire fighters even though the first groups were only bucket brigades. However, as early as 1820, Seth P. Carpenter, called Father of our fire department, started a movement to purchase some handtubs. The first two firefighting engines were purchased in 1831 at a cost of \$125. Seth Carpenter formed one company on the lower Main Street around Town Hall from whose example a fire department was organized and continued. The other tub was stored at Parish Common (Draper Park) in William Godfrey's barn but was never used and soon fell into disrepair.

Milford selectmen created the first so-called fire department on August 19, 1839, by assigning thirty firemen to Company 1 and twenty-six firemen to Company 2. These were all volunteers, but it was necessary to have large companies to run the handtub machines. In 1843, these first companies received compensation from the town, which paid their poll taxes.

The first firehouse was built in 1844, at a cost of \$1,044.56. It was located adjacent to the Town Library at Lincoln Square. This fire station was moved to Spruce Street in 1887, where an addition was made to provide space for the horses. It housed the Wide Awake Hose Carriage No. 1 and the Washington Hose Carriage No. 2. This fire station was nearly destroyed by fire in 1893.

By 1845, the department expenses were \$324, and \$66 of this sum was for the firemen's pay. In 1852, the town bought a new engine with hook and ladder equipment and built the South Main Street fire station. All of the companies had interesting names: the "Wide-Awake Hose Company," "the Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company," "The Washington Engine Company," "The William C. Gillman Hose Company," "Old Protector Engine Company," and the "North Star." There was a great but harmonious rivalry among the groups. In 1853, a series of 17 reservoirs were constructed: these were large holding tanks later replaced by hydrants. They were situated as follows; one each on Grove, Fruit, Exchange, Jefferson, North Bow, Walnut, Lawrence, West, Hayward and Congress Streets; one in the Plains, one at the junction of Pearl and School Streets, one in Lincoln Square; one in the rear of the Foster place, Main Street; one on the Parish Common; one on the corner of Purchase and Fountain, and one on Tyler Street.

The North Star Company No. 4 was formed in 1856 by the residents of the North Purchase area. A small building was erected on Tyler Street on the site of the first schoolhouse. This accommodation also served as a community center for the next thirty years.

In 1880, the Fire Department had 5 houses, 18 reservoirs, 170 men and 5 engineers. These houses were the Central Street Hose House built in 1884; the old Spruce Street Fire Station, which was replaced in 1895; the

Spruce Street Hose Company No. 1, which served at one time as the highway barn and presently is the site of the Milford Tool and Die Company; the present South Main Street Station and the North Star on Tyler Street.

In 1888, the Excelsior Hook and Ladder Company held the oldest charter of any fire company in New England. The document dated 1828, was signed by Governor Levi Lincoln. On June 30, 1888, this company held the world champion title for hook and ladder races. The Milford team defeated the whole field of entrants at Beacon Park, Boston, by making a new world's record of one minute and a half second. During the 1880's the fire department had gala firemen's musters which were the chief social and athletic events of the season.

On November 7, 1882, Washington Engine Company No. 2 was disbanded after thirty-nine years of service. Two new horse hose carriages were purchased at \$650 and named "Wide Awake Company" and "Washington Hose No. 2." Their mottoes were *Veni, Vidi, Vici* and *Faithful and Fearless* respectively.

In 1894, the contract for the construction of a hook-and-ladder house on Spruce Street was awarded to E. F. Lynch for \$4,975. The Town Report for 1896 listed the following equipment; 4 buildings, 2 steam fire engines, 3 hose wagons, 1 ladder truck, 2 hose jumpers, 2 horses, 3 sets of double harnesses, 4 sets of

single harnesses, 1 two-horse tip-cart, 1 sled, 5000 feet of double jacket hose, 5 stoves, furniture for three sleeping rooms, 8 three-gallon chemical extinguishers, bob-runners for Hose Wagon No. 1 and ladder truck, 1 pung, and 1 express wagon. A new fire whistle was installed atop the South Main Street barn in 1912. The Purchase Street hose house, known as Hose 4, was dedicated on January 31, 1914. Piece by piece the old apparatus was replaced, and in 1924 the town capped its improvements with a \$12,000 triple-motored fire wagon.

Over the years Milford has had its share of destructive fires. During the night of March 31, 1799, the cabinetmaker's shop and dwelling house of Phinehas Eames were burnt, and three people perished in the flames; Jotham Hayward, Charles Turner, and Eiljah, son of Phinehas Eames. On October 28, 1814, the clothier's establishment of Nathan Parkhurst on Main Street just below Charles River bridge took fire in the day time, and the flames spread over it so suddenly that two female operatives Lucinda, wife of Henry Allen, and his sister, Dolly Allen, were unable to escape and lost their lives. In August, 1828, the cotton and woolen factory of Stephen R. and Parmenal P. Parkhurst, on the "Island," located at the site of Calzone Park was destroyed by a fire. Another memorable fire occurred on February 28, 1838; flames consumed John Claflin's hotel and store on the site of the "Mansion House," now the Milford Cinema.



**Protector 2 Hand Tub 1865. William Gillman, John Lackey, Charles Eames, David Newton, N. B. Fairbanks and Ollie Pond.**

Other conflagrations occurred at the following sites: on January 3, 1853, John Mason's boot shop burned along with the Town Treasurer's books dated 1780-1853. On January 16, 1857, Union Block, Tremont Block, two large dwelling houses, a store and the post office building was destroyed. This block is now occupied by Friendly's. On January 23, 1871, a fire on Main Street destroyed the buildings of M. A. Bunt, N. W. Heath, and others and took the lives of three women. On May 18, 1881, just after mid-

night, Captain Elbridge Mann's large boot manufactory at 229 Main Street burned; valuable machinery, goods and stock, and also the old "9 o'clock Schoolhouse" were lost. On March 2, 1892, Mr. Thom's fine new granite block was entirely gutted and several firemen were injured.

On March 16, 1900, the high school building almost half a century old, was totally destroyed by fire. The fire department could do nothing beyond keeping the fire within bounds. The town then purchased the Universalist Church





**Milford's first firehouse, which is now the rear portion of Milford Tool and Die Company on Spruce Street.**



**Spruce Street Fire Company.**



**North Star engine house in 1857 on Tyler Street.**



**The 1937 fire in Milford High School.**



on Pearl Street to use as a temporary high school. This structure burned on February 8, 1901. On June 16, 1914, the Walker Boot Shop at the corner of High and West Streets burned. The fire started from an overturned oil lamp. This place served as a boarding house for many Armenian people working at the Draper Company. Seven were killed and seventy injured as the fire swept through all four floors of the building. Milford Hospital issued a plea for linen to use as bandages, and Milford citizens readily responded. Draper Company purchased a lot at Vernon Grove Cemetery for the victims.

A fire at the Claflin Street School occurred on November 9, 1957, at a loss of \$37,000. The Werber & Rose Furniture Company at 107 Main Street burned on January 24, 1962; the loss there was \$148,000. Two large fires of suspicion origin at H.M. Curtiss Coal Company and B. Vitalini Coal Company in October of 1965 caused damages of \$80,000. On December 2, 1966, Louis Fashion Store, Marcus Jewelry and other establishments at the corner of Main and Central Street burned at a \$150,000 loss.

Today Milford has a well-trained group of men staffing two stations: the Spruce Street Station and the South Main Street Station. The personnel include Chief John E. DePaolo; Deputy Chief Walter S. Power; five lieutenants, Frank A. Bulso, John A. Taddei, Edward F. Casey, John J. Hennessy, and John E. O'Connor; and thirty privates. The department is equipped with

pumpers, a ladder truck, a reserve pumper, a tanker, a forest fire truck, an alarm truck, a pick-up truck and a new rescue wagon. Between July 1, 1977 and June 30, 1978, the department responded to 1,339 alarms.

### Police Department

Before 1880, the citizens of Milford were protected by a police court. Established in May, 1854, under the name of The Police Court of the Town of Milford, it held sessions in a barn on the Clark Ellis' property on Purchase Street. Many criminal and civil cases were heard by Judge Charles A. Dewey before this court was finally replaced by sheriffs and constables in the late 1870's and moved to Town Hall. At this time there was a strong temperance movement throughout the country. During this time, local police were always locking up the inebriated individuals. In the early 1880's, 400 yearly arrests were considered normal; sheriffs and constables got a small fee for each arrest. However, there were also other serious things to worry about. There were sneak thieves, tramps, and those who drove their horses and wagons too fast through Main Street.

Among some of our first policemen were Samuel W. Hayward, S. W. Keene, Oliver D. Holmes, Milford's first night patrolman, and Henry C. Snell.

In 1892, Deputy Sheriff Abbott A. Jenkins was appointed the town's first chief of police. In the following year Charles Caruso was appointed as a special policeman by the selectmen; he was the first native of Italy to serve on the police force of Milford. Michael C. Nolan was one

of the biggest policemen Milford has ever had. "Mike," as he was called by everyone, was appointed a constable in 1903 and to the regular force in 1905. He towered above everyone, and his stovepipe hat made him appear even taller. He served on the force until his death in 1921. His body lay in state in Dewey Hall, in the Town Hall.

In 1914, Jeremiah T. Murphy was appointed chief. By this time nine patrolmen were employed at odd hours of the day and night. A position of a traffic officer was created, and he took his post for the first time on May 6, 1915, at the corner of Central and Exchange Streets. For his services he was paid 25 cents an hour.

The year of 1916 saw Milford overrun by a gang of white slavers and thieves who completely upset the morale of the citizens of the Plains district. Residents were afraid for their lives, and houses resembled armories. Policemen were stationed on Beach Street, and one of them, Harry Butler, was struck by a bullet which took his life on the night of September 8, 1916.

In 1925, Milford had the novel experience of having two chiefs of police, instead of one. Milford had a famous town meeting that was long remembered by everyone. That year, articles 13 and 14 were inserted in the town warrant to place the patrolmen and the chief under civil service. This move would form the basis for a regular, permanent paid police force, a move which had been urged as early as 1887. John J. Maloney, who succeeded Ernest E. O'Brien in 1923, was chief at the time.



**Milford Police Station former Post office built in 1912.**

During election of town officers, there was an apparent victory of the Citizens' party. A recount, however, removed Frederick W. Fitzsimmons from the Board of Selectmen and in his place put Thomas Malloy, thereby giving the Good Government party control of the board. Pending the recount, the adjourned town meeting assembled to act on the important articles. It is to be noted that Milford had two political parties at that time.

The members of the Good Government party, colloquially known as the "Goo-Goo's" naturally were not anxious to give a permanent position to a Citizen's candidate for chief of police; hence they went to the meeting determined to have action on Article 14 postponed. After a turbulent debate on Article 13, which was finally carried;

Article 14 was taken up and the real fun began. The first count apparently gave the article a majority, but it was doubted and so there were more votes. Each succeeding vote was taken with an abundance of noise and confusion. Gradually the assembly worked itself into a seething mass of gesticulating voters, each demanding something be done. Moderator McLoughlin wore out the face of his gavel pounding for order. Motions filled the air until the auditorium resounded with increasing surges of sound. Into this place of turmoil suddenly marched several khaki-clad state troopers. Without much ceremony, they ploughed a furrow in the masses of humanity blocking the aisles until one of them clambered onto the platform. The townsmen were informed that the

meeting must proceed quietly or not at all.

The O'Brien proponents took the question to the courts of Massachusetts, and they settled down only when the Supreme court of the state handed down a decision favoring Moloney. But while the matter was under jurisdiction, both Mr. Moloney and Mr. O'Brien had been functioning busily as heads of the enforcement department. A criminal who went unscathed during these exciting days was lucky indeed.

In 1937, John J. Maloney was still Chief of Police and had a thirteen-man police force. In 1949 Milford appointed its first two sergeants, Ernest Lombardi and Raymond Cross. In 1950 William Fitzpatrick was appointed to the position of Chief and served in this capacity for 21 years. The force consisted of 4 sergeants and 13 patrolmen. Between 1950 and 1969 2 sergeants and 8 patrolmen were added. In his twenty-one years as Chief, Fitzpatrick doubled the size of the department and added the first detective to the force.

In 1967 the department moved to its new headquarters at 250 Main Street.

In 1971 Sgt. John J. McGrath became Chief. During his administration he established a detective division. By 1978, the police force consisted of 6 sergeants, 26 patrolmen, 1 detective sergeant, 3 detective patrolmen, and 6 reserve officers.

### **The Hopedale Strike:**

The biggest strike to affect Milfordians was led by the International Workers of the World against Draper Corporation of

Hopedale. This strike, which began on April 1, 1913, necessitated the assistance of the state police along with the police of several area towns. Also twenty-three members of the metropolitan police arrived in Milford for the duration of the strike. Both Milford and Hopedale were heavily guarded. On April 2, 1913, the first clash of strikers and police occurred when strikers resisted efforts of police to take baseball bats from them. Joseph M. Coldwell was the leader of the strikers.

On April 10, 1913, thirty-five iron moulders employed in the Milford Iron Foundry were discharged in the morning when they reported for work. In retaliation Coldwell threatened a general strike of all "foreigners" employed in Milford factories.

Four unknown men fired several shots into a Hopkinton-bound car of the Milford and Uxbridge Street Railway Company. The car contained employees of Draper Company. George Davis of Hopedale was the only person wounded; he was hit by a 32-caliber bullet.

On April 14, 1913, 428 Hopedale strikers marched to Green Brothers, heel manufacturers and William Lapworth and Sons, elastic web manufacturers, and urged the employes to leave their work. There were 50 girls from Green Brothers and 25 from Lapworth's who quit work.

On April 24, 1913, Emilio Bacchiocchi of Milford was shot and killed while picketing in the Spindleville section of Hopedale. Coldwell, leader of the strikers, was arrested for an infraction of the

Hopedale by-laws. He was charged with being a dangerous and disorderly person and uttering threats and menacing speeches. Coldwell was arraigned in District Court and his case was continued. On Coldwell's promise not to lead the strikers again, the charges were not pressed.

On May 23, 1913, a crowd of 200 strikers picketed in front of an electric car at Braggville, refused to move, and compelled employees of Draper Company to get out of the car. Picketing was renewed and street cars were stoned; women and children were active in the trouble. Many employees of Draper Company were therefore forced to return to their homes.

In the evening rioting occurred at Depot Square. Strikers stoned the police, and the police were forced to use their clubs without restraint. Three men were arrested and charged with rioting. The backbone of the strike was broken on June 5, 1913, when Coldwell was found guilty of uttering threatening and menacing speeches in Milford. Many of the men returned to work; the police were withdrawn, and there was less activity by picketers. On June 8, 1913, two carloads of children of strikers were taken to Providence to remain there until the strike was over. On July 5, over 150 strikers applied for work at Draper Corporation, signifying the strike was over.

On August 27, 1913, Draper Company of Hopedale reimbursed Milford \$4,500 for expenses incurred by the I.W.W. strike. Coldwell received a three-year sentence at the Atlanta penitentiary for sedition.

## **The Milford-Whitinsville Regional Hospital**

Prior to the building of the Milford Hospital in 1903 the town's first hospital was located at 6 South Main Street. It was operated by Dr. Frank Harvey. He later operated a hospital at the current Edward's Funeral Home on Congress Street.

The first move toward the establishment of a hospital is indicated in the following remarks which appeared in the Milford Gazette on March 16, 1900:

"Sentiment in favor of a cottage hospital in Milford is surely increasing . . . The interest already manifested shows that when determined efforts are put forth in its behalf, the movement will be a veritable boom."

Within a few months a strong movement had indeed begun which involved the Village Improvement Association, the Board of Trade, the Thurber Medical Society and other local people. On June 28, 1900, the Milford Hospital Corporation was legally organized with E. L. Wires as president and G. B. Williams as vice-president. The Hospital Association was instituted on July 1, 1900, and on July 3 of the same year a charter was granted by the Commissioner of Corporations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

For the next two years, money was raised through field days and an "entertainment" was given by the young ladies on vacation at Miss Seabury's "Resthaven." The people of Upton gave money and many others made pledges. Then on June 20, 1902, the Eben S. Draper family of Hopedale announced a substan-



**Milford Hospital and Nurses' Home.**

tial gift of \$50,000 for a hospital to be erected at the corner of Main and Prospect Streets in Milford.

Plans were drawn up by Robert Allen Cook. On the first floor was to be a four-bed ward; a dining room; a pantry; a bath; sterilizing; etherizing; and operating rooms; a doctor's room; a pharmacy; and a hydraulic elevator to the upper floors. On the second floor would be a four- or five-bed ward, three private rooms, a bath, a sewing room, a diet kitchen, and linen closets. The third floor was to have seven bedrooms for staff. On July 23, 1902, Dillon Brothers of Milford was awarded the contract.

On July 24, 1903, at the Charles River Driving Park before a large gathering, the hospital building was presented by Honorable Eben S. Draper to the people of Milford. Mr. Draper said in his speech that day, "Our only doubt was whether

or not the communities to be benefited were able and willing to support an institution of this kind . . . We believed that they could and would." The Draper family and its descendants have certainly set a generous example in this regard for they are still active in hospital affairs.

In 1905, a house on Prospect Street was remodeled by Mrs. C. S. Draper for a nurses' home. This residence was used until 1914 at which time a new one was built as a memorial for former Governor and Mrs. Eben S. Draper. In 1964, a modern new hospital was connected to the nurses' home. The original hospital was razed in 1964 to expand parking facilities.

In 1978, the hospital celebrated its 75 years of service to Milford, Whitinsville and the surrounding towns. In that time, several additions have brought bed capacity to

nearly 200. Presently plans are underway for a \$10,000,000 expansion to begin in the spring of 1980. The 1974 merger with the former Whitinsville Hospital and the 1976 opening of the Franklin Health Center make the Milford-Whitinsville Hospital a truly regional accommodation.

The medical staff has grown from 12 to over 120 doctors. There are 780 full-time and part-time nurses and other employees. The annual payroll of about \$6,000,000 (1977) is important to the local economy.

The hospital can now meet virtually every medical need from hip replacement to pacemakers to psychiatric care; from diagnoses by EEG and ultrasound to courses for diabetics; and from tours for children to family-centered maternity care. In 1977, admissions and visits to Franklin Health Center and Emergency, plus outpatient referrals, totaled over \$75,000.

A high level of service has also been provided to the hospital by its Ladies Aid Society. This organization was formed January 23, 1912 in the Elks Hall with Mrs. V. W. Ryan as president. This society is active today as sponsor for the Volunteers.

The support of area people has been an important factor in the development of the hospital. Money raised in early efforts provided initial working capital and investments for income. A \$10,000 gift from Mrs. Charles H. Colburn was the first of many toward endowment funds. Friends of the hospital give to the annual Progress and Development Drive and make other valuable contributions.

Milford is indeed fortunate to have within its own boundaries a modern, caring facility for the needs of young and old alike.

### **District Nursing Association**

Under the leadership of the late Miss Fanny C. Osgood of Hopedale, the present District Nursing Association was formed at a meeting held on December 28, 1918, at her home in Hopedale. Throughout the years, the nursing staff provided the services that the times demanded: A tuberculosis dispensary, a home baby delivery service (in the 1920's and 1930's the nurses assisted at over 2,000 home births), a home nursing program, a well baby clinic, and a clinic for the elderly.

This organization has expanded its services to include therapist and home health care. It now serves five towns: Milford, Hopedale, Mendon, Bellingham, and Medway. The organization, now staffed by 47 personnel, recently moved into new headquarters on South Main Street in Hopedale.

### **The Thurber Medical Association**

The Thurber Medical Association, named after Dr. Daniel Thurber, a native of Rehoboth, Massachusetts, was established on June 9, 1853. Dr. Thurber opened practice in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, which he subsequently left, and came to Mendon. His office was in the area known as the Green Store in South Milford. Thurber Medical Association eventually joined the Milford Hospital. This association continues to help the Milford area doctors address the needs of the community.



**Harvey Hospital at 44 Congress Street.**



**The old Milford Hospital pictured around 1916.**

# Hopedale Separation



**General William Draper statue dedicated in 1912.**

On June 22, 1885, George Draper in an open letter to the *Milford Journal* stated that he was going to petition the Massachusetts Legislature to have Hopedale set off as a separate town. At a public meeting held in October at the Social Hall, the Hopedale people favored separation. During January and February of 1886, several hearings were held in Boston. Attorney Mynck represented Hopedale, and Attorney Benton represented Milford. The principal speakers for the petition were George Draper, General William F. Draper and the Reverend Adin Ballou; and the spokesmen for Milford were Zibeon Field, the Honorable C. A. Dewey, Delano Patrick, and Lewis Gaskill.

On March 5, 1886, the State Senate vote resulted in a tie (13 to 13). President Pillsbury caused the deadlock by voting for the separation. On May 24, 1886, the House passed the Hopedale separation bill by a vote of 116 to 78. Representatives Stratton and Fales fought against the bill, and fully 300 persons from Milford were present at the State House when the voting took place. On April 3, the Senate enacted the bill by a vote of 18 to 16. When the separation became complete, the Milford School Committee decided to charge the Hopedale pupils in the Milford High School \$1 per week for tuition.

In December of 1886, Selectmen of Milford and Hopedale met to

divide the assets and liabilities of Milford as of April 6, 1886. The matter was referred to three commissioners appointed by the Superior Court of Worcester County. E. D. Bancroft of Hopedale, Chairman of the Selectmen Committee, demanded this procedure.

Appointed were William N. Clark of Worcester, Simeon Borden of Fall River, and Augustus B. Endicott of Dedham.

An agreement for the settlement of all differences arising between Milford and Hopedale was finalized on April 7, 1886, and presented to the special commissioners on July 22, 1887. At this time Hopedale won its struggle to become a separate community.

# Organizations

The Masons have the distinction of being the oldest active order in Milford. The first order of Masons was Charity Lodge; it came to Milford from Mendon around 1815. The order was discontinued in 1830 during the great Anti-Masons movement. The oldest active chapter the Royal Arch, was formed on May 13, 1855, it was followed closely by Commandery Knights Templar, founded on October 28, 1859. The first order of the Eastern Star was formed on January 31, 1894. This was called the Granite Chapter in commemoration of Milford's pink granite.

Two Independent Orders of Odd Fellows were organized very early in Milford, but they surrendered their Charter to a later date. Tisquantum I.O.O.F. was organized on September 30, 1844, disbanded in 1860, and reorganized in 1871. There have been several I.O.O.F. groups in Milford and two very active women's chapters, the Norma Rebeckah and the Fraternity Rebeckah Lodges.

Oghneta Tribe Order of Red Men was chartered in Milford on May 18, 1886. The Order of Red Men, formed in 1765, is one of the oldest fraternal groups in America. Until 1813, it was known as the Sons of Liberty. It is patterned after the Iroquois Indian nation. The goal of the order is "to inspire a greater love for the United States of America and the principles of American Liberty." The name was changed in 1813 from the Sons of Liberty to the Order of Red Men.

Milford has several fraternal organizations that have remained active for many years. Some of them furnish the financial backing for

youth programs involving sports. They have their own clubs which furnish meeting places for several scout troops and packs in Milford.

Still others were organized by ethnic groups to give their people an opportunity to get together and to help each other to become better Americans. These clubs not only help people of their nationality but are very active in helping the youth of Milford through various athletic programs.

Around the turn of the century, there were several Mutual Benefit Societies formed which provided sickness and death benefits to its members. Most of these organizations had a short history because they could not meet their financial obligations.

Milford has several service clubs that run yearly active programs. The Rotary Club has a long history of service to Milford and surrounding towns. One of its better known programs is the Rotary Swim Program. Every summer for the past thirty-one years, 1,000 young persons have been taught to swim. The Rotarians also grant a total of five scholarships per year to graduates from Milford, Hopedale, and Mendon to a college of the recipient's choice. The Lion's Club also contributes its services to the community. Their special contribution is helping people care for their eyes by running clinics each year and providing needy children with glasses and eye care. Another service club is the Quinshipaug Women's Club; it was formed so that the women could have a group to sponsor speakers and lecturers from all walks of life. To raise money, members often presented plays. The Milford Chamber of

Commerce was organized on June 22, 1921, previous to that time there was a Board of Trade whose purpose was to promote the best interest of Milford. The Antickers are a group of people interested in collecting and preserving the history of Milford. This group is responsible for preserving and beautifying our milestone marker in Draper Park. Milford also has these presently active youth oriented groups. The Youth Militia was formed in 1975 to help celebrate our nation's 200th birthday. The members marched in several parades and at the inauguration of Governor Michael Dukakis. The two most active groups of boys and girls are the many scout troops and packs in Milford.

Milford has a host of veterans' organizations. The Daughter of the American Revolution is the oldest one in existence. It was originally formed in Mendon. The Grand Army of the Republic was a long and active group in Milford. For seventy-four years this group helped to promote and instill patriotism. Other local veterans' groups include the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Italo-American Veterans, the Armenian-American Veterans, and the Lawrence J. Heron Disabled American Veterans. Many of these organizations have their own home and support many youth activities. Most of them have a ladies auxiliary that extends a helping hand in many ways from preparing bandages during wartime to writing letters for veterans and organizing social functions in Veteran Administration hospitals.

The following chart lists all the organizations established in Milford:



## FRATERNAL

NAME	DATE	COMMENT
<b>Masonic Lodges</b>		
Charity Lodge A.F.&A.M.	1815	Moved to Milford from Mendon
Royal Arc Chapter	1855	Active
Commandery Knight Templars	October 28, 1859	Laid Memorial Hall corner stone
Montgomery Lodge	January 5, 1860	Active
Fidelity Lodge #21 Good Templar	September 14, 1863	Disbanded 1880
Hopedale Lodge #237	February 1, 1867	Disbanded 1877
Clafflin Lodge #237	July 11, 1867	Disbanded 1872
Milford Division Sons of Good Shepherd	August 6, 1868	Disbanded 1872
Elmwood Lodge #129	1872	Disbanded 1880
Granite Lodge Eastern Star	January 31, 1894	Still active
Eagle Lodge #38	November 5, 1902	Formed from earlier Good Templars, no other records.
Council of Royal and Select Masons	February 14, 1905	
<b>Independent Order of Odd Fellows</b>		
Tisquantum	September 30, 1844	Disbanded 1860 and reorganized 1871. Joined "Milford Lodge" February, 1923.
Quinshipaug	August, 1846	Disbanded 1867 and reorganized 1871, no longer active.
Milford Lodge	September 8, 1893	Active
Norma Rebeckah	September 26, 1888	Active
Loyal Sears Lodge	March 20, 1909	Disbanded 1943
Fraternity Rebeckah	January 27, 1913	Active
<b>Additional Organizations</b>		
Oghneta Tribe of Red Men	May 18, 1886	Active
Winona Council	October 21, 1887	
Pocahontas	January 2, 1895	
Knights of Columbus	September 3, 1893	Active
Elks	November 20, 1900	Active
Eagles	March 8, 1903	Active
Plains Athletic Club	October 9, 1914	
Plains Athletic Club Auxiliary	April 15, 1921	
Catholic Women's Club	1918	Active
Emblem	September 10, 1944	Active
Knights of St. Crispin	December 1867	A forerunner of the Shoe Union. Disbanded 1872
Ancient Order of Hibernians #2	March 24, 1873	Irish ethnic organization
Ladies Auxiliary of Hibernians	May 8, 1897	
Ancient Order of Hibernians #15	February 15, 1898	Merged with #2 September, 1911
Societa Operia Italiana	September 15, 1890	
Granite Klippan	March 3, 1906	Vasa order of Sweden
Connaught Rangers	January 9, 1907	Male descendants of County Cork, Ireland

Lady Gordon Club	April 15, 1924	Daughters of Scotia from 1924 until 1940
Marchegiano Club	1924	From 1924 until 1940 members had to be descendants of natives of Marche, Italy.
Italian Fascio	May 26, 1918	Joined Sons of Italy
Societa di Muto Succorso	1921	Joined with Sons of Italy March 9, 1927
Milford Lodge Sons of Italy	March 25, 1925	Merged with two above lodges on September 25, 1931
Vittorio Emanuel III, Sons of Italy	April 27, 1920	
Victorial Lodge Daughter of Italy	May 14, 1925	
Hoboken Club	February 7, 1930	Active
Foggiano Club	July 26, 1936	Active
United Sicilian	August 17, 1975	Active

#### MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES

Bay State Lodge Knights of Pythias	May 14, 1870	Disbanded 1880
Roman Lodge Knights of Pythias	May 14, 1870	Joined Hopedale Lodge in 1903
Nipmuck Council of Royal Axcorum	June 8, 1885	
Daughters of the Foresters	May 12, 1886	Disbanded
Knights of Honor Milford Lodge	July 18, 1887	Disbanded 1907
American Court of Foresters	October 8, 1887	Disbanded
Magomiscock Lodge	December 13, 1889	Ancient Order of United Workman
Foresters of America	November 18, 1896	
Golden Star	July, 1900	Disbanded prior to 1952
Charity Court #169	February 8, 1900	Foresters
Welcome Lodge	January 1, 1901	New England Order of Protection of Foresters
Pride of Court Civil Charity #605	1901	
Pilgrim Fathers	April 29, 1903	Disbanded prior to 1952
Golden Cross	November, 1904	Disbanded prior to 1952
Magna Charta Lodge	May 12, 1906	Sons of Saint George
Hope Lodge	October 10, 1907	Daughter of Saint George
Owls	March 3, 1909	Active about 12 years.
Pride of Court Civil #963	May 10, 1909	Foresters
Tigers	January 30, 1911	
Moose	May 26, 1911	
Clan Gordon Lodge	February 9, 1924	Scottish Order

**Service Clubs**

Quinshipaug Woman's Club	June 8, 1898	Last function October, 1974; disbanded May 25, 1975.
Milford Grange	December 3, 1907	Formed to enable the farmers to share their resources.
Chamber of Commerce	June 22, 1922	Formed from Retail Board
Rotary Club	April 9, 1931	
Lions Club	November 9, 1931	Disbanded 1943 and reorganized February 28, 1953
The Antickers	May 7, 1945	Formed to preserve Milford's history.
Rotary Anns	September 1950	
Kiawanis		
The Greenleaf Garden Club	May 19, 1968	Helping to beautify Milford
Jaycees	January, 1969	Active in 1975
Jaycetts	March 1970	Combined with Jaycees
Couples Club	February 1972	A charitable and Social Club.
Junior Woman's Club	January, 1974	

**Youth Groups**

Boy Scouts of America	1941	
Girl Scouts of America		
YMCA		Do not have date of organization but active in 1904.
Girls 4-H Club	1928	In 1930 we had both a boys and girls club, but by 1980 they were inactive.
Campfire Girls	1951	
Milford Youth Militia	1975	Formed for the 1976 celebration

**Fish and Game Clubs**

Beaver Pond Fish and Game	1930	Disbanded 1974
Maspenock Rod and Gun Club	1931	Active
Charles River Fish and Game	June, 1943	Disbanded in 1975

### **Veterans Organizations**

Major E. F. Fletcher Post 22	September 19, 1867	Disbanded June 14, 1841, after the death of the last living member John M. Fletcher
Grand Army of the Republic		
Relief Corps	July 18, 1885	Disbanded
Daughters of American Revolution	January 24, 1912	Joined with the Old Mendon Chapter
Sons of the Veterans	May 31, 1914	General William F. Draper Camp sons of the G.A.R. veterans.
Daughters of the Veterans	March 28, 1934	
American Legion Post #59		
John W. Powers	July 18, 1919	Active
Women's Auxiliary Post #59	November 19, 1919	Active
Veterans of Foreign Wars	August 2, 1927	Robert C. Frascotti, sometimes called Gold Strip. Frascotti first soldier killed June 6, 1944.
Women's Auxiliary of VFW	August 19, 1929	
Spanish War Veterans	July 10, 1932	Lt. Arthur Joy Draper Camp
Flanders Post #37 Canadian Legion	September, 1932	
Italo American World War Veterans		
Incorporated #40	1938	Later became the Italian American Veterans Incorporated in 1960; Better known as the Italian Veterans.
Armenian American Veterans	May 8, 1946	Active
Lawrence J. Heron Disabled		
American Veterans	December 7, 1946	Active
State Guard Veterans Milford Unit #51	May 22, 1947	
World War I Barracks	1956	
Sons of American Legion #59	1972	Inactive

# Cemeteries

Milford's first cemetery was located on the site of the present Memorial Hall. At an Easterly Precinct meeting on March 3, 1747, it was voted that Deacon Nathaniel Jones of the Congregational Church acquired from Mr. Amos Binney half an acre of land for a burying place. At this time the land already contained several tombs of the early settlers.

In 1780, the burying ground passed from the care of the Congregational Church to the custody of the town. The town took no action concerning the burial ground until 1792 at which time the town purchased an impressive grave cloth and appointed Ezekiel Jones sexton to manage the cemetery.

On September 2, 1805, the Town chose a committee comprised of Col. Ichabod Thayer, Lt. Ephraim Chapin, and Lt. David Stearns to purchase a funeral carriage and to build a carriage house. The carriage was a four-wheeled one costing \$150; the building covering the carriage was set in the northeast corner of the graveyard. In April of 1809, many of the influential citizens were given permission to build tombs. These tombs faced School Street.

In 1837, the town purchased twelve acres of land between Central and South Bow Streets from Samuel Oliver for an additional cemetery. However, this location was not popular because of its proximity to the

railroad tracks. In the autumn of 1847, a plan was developed to change the location of this cemetery and move the remains of those already buried there. Later, the Claflin Street School was built on this lot and Cemetery Street was created.

The Vernon Grove Cemetery was established in Milford on May 2, 1859. A 21-acre parcel of land off Depot Street was purchased for \$1,680.23. Removed to this cemetery were remains originally buried at the Spruce Street burial ground, now the site of the Memorial Hall. Most of the slate stones in this cemetery are memorials to these early settlers. Located toward the right side of the entrance, is the Grand Army of the Republic memorial. This soldiers' monument, made of Ohio granite, was erected by the G.A.R. Post #22 on Memorial Day in 1872.

In 1841 several people from Milford and others from neighboring towns formed a corporation and established Pine Grove Cemetery. This cemetery contains a vault and chapel designed by Robert Allen Cook. The material used was Milford pink granite. Governor William Claflin, a Milfordian, is buried in this cemetery.

A cemetery was opened in the North Purchase in April of 1847.

This lot was purchased from Ellis Sumner for \$200. The North Purchase Cemetery is still the site of yearly Memorial Day exercises, conducted under the auspices of a North Purchase Association. This cemetery contains two very unusual flat stones bearing only the names of Gramma and Grampa. The oldest grave is that of Orrilla Ball, who died on October 31, 1801.

St. Mary's Cemetery is located on Cedar Street opposite the Pine Grove Cemetery. This cemetery was undoubtedly used long before it was actually incorporated. The Reverend George A. Hamilton purchased the first four acres for this cemetery, and Father Patrick Cuddihy greatly enlarged it.

St. Mary's Cemetery is rich in many forms of art work. A remarkable specimen of monumental stone art is the Celtic cross of Milford pink granite that marks the grave of Charles Carroll and his wife. Mr. Carroll carved this cross himself. It stands ten feet high, its arms are four feet wide, and it weighs two tons. This cemetery is also noted for its Irish Round Tower. At the foot of the Tower is the priests' burial lot, marked by a Calvary Group in bronze set in pink granite. This exceptionally fine sculpture was donated by Father McGrath. In 1906, Patrick Ferguson built the stone wall which encloses the entire front of the cemetery on Cedar Street.

The most recently established burial site is the Sacred Heart Cemetery located on Medway Road. Through the efforts of Reverend Julius Valentinelli, the parish was granted a charter on May 26, 1937. Leading into the cemetery is a unique hand-hewn arch. This entrance was designed by Medway Monumental Company and built by Peter Consigli and Sons of Milford. The large stone Cross at the top of the arch was placed there by Albert Consigli. At the end of the circular drive is an altar with a large marble crucifix. This altar is used for special services.

In 1975, the Stigmatine Fathers requested permission from the Worcester diocese bishop to have a section of the cemetery reserved for them. As of 1979, thirty-two of the order, including both priests and brothers, have been buried here. This is the only cemetery used for the Stigmatine Fathers in the country. This order came to Milford expressly to serve the Italian-American parish.

The cemeteries in Milford contain numerous beautiful ornate works of art on granite, most of which were carved by local skilled craftsmen.



**Christopher Defonzo and William Sgammato restoring the slate stones in Vernon Grove Cemetery. These memorials had been removed from the cemetery where Memorial Hall now stands.**



**The granite chapel in Pine Grove Cemetery designed by Robert Allen Cook.**



**Entrance to St. Mary's Cemetery.**



**Entrance to Sacred Heart Cemetery.**



**The Grand Army of the Republic erected this soldiers' monument in Vernon Grove Cemetery on Memorial Day, 1872.**



# Historical Districts

## Milford Main Street

Many changes have taken place on the Milford Main Street within the last one hundred years. The Main Street, originally called Sherborn Road, had only a few homes and maybe two taverns on it. As early as 1734, there was an inn located near the corner of Main and South Main Street. This inn had a small general store at one end. Later called "Colonel Godfrey's Tavern," it was very prominent in the great strife of 1819. The other inn located on the site of the present Milford Cinema, was owned by John Claflin, Jr., it burned in 1838 and was replaced with the Mansion House, in 1873. The Mansion House remained until 1926, at which time it was razed.

The inn that had the longest existence was the Milford Hotel. Built in 1853, it was situated across from the Town Hall. It was originally called the Quinshipaug. It contained seventy-five rooms with gaslights. This hotel was partially burned at one time and closed in 1927. In July 1887, the Hotel Willian opened on the corner of Main and Fayette Streets. This large brick building is still in existence. The Lincoln House that stood at the corner of School and Pine Streets was built in 1893. It was torn down around 1960. Another large hotel was the Rockingham Hotel on Central Street and reputed to have the first elevator in Milford.



**Mechanics Block, corner of Central and Main Street.**



**Arcade Block 1865 corner of Main and School Street.**

Starting around the 1850's the Main Street gradually changed from a residential to a business district; many blocks and halls were built. Previous to this time, there were many homes on the Main Street. One of the oldest was owned by Esquire John Claflin, Jr. This home was moved from the corner of South Bow and Main Streets to 22 South Bow Street, where it still stands. Claflin's son Aaron had a home that was in the same block. This home is now situated at 52 South Bow Street. The Aaron Mayhew home, built in 1854, is located at 4 Park Terrace; it once stood on the site of the former Post Office, which is now the Police Station. In 1909 this house was moved back to make room for the post office; at the same time Captain Waldo Perry's house, built circa 1834, was moved from the Main Street to the far right end of Park Terrace.

The first large block appeared sometime after 1850. Most of these buildings had businesses on the first floor with large halls above to serve as meeting places for Milford's many fraternal organizations. Washington Block was opened with a Grand Ball dedicating it as the armory for Milford Light Infantry. The Irving building subsequently called the Swift building was later erected on the opposite corner, then the Avery & Woodbury Building and the Grant Building in 1871,

were added to the group between Central and South Bow Streets.

The Consigli building on the corner of Exchange and Main Streets is a good example of the changing Main Street. This building was originally four stories high, but the top two stories were removed after they were damaged by fire. The Exchange Street Block had been built in 1865; but when it was destroyed by fire; it was replaced by the Hayward building.

The Gillon Block, built in 1888 of brick and granite, is still a structure of architectural beauty. It has a large onion tower on top, flanked by two smaller gables. The entire front of the building is characterized by fancy brickwork.

One of the latest blocks added to the lower Main Street was the Thom Building built in 1891. This building was nearly destroyed by fire just before it opened. It stands at the corner of Main and Spruce Streets. It is the only other building on Main Street built from Milford granite.

The town's first post office was located in the Pearly Hunt mansion on the corner of Pond and Main Streets in the district known as the "basin." This post office was established February 10, 1823, and known as the Milford Center Post Office. The first Post Office in the township of Milford was at Peniman's Store in South Milford at the corner of Hartford Avenue and South Main Streets. Esquire Hunt's first quarterly return to the govern-

ment was about one dollar. Through Hunt's efforts in 1829, this became the Milford Post Office and Peniman's, South Milford. After the Civil War it was located at the corner of Jefferson and Main Streets. Sometime after 1870, it was moved to the Post Office Block at the northwest corner of Main and Exchange Streets. The first United States' post office was built in 1913 from Milford granite. In 1964, the post office moved to its present location at the corner of Main and Congress Streets.

Until 1849 there was no bank in Milford. The nearest bank was in Mendon in the small square brick building which is now its Historical Society building. The town's first bank was the Milford Savings Bank, incorporated 1851; the Milford National Bank arrived in 1865; and the Home National Bank of Milford in 1872. These banks are still in operation.

The Main Street, two miles long, stretches from the junction of Routes 16 and 109 and extends to the Milford Hospital at the border of Hopedale. With its collections of stores, offices, banks, restaurants, specialty shops and a mall, it offers a variety of services and conveniences to all residents of the town.



**Main Street looking northeast from Lincoln Square.**



**Main Street with Nipmuck Trolley.**



**Exchange Building 1865, L. H. Cook standing in front of his office.**



**Main Street looking southwest.**



**Lincoln Square from Jefferson Street.**



**Rockingham Hotel on Central Street.**



**Milford House, Main Street opposite the Town Hall.**



**Hotel William, corner of Fayette and Main Street.**



**Lincoln House corner of Pine and School Street.**



**Union Block 1850, which stood opposite Spring Street and burned in 1858.**



**Main Street looking north from Central Street.**



**Mansion House, Park Street.**



**The Mansion House Hack, Livery and Feed Stable.**



**Lee Claflin home at 179 Purchase Street, this was also the home of John Goldsmith who ran a large boot and tannery business here.**



**Pythian Hall corner of South Bow and Main Street.**



**G.A.R. Hall corner of South Bow and Main Street.**



**John Claflin home on the corner of So. Bow and Main Street, built c. 1805.**



## The North Purchase Area

The North Purchase area derives its name from the original purchase of three square miles of territory from the Natick Indian tribe in the year 1691. The general layout of the area reaches from the land north of Fountain Street to the Hopkinton line, then east to the Hopkinton line and west to Upton.

As can be seen by viewing the "Milford Historical Interest Map," some of the earliest dwellings in the town were established in the North Purchase area long before Milford founded its own township two hundred years ago.

The area was and still is rich in woodlands, ponds, brooks and meadowland. While it is typically New England in rocks and gentle rolling hills, the combination of brooks and meadows was conducive to farm settlements. As late as the early 1950's, the area had numerous family, dairy and poultry farms as well as several substantial fruit orchards. While the area developed over the years, there were still many areas where neighbors were separated by distances of half a mile; yet the entire community was a close one, and in many ways the North Purchase section resembled a family settlement.

Eventually a school was needed in the immediate area, primarily so that the children would be close to home. The children would thus be able to help out on the farms during the spring and fall months, and still get their schooling during the winter months. In 1832 a brick school was

built to accommodate grades 1, through 4. It consisted of one room with a woodburning stove. This was the third school built in the North Purchase and still stands on upper Purchase Street. In 1864, another school was built in the area to house grades 5, through 9. This was a two-room school, which is still in use today. As late as the mid-1950's these two rooms were used for grades 1 through 5. Many a North Purchase child had apprehensive second thoughts about leaving the neighborhood to go "all the way downtown" for his higher grades. Sometimes the students were allowed at lunchtime to go ice skating at "Clarridge Meadow" on Silver Hill Road during the winter or to go blueberry-picking at the local blueberry patch during early summer.

In 1887 a community chapel was built just a little south of the North Purchase schools. It was used as a religious chapel and local community house for many years. Many a Saturday night bean supper which was held here attracted residents from other sections of town. Around 1920 this building was eventually converted into a home, now owned by the Allegrezza family at 192 Purchase Street.

When Milford became a granite quarry town, the North Purchase section contributed its share of land to this industry. No fewer than four quarries were worked in the area to yield their unique and beautiful stone which was used in some of the most distinctive buildings constructed in Boston, New York and Washington.

With the exception of the quarry industry, the North Purchase area remained a farming area. In the

winter the Clarridge Meadow on-Silger Hill Road froze over. The ice was cut for use during the summer and stored in a local ice house, and the farmers in the immediate area were thereby able to keep their milk from turning sour during hot weather.

Gradually during the 1930's the area developed into a residential community. When additional families settled here, there was increased concern over fire protection. The North Purchase was a considerable distance from the fire stations in town. As a result, a local volunteer fire department was formed. It was known as Hose No. 4 and was manned by local residents. Many a summer evening was spent by this dedicated group of men in muster practice; they would race their truck a mile or so down the road, hook up to a hydrant, and practice their skills. These volunteers also assisted in fighting various major fires in the town. In fact, the truck still stands at the Hose No. 4 firehouse and is used on occasion.

During and immediately after World War II, the Hose No. 4 building housed an observatory that was used by the Civil Air Patrol volunteers for plane spotting. During the building boom after World War II, the North Purchase became a prime area for expansion. In the early 1960's, large tracts of land were put together for several major housing developments. Yet today, after nearly three hundred years, this section of town maintains more than its share of woodland, brooks and pastures and is one of the most picturesque areas of Milford.

## Braggville District

Braggville District is situated in the northeasterly part of Milford bordering on the town of Holliston. This area was named for Colonel Ariel Bragg who settled there in 1795. Having felt apathy toward the poor in early life, Mr. Bragg worked hard to abolish the custom of letting out town paupers to be kept by the lowest bidder. In 1825, the town purchased a farm to care for the poor.

Colonel Bragg moved into Aaron Phipps house and started what is believed to be the first strictly wholesale boot and shoe business in America. Between the years 1803 and 1835, he had purchased approximately 178 acres of land to accommodate his boot industry. Colonel Ariel Bragg was elected Representative to the General Court of the State in 1839, and later he was elected Senator from this district. He served in the State Militia in every rank from private to colonel of a regiment and also served the town of Milford in many important ways.

The Boston and Worcester Railroad was persuaded to come to Milford in 1848. At this time, the railroad company purchased land with granite, as this material was needed for bridge abutments. With the coming of the Boston-Worcester Railroad Company, a Braggville Depot was built with a cutting yard near the depot. Here the milestones marking the mileage to Boston were cut. It is interesting to note that, when the railroad was built here, evidence was found of volcanic action and boulders believed to have been left by the glaciers of the Ice Age.

Other changes took place in Braggville when Mr. Appleton Bragg, who had acquired a fortune in New York and controlled all sole leather in the United States, returned to Milford and bought his father's farm. He built tenement houses and a hotel which had a picnic grove with a dance floor. Excursion trains came from Boston to the grove. He also built two large boot shops because the Civil War was being fought and the army needed boots. The hotel burned in the late 1860's and soon after the boot and shoe shops burned down. This left few business establishments in Braggville. A great amount of the shoemaking was done in small shops in the homes.

Peat also was found in this area around 1850. The peat extended along the valley of Hopping Brook and the peat bogs were several miles long. It was dug and dried for fuel by Mr. Mellen Bragg. Other discoveries in the Braggville section were a pocket of large and perfect crystals, a large nugget of hornblend and Victoria white granite. Also passenger pigeons abounded in this locality. They were so numerous the early settlers would net as many as a hundred dozen a week and ship them to the Boson market.

In 1859, the Braggville school house was built on the west side of East Main Street; it later became the Community House. In 1958, Mr. Ernest A. Bragg wrote a short account, *History of Braggville Section*, which can be found in the Milford Public Library. Mr. Bragg served as



Joel Chapin home was built in 1854 at 21 Fruit Street. This is a brick octagonal house.

station master, assistant post master, and Adams Express agent in 1888 and held this position for about nine years.

## Lawrenceville

The district of Lawrenceville includes Lawrence Street and all adjacent streets. It derived its name from Cephas Lawrence, who built small dwellings here to accommodate the many Irish immigrants who came to America and began to settle here around 1847. This area was also known as "New Ireland or Whistly Beer."

## The South End

Milford's South End includes the area from Main Street east to Grove Street and all inner streets. Like many other districts, it has seen many changes, the most notable being the construction of modern Milford Hospital, on the same site as the original facility built in 1903.

In the early 1900's numerous neighborhood shops were established to address the needs of the district. One of these was a penny candy store operated by Mrs. Joseph Brown near Godfrey Brook. A complex at the corner of Water



**Amariah Taft residence on Claflin Hill.**



**Birdseye view of Milford from Bear Hill.**

and Main Streets housed Carley's Bakery, Connolly's Meat Market, Walter Wall's Cigar Store, a millinery shop run by Blanche Bowen, and a cobbler shop. This building was torn down around 1935, and the area is now a garage and filling station. Mr. Frederick Burns' cigar store was located in another building across the street. The former Dwyer Furniture Store was situated across from Oliver Street.

At one time there were three schools in the South End. South Grammar was built in 1858; it is now a playground. The Chapin Street School, built in 1867 is now closed. The Oliver Street School was built in 1904; it was closed as of 1979 and is now a senior citizen facility.

Ernest Bragg, a Milford historian, lived in this district at 17 South Main Street. He wrote many historical articles on Milford which he printed on a small press in his cellar.

John C. Lynch, who lived at 305 Main Street served the town as

judge of the third District Court of Southern Worcester for many years. The Lynch auditorium of the present Middle School was named in his honor.

### **Bear Hill**

Bear Hill, the second highest point in Milford, was called Moshcock Hill "haunt of bears" by the Indians. This spot is 532 feet above sea level.

The oldway, now called Beaver Street, was a traveled cart path before being legally laid out. This path had been opened as early as 1703; evidence suggests that it could have been used as early as the beginning of the Quinshipaug Plantation so that the settlers could reach the mill at Medfield and harvest the hay from the "Great Meadow" on Medway Road.

The earliest settlers to take up residence at top of Bear Hill were

the Whitneys, the Albees, the Kilburns, the Thayers, and the Haywards.

This area was so heavily populated that a Bear Hill School was built in 1820 for \$340. The school could accommodate sixty pupils. Adin Ballou taught there from 1825 to 1826. In 1859 a new schoolhouse, costing about \$1,000 was built in the Whitney neighborhood. This is now a private home.

### **Claflin Hill District**

The Claflin Hill district, where many of Milford's wealthiest businessmen lived from 1850 to 1940, contains a number of large Victorian homes. Most of these homes have been made over into apartment buildings; one has been converted into the Mary Milner Rest Home.

For nearly fifty years, the spacious rambling mansion of Amariah Taft, a large landholder in Milford, was a landmark in the district. His house, built by him around 1860, could be seen from anywhere in Milford. His estate was enclosed by a stonewall which had a very narrow opening at the corner of Franklin and Grove Streets. In winter it was a thrill for children to slide down the hill and shoot through the "eye of the needle," and continue their ride down Grove Street onto South Bow Street. This home is now an apartment house.

The homes of the Williams, Vincent, Reynolds, Thayer and Harris families are reminders of the people who contributed so much to Milford. These people not only served in public office but also were generous benefactors who built Milford's banks, hospital and many

blocks on the Main Street. In many ways they helped Milfordians to get through the great depression.

Dr. Franklin W. Mann had his home on Grove Street. He invented the green bone machine that was a boon for the people raising chickens and foxes. He wrote a scientific work, *Flight of the Bullet*, a copy of which is in the library of Congress. He worked on putting a bore in a rifle so that it would shoot true.

Mr. E. Stanley Wires, who had a home on Claflin Street, founded the W. Stanley Wires Tile Company of Boston. He was a contractor and distributor of ceramic tiles and building materials. He collected old decorated ceramic tiles from all over the world. In 1959, he presented to the Smithsonian National Museum, in Washington, D.C., a collection of over four hundred ceramic tiles and plaques covering a period from the seventeenth century to the middle of the twentieth century.

In 1871, a large six-room school was built at the foot of Claflin Street at a cost of \$15,137.50. In 1957, this school was partially destroyed by fire and subsequently had to be razed.

### **Hoboken District**

The Hoboken district is situated in the southeasterly part of Milford at the foot of Bear Hill, a section which was originally inhabited by the Anglo-Saxons and the Irish. By 1910 immigrants began to arrive from southern Italy. This small district includes Beech Street, Hayward Street to East Walnut Street, and upper Central Street from Depot Street. The only mention in Ballou's *History of Milford* was a two-family

home on Front Street which runs parallel to the Hoboken district. At the foot of Bear Hill at the intersection of Beech and East Street set the original trolley car barn and the Hoboken school. The latter was a one-story school containing first and second grades. Miss Glennon taught there for many years. The building has been torn down and an apartment house now stands on the site. Industries in the area were; the grist mill at Supple Square; a shoe shop now the site of the Archer Rubber Company; variety stores on nearly every corner; and a car barn. The car barn housed railroad engines which took commuters back and forth to Boston. Families that are readily connected to Hoboken are the Capeces, the Ferruccis, the Iacovellis, and the Pillarellas.

It is interesting that each corner of the Hoboken district was lighted by an oil lamp. Each night an employee of the town would refuel and light each lamp. As late as 1928, the district had no sidewalks, poor lighting, and dirt roads. Three residents who took action were Joseph Pillarella, Felice DeCesare, and Giuseppe Capece. On February 2, 1930, these men organized a group called the Hoboken Citizens Club. The first meeting was held at 230 Central in the home of the late Mr. and Mrs. Louis Ruggerio. The purpose was to enlist the aid of the town fathers to make needed improvements in the area. In time, the organization began to invite all non-citizens to apply for naturalization. As the organization prospered it bought land from Nellie Cook Batchelder. On this land situated at the foot of Bear Hill on

Central Street, the Hoboken Citizens Club was built. The dedication on July 2, 1939, marked the end of a long wait for a clubhouse.

The majority of the residents in the Hoboken district of Milford were Italians from the town of Casalvecchio di Puglia in Foggia, Italy. These residents spoke Italian as well as a dialect called Ghegg. This dialect was spoken in the town of Casalvecchio, since an Italo-Albanian village was established there in the year 1459.

In July, 1975, the Hoboken Club, under the direction of Dr. Nicholas J. Capece, commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of Casalvecchians in the Hoboken district. At the time of the anniversary a bronze plaque listing the forty-two original families was placed on the grounds. These families were the original settlers from Casalvecchio who still have descendants living in Milford. The forty-two original families are as follows; Andreano, Andreola, Beccia, Bergantino, Brunetti, Bulso, Calzone, Capece, Celozzi, Chianese, Colaianni, Colavita, Costantino, Creasia, Criasia, DeCesare, DeLoia, DeLuca, DeSalvia, Dota, Ferrucci, Fino, Fratta, Iacovelli, Mancini, Mazzone, Moschilli, Muccini, Musulli, Niro, Pannichelli, Pilla, Rossacci, Sannicandro, Simone, Tocci, Tosches, Tusoni, Vasti, Vendetti, Venditti and Ruscitti.

Presently the organization displays considerable interest in sports by sponsoring golf, baseball and bocce tournaments. Also the club annually awards two scholarships to high school seniors who plan to further their education. The Ho-



**Memorial plaque at Hoboken Club on Central Street.**



**Stone Castle on Reade Street.**



**World War II Memorial at Prospect Heights.**

boken Club has sponsored several visits to Italy, including a visit to Casalvecchio di Puglia.

### **The Plains**

The area between the Sacred Heart Church and the junctions of Routes 16 and 109 is generally considered "the Plains." It received its name from the topographical characteristic of the land.

The population of the area during the 1800's was composed primarily of English and Irish people. In the 1890's, the Italian immigrants who came to Milford settled in "the Plains." The Italians were skilled stonecutters from the quarries of northern Italy. These workers naturally found that their skills were in demand in Milford granite quarries. In time, with the arrival of many more families, the Plains district would become a little Italy within the town.

The present Knights of Columbus Hall, located on Cedar Street, occupies the site of the former Driving Park, where horse and bicycle races were held for many years. The entire area behind the Knights of Columbus Hall was woodlands until 1860, when "The Worcester Southeast Agricultural Society" developed a riding park. About 1890, the "Driving Park" was purchased under the auspices of the Societa di Operai Italiani (Italian Labor Society). This society was typical of any organization in Milford at that time in that it was a fraternal, social

and mutual benefit society. New Year's Eve and Mardi Gras were two of the more festive holidays celebrated. The Victor Emmanuel Club, located on Genoa Avenue, eventually merged with this society and sponsored the same types of activities.

The Milford Iron Foundry, located in the approximate area of what is now Fino Field, provided employment for many people in the Plains district. Also located in "the Plains" was the Milford Power House, a privately owned utility company that provided electrical power to the trolley cars. This plant was located near the present Milford Town Pool. The large copper cable which transferred the power to East Main Street areas is still buried underground near the vicinity of Hayward Field.

The entire area has many small grocery stores, as well as homes. A well-known landmark was the Cavagioli Meat Packing Plant which was prominent in the wholesale meat business. This plant, built entirely of cobblestone taken from Main Street, was recently razed. The junction of Routes 109 and 16 is known as the old circus grounds where many large events provided enjoyment for the citizens of the town.

## **Milford's Central Street**

This is the portion of Central Street, starting at Depot Street, where the railroad tracks from Boston ended. It rose gently at first, then sharply up the hill to Main Street. In the early 1900's it was the most exotic street in town. On both sides of the street two and three-storied tenements tilted precariously over hastily constructed stores. It looked as though the Industrial Revolution had caught the street unprepared and that the buildings were thrown together in a frenzy of activity to accommodate the influx of arriving foreigners.

Clustered around the depot, in anticipation of the daily train from Boston, stood the rubber factory, a shoe plant, the grain loft and a warehouse. It was here that the immigrants carrying their cheap cardboard valises and cloth sacks arrived. Some settled in the Plains, where they created a "little Italy." Others lived in the Heights, where a large group of Armenian and Portuguese men worked for the Draper Corporation of Hopedale. Those who were alone and without ties climbed the Central Street hill and frantically rented the first vacancy they could find. As the later immigrants arrived, they huddled together as closely as they could to find strength and comfort in the veteran's brief knowledge of the ways of America.

They all came Irish, Italian, Jew, Greek, the Turk, Armenian, Russian, Poles, Finn and Chinese. As they settled Central Street, it soon became a crowded district.

Daily these residents engaged in a number of activities. They bargained and they traded in so many different tongues that it was a small miracle that a deal was concluded. The haggling, often bitter with foreign curses, was long and tedious. Yet, all transactions ended in a handshake.

This area had its own distinctive accumulation of small establishments. Among those to be found here, were Pressman's Bakery, Lee Fong's Laundry, Rapapport's Delicatessen, Slavin's Blacksmith Shop, Goldberg's Dry Goods Store, Markakis Cobbling Shop, an Armenian fruit stand, and Italian and Polish Grocery Stores.

Central Street, had magic and excitement in those days. There will never again be a street just like it. It was formed out of the immigrant's dreams. In return, the street shaped, forged and molded the newcomer into a strong American citizen. The immigrant and his children bestowed spice, variety and depth to the language and customs of America. This street today is still a home for many people who arrive here and then move out into other parts of Milford to contribute to the daily life of Milford.

## **Prospect Heights**

Prospect Heights is a section of Milford that was owned and built by Draper Corporation of Hopedale, the world's largest manufacturer of automatic looms. This area is located between upper Water Street, Route 140, to the Milford Hospital and down to Prospect Heights. The first brick homes were built around

1900, to house families who worked strictly for Drapers. The rent of \$1.40 per week was taken directly from the employee's pay. Each home had one faucet in each sink with free cold water. A black stove with either coal or wood was used for both heating and cooking. Draper Corporation completely maintained these homes.

Many of the first inhabitants of these homes were immigrants from Ireland, along with some Italian, Armenian, Polish, and a few Portuguese families. There were also two German and two French families and the Coniaris family from Greece.

In 1906, when there was an increase in employment and more homes were needed, Draper Corporation built the wooden homes on Prospect Street. The rent was \$1.75 per week with heat, hot water, and a full bath. The Irish families moved into these homes making room for the newly arrived laborers from Portugal and Armenia. Many Portuguese families would take in boarders, sometimes as many as ten or more, mainly to help their brothers to get a start in America. As these boarders saved enough money, they would send for their wives and children, and then establish their homes in the Heights.

The Portuguese families occupied the section of houses beginning with number 1 through 40. The Armenian people lived nearer to Milford Hospital and included numbers between 101 and 118. The Polish and Italian families lived mainly in houses numbered 41 through 60. There was always a sprinkling of other nationalities throughout the



**Central Grocery store.**

Heights. The families were set up in this order so that they would feel at home in their own little community.

In the early years many women would wash their clothes in the Heights brook that passed through the Heights. This brook is now piped and covered. Oil lamps using reflecting mirrors provided the only means of light. The first street lights were gaslights, which were maintained by a watchman named Thomas McDonald. He was dressed in a policeman's uniform, carried a pistol and club, and made his nightly rounds on foot in the different sections wherever he was needed. "Tom," as he was known by everyone, lived on the corner of Water and Lee Street. During the winter months, as he made his rounds, he would make many stops where the people treated him to hot coffee or a glass of homemade wine.

Draper Corporation built a grocery store on Water Street in 1915 for the convenience of the workers. The company also provided a field across Route 140, that included a baseball field, play equipment for the young and a place for the picnics that were held annually by the Polish people.

The Portuguese people have always held their annual picnic in the field next to the Portuguese Clubhouse. In the early years this structure was the Marx Brothers Grocery Store, operated by the Pereira Brothers. The Heights had other grocery stores and a barber-shop. Milk was delivered daily by Walter Beal from Mendon with his horse and buggy.

Each summer Draper Corporation would arrange a big field day for all the families. The children enjoyed refreshments of ice cream, crackerjacks, and soda and all kinds of field events with prizes. After

dark, the people would gather on the grass on the hillside behind the main office to enjoy a silent movie.

The people in Prospect Heights became one family as they broke down the language barrier and the children became familiar with the American language. These people worked and played together and looked out for each other in time of need. Around 1960, through the generous donations of the people in the Heights, a monument was erected in honor of the sons and daughters of residents of the Heights, who served during World War II. This memorial was first situated on the baseball field but was later moved to a little park between the brick homes and Prospect Street. Each Memorial Day services are held here, and every morning the flag is raised. Mr. Albert Bernardi performed this ritual for several years, his son Andrew now continues the tradition.

In 1960, Ardashes "Art" Krikorian and Dante "Danny" Villani made arrangements for an annual reunion for past and present men from Prospect Heights. It was decided to elect a mayor; the first person elected to this honor was Oraccio "Flash" Morzira. Each year a new Mayor is elected, and the present one is Dante "Danny" Villani. It was decided to make the reunion coincide with the date of the Portuguese Annual Festival. Each year a parade, led by the past and present mayors of the Heights, passes through the town and then proceeds to the Heights where a weekend celebration is enjoyed at the Portuguese Picnic grounds.



# Parks

Draper Park, located between the Congregational Church and the police station, is Milford's first park. It was originally known as the Parish Common. On October 20, 1910, Susan Preston Draper purchased the site for \$10,000 from the First Congregational Parish to be used as a memorial to her husband.

On September 25, 1912, Miss Marguerite Preston Draper presented the equestrian statue of General William F. Draper to the town. Mr. Draper was a veteran of the Civil War, a Congressman, and Ambassador to Italy. He was a supporter of Memorial Hall, the Opera House and the Milford Hospital as well as other worthy Milford projects. General Draper was also one of the original petitioners for the separation of Hopedale from Milford.

On October 12, 1920, a boulder was located in the park by the Valencia Council Knights of Columbus as a tribute to council member John W. Powers, who had been killed at Chateau-Thierry, France, on July 21, 1918. This park also contains the Memorial Honor Roll for the World War I veterans. This memorial was designed by Cook and Phillips of Milford and carved by Milford men. It was dedicated on Armistice Day, November 11, 1939. In 1974, the Sons of Italy, then located on Sumner Street, moved its World War II Honor Roll to this park. In the corner near Park Street is a granite milestone engraved "34 miles to Boston, 1773."



**Upper Main St., Milford 1857. Old Academy, Congregational Church and Mansion House.**

On November 27, 1976, members of the Milford's Bi-Centennial Commission concluded Milford's participation in the nation's two-hundredth birthday with the burial of a time capsule in the park. This capsule, to be opened in 2076, contains many mementos of the Milford of 1976.

The first step toward the establishment of Milford Town Park



**Milestone marker to Boston in Draper Park.**

was taken by the town on March 2, 1863. The town purchased fifteen acres of land from Emmons Twitchell for \$10,000 to be paid for within fifteen to twenty years. A provision was that \$1,500 was to be raised by private subscription for the purpose of fencing and ornamenting this park. This land was bounded by Walnut Street, Congress Street, and Chessman Street (now Spruce Street). This park is situated within three minutes' walking time from the Main Street. At the time of purchase, about two acres were covered with a fine growth of walnut and oak trees, and the balance was an open field of grassland. In the open field, rows of young trees were set out, and in a short time the town had a fine grove and park.

On June 10, 1880, a large tent was erected in the park for Milford's centennial celebration. This tent measuring 260 by 80 feet held twenty-eight tables seating 2112 people. A catering firm served dinner to 2100 guests. Highlight of the evening was a magnificent display of fireworks, including a brilliant piece especially designed for the occasion.

On July 24, 1915, Miss Margaret Foley, Boston's noted suffragist, addressed large throngs on the Park in her campaign for "Votes for Women." In 1916 and for several years thereafter, Chatauqua Camp Meetings were held in the Park. On July 24, 1928, the Certus Club held

its first open air boxing tournament, which was witnessed by 1,500 persons. Band concerts were also held at Town Park for many years. The Middle School, and the Stacy School stand on the School and Spruce Street sides of the park, and the Memorial School is situated on the Walnut Street Side.

Milford's Calzone Park is located on the corner of Main and Beach Street, formerly Supple Square. On November 11, 1921, the eight foot high doughboy statue was set in the center of the park. The inscription reads "Our Heroes of the World War I, 1917-1918." The monument was designed by Monti and Rossi of Milford. It is made of blue and white granite from Westerly, Rhode Island, and it was cut at the William Sherman Quarry on East Main Street. It was unveiled by Philip Callery, Jr., son of the first Milford man to die overseas in World War I. The beautiful carved statue is representative of a doughboy returning victorious from a battle. He carries a German helmet in one hand and a regulation army rifle in the other. His erect figure stands in a peaceful and determined pose.

In 1944 Fino Field was built and named for Pvt. Rudolph H. Fino, the first soldier from Milford killed in World War II. Walter Corbett was the prime mover to build this municipal athletic field. Milford was

one of the first towns to have a lighted baseball field. The field also contains a regulation baseball field and a quarter-mile cinder track. In 1957, Milford built a large municipal swimming pool on the north end of Fino Field. The Little League field was relocated here in 1967. The field had been on the Town Park, where Memorial School now stands. Nearly every year some Milford organization sponsors fireworks for the Fourth of July celebration and recently our firemen musters have also been held here.

In 1976, the Bi-Centennial Park was opened on Clark Island to celebrate and commemorate our nation's birthday. Linear Park will open in 1980 to celebrate Milford's Bi-Centennial year. This park is situated between Dilla Street and the side of Fino Field bordering the Charles River. It will contain a physical fitness course and a bird sanctuary.

Rosenfeld Park is one of the newer parks. It is located on Cedar Street on land next to Milford Pond. Through the generosity of Joseph Rosenfeld, the site was filled in, and Milford made a second Little League field here.



**Baseball game in Town Park.**



**Sergeant John W. Powers memorial in Draper Park.**



**Sons of Italy Memorial in Draper Park.**



**Doughboy statue in Calzone Park.**



**Town Park looking north from Spruce Street.**

# Sports

One of Milford's proudest traditions since the early 1900's has been the highly competitive quality of its athletic teams, which have brought honor and recognition to the town on both state and national levels.

Baseball, in particular, has been a consistent source of community pride and enthusiasm over the years. In fact, Milford often has been called the House of Baseball Champions. Milford American Legion teams, for example, won eight state championships over a fifty-year period from 1929-1979, an accomplishment that remains unmatched in Massachusetts. Two of those teams advanced to the national finals in 1952-1953 marking the first time that a Massachusetts club achieved the feat in successive years.

From the core of baseball talent developed at Milford High School and in the American Legion program have emerged such major league players as Hank Comolli, Glenn Adams, John (Jocko) Thompson, Raphael (Lefty) Lumentti and Art Kenney. A host of Milford athletes played in the minor leagues.

While interscholastic competition produced a good share of league and tournament championships, nothing in the realm of Milford sports ever captured the imagination and held the interest of thousands like Legion baseball. Large crowds of devoted fans, colorful and wildly enthusiastic but never unruly, have followed the teams on long trips. A carnival atmosphere often takes hold in Milford when a Legion team goes on a winning rampage.

The summer phenomenon took root late in the 1920's when the late Frank C. Berry, then assistant principal at Milford High School and a former coach, watched a Legion game involving two Worcester teams at Lake Park in Worcester. Berry, who later became Milford High School principal and eventually superintendent of schools in Milford, convinced the Sgt. John W. Powers Post of Milford to sponsor a Legion team in 1929.

An omen of exciting things to come was provided when that initial 1929 team swept to the state tournament finals at Fenway Park in Boston, where it lost to New Bedford. The captain of that team was a young first baseman who was destined to become a legend among American Legion coaches in New England in later years. His name was Christopher (Pep) Morcone.

The success of the 1929 team was no fluke. It signalled the beginning of Milford's first golden baseball era, Powers Post teams, under the tutelage of Berry, rumbled to state championships in 1930 and 1931 and remained strongly competitive into the World War II years when the program was temporarily disbanded.

"Pep" Morcone was appointed Powers Post coach in 1949 and served in that capacity for twenty-one years. During his long reign he produced four state champions, two state finalists and numerous zone titlists. During the summer of 1952, baseball hysteria gripped Milford when the Powers Post, behind the

pitching of "Bob" Stoico and "Lefty" Lumentti, beat a path to the national finals in Denver, Colorado. The community was in a complete uproar for two months. The fever spread through the 1953 season as the Power Post again swept aside everything in sight and thundered to another national tournament, this time in Miami, Florida, where the team placed third. Using every conceivable means of transportation to get there — a special train, chartered buses, cars, motorcycles and hitchhiking — more than 2,500 Milford fans danced in the streets of Pittsfield when the Powers Post won the Eastern U.S. Sectional Tournament that year. Approximately 300 followed the team to Miami.

The 1952-1953 seasons stimulated enormous pride in a community of 16,000 that rejoiced in the thrill of victory and resultant national recognition. Dale Mitchell, national American Legion administrator, hailed Milford as "the hottest Legion baseball town in America." Milford, indeed, was the baseball toast of New England.

After placing a team in the state finals in 1938, Milford hoisted another state championship in 1959 behind the pitching of Pete Haggerty, Dick Bavosi and Mike Brita. Hundreds of Milford fans traveled to Keene, New Hampshire, where the Powers Post lost to West Hartford, Connecticut, in the finals of the Eastern U.S. Sectional Tournament.

Another state crown barely eluded Milford in 1962, but four years later the Powers Post was not to be denied as Morcone's 1966



**Marathon Race, Earl Vasile was the winner from Milford to Medway in 1908.**



**Milford Country Club on Asylum Street.**

machine rolled to the Massachusetts championship. The team was eliminated in the regionals in Manchester, New Hampshire.

When Morcone relinquished the coaching reins in the spring of 1970 after an illustrious 21-year career, he was succeeded by one of his most distinguished proteges. Bob Pagnini, one of the few five-year veterans in the history of Legion baseball in New England and the first Milford athlete ever named "Most Valuable Legion Player in Massachusetts" in 1953, took up where Morcone left off.

Under Pagnini's guidance, the Powers Post added two more state titles to its well-notched belt in 1970 and 1972. Thus, during the period between 1952 and 1972, Milford annexed six state championships.

Beset by financial problems, the Powers Post was forced to abandon sponsorship of the Legion baseball program at the close of the 1976 season. However, a group of former players and coaches joined with dedicated fans to form the Milford Legion Baseball Club, Inc., and assume sponsorship of the Milford teams.

In its third year of existence, the Legion Baseball Club embarked upon an ambitious undertaking in sponsoring the Northeast Regional Tournament at Fino Field in 1979. Sponsorship of the tournament was arranged in conjunction with the fiftieth anniversary observance of Legion baseball in Milford. The Powers Post had sponsored the New England Regional Tournament at Fino Field in 1951.



## High School Baseball Champions

Milford High School and St. Mary's High School were involved with equal prominence in the golden baseball eras as both contributed players to the Legion program after amassing outstanding interscholastic records of their own.

Elder baseball statesmen still speak in awe of the Albert (Hop) Riopel coaching era of the early 1930's when Milford High fielded the most powerful teams in the state. This was an era of Milford baseball immortals like Kenney and Comolli and Charlie Brucato and a sharp, well-disciplined array of athletes thoroughly versed in baseball fundamentals. To these intense athletes, baseball was a way of life.

Some insist that the 1932 team was the strongest ever produced at Milford High. The team amassed a magnificent record of 21-1 (losing only to Norwood, 4-3) and won the mythical state championship by wallowing Cambridge Latin, 9-0, before a huge crowd at Milford Town Park. Kenney, who later pitched for the Boston Braves, struck out 19 batters in that contest.

Highlight of that 1932 season was a post-season game between Milford High and the Boston All Scholastics. A crowd estimated at 5,000 ringed Town Park and watched Milford win, 3-2, much to the chagrin of the late Doc Mooney, a Boston Post sportswriter who reportedly assembled the All-

Scholastics to teach the Milford upstarts a lesson for having beaten Cambridge Latin.

Milford High's 1933 team was another powerhouse; it overpowered opponents after losing the first two games of the season to Wellesley and North Attleboro. A post-season series was arranged with the Boston All-Scholastics, and Milford High won both games at Town Park and Fenway Park in Boston. It is said Doc Mooney never recovered from the shock.

Succeeding the Holy Cross-bound Riopel as Milford High coach in 1934 was Ted Steeves, who was responsible for converting Jocko Thompson from an outfielder to a pitcher. Thompson later hurled for the Philadelphia Phillies. Steeves' team won several Midland League titles through the 1942 season.

Milford High experienced a baseball boom in post-war years as Coach Charlie Brucato's team won five Midland League championships and two state tournament titles in a seven-year period extending from 1947 through 1953. With fastballing Jim Giacomuzzi as the pitching ace, the then-called Scarlets once again made their presence known throughout the state by capturing the Small Schools Tournament crown at Fenway Park in Boston in 1948.

One of the school's most prestigious championships was notched in 1953 when Milford High surprised a gallery of Boston sportswriters by sweeping the Class

A Eastern Massachusetts Tournament at Fenway Park. Tournament officials secretly feared embarrassment for having invited a smaller school to compete with the strongest schoolboy teams in the state.

But Milford High embarrassed only the opposition. Lument and Stoico, probably the most outstanding one-two pitching punch in local baseball annals, hurled consecutive victories over such powers as Malden Catholic, Dorchester and Concord to sweep the title. In the meantime, a sophomore catcher named "Gardie" Rett became the first Milford High athlete ever to hit a home run out of Fenway Park as he blasted a pitch high into the left field screen in the tournament opener with Malden Catholic. Milford High was beaten by Holyoke High, 7-4, in a state championship game at Fino Field and finished with a 15-2 record.

Charlie Espanet succeeded Brucato as Milford High coach in 1954 and guided the Scarlets to several league titles. Under his tutelage Milford High captured the state Class B championship in 1960, by defeating Charlestown High in the tournament finals in Stoughton.

Milford High added the Western Massachusetts Tournament to its string of championships in 1965 as Coach Joe Stoico's team carved a brilliant 22-2 record behind the pitching of Joe Lasorsa and Chris Morelli. Milford was blanked by Somerville, 10-0, in a state championship game in Boston.



Another outstanding Milford High team was fielded by Coach Mike Brita in 1971. This aggregation, with Craig Allegrezza and Dave Durian as pitching aces, won its first 16 games in a row and finished with a 19-3 record. Milford High lost both town series games to arch-rival St. Mary's Central High and then was eliminated from the District III playoffs by the Saints.

With Tony Chinappi at the coaching wheel, Milford High came very close to winning the state title in 1972. Now renamed the Scarlet Hawks, the team grabbed the Midland League and Central Massachusetts Tournament crowns behind the pitching of Allegrezza and Mike Bruno. The players advanced to the state finals and lost a cliff-hanger to Braintree in the 12th inning of the championship battle at Fitton Field in Worcester.

Although St. Mary's Central High School produced fiercely competitive teams over the years, as well as numerous athletes who later played minor league or semiprofessional baseball, it did not figure prominently in the state baseball picture until the 1960's. Coached by Bob Pagnini, the Saints won the District III championship in successive years in 1966-1967. Both teams were eliminated in Western Massachusetts Tournament competition. Another excellent St. Mary's team, coached by Paul Lombardi, reached the District III playoff finals in 1971. It numbered arch-rival

Milford High among its victims. The Saints lost to St. Peter's High of Worcester in the finals.

The Saints generally were dominated by Milford High in the town baseball series but managed to engineer a good share of upsets. Predicting the winner was usually not possible when the Saints and Milford High got together in sports because of the intensity of the traditional rivalry, which ended when St. Mary's Central closed in 1974.

Interest in amateur and semi-professional baseball has always remained high in Milford since the days of the legendary Plains Athletic Club teams of the early 1900's. There was the historic Blackstone Valley League that flourished intermittently over the years with some of the best ballplayers ever assembled in this territory. In the 1920's-1930's, Milford consistently entered strong contenders in the league, which served as an early stamping ground for such budding major leaguers as Hank Greenberg and Wes Ferrell. Co-managed by Tom Davoren and the late Fitter Cahill and listing such luminaries as Tate Bodio, Soeey DeGaetano and Sammy Tomaso on powerful rosters, the Milford A.A. won the Valley League pennant for three consecutive years from 1933 through 1935.

The Milford Soda Shoppe team, sponsored by Milford businessman Tulio Pagnini, won the championship in 1946 when the Valley

League was revived following World War II. Three years later, the local entry became the Milford Town Team, which was funded through contributions made by fans, merchants and businesses. Milford's 1949-1950 teams were managed by former major leaguers Hank Comolli and Lennie Merullo. Economic conditions led to the disbandment of the star-studded league in the early 1950's.

Since 1955, Milford's reputation as a baseball town has been upheld on a national level by a local franchise in the All-American Amateur Baseball Association, which annually conducts a highly publicized tournament in Johnstown, Penn.

The Milford Town Team (not to be confused with the Town Team of the Blackstone Valley League) has competed annually in the tournament for 25 years, except for the 1966 season. Team funds are raised through public contributions every year.

Some of the best college and high school athletes in the nation are listed on the rosters of the twenty-five AAABA teams, which are scouted closely by major league clubs during the tournament. It has been to Milford's credit that the Townies consistently have made good showings in this huge national pool of baseball talent.

In fact, eight Town Team players worked their way to the major

leagues. They include Mark Fidrych, Wilbur Wood, Mike Hegan, Paul Mitchell, Bruce Taylor, Pat Borque, Don Mason and Tom Aruda.

The Town Team won the AAABA tournament crown in 1958 by defeating Washington, D.C., 5-1, in the finals in Johnstown. Milford pitcher Johnny Kulevich was named the tournament's most valuable player that year. That team was managed by Pep Morcone and the late Red Fazio.

With Fazio as manager, Milford again advanced to the AAABA finals in 1959 and lost to Baltimore, 2-1, in the championship game. Manager Bob Pagnini's team also placed second in 1962, losing to Washington in the finals, 3-2. Milford finished fourth in 1978.

Milford established an AAABA record for most hits in a tournament game in 1968 as it exploded for twenty-seven hits in a 16-7 romp over Birmingham, Alabama. During Milford's first appearance in the tourney in 1955 when Albert (Chick) Sayles was manager, Gene White compiled a batting mark of .636 that stands as one of the highest averages in AAABA records. White had seven hits in eleven trips.

Through the 1978 season, Charles Fitzgerald of Milford served as AAABA tournament chairman for ten years. He was president of the association in 1965 and 1966. Since 1968, the Milford franchise has been

held by William Fertitta, who also has managed the team on the field for thirteen years. Fertitta was elected in 1979 to a two-year term as third vice president of the AAABA.

In terms of winners, basketball was the most productive sport at St. Mary's High (or St. Mary's Central Catholic High, as the school was renamed following centralization in the 1950's). Long one of the most respected basketball machines in Worcester County, the Saints dominated arch-rival Milford High in the town schoolboy series over the years.

St. Mary's annexed its first major tournament championship in 1954 under the coaching of Albert (Chick) Sayles. Sparked all season by the scoring of Bob Sullivan, the Saints won the Class B championship of the Assumption College Tournament in Worcester by defeating Bellingham High in the title game. St. Mary's had lost twice to Bellingham during the regular season.

The Saints came marching in again nine years later as they swept the Class C championship of the New England Catholic Invitational Tournament in Lawrence. Coached by Bob Pagnini and led by the scoring of Don Phillips and Bob Meomartino, St. Mary's easily disposed of Sacred Heart of Newton, 62-46, in the finals and finished with an overall record of 17-5. It earlier had won the Division II championship of the Catholic League.

While never noted particularly for its basketball prowess, Milford High produced four outstanding championship teams over the years. Fans still talk about Coach Fitter Cahill's 1941 team that won the Bay State League crown and advanced to the Tech Tournament at Boston Garden. That fine club was led by the scoring of the late Bucky Tusoni.

When the Midland Basketball League was formed in 1947, Milford High did not win a league title for eleven years. Then in 1958 and 1959, Coach Charlie Espanet came up with two powerhouses that captured the Midland crown in successive years. Tim Carroll and Dick Swift, considered by some as the best scoring combinations in the school's hoop annals, led by the 1958 team. George Pyne, Ernie Kapatoes and Tony Williams set the pace for the 1959 squad. The only other league champion was Coach Matt O'Connor's 1972 team that was sparked by high-scoring Mike Bruno.

According to sports' historians, Milford basketball dates back to the pre-World War I days of the two-handed dribble when a three-foot-high wooden barrier encased the playing area and the ball always remained in play. Co. M, as the Milford National Guard unit was named in those days, had a professional team that scheduled some of the best professional clubs in the country. Large crowds packed the State Armory for these contests.

Co. I basketball teams of the 1930's are legendary in Milford. The National Guard squad competed in the 181st Regimental League and walked off with the title one year in tough competition. The team rosters for the 1933-1935 teams listed Fitter Cahill, Tom Davoren, Red Vernon, Bucky Butler, Jack Hourihan, Vin Ghelli and Smiler Williams.

Milford High's emergence as a football titan in Central Massachusetts and the expansion of the school's athletic program to include thirty-seven activities for boys and girls highlighted Milford's sports decade of the 1970's

For nearly seventy years, football was overshadowed by baseball in Milford. In fact, from 1904 through 1969, Milford High managed one mythical state championship and only three Midland League titles in football.

Then in a complete turnabout initiated by the arrival of football architect Dick Corbin as head coach, the Scarlet Hawks became a gridiron power. From 1970 through 1978, they rolled up four Midland League crowns and a Super Bowl championship. In addition, Milford High placed second in the league four times and produced a second Super Bowl team. In terms of football championships, Milford High accomplished more in nine years than had been achieved in the previous sixty-six years.

One of Milford High's earliest football successes was recorded in 1904 when the team won the Midland League title. Twenty-five years passed before another league title was annexed by the 1929 team, which listed a backfield of Red O'Donnell at quarterback, Capt. Mickey Iannitelli and Pep Morcone at halfbacks and Marco Balzarini at fullback.

Milford High's 1930 team stands as one of the strongest ever produced here. Coached by "Hop" Riopel, that club won the mythical state championship by defeating Norwood High, 20-12, in a post-season game. Highlight of that game came in the first few seconds when a sophomore Milford halfback named Charlie Brucato returned the opening kickoff for a touchdown.

Milford High would taste the fruits of a league title only once in the next forty years. In 1943, Coach "Fitter" Cahill developed a powerhouse that shared the Midland League championship with Natick. Peter Macchi and Arthur Schiavo were co-captains of that team.

Several excellent Milford High teams just missed the mark. Coached by Brucato, the 1950 team amassed a record of 6-1-1 and placed second in the Midland League.

Johnny Calagione became Milford High's head football coach in 1953, and he posted a record of 56 wins, 62 losses and 6 ties during a 15-year coaching reign extending

through 1967. His best season came in 1956 when the team, co-captained by Dick Rizoli and Tony Ferrante, finished second in the league with a 7-1 record. Other runner-up teams were fielded in 1954 (6 wins, 2 losses), 1963 (7 wins, 2 losses) and 1964 (6 wins, 3 losses).

The foundation for the expansion of Milford High's athletic program was laid by the School Committee in 1968 when Dick Corbin was named athletic director and head football coach. Corbin and his coaching staff embarked upon a football reconstruction program that paid rich dividends after two years.

The first undefeated football season in the school's history was experienced in 1970 when the Scarlet Hawks thundered to nine straight wins and their first Midland League title in twenty-seven years. End Carl Deleso caught twelve touchdown passes from quarterback Tom Delfanti for a school record as the team averaged twenty-six points a game while holding the opposition to an average of six points. After posting an 8-1 record in 1973, Milford High again took the league title in 1974 with an 8-2 mark.

Mark Niro and Vin Ferrelli were called the Touchdown Twins when Milford High romped to another league title with a 9-1 record. In 1975, another chapter in local sports history was written when that 1975 team advanced to the Division II Super Bowl and ran roughshod over Pittsfield High, 42-12.

A fourth Midland League championship in nine years was added in 1978 as Corbin's team stormed to a record of 9-1 during the regular season. Led by fleet-footed halfback Mike Elia, who scored twenty-one touchdowns to eclipse the previous school record of nineteen touchdowns set by Mark Niro in 1976, the team moved on to the Division I Super Bowl and lost to undefeated Leominster High in overtime, 13-6.

Thus in nine seasons (1970-78) under Corbin's tutelage, Milford High compiled a remarkable football record of sixty-seven wins and twenty losses. Many athletes on these teams went on to play college football.

Economic conditions restricted St. Mary's High from fielding football teams on a steady basis, but the parochial school had some fine clubs. Perhaps the St. Mary's team most often discussed by sports historians was the 1939 club, which sprang upsets on such vaunted foes as Cathedral High of Springfield and Malden Catholic enroute to an 8-2 record. Called the "rags to riches" team and coached by Nick Morris, the Saints had a backfield consisting of Johnny Casey at quarterback, Joe Hickey and Gus Bouchard at halfbacks, and Larry Heron at fullback.

Semi-professional football thrived in Milford for several years after World War II as the Milford Trojans, rough and tough and loving every minute of competition, fielded some outstanding clubs. The teams

consisted of former high school athletes, and they were crowd pleasers.

The 1970's could be called the sports expansion years at Milford High; the athletic program was enlarged to include ten varsity sports for boys and nine varsity sports for girls. Eleven other team activities were listed in 1979 on a sub-varsity level.

Through the 1940's, Milford High could offer only baseball, football, and basketball as varsity sports for boys and basketball as varsity involvement for girls. Cross country was added to the boys' program in the 1950's, and boys' field and track was adopted in the early 1960's.

During the first half of the century, all boys' varsity sports at Milford High were coached by one individual in most years. With the major expansion of the athletic program, thirty-four coaching positions and six administrative posts were listed in 1979.

Wrestling became one of the school's most successful sports in the 1970's; the 1976 and 1977 teams won the Division II south sectional championships. Then in 1978, the Scarlet Hawks swept to the Division II state title and placed third in the New England tournament. They had a 13-0 record in state competition.

Many championships were won by Milford High boys' and girls' teams in this decade. High School athletic officials provide the following data:

1969-1970 — Success of the little known Tennis Team, coached by Thomas Davoren, established a

record that is still unequaled in the total sports program in Milford High School: undefeated through the regular season at 18-0, and then placed 4th in the state tournament, in the first year of its existence.

1974-1975: Girls' Basketball, Midland League champion and District III quarter-finalist; Cheerleading, Eastern Massachusetts Tournament champion; Girls' Tennis, Midland League champion, with Kathy Hickey and Julie Waaramaa winning the District III doubles title and becoming runners-up in the Western Massachusetts Doubles Tournament.

1975-1976: Girls' Field Hockey, Midland League champion; Girls' Basketball Midland League co-champion; Cheerleaders, Midland League champion; Boys' Track and Field, Midland League and District III champion.

1976-1977: Boys' Soccer, Midland League champion and District III semi-finalist; Girls' Gymnastics, Midland League champion; Boys' Track and Field, Midland League and District III Class A champion.

1977-1978; Girls' Volleyball, District III champion; Girls' Gymnastics, Midland League champion; Cheerleading, Midland League and Western Massachusetts Tournament champion; Boys' Tennis, Midland League champion and District III runner-up; Girls' Tennis, Midland League champion and District III runnerup; Girls' Softball, Midland League champion.

1978-1979: Girls' Volleyball, Midland League and District III champion and state finalist; Cheerleading, David Prouty Tournament champions.

# Entertainment

In 1870, a group of Milfordians wanted to build a lasting edifice for the performance of the arts and drama. From this idea the building then known as the Music Hall (Opera House, circa 1915, now Midtown Racquetball Club, 1979,) evolved. By 1874, A. C. Corbett had laid the foundation. When Mr. Corbett died the following year, work ceased. In 1879, a drive was started by Milford's businessmen who pledged funds to complete the building. Music Hall Corporation was established in 1880. On June 2, 1880, the Music Hall was opened amid much fanfare. The crowning gem of that evening was the play *The Guv'nor*.

Prior to the opening of the Music Hall, the townspeople engaged in a variety of informal activities. Being an agricultural community, Milford had conducted its share of husking and quilting bees. Husking bees that were carried on in many of the local barns eventually gave rise to country dances. As long as Milford remained small and relatively unknown, it had to satisfy itself with local talent. The town fiddler became an important person. It was quite probable that a good fiddler could "fiddle" his way into any elective office by bargaining with his talent. The people cared little who ran the town, but it did make a difference when they wanted to dance.

About 1820, however, as Milford became known to travelers, it also became a stopping point for traveling talents. As early as 1825, stage productions were being presented in the old brick meetinghouse (site of the Town Hall Texaco Gas Station).

Also in that time balls were both the social and fashion event of the season. In these early days these assemblies were important because there was enough of the social elite to make them magnificent and enough hoi polloi whose exclusion made the affair worth attending.

In the late 1880's the vogue was the revue and the minstrel show for those who preferred a little spice in their drama. The Music Hall offered such shows while its nearest rival, the Lyceum, offered straight drama. The Lyceum was built and first owned by Seth Carpenter about 1850. It was located at the corner of Main and Spring Streets.

By 1898, movies were already beginning to capture the public's fancy. Accounts dated 1899 show that Vitascope pictures of the Fitzsimmons-Jefferies fight were shown in Washington Hall. The Lyceum, reluctant to change its programs, was forced to close. It reopened in 1904 and showed movies until 1915.

In 1904, the Hub and the Empire theatres opened as the town's exclusive vaudeville theatres. In 1907 the Empire closed; it was succeeded by the Scenic Theatre in the Rastery block.

By 1908, the Music Hall added movies to its productions, and it retained its place as leader in Milford's amusement productions. In 1911 a disastrous fire gutted its classic interior and caused \$30,000 damage. The Music Hall was then rebuilt. When it was opened in 1913, it was renamed the Opera House. In

1914, it acquired a permanent stock company; a few years later it had a full repertoire opera company with an Italian prima donna.

About 1917, the Tripoli Theatre opened on East Main Street. Later named the Star Theatre, it showed Italian films and offered vaudeville; however it soon ceased operations.

The Opera House entered into a new era of prosperity and success in 1922. J. Bernard Hurl returned to take over the management of the Opera House where he had once performed. The Opera House had been completely remodeled, and under his direction it began showing the latest moving pictures of the day. From 1922 to 1927, it remained the center of entertainment in Milford, showing on its stage such renown stars as Enrico Caruso and Rudolph Valentino. But as the motion picture industry progressed, stage productions became subordinate.

In October, 1927, the State Theatre (now Milford Cinema) came into existence. At one time the State Theatre and the Opera House competed with each other. But after two years of vying for public favor, the Opera House at last closed its doors. In 1973, the State Theatre, now renamed Milford Cinema, was converted into a twin theatre. The former balcony was made into Cinema II. In the mid-1970's Interstate Corporation, which owns the Cinema, purchased the Rt. 495 Cinemas and incorporated them into its movie syndicate. The Ideal

Theatre located in the former Werber & Rose Block (presently the site of Friendly Ice Cream), was also a rival of the State Theatre. Around 1964 this entire block was gutted by fire and later razed.

In 1974, a group of Milfordians formed the Milford Theatre Guild, so that Milford could again enjoy live theater. Their repertory has included comedy, drama and Broadway musicals.

The Charles River Driving Park on Cedar Street (located near the present site of the Knights of Columbus hall) provided a variety of sporting activities to the citizens of the town. This park was owned by the Worcester Southeast Agricultural Society from 1865 to the early 1880's. The Driving Park was the site for its annual fairs. But in the last quarter of the 19th century, most of the activities conducted at the fair grounds consisted of horse racing and driving competition events, along with baseball games, picnics, bicycle races, foot races, and even sports grudge matches. The *Milford Journal* of July 3, 1878, recorded that "some 400 or 500 people were present to witness some novel sport in the shape of two trots for 75 bushels of oats." It further stated that Hopkinton resident H. Phipps' horse, Tomy, won the race.

By January, 1900, the Park was facing financial ruin. Ownership went to the Milford Stock company in May, 1902. By 1905, the new company was deeply in debt. It was no longer possible for the company to meet the expense of operating the park. The demise of the horse racing era in Milford contributed to this poor financial condition. The old Driving Park hall, used as apart-



**Music Hall Block built in 1881, note the large clock and gas lights.**



**Milford Band 1875.**



**STRIKE UP THE BAND** – Members of the Milford Puglia Band as they looked in 1918 are: 1st row – John Morcone, Boniface Longo, Mario Lancisi, Nicholas Andreola, Joseph Lombardi and Alphonse Andreano. 2nd row – John Morcone, John Sciarillo, Matteo Paradiso, Dr. Frank Moschilli, Giovanni Castellucci, Michael Brita, Alessandro Iannitelli, Matthew Colianni, and Alberto Iacovelli.

3rd row – Salvatore DiMatteis, Anthony Sciarillo, Clemente Andreano, James Zurlo, Louis Morcone, Michele Mazzone, Alfonso Santilli, and Nicholas Cardone. 4th row – Luigi Pilla, Louis Lancisi, Anthony DiCicco, James DiCicco, (Manager), Pasquale Zurlo, Michele DeMaria and Leonardo DeCapua.



ments, was destroyed by fire in April of 1905. The property was then purchased by a Clinton firm. A new Riding Park Hall, presumed to be the present Knights of Columbus hall on Cedar Street, was built. Boxing matches, dances and other special occasions were held at the new hall. The Charles River Driving Park no longer exists. The area has been leveled over the years, and Short, Free, Naples, Ravenna, Florence and North Streets were developed.

Another popular pastime was roller-skating. In 1884, Milford was one of the few towns that could boast of having a rollerskating rink. Located on School Street, the Una Roller Skating Rink opened in October, 1884. Admission was fifteen cents, and the use of skates was ten cents. Special attractions were held each week; during the winter polo was played. By June, 1886, the rink had closed. Roller-skating again became a popular activity locally with the opening in 1978, of the new Skate Palace on Depot Street. The original building opened in the early 1970's as an ice skating rink known as the Sons' Memorial Arena.

## Music

For more than 150 years, Milford has been noted for its many fine musicians and bands. The Milford Brass Band was formed in the fall of 1836. Eleven men under the leadership of Jackson M. Leland started rehearsals at the "old brick church." The Milford Brass Band was selected in 1843 to participate in the dedication of Bunker Hill monument in Charlestown.

The original uniform of the band was cut, military fashion, in blue. In

1860, the band adopted a handsome uniform consisting of red pants and gray coats. The band was very popular in the post Civil War years until the early 1900's.

The Milford Musician Union was started in 1929 to organize and help the many musicians in the area. The first president was Peter Gaskill, and the secretary was Nick Narducci. The first union also sponsored a concert band which performed at outdoor summer concerts until the 1950's.

About 1900 Francesco Sinopoli came to Milford and started a music studio on East Main Street. Sinopoli, an accomplished violinist taught many of Milford's well-known musicians. He also started Milford's first youth band, the Juvenile Band, in 1915. Their repertoire consisted of Italian marches and light overtures, which were performed at many outdoor concerts and parades.

In 1902, Edward McEnelly and Henri Antrobus started their musical careers in Milford. McEnelly formed his first orchestra in this year and played at the then new dance pavilion at Nipmuc Park. The band became a regular attraction there for the next fifteen years. About 1912 Edward McEnelly received an unusual honor from the Edison phonograph company; he was invited to make a recording. After becoming very well-known, the band toured New England and New York extensively and later moved to Springfield.

By 1918, Milford had a fine musical reputation. At this time Professor Castellucci settled here for a short period (1919-1920). He started

the Puglia Band with residents from the Hoboken district. When he left to play with a symphony orchestra, Signor Paulucci, a tailor, took over its leadership. The Mandolin Orchestra was formed by Professor Morelli.

Benjamin C. Lancisi had a music studio on Main Street where for many years he taught organ, piano and saxophone to hundreds of young people in Milford and surrounding towns. In the late 1920's he organized and directed the Milford Boys' Band. His orchestra provided the music for the Opera House, and he played the organ at the old State Theatre. During the 1940's, Mr. Lancisi organized the Milford-Hopedale Civic Music Association, which brought such musicians as Ezio Pinza, Lucia Albanese, The Vienna Boys' Choir, and the Russian Cossack Chorus to Milford. These performances took place at the high school.

Some of Milford's first orchestras were led by Jimmy Cervone, Charlie Liborio, Nick Narducci, Silvio Santosuoso, Peachy Casasanta, Tulio Pagnini and Johnny Harrington. One band was "Zorzi's Collegians," led by Julio Zorzi, a versatile musician. During the mid-1920's Zorzi went to New York and played in various theatre orchestras and jazz bands. While he was in New York, Dr. Frank J. Moschilli directed the collegian orchestra. The group was comprised of such notable area musicians as Larry Santoro, Ralph Cicchetti, Tony Gareri, Frank Mussulli, Terry Candini and Dr. John Cicchetti. Later, the band's name was changed to Moses Aces. Zorzi returned to Milford in 1931 and opened a music studio. Julio Zorzi's

slogan was "The business of a teacher is to find mistakes and to teach how to correct them."

Still another musical personality of Milford was Louis Calabrese, whose professional name was Lou Breese. A very talented musician Breese played the trumpet, the violin, the piano, the cornet, the mandolin and the banjo; he was also a composer and band leader. When he was a young boy, he studied under Professor Sinopoli. During the years prior to 1920, he played as a member of Edward McEnelly, Bill Hardy and Peachy Casasanta's orchestra. During the 1930's he conducted the pit orchestra at the Orpheum theatre and also became adept at directing night club and theatre shows in New York and other cities.

Lou Breese went to Chicago in 1936, and in 1939 he took over the former Henry Busse Band. He continued to lead bands in the Chicago area through the 1940's and 1950's. Sometime before 1950, he made several recordings with his band. One of these albums was titled "Breezing Along with Lou Breese." A few copies remain today in the Milford area. In 1952, he led his band at President Eisenhower's inaugural ball. He became a familiar figure to millions of television viewers during the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago when he gave the downbeat to his musicians for a musical interlude after one of a number of heated arguments among politicians.

Three famous jazz musicians came from the town of Milford. Tony Micelotti was a clarinetist who headed bands in New Orleans and Florida and has had extensive re-

cording engagements. Bob Varney was a drummer who performed with such well known personalities as Tommy Dorsey and Stan Kenton. When he returned to Milford in the 1950's, he taught music in the Milford School system and opened a private drum studio.

Henry "Boot" Mussulli is probably the most famous jazz musician. At the age of eleven, he was a permanent member of Julio Zorzi's band; he played the clarinet as well as the saxophone. When he was fourteen, he formed his own orchestra, and he began arranging with Tony Gareri, a well-known local pianist. By the late 1930's he was well-known in the music field. In 1940 "Boots" was asked to take the place of one of the world's greatest clarinetists, Irving Fazzola, with the Teddy Powell Band. Later, he performed and recorded with Stan Kenton, Herb Pomeroy, Gene Krupa, and a host of others. In the 1960's he started and directed the Milford Youth Orchestra. He performed with them at the Boston Globe Jazz Festival; and the Newport Jazz Festival. He returned to Milford in the 1950's to teach privately and for the Milford schools.

The jazz tradition started by Boots Mussulli is still very much alive in Milford. The Jerry Seeco Band performs regularly at concerts and in night clubs. This organization consists of local musicians who were students of Mussulli. Most of the musicians are school music teachers. From Milford are Don Iacovelli, Mike Crowley, Bob Tamagni, Bill Bishop, John Bouchard and Jerry Seeco. In the 1950's, Milford's Al Cass (Cassinelli)

li) invented a trumpet mouthpiece which is used by many musicians.

Another familiar figure associated with music in the Milford schools was Alex DiGiannantonio. He was educated at the New England Conservatory in Boston and taught private piano and theory lessons. He later became a teacher of music at Milford High School where he taught chorus and music history. In 1930 he wrote the music for a song written by Anna Calabrese Zocchi. This song was written for Milford's sesquicentennial.

When the new Milford High School was built in 1972, music education under the direction of Donald Thatcher was greatly expanded. Milford has a fine high school band with over 100 students, a Middle School band with 130 students and elementary school bands with over 150 students. Three orchestras exist as well as eight choruses. Musical plays and concerts are performed quite regularly.

Church choirs and choir directors have also made significant contributions to the performing arts in Milford. In 1933 the Bach Choral Club was organized under the direction of Alex DiGiannantonio. It was comprised of fifty to seventy members, many of whom came from the Sacred Heart parish. Its first concert was given on April 9, 1933, at the Milford Opera House. The group performed music by Bach and other classical composers and also some of the lighter music of the day. This musical tradition was rekindled in 1974 when the Milford Community Chorus was founded. Its most notable performance was at the White House in 1978 for our nation's annual Christmas program.

# 200 YEARS HAPPY BIRTHDAY MILFORD TOWN

Words & Music  
by  
Bob Reed  
9/29/79

Mil-ford was pur-chased from the Nip-mucks — in  
six-teen nine-ty one. English settlers came from  
Men-don — and our lit-tle town had be- gun.  
Mov-ing a- way from Men-don — made it hard to keep in the  
know, so town-folks in-cor-por-a-ted Mil-ford — in  
**CHORUS**  
sev-en-teen-eight-zer-o — Two hun-dred years —  
— We've been build-ing Mil-ford town. — Two  
hun-dred years — we're proud to say — we helped the world go 'round —

The musical score is written on ten staves. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff has a C major chord above it. The second staff has G, C, and C chords. The third staff has F, G, and C chords. The fourth staff has C, F, and G chords. The fifth staff has C, C, and F chords. The sixth staff has G, C, and C chords. The seventh staff has C, F, and C chords. The eighth staff has C, C, and G chords. The ninth staff has C, C, and G chords. The tenth staff has C, C, and G chords. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Two hun-dred years it was - n't long- er.

Two hun-dred years and we're grow- in' strong- er.

Two hun-dred years, Hap- py Birth-day Mil-ford Town

Second Verse:

Ariel Bragg in his cobbler shop made shoes for folks to wear  
 He packed them in a saddle bag and climbed upon his mare  
 He traveled as far as Providence for a dollar you could buy his brand  
 People bought his boots and shoes and the shoe business began

## CHORUS

THIRD Verse:

As the railroads started pushing west the Irish came to town  
 They cut Milford granite straight and true - Granite soon was quite renown  
 Pink granite is a beautiful stone our Italians polished it well  
 It adorned Penn Station in the Big Apple - Time Square looks really swell

## CHORUS

Fourth Verse:

Today our town is a pleasant place to live and raise our Kids  
 We're a complementary blend of cultures with the strength of the pyramids

## CHORUS

# Media

## Newspapers

On January 1, 1831, the first issue of the *Independent Messenger*, a newspaper devoted principally to religious topics, was put into circulation in Milford. The business was located in a barn on Exchange Street. This paper was the first ever published in Milford. George W. Stacy was the owner, and Adin Bal-lou was the editor.

However, by 1852, Milfordians began to call for a weekly newspaper. Accordingly, the *Milford Weekly Journal* was issued on June 18, 1852, with Charles Nason as editor and publisher. After two years, he sold the business to A. Dexter Sargent. In addition to printing the *Journal* over a period of two years, Mr. Sargent compiled and published Milford's first town directory in 1856. In this year, he sold the paper to the firm of Wood & Blunt, who ran the business until 1858. At this time, it was sold to Mr. Wood, who ran the business for a number of years before eventually selling to James M. Stewart in 1866. In 1872, the *Milford Journal* was purchased by Cook and Sons who ran it very successfully as a weekly and eventually as a daily. On July 18, 1918, it merged with the *Milford Daily News*.

On May 5, 1882, under the editorship of George M. Billings, the first issue of the *Milford Gazette* was printed. This eight-page weekly was published for over fifty years.

The *Milford Daily News*, the oldest of the town's papers still publishing and also its first daily, was first published on September 1, 1887. It was printed in the Coolidge Block (now the Odd Fellows Building) by Dr. Thomas Mann and William Leahy. By 1908, the circulation was 3,000 copies daily. The rooms of the Coolidge Block were found to be inadequate, so the operation was moved to the Telephone Building (the site of the Milford National Bank, and Trust Company). When it outgrew these quarters, the *News* purchased the former Mahew mansion on Park Terrace and occupied the building on April 9, 1924. In 1964, the *Daily News* changed from the conventional letterpress system of printing to the more modern offset press. It moved to its new location off Route 140 at the Hopedale town line in January of 1973. The spacious building includes a computerized composing room and modern equipment throughout. The newspaper's circulation now exceeds 14,500.

Milford also had four other smaller newspapers, all of which met with little or no success. The *Milford Transcript* was published between April 12 and October 11, 1848, by William Hayward. In all, twenty-six issues were published in six months. In its final issue it was stated "... we have now effected the purpose we

had in view: the publication of the *Transcript* for six months." The files of the paper may be viewed today at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester. The *Bay State Chronicle* was an early rival to the *Journal*. It was published by Coffin and Drake between 1859 and 1861. Between 1885 and 1890 two more weekly papers made their appearance. The *Milford Times* was published for a short period by Joseph P. Gallagher and the Reverend Patrick Cuddihy. Its office was on School Street. The *Times* was succeeded by the *Milford Herald*, which was first published in February of 1887 from the former *Times* office. It was a four-page paper published weekly by John El-lam and Philip Gleason. It ceased operation around the turn of the century.

The principal distributor of the *Milford Daily News* and all other newspapers in town was Fred T. Cahill. First entering the business in 1903, Mr. Cahill was soon the sole dealer of the Boston papers. In 1910, he purchased the Franklin Tompkins newsstore in the old Haywood building on Main Street (site of the present Dollar Saver). From this store, he organized Milford's first newspaper delivery service, mapping various routes and hiring newsboys. This business is now known as the Greater Milford Newspaper Distributors.



**Congress Street with W.M.R.C. Radio Station, second house on the right.**

### **Milford Radio Corporation**

In October, 1956, the first commercial radio station in the Greater Milford Area was granted a license to operate. The first studios were located in the old Opera House building in Lincoln Square. Broadcasting under the call letters WMOO at 100 watts, the station served the area until 1961 at which time the present ownership, Milford Radio Corporation, assumed control and began operations under the new call letters WMRC. The station was then relocated to larger studios at the corner of Exchange and Main Streets and from there to its present location in the WMRC building at 11 Congress Street. It now broadcasts in 1490 kilohertz at 1000 watts. WMRC prides itself on community involvement and features programs of community interests including local sports, news and music.



**The Milford Daily News at 159 South Main Street. They occupied this building in January 1973.**

# Historical Homes

When Milford was set aside as the "Easterly" or "Mill River" Precinct in 1741, it had approximately twenty homes and a population of one hundred and fifty people. At this time the area included South Milford and Hopedale. Of the twenty colonial homes, six remain standing. Five still have the characteristic large center chimney; they also retain the small front doors that face in a southerly direction. The two oldest ones are located in the southern part of Milford. One is the Obadiah Wheelock home on Howard Street, it was built in 1708 and is presently known as the Ferrucci Farm. The other is the Benjamin Hayward, Jr., home at 96 South Main Street, which was built in 1711. The only other house built near town before 1741 is the Joseph Chapin home. Built in 1729, it is located at 280 Main Street. The other three homes are located in the North Purchase section of town. Deacon Nathaniel Jones' home at 198 Purchase was built in 1722. It is the first home in the North Purchase; it originally stood at the rear of 13 Silver Hill Road and was relocated in January of 1876. In 1723, John Jones' home on Eben Street was constructed. The Richard Gardner home at 41 Purchase Street was built in 1733; it is better known as the Chester Clark home.

In 1780 when Milford was set off as a separate town it had a popula-

tion of 750 people and approximately 150 homes. Milford is very fortunate to have 17 homes of this era left today. Of these, eleven can be found in North Purchase; the remaining five are all located south of Main Street; two of these can be seen on Elm Street.

Milford has two outstanding homes built in the Greek Revival style, which became popular shortly after the turn of the century. The Nathaniel Chessman home on Central Street, presently known as the Moschilli home was built in 1850. The other one was constructed in 1851 on Main Street near the corner of Fayette and Main Street; it now stands at 10 Fayette Street.

Milford has a large number of lovely Victorian homes. Most of these have been renovated into apartments; only a few remain as private homes. One of the largest of these has become the Buma-Sargent Funeral Home at 42 Congress Street. Many are located on Claflin Street and around the Town Park. Only a few still have the gingerbread trim that was so popular from 1850 to 1870. One of the best examples is the Inez Stevenson home at 54 Claflin Street.

From 1850 until around the turn of the century many large boarding houses were constructed. They were known as the Milford Hotel, located across from the Town Hall, the Mansion House, site of the Milford

Cinema, the Rockingham Hotel on Central Street, and the Hotel Wilian on Main Street.

Milford is unique in having several large three-story buildings, which are commonly found in the suburbs around larger cities but generally not in the smaller communities. These were built during the time when Milford was a very large shoe manufacturing town and Draper Corporation of Hopedale was operating three shifts. The homes in Prospect Heights were built around 1916 to accommodate employees for the foundry workers in Hopedale.

Scattered around Milford are many houses built in the Queen Anne style from 1890 to 1920. These homes present a picturesque variety of shapes and textures in non-symmetrical composition: gables, dormers, chimneys, round turrets, oriel windows and porches turned with delicate spindlework. These homes are often a mixture of clapboards and shingles, so arranged as to form interesting patterns.

From 1900 to 1965 there was little change in the population of Milford, but with the completion of Route 495, Milford grew from 14,000 to 23,000 in less than twenty years. Milford now has approximately 7,338 homes of various contemporary styles, five large apartment complexes, and, three modern complexes for the elderly.



Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
Adams St.	Mellen Bragg	Irving Tingley	1843	This home still remains in the same family.
45 Beach St.	Timothy Devine	Antonio Mazzone	1854	
*37 Birch St.	Seth Thayer	Stanley Dypry	c. 1753	This home was used as an inn at one time and contains a very large dance hall.
151 Cedar St.	Luther Adams	Walter Burnett	1852	
*131 Cedar St.	John Hero	Nicolas Sarah	1777	On account of boundry changes this home has been in Holliston, Hopkinton and Milford as well as Middlesex and Worcester county.
4 Cemetery St.	Henry Walpole	Richard Grillo	1858	
242 Central St.	Barton Cook	Michael Mancini	1851	
264 Central St.	Lawrence Demsey	Theodore Tocci	1869	
283 Central St.	Nathaniel Chessman	Frank Moschilli	1850	From this majestic Greek Revival home, there is a magnificent view of our town.
14 Chestnut St.	Thomas G. Kent	Margaret Knowlton	1860	Mr. Kent was a member of the Centennial Committee
26 Chestnut St.	Nathan Paine	Joseph Capece	1867	
30 Chestnut St.	Nathan Paine	Clarence Taylor	1861	
46 Chestnut St.	John Annette	Laurence Rouleau	1865	
10 Church St.	Fred Swasey	Paul Bruno	1880	Fred Swasey was the architect for Memorial Hall.
54 Claflin St.	Edward Ross	Inez Stevenson	1856	This home has a fine example of gingerbread trim.
55 Claflin St.	Halsey Cook	Michael Fino	1878	
6 Congress St.	Clark Sumner	Karl Bright Ins. Agency	1845	Dr. Frank White resided here.
8 Congress St.	Elthrona Cheney	Lucy Day House	1898	The Congregational Church purchased this home for Sunday School facilities and offices.
16 Congress St.	George H. Johnson	Century 21 Realty	1869	This was the New England Jewelers Institute founded in 1920.
24 Congress St.	Emory Walker	Watson Funeral Home	1828	This lovely Colonial home remained in the Walker family for 74 years.

Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
28 Congress St.	Jarvis White	Pasquale Costentino	1857	John Erskine was a Town Clerk and Justice of the Peace.
30 Congress St.	Michael Finnegan	Lena Doyle	1857	
38 Congress St.	John Erskine	Donald Small	1836	
39 Congress St.	Leonard Fairbanks	Joseph DelSignore	c. 1852	Benjamin Godfrey initiated the the power machinery for the boot and shoe industry.
42 Congress St.	B. D. Godfrey	Richard Buma Buma-Sargent Funeral Home	1854	
44 Congress St.	Perley Field	Edwards Funeral Home	1881	Milford's second hospital was in this home. It was owned by Dr. Frank Harvey.
50 Congress St.	George Beatty	Arlan Johnson	1859	George Beatty was very charitable to the Methodist Church.
52 Congress St.	George Beatty	John O'Meara	1860	This home has been in the same family since 1876.
58 Congress St.	Emery Walker	Dominic Bozzini	1850	
62 Congress St.	David Taft	Walter Doane	1871	
101 Congress St.	Charles Holmes	David I. Davoren	1878	The auditorium in the new Milford High School was named after David I. Davoren who was the superintendent of schools for many years.
105 Congress St.	Patrick Gillon	James Stewart	c. 1880	Mr. Gillon built the Gillon Block on Main Street in 1881.
151 Congress St.	James M. Fletcher	Bento doCurren	c. 1867	Adam Hunt was once representative to the General Court and post master.
11 Court St.	Adam Hunt	Clarence Morin	1847	
17 Court St.	Henry Nelson	Guiseppe Guidi	1847	Captain Henry Nelson was Commander of the Milford Artillery Co.
40-42 Court St.	Oliver Parkhurst	Attilio Andreola	1873	Home of Robert Andreola first Chairman of the Historical Commission.
16-18 Court Sq.	Oliver Parkhurst	William Haskell	1835	One of the original homes around the first town common and the first town meeting house erected in 1819.

Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
17-19 Court Sq. 52 Depot St.	Oliver Parkhurst Issac N. Davis	Eric Norden Stephen Laczenski	1832 1862	It was stated in the deed no dwelling house could be build on this land for less than \$500.
89 Depot St.	Milford Fire Depart.	Lawrence Seghezzi	1884	Originally this was the Central Street Fire Station. This was moved from Central Street after 1900.
21 Dilla St.	James Macuen	Richard Nashawaty	1900	Mr. Macuen made the dam creating Louisa Lake for his ice business.
Dilla St.	Henry Chapin	Carl Eden	1837	The Webb Pink Granite quarries were located on this farm.
*40 Dilla St.	Mordecai Day	Kenneth Neal	1768	
103 E. Main St.	John Griffin	Louis Bagaglio	1875	This was the home of Santo Bagaglio, owner of the granite tools on display at the Historical Museum.
112 E. Main St.	Whitman Cook	John Tognazzi	1845	This home is our only original salt box.
201 E. Main St.	John Hennesey	Angelo Luisetti	1856	
†3 Eben St.	John Jones, Jr.	Robert Curtiss	1723	
*20 Elm St.	James Sumner	Charles Lees	1751	James Sumner was a principal promoter for the separation of Milford from Mendon.
*5 Elm St.	Joshua Chapin	Anthony Mozol	1751	This home was one of Milford's first inns; it was at one time run by Dr. William Jennison who was prominent during the Revolutionary War and gave a brass field piece to the town.
9 Emmons St.	Benjamin E. Harris	Benjamin Consoletti	c. 1871	Mr. Harris owned and operated Harris and Co. clothing at 164 Main St.

Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
2 Exchange St.	William Nichols	Warren Heller	1899	This house is referred to as the "Spite House." William Nichols built this home for Anna Mary Nichols Ballou, as her wedding present. This was done in spite of the fact neighbors told him it was an impossible task. This small triangular nine room home contains rooms of various geometric shapes, only one of which has four corners.
10 Fayette St.	Nathaniel Newcomb	Joseph Bonacci	1851	This Greek Revival once stood on the Main St. It was the home and office of Dr. Perry Joselin.
36 Forest St.	Edward Ross	Dorothy Smethurst	1856	This was originally a barn that went with Inez Stevenson's home at 54 Claflin St.
30 Franklin St.	Calvin Barber	Albino DaCosta	1854	R. S. Tuttle lived here and he entered the Union Army and organized Co. F. of the 36th Regiment Mass. Vols.
31 Franklin St.	Thomas Sheldon	Carolyn Bragdon	1855	To this date this home has remained in the same family.
23 Freedom St.	Frank Kilcline	Francis Shea	c. 1871	
14 Fruit St.	Andrew Ames	John Phelps	1858	
21 Fruit St.	Joel Chapin	John Romiglio	1854	
9 Goodrich Ct.	John McGuire	Anthony Grillo	1870	This home is a unique brick octagonal home.
8 Green St.	John P. Moore	Francesio Carreara	1869	
53 Grove St.	Samuel Nicholas	Richard Allardice	1872	
55 Grove St.	William Nash	William Dillon	1869	
*9 Haven St.	Deacon Daniel Corbett	James Baker	1745	
				John Corbett Jr., was major of the Milford Artillery Co., served the town as selectman, assessor and was representative to the General Court.

Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
41 Haven St.	Caleb Cheney	Barry Stramer	1791	Luther Haven, a farmer, purchased this home in 1801. He was always spoken of as a very worthy man. He held various town offices.
50 Haven St.	John Corbett	Robert Mulvaney	1858	
46 High St.	Erastus Smith	Joseph Mazzini	1851	
83 High St.	Patrick Duggan	William Curran	1860	
91 High St.	Benjamin Broderick	Alex Anderson	1857	
41 Highland St.	William Hynes	Daniel Glennon	1864	This house was on a large farm that contained the property where Milford High School now stands.
*118 Highland St.	Samuel Torrey, Jr.	Leo Papalian	1747	This estate was the Ira Cleveland Farm.
†86 Howard St.	Obediah Wheelock	Attilio Ferrucci	1709	This home has remained a working farm for 211 years.
26 Jefferson St.	Leonard Hunt	Arthur Caswell	1852	This home is where Secretary of State John F. X. Davoren was born.
8 Leonard St.	Lewis Hayward	Normand Chouinard	1867	
35 Main St.	Lovett Albee	Charlescraft Press	1850	This house was recently renovated by the printer of this history book.
†280 Main St.	Joseph Chapin	Francis Larkin	1729	Deacon Peter Rockwood resided here and he was the first to set up a wheelwright business in Milford.
290 Main St.	Elbridge Hayward	Arthur Vesperi	1847	
56 Mt. Pleasant St.	Jeremiah Comba	Perina Ramelli	1880	
80 Mt. Pleasant St.	George C. Temple	Grace Wasner	1872	
10 N. Bow St.	John Mason	Roger Orfice	c. 1851	John Mason held various town offices and was the town treasurer for years.

Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
16 N. Bow St.	John Mason	Allen Linnell	c. 1851	Jonathan Bradford was a very skillful, enterprising and prosperous mason. This home is a fine example of his work.
18 N. Bow St.	Hollis Phipps	John Carneiro	c. 1830	
52 No. Bow St.	Leonard Eames	Leonardo DeLuca	1850	
53 No. Bow St.	Jonathan Bradford	Ralph Creasia	1855	
9 Oliver St.	Patrick Milan	Zakie Zakarian	c. 1871	Aaron Mayhew was one of Milford's leading shoe manufacturers, razed in 1980. This home was built by Colonel Sullivan Sumner. In 1910 it was bought by St. Mary's Parish for a rectory. John S. Scammell opened Milford's first law office was appointed first justice of our original police court. Benjamin Spaulding lived here and he was a large manufacturer of straw goods. This was the Sweeney home for over 100 years and they ran the Pearl Street Market.
9 Orchard St.	Charles Tufts	Henry J. Pillarella	1850	
4 Park Ter.	Aaron Mayhew	Milford Daily News	1854	
27 Pearl St.	Sullivan Sumner	St. Mary's Rectory	1848	
31 Pearl St.	John Scammell	Francis McDonough	1855	Benjamin Spaulding lived here and he was a large manufacturer of straw goods. This was the Sweeney home for over 100 years and they ran the Pearl Street Market.
41 Pearl St.	Amasa Parkhurst	Joseph Testa	1849	
44 Pearl St.	William Leseur	Margaret Burns	1836	
56 Pine St.	Milo Sadler	Leon Smith	c. 1845	
57 Pine St.	William Sadler	Nancy Sharoogian	1845	
60 Pine St.	Milo Sadler	Lawrence Bonetti	1848	

Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
67 Pine St.	David G. Chapin	John Callery	1856	Sergeant Philip Callery grew up here, was the first Milford soldier to die on the battlefield in France during World War I.
32 Purchase St.	George Howe	James Kenny	c. 1846	
37 Purchase St.	Clark Ellis	George Ellis	1810	This was a tenement house on the Elisha Parkhurst farm until 1812.
60 Purchase St.	James Tyler	Fred Roberti	1878	
†41 Purchase St.	Caleb Gardner	Henry Consigli	1733	A select seminary for girls was taught here by Abigail Thayer from 1819-1822.
51 Purchase St.	Rosalinda Clark	John Moore	1858	
64 Purchase St.	Amasa Parkhurst	William Ramaskewich	1860	
71 Purchase St.	Joseph Hancock	Henry Consigli	1853	Captain Joseph Hancock won honorable fame in the Civil War.
72 Purchase St.	Silas Tingley	Magnus Erickson	1842	
77 Purchase St.	Silas Parkhurst	Henry Consigli	1805	Silas Parkhurst was a carpenter and farmer.
152 Purchase St.	Rufus Cheney	Joseph Volk	1829	This was once a small boot shop.
156 Purchase St.	John Claflin	Louis Marino	1838	The ell of this house was once the Claflin and Underhill boot shop.
*158 Purchase St.	Ephraim Parkhurst	Arnold Pickering	1767	Ephraim Parkhurst owned and operated a sawmill on the brook now called Ivy Brook.
179 Purchase St.	Lee Claflin	Vincent Ahearn	1816	The Honorable William Claflin was born here March 6, 1818, he became Governor of Massachusetts. Lee Claflin set up a boot and shoe business and a tannery as early as 1819.



Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
180 Purchase St.	Nathaniel Felton	Clarence Webster	1829	
188 Purchase St.	John P. Dale	William Elliott	1854	This house has always remained in the same family.
191 Purchase St.	Charles Blood	William Moreau	1844	
192 Purchase St.	Ladies Aid Society	Anthony Allegrezza	1886	This home was built as a chapel for all faiths to use as their Sunday School and in later years as a community center, until about 1930.
†198 Purchase St.	Deacon Nathaniel Jones	Roy Lovell	1722	Esquire Samuel Jones was born here. He was commissioned as justice of the peace by Governor Samuel Adams, March 2, 1797. He was always held in high esteem by the townspeople.
200 Purchase St.	Albert M. Sumner	Warren Kunz	1849	This home is a fine example of the early Greek Revival homes.
202 Purchase St.	Albert Sumner	David Webster	1849	This home was the barn that belonged on farm at 200 Purchase Street which was moved and re-modeled by the Clarridges.
206 Purchase St.	Daniel Tyler	Kenneth Negrotti	1846	
209 Purchase St.	Ellis Sumner	Joseph Borghetti	1810	Ellis Sumner was a house carpenter, farmer and was elected to numerous offices.
253 Purchase St.	Peter Corbett	Robert Moore	1829	Peter Corbett was elected a colonel in the Milford Artillery Co.
254 Purchase St.	John Cheney	Lajos Masszi	1808	This large farm was owned by Jeremiah Boyington, one of the original Mendon proprietors in 1737. The house was replaced in 1808 by John Cheney.
286 Purchase St.	Edmund Bowker		c. 1829	This lovely old farmhouse is being restored, following the fire in 1978.

Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
415 Purchase St. 13 Reade St.	Robert Wood Bernardo Ambrioli	Steven Oldfield	1847 1890	This imposing granite apartment house is often called the "stone castle." The early Italian immigrants celebrated mass here.
41 School St. 52 School St.	Patrick O'Donnell Elliot Alden	Anthony Bento Michael Scordamaglia	1860 1847	Dr. Alexander Scammell a physician of the botanic practice, lived here.
53 School St.	Leander Holbrook	Annette Morcone	1855	Leander Holbrook was Milford's second lawyer. He graduated from Cambridge Law School in 1846.
68 School St.	Ethan Claflin	Noah DeMattia	1866	Ethan Claflin was Milford's treasurer from 1864 to 1881.
74 School St. 76 School St.	Homer Ball Francis Ball	Noah DeMattia Dorothy Butler	1866 1867	This residence is now the site of the Mother Hubbard Nursery School.
84 School St. 93 School St.	Charles S. W. Day Lemuel Leland	Richard Brogioli Michael R. Smith	1872 1850	This is presently the home of Michael Smith, who is superintendent of the Milford Medical Home.
94 School St.	Moses Walker	Paul Ohannesian	1880	This was the home of Captain Henry Bailey, who served during the Civil War and was a promoter of Memorial Hall.
39 Silver Hill Rd. *44 Silver Hill Rd.	Lovett Sumner Azariah Newton	Victor Ostrand Arthur Floyd	1849 1747	History tells us Emory Sumner purchased this unpretentious home for his bride in 1816. It remained in the Sumner family for 100 years.
45 Silver Hill Rd.	Seth Nelson	Henry Charzenski	1794	This was one of our earliest farms in North Purchase owned by Samuel Parkhurst. This farm house was built by Seth Nelson and has a field stone fireplace in the kitchen.

Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
83 Silver Hill Rd.	Ziba Thayer	Ernest Kapatoes	1808	This farm was originally the home of Colonel Ichabod Thayer in 1744. In 1852 Aaron Claflin purchased this model farm for his summer home.
22 So. Bow St.	John Claflin		c. 1805	This home was moved from the corner of So. Bow and Main St. around 1850. It has recently been renovated but retains the original boot scrapes.
28 So. Bow St.	Henry Chapin	David Imbruno	1842	This home originally stood on the Main St. Mr. Claflin ran a large boot store in New York City.
48 So. Bow St.	Edwards Daniels	Michael Celeste	1850	
52 So. Bow St.	Aaron Claflin	Albert Raffaela	1828	
54 So. Bow St.	George S. Bowker	Leonardo DeLuca	1849	This was the site of Milford's first hospital.
2 So. Main St.	Elmer Cobb	Iada Scruton	1842	
6 So. Main St.	Winthrop Ring	Carl Bon Tempo	1859	
17 So. Main St.	Charles Johnson	Therese Dunlap	1845	This was the home of Ernest Bragg, who wrote many historical books on Milford. He had a small printing press in his home where he printed them.
18 So. Main St.	Edwin Withington	Michael Fino	1844	Henry White is a direct descendant of Walter Cook, an original Mendon proprietor.
20 So. Main St.	John Wood	Mary Ann Boucher	1846	
24 So. Main St.	George Sweet	Louise DeManche	1845	
29 So. Main St.	George Sweet	Ernest White	1843	
29 ½ So. Main St.	George Sweet	Gaetano Trongone	1843	
55 So. Main St.	Darius Flagg	Richard Guardabascio	1859	
73 So. Main St.	William Richardson	Henry White	1874	
†96 So. Main St.	Benjamin Hayward Jr.	Edward Freeman	1711	This estate was a four hundred acre farm that remained in the same family for several generations. Nathan Wood lived here and he was one of the proprietors of the Milford Academy.
119 So. Main St.	Nathan Wood	John Mercer	c. 1856	The cellar of this home is possibly one of our first schoolhouses prior to 1791. It was the Tyler farm for four generations.
1 Tyler St.	Henry Nelson	Roger Lamontagne	1834	
8 Walnut St.	J. Cheney	Marion Croughwell	c. 1871	This home was moved from Purchase St.

Address	First Home Owner	Present Owner	Date	Comments
17 Walnut St.	Zibeon Field	Lawrence Shane	1868	This was the Universalist Parsonage at one time.
33 Walnut St.	George Underwood	Nicholas Mastroianni	1866	George Underwood built this unique "mansard roof" home facing the town park. Dr. Nicholas Mastroianni resides here now.
8 Water St.	Hamilton Staples	Frank Worthen	1863	Honorable Hamilton Staples was very interested in antiquarian researching and was a member of the American Antiquarian Society.
20 Water St.	James Barber	Antonio Sannicandro	1847	This home was open for the bi-centennial tour of Milford.
1 West St.	George Bowker		1854	
12 West St.	Eli Chapin	Larry Catusi	1852	
20 West St.	George Edwards	Luciani Arcudi	1840	
24 West St.	Augustus Daniels	Levi Tanfani	1847	
45 West St.	Jessie Daniels	Ernest Billsbury	1831	
76 West St.	Jesse Alderman	Michael Minnehan	1851	
78 West St.	Thomas Quinlan	Robert Bell	1848	This home was the farmhouse for the large farm, that included all the area around Madden Ave.
81 West St.	James Tobin	Wm. Birmingham	1863	
91 West St.	Thomas Connors	Gerard Boulanger	1863	
92 West St.	Robert Sheraman	Fred Luby	1854	
101 West St.	John Madden	Lauretta Leo	c. 1853	
119 W. Spruce St.	Anna Bell	Wm. Broderick	1861	
121 W. Spruce St.	George Beatty	Christopher Morcone	1861	
157 W. Spruce St.	Andrew Ranahan	Donald Schwendenman	c. 1871	This beautiful home was designed in England and partially assembled there, before being shipped here for completion.
158 W. Spruce St.	Wm. Nelson	Harry Platcou	1852	
3 W. Walnut St.	Randall Greene	Noel Bon Tempo	1884	
*Whitewood Rd.	Ely Partridge	Charles Bisbee	1764	This is an early home in the North Purchase.
29 Whitewood Rd.	Nathan Taft	Joseph Gattoni	1833	This cape was built before the town was incorporated.
*38 Whitewood Rd.	Nathaniel Legg	Russell Roy	1771	

†Built prior to the establishment of the Easterly precinct in 1741.

\*Built prior to 1780.

c. Circa



**Obediah Wheelock home on Howard Street was built in 1709. He was one of the original Mendon proprietors.**



**Benjamin Hayward Jr., 96 South Main Street built in 1711. Wood Street once extended to this home.**



**The Deacon Nathaniel Jones' home at 198 Purchase Street was built in 1722. This home was moved from Silver Hill Road by George Kibbey, January 6, 1876.**



**John Jones Jr., built this home on Eben Street in 1723. Jones swapped this farm with his brother-in-law Elder Daniel Corbett from Bellingham in 1742.**



**Joseph Chaplin, 290 Main Street built in 1729.**



**Caleb Gardner, 41 Purchase Street built in 1733. Chester Clark ran this farm many years and had a milk route.**



**Deacon Daniel Corbett, 9 Haven Street, built in 1745. John Corbett was born here November 22, 1761, he was captured at the battle of Bunker Hill, but was later allowed to escape.**



**Azariah Newton home at 44 Silver Hill Road was built in 1747. This home is a fine example of a full cape and has been restored.**



**Samuel Torrey Jr., built this home on the highest point in Milford at 118 Highland Street in 1747. This has long been remembered as the Ira Cleveland farm.**



**Joshua Chapin built this home at 5 Elm Street in 1751. He inadvertently placed it right in the middle of what was to become Elm Street.**



**James Sumner built this home at 20 Elm Street in 1751. James Sumner was second on the Revolutionary Committee of "Correspondence and Safety."**



**Ephraim Parkhurst built this home in 1767 at 158 Purchase Street. The original fireplaces are still in this house.**





**Mordecai Day built this home in 1768 at 40 Dilla Street. The stone "spring" house remains on this property.**



**Ely Partridge built this home in 1764 at 13 Whitewood Road.**



**In 1777 John Hero built this home at 131 Cedar Street. It was an early home in the Deer Brook section of Milford.**



**Nathaniel Legg built this cape in 1771 at 38 Whitewood Road. A small boot shop still stands to the left of this house.**



**In 1791 Caleb Cheney built this home at 41 Haven Street. Isaac Haven, who lived here many years, was always active in the Methodist Society.**



**Seth Nelson built this home in 1794 at 45 Silver Hill Road. History tells us this home was called the "barracks". It has always remained a working farm.**



**Seth Thayer built this home around 1753 at 37 Birch Street. The large dance hall in the foreground was added in the late 1800's.**



**B. D. Godfrey built this Victorian home in 1854 at 42 Congress Street. Dr. Frank Harvey resided here when he ran the Harvey Hospital.**



**Nathaniel Chessman built this home in 1850 at 283 Central Street. Dr. Frank Moschilli, resides here and he has always been active on town committees.**



**In 1851 Nathaniel Newcomb built this home. It was moved from Main Street around 1926, to 10 Fayette Street.**



**George Underwood built this home in 1866 at 33 Walnut Street. He was the son of General Orison Underwood.**



**Edward Ross built this home in 1856 at 54 Claflin Street. This is one of the first homes on Claflin Hill.**

# Historical Events

December 31, 1741	Incorporation of the Easterly Precinct or "Mill River".
March 22, 1747	Alexander Scammel was born; he was an Adj. General in the Continental Army. He died from wounds received at Yorktown.
April 15, 1775	Milford sent two companies of "Mill River" men to Charlestown to fight the British.
1790	There were 838 people credited to Milford with the first United States census.
1794	First plan of the town was made by Colonel Ichabod Thayer, Lieutenant Ephraim Chapin and Lieutenant David Stearns.
April 11, 1780	The Easterly Precinct in the Town of Mendon was incorporated into a separate town by the name of Milford.
1806	The hateful old custom of vendueing the poor was abolished.
1811	Nathaniel Bennett was permitted to remove the old pound from near his premises at 174 Main Street to Spruce Street.
March 6, 1818	The Honorable William Claflin was born on this day at 179 Purchase Street. He was governor of Massachusetts from 1869-1872.
1822	Milford-Mendon-Boston stageline organized.
1837	Sullivan Sumner, town treasurer was authorized to receive the town's proportion of the U.S. surplus revenue. The first fire apparatus was voted by the town.
1841	All useless books and papers in the town clerk's office ordered to be sold at public auction.
1842-1843	Five hundred reports of selectmen and overseers of the poor first printed.
1846	First Milford directory was printed by W. A. Hayward.
1848	The first railroad came to Milford.
1851	Assessors were allowed \$1.50 per day for services.
1853	It was voted to build a new town house; a building committee of seven was chosen and instructed not to exceed the cost of thirteen thousand dollars.
January 7, 1853	John Mason's factory burned with all the town's treasurer's books to this date.
1854	The Milford Gaslight Company was incorporated.
1855	A Telegraph office was opened in the Mansion House.
June 17, 1858	Eben Sumner Draper, who was to become the 46th Governor of Massachusetts 1909-1911, was born.
1858	Milford's first town library was established.
March 9, 1862	All the fire alarms were sounded to celebrate the destruction of the Monitor by the Merrimack. This act caused the fire engine to hurry around town looking for the fire.
July 4, 1876	The National Centenary was celebrated in Milford.
April 7, 1880	Telephone service installed in Milford and surrounding towns.
June 10, 1880	Milford celebrated their centennial. There was a large parade, banquet and an elaborate fireworks display that evening as well as many other festivities.
July 13, 1880	Total assessed property is \$4,376,345.00 of which \$3,276,891.00 was real estate and \$1,099,454.00 was personal. The tax rate was \$17.00.
September 6, 1881	An unusual and curious atmospheric condition, remembered as the "yellow day" occurred in the area.
January 16, 1882	Milford Water Company was established. The rates announced in June were \$6.00 per year for the first faucet: \$2.00 for the second: Toilet and bath \$3.00 each and a lawn hose was \$4.00 and \$5.00

November 22, 1882	The telephone company started all-night service.
1882	The History of Milford written by the Reverend Adin Ballou was published.
April 6, 1884	Several Boston people interested in the supposed gold mine in the North Purchase form a company headed by Dr. Rae.
May 31, 1884	The corner stone of Memorial Hall was laid. over 1,000 men were in the parade. Previously the site of the town's old burying ground.
July 2, 1884	The first registrars of voters appointed in Milford, under the new law.
October 3, 1885	The first special delivery postal letter was received in Milford by Henry E. Rockwood.
November 11, 1885	Lighting by electricity for the first time in Milford tonight. The first five arch street lights were at the corner of Main and Congress streets: corner of Main and Exchange streets; Lincoln Square, and one each at the Town House and the electric light building. Seven business men also began using electricity.
February 13, 1886	A heavy rainstorm flooded the streets from the railroad crossing on Main street to Pond Street. Washouts on the Hopkinton railroad delayed trains for three days.
May 28, 1886	The birth of Amelia Tonoli Lamborghini of 42 East Walnut Street. She was the first child of Italian speaking residents to be born in Milford.
April 3, 1886	Senate passes the bill separating Hopedale from Milford.
July 13, 1887	The Hotel Willian opened.
August 15, 1887	School Committee voted to open the Silver Hill School. Miss A. O. Cheney was elected teacher.
September 1, 1888	Home coming reception tendered General W. F. Draper by the citizens of Milford and Hopedale.
April 11, 1888	Milford's first highway surveyor was John D. Shippee of Holliston, at \$90.00 per month.
April 24, 1889	Milford was the first town in New England to use the "Compensator System of Incandescent Lighting."
October 7, 1889	Postmaster Cook gave notice that the post office would not be opened on Sundays until further notice.
December 19, 1889	Milford Fire Department received a letter from Boston Fire Department for their aid on Thanksgiving Day in fighting a big fire.
December 3, 1890	Postmaster George G. Cook received word that Milford now has free mail delivery. The first four letter carriers are Thomas O. Nelson, Gilbert Bent, James C. McKenna and William H. Hartwell.
March 2, 1891	W. B. Hale, A. A. Taft, and W. L. Wires were the first selectmen elected by secret ballot.
October 12, 1891	Milford citizens accepted the proposition of Clapp, Huckins, and Temple shoe manufacturers, to locate in Milford on Depot Street. Milford built a four story factory not to exceed \$20,000. The company agrees to entirely equip the factory and pay all expenses. They did an annual business of \$300,000. Lynch and Murdough of Milford, awarded the contract to build the factory for \$20,100., since the bids were restricted to \$20,000 the shoe company agreed to pay the extra \$100.
February 12, 1891	Milford stonecutters make demand for an increase \$2.75 to \$3.00 per day for a 53-hour week. Like demands were made for the blacksmiths also that no man be discharged until the shed committee is consulted.
January 16, 1892	The death of Rev. George W. Stacy at his home on School Street.
August 3, 1892	The historic "Bear Hill" rock was split and used for curbing.

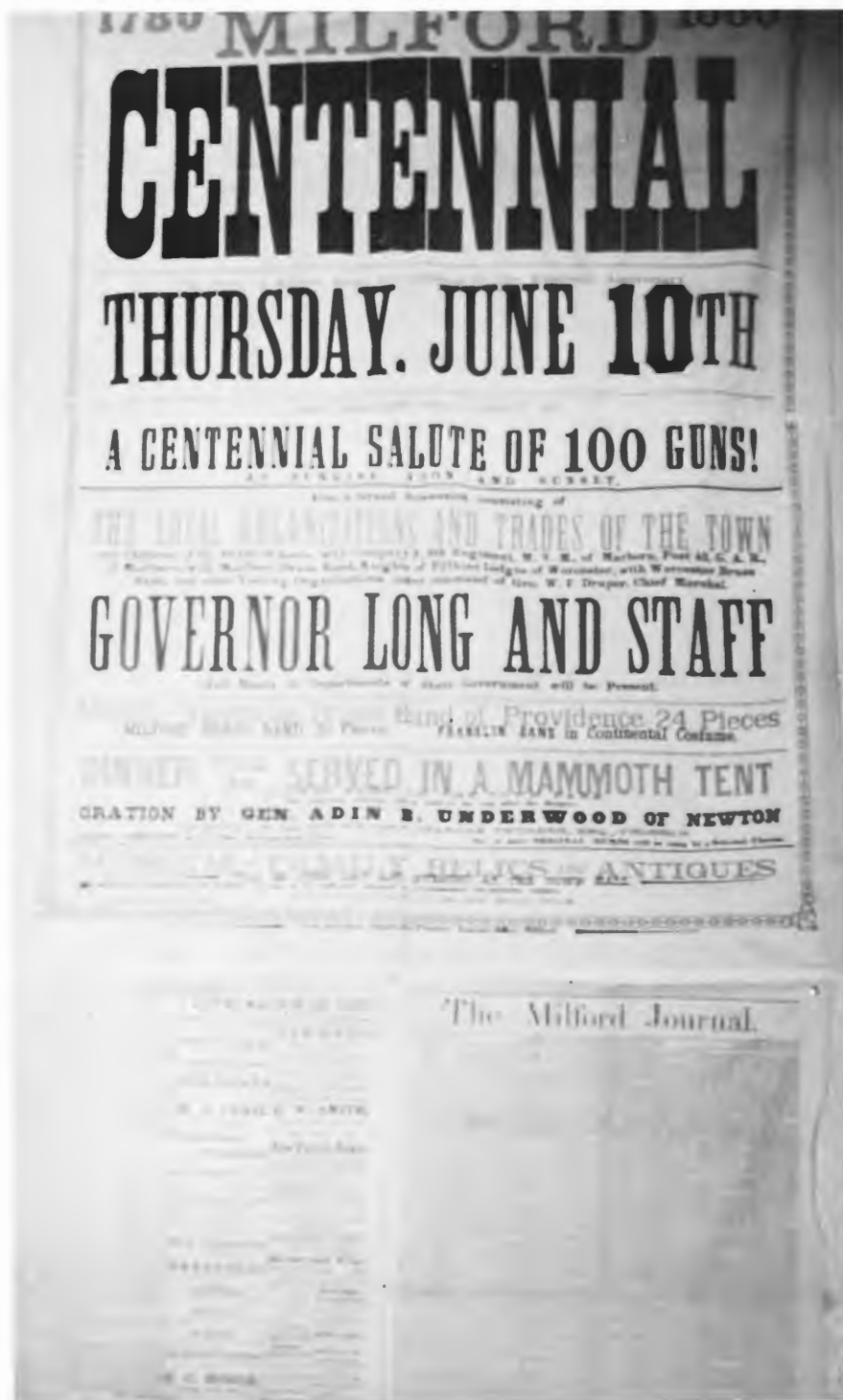
September 14, 1892	James E. Macuen, ice dealer is establishing a new plant on Dilla Street, to be known as Louisa Lake Ice Company. A dam 183 feet long, 8 feet wide is being built. It will flood ten acres of land.
April 19, 1893	Mrs. Robert Peard presented the town an oil painting of her husband, Colonel Robert Peard. This is from the collection of war heroes by Count Schwab.
February 21, 1894	The total financial expenditures of Milford for 1893 was \$1,000,583.23 and there was \$3,743.51 unexpended.
September 10, 1894	There were 151 pupils enrolled in the High School.
May 21, 1895	Milford Master barbers form a union.
April 1, 1896	Miss A. M. Hastings of Newton, appointed first drawing teacher in Milford.
September 1, 1896	Electric street cars made their first run to Hopedale.
February 16, 1897	Post 22, G.A.R. was notified they would receive two 30-pound rifled cannons and eighty shells for ornaments at Memorial Hall.
March 26, 1897	Trinity Episcopal Church votes to build a Parish House at a cost not to exceed \$6,000.
August 11, 1897	A bridge is built over the Medway crossing by the Boston and Albany railroad.
January 15, 1898	Mr. and Mrs. Michael Gallen received word of the death of their daughter Mary A., Sister Teresa, a Sister of Charity in Chicago. She was the first Milford girl to enter the Sisterhood.
January 31, 1898	The worst blizzard since 1867 visited Milford tying up all traffic and completely isolating the Town for two days.
April 14, 1898	Milford Board of Trade organized with J. Allen Rice as president, there were seventy-nine members.
September 1, 1898	A very severe storm of wind, hail, and lightning struck Milford. Lightning struck St. Mary's Church granite tower causing one of the pinnacles, weighing 800 pounds, to be torn into four pieces, two of which fell through the Church causing \$5,000. damage. The A. J. Sumner boot shop and house in the North Purchase were also destroyed. The water and hail also caused considerable damage.
September 6, 1898	Milford's first soldier to die in the Spanish-American war was Arthur L. Wilkinson, his uncle Walter Wilkinson, was the first Milford soldier to lose his life in the Civil War.
December 7, 1898	Death of Rev. Patrick Cuddihy, he was 90 years old being one of the oldest priests in the country, having been ordained in Rome, December 25, 1831. He came to Milford, August 15, 1857.
May 24, 1899	The Selectmen awarded P. H. Gaffny the contract at four and sixty-eight one-hundredth cents per light for the residential section of Milford. There were 102 lights and kerosene was used.
March 9, 1900	It was voted to enlarge the Town Hall by adding 57 feet to the present building with wings on either side. This will give a seating capacity of 1,500. The town meeting also accepted a gift of land on Church Street to be used as a park. This was given by General William Draper and William Bancroft.
March 15, 1900	Milford High School entirely destroyed by a fire of incendiary nature. Everything was lost including the many gifts from graduating classes.
1900	The population of Milford was 11,376 people.

February 18, 1901	Formal opening of the newly remodeled Town Hall with the first Valencial Council, Knights of Columbus holding a ball.
May 2, 1902	H. M. Curtiss, was the first Milford citizen to own and operate an automobile on our streets.
December 2, 1902	Booker T. Washington, noted negro teacher, addresses Quinshipaug Woman's Club.
January 22, 1903	The painters demand an eight-hour day and a minimum wage of \$2.50
July 24, 1903	Milford Hospital presented to town of Milford by Honorable and Mrs. Eben S. Draper. Mark Tiernan, Civil war veteran was the first patient September 1.
September 26, 1903	Bricklayers, masons, and plasterers union ask for an eight-hour day. Bricklayers want 50 cents an hour and plasterers \$3.50 per day.
August 4, 1904	The first automobile parade held in Milford. It was held as the chief event for Milford old home week that had started on August 1. There were seventeen cars in the parade led by a Wayne touring car owned by W. D. Leahy. There were 76 floats presented by the merchants.
February 7, 1905	Lieutenant Robert E. Peary, discoverer of North Pole lectures in Milford.
February 16, 1906	Milford physicians have increased the price of day calls from \$1.00 to \$1.50; night calls from \$1.00 to \$2.00 and office calls from 50 cents to \$1.00.
March 9, 1906	Milford voted to build a modern sewerage system.
January 1, 1907	The Archer Rubber Company was incorporated on this day and continued in Milford until January, 1980.
June 14, 1907	Stuart C. Godfrey; was the first Milford boy to graduate from West Point Military Academy. He received the highest honors the Academy had ever conferred upon a graduate.
August 8, 1907	The price of milk advanced from six to seven cents per quart.
January 30, 1908	Milford merchants agree to close their business at 6 o'clock every night commencing February 3, except Thursday and Saturday.
July 14, 1908	Dr. John J. Duggan paid the first sewer tax in Milford.
December 10, 1908	Five girls in the first graduating class from Milford Hospital School of Nursing.
May 29, 1909	Dr. Franklin W. Mann of Milford receives high praise from noted experts on the appearance of a book called "The Bullet's Flight from Powder to Target."
January 13, 1910	F. S. Howard drove a Maxwell, four cylinder auto from Boston to Milford, in one hour and forty minutes, establishing a new record.
June 15, 1910	Selectmen sign a contract with the Globe Gaslight Company of Boston to furnish 163 gas street lights to burn for the next three years.
April 19, 1911	First Patriots Day parade was held.
November 30, 1911	Thanksgiving turkeys were selling for twenty to twenty-five cents a pound. Pork and lamb were selling for 12 cents a pound.
September 5, 1911	Death of Waldo M. Claflin in Philadelphia. He was a leading shoe manufacturer and designer of the first shoe to be equipped with spikes.
May 3, 1912	Dedication of the National Guard Armory with a grand ball was held.
January 6, 1912	Milford's manufactured products reached a value of \$4,442,140 yearly, according to the United States census for 1910. Average weekly wage of Milford workmen is given as \$10.09.



October 28, 1913	John Phillip Sousa and his band gave a concert in the Milford Opera House.
December 7, 1914	Rufus Pond sold the first stamp in the new granite Milford Post Office (now the police station).
May 6, 1915	Milford had its first traffic officer at the junction of Main, Exchange, and Central Streets.
June 18, 1915	The school committee gave increases in salaries ranging from fifty to one hundred dollars per year. The high school teaching staff was increased to twelve.
February 19, 1916	Father Francis Sweeney was born. He has written a number of books and articles, and at the present time he is director of the Humanities series at Boston College.
May 18, 1917	War gardens were springing up throughout Milford.
July 31, 1917	Company M soldiers were entertained by throng of 10,000 at the Y.M.C.A. in town park.
February 5, 1918	There was extremely cold weather. The thermometer dipped to twenty-five degrees below zero in some places, there was a coal shortage, and a snowstorm soon followed which upset much of the transportation in town.
September 28, 1918	The Board of Health established an emergency hospital in the Y.M.C.A. building for Influenza patients. By November there had been over ninety deaths due to the epidemic.
April 1, 1919	Dr. Joseph Murray was born. He is now chief of plastic surgery at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. He performed the first successful kidney transplant.
September 7, 1920	Milford women voted for the first time, there were 156 voters.
September 15, 1920	Franklin D. Roosevelt, democratic candidate for vice-president addressed six hundred people in Lincoln square.
July 28, 1921	A severe thunderstorm struck Milford. Lightning struck the Baptist Church spire.
November 27, 1921	A three day sleet storm caused extensive damage here.
April 3, 1922	W. D. Howard's carnations took four out of five first prizes at the national flower show in Indianapolis, Indiana.
June 1, 1922	Thomas J. Raftery graduated from the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. He was the first Milford boy to attend the Academy.
November 25, 1922	Hard coal was selling for fifteen dollars per ton.
April 29, 1923	Rudolph Valentino performed in Milford.
January 7, 1925	The fiery red cross of the Ku Klux Klan made its first appearance in Milford on Bear Hill.
November 21, 1925	Sewall Holbrook, the youngest Civil War veteran to serve from Milford, died at the age of seventy-seven.
December 17, 1926	Work began on the Mansion House to have it razed.
May 13, 1927	Three armed men held up the A&P store on South Main Street. This act profited the robbers only twenty dollars.
June 29, 1927	A mass meeting was held in the town hall by Sacco-Venzetti sympathizers. Nicola Sacco had lived in Milford for some time and worked in one of the shoe factories.
September 15, 1927	Attorney John E. Swift, state deputy of the K of C, received notice of his appointment as a supreme director of the order.
November 3, 1927	Milford experienced a cloudburst, receiving 6 inches of rain. This caused an estimated damage of \$75,000. Many bridges were washed out and Louisa Lake dam broke, sending the flood waters into Milford Pond.

February 7, 1930	The Finance Committee tonight recommended expenditure of \$10,000 for Milford's Sesquicentennial celebration.
May 15, 1930	The Sons of Veterans officially gave to the Town of Milford the G.A.R. artifacts housed in Memorial Hall.
June 20, 21, 22, 1930	Milford celebrated its sesqui-centennial with a program at the High School, a parade, fireworks display and special services in all the churches. It was concluded with a band concert on Sunday afternoon.
March 5, 1934	Milford voted to have a representative town meeting. the first election was held March 4, 1935.
September 21, 1938	Total expenditures for the year was \$1,177,098.35. A hurricane of unprecedented force left Milford isolated and paralyzed. Roads were washed away and trees blocked railroad tracks. The damage in Milford amounted to nearly \$200,000.
December 22, 1944	"A" gas rationing coupons were worth four gallons of gas.
October 11, 12, 13, 1946	Welcome home celebration for World War II Veterans.
December 9, 1950	Ground is broken for new Sacred Heart of Jesus grammar school.
December, 1954	Eugene Cyr of Dilla Street was appointed Presidential Guard for General and Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower.
February 2, 1962	The proposal for the routing of Route 495 through Milford was presented.
Dec. 20, 1967:	House Speaker John F.X. Davoren was appointed by a joint session of legislature as Secretary of State. He was re-elected in 1970.
January 7, 1970	Milford Building Inspector reports over \$4 million in construction during 1969.
January 28, 1970	Dr. Nicholas Capece to be honored by Milford Heart Fund as Heart Fund Man of the Year.
July 18, 1970	P. Eugene Casey swimming pool is opened on Prospect Street.
August 23, 1970	Milford town officials will seek \$25,000. to fight the drug abuse problem.
April 25, 1971	Ground is broken for new Milford High School with projected cost of \$14.7 million.
July 14, 1971	Milford Historical Commission is organized with Robert M. Andreola elected chairman.
November 23, 1971	Milford appoints its first Executive Secretary Andrew Gala.
January, 1972	Milfords first town engineer and town planner were appointed. They were John Bertorelli and Charles Abrahamson respectively.
April, 1974	Attorney Edward P. Doherty was appointed full-time Town Counsel to the newly created Legal Department.
January 1977	The retirement of Milford's first woman to serve as Town Clerk. Miss Catherine L. Coyne served the town for over forty years.
February 7, 1978	A severe blizzard brought a total snowfall of 27.1 inches and winds of 79 miles per hour with a chill factor of 20 degrees below zero. The Selectmen declared a state of emergency, and the Civil Defense set up headquarters in the Central School. All the businesses, banks, and factories were closed the next day and some for several days.
January 26, 1979	Milford completes 100 percent equalization plan. New estimated rate is \$32.47.
June, 1979	Joel Liberto was appointed to West Point after having also been accepted at Annapolis Naval Academy.
July, 1979 to June, 1980	The total budget for all town departments is \$16,625,978.89
January 1, 1980	The Bi-Centennial was ushered in with the ringing of all the fire alarms and church bells at 1:00 p.m.



These Centennial Banners were printed on cloth to celebrate our town's birthday.



Lincoln Square during 1910 celebration.



This float was in the Sesquicentennial parade in 1930.



**Avery and Woodbury Department store during the hurricane, September 21, 1938.**



**Macuen's ice house on Dilla St. collapsing during the flood in July, 1938.**



**Franklin Street after Nov. 27, 28, 29, 1921.**



**The Congregational Church steeple after the hurricane of September 21, 1938.**



**Morcone's Market at 23 Main Street  
in the background during the flash  
flood, July 1938.**











**Large crowds turned out for the Welcome Home Parade October 13, 1946.**



**The Milford Musicians entered this float in the parade.**



**This was the Woman's Relief Corps float in the parade.**



**A Welcome Home Parade for the World War II veterans was held. This contingent is led by John F. X. Davoren.**



**Troop 6 Boy Scouts of America sponsored by the Rotary Club entered this float.**



**This was the American Legion float in the parade on October 13, 1946.**



**Bicentennial birthday cake made by Milford bakers. The cake was paraded through Milford then eaten at a huge party.**



**This garage set on Church Street before the flood in August of 1955 floated it over Godfrey brook to make an unusual bridge.**



**The first Stacy baseball team with uniforms. First row l-r: Joseph Sheedy, George Irwin, William Fitzpatrick, second row: Eugene Bodio, Kelley Whyte, George Stacy, Thomas Davoren, Julio D'Agostino. Back row: Ted Steeves, Fred Rose, Roger Gifford, Adam Diorio, Wilfred "Whisie" Griffin.**



**Milford's Youth Militia in the 1976 parade under the watchful eye of William Dillon.**



**Milford Youth Militia at Town Park in 1976.**



**Great Milford Chamber of Commerce float in our Nation's Bi-Centennial Parade.**



**This birthday party was held to commemorate the country's birthday in 1976.**



**Bulldozers from the Army Corps. of Engineers were brought in to clear parts of town.**



**Route 16 following the blizzard on February 6, 1978.**



**People walking to grocery store on West Street several days after the blizzard of 1978.**



**Picture of Main Street the day after the great blizzard. Note person walking down the middle of Main Street.**





**This was the only mode of transportation during the great blizzard of '78.**



**Cherry Street shows the condition of many streets in Milford even days after the blizzard in February of 1978.**





**Milford's Historical Library and Museum.**

# Historical Commission

The Milford Historical Commission was established by the Board of Selectmen in July 1971, consisting of seven commissioners. The commission's headquarters was located in a small room on the second floor of Town Hall. During the first five years of existence, the commission was assisted by six associate members. Through the efforts of all, the commission collected many artifacts. By the year 1976 a new headquarters became necessary. After much searching the selectmen granted the use of Memorial Hall. This historical building provided adequate space as well as the proper historical setting for the commission's headquarters, library, and museum.

Upon moving to Memorial Hall, which was built in honor of the Grand Army of the Republic, the commission uncovered many civil war artifacts left to the Town by the G.A.R. veterans. These artifacts were officially turned over to the jurisdiction of the Milford Historical Commission, for preservation, by the Milford Board of Selectmen, in accordance with the wishes of the Sons of the Veterans, Draper Camp. At the present time, the commission established a permanent library – museum on the second floor of Memorial Hall.

In honor of our 200th birthday, the commission is presenting to Milford the following events at the museum:

April 13, 1980	Milford Past and Present
May 11, 1980	Eighteenth Century Historical Homes
June 15, 1980	Appreciation Day, open house
July 27, 1980	Milford's struggle for religious freedom
September 28, 1980	Early mills, Agriculture and Industries
November 9, 1980	Pictorial Review of Milford



**The Washington Hose 1 memorial tablet.**



**This is one of two cannons cast in Hopedale by J.E. Kimball in 1888.**



**Sword of Captain James M. Mason and a Rebel knife from the Battle of Fairoaks, Virginia.**



**Santos Bagaglio's granite tools on display in the Historical Museum.**



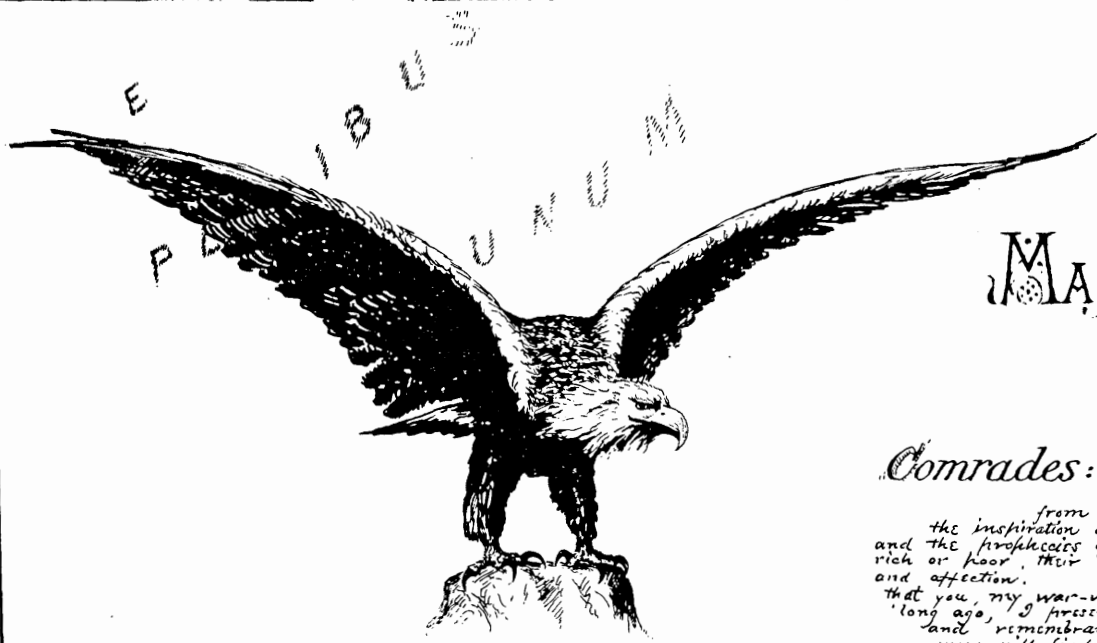
**Shirt, with bullet hole, worn by Whitman Howard at the battle of Petersburg. He was 15 years of age.**



**Civil War artifacts are on display at the Historical Museum.**



**Three souvenirs were made for celebration in Milford. The plate is a Martha Washington plate made for our country's centennial.**



DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS.

\*\*\*\*\*

MAJ. E. F. BLETCHER POST 22.

GRAND ARMY of the REPUBLIC.

Comrades:-

The sons of New England however distant they may be from their native hills, and however long the time since they last felt the inspiration of its free air fragrant with the recollections of a great past and the prophesies of a noble future, and whether they have become great or little, rich or poor, their hearts still turn to the scenes of their early days with reverence and affection. Partly in obedience to this feeling and yet even more that I know that you, my war-worn comrades are keeping alight the altar-fires of Freedom kindled long ago, my present to you, through your Commander, as a token of my respect and remembrance, a symbol of this Nation and as prelude, I trust, that you will find it a worthy decoration for Memorial Hall, the place of your Encampment, and may the sight of it stir other hearts than yours, and at other times to feelings of Patriotism and National Fidelity.

Comrades, is it not well, when we recall the story of the revolution, that this American eagle, from old Virginia, should at last spread her great wings at rest and in peace forever over your camp-fire in Massachusetts, and in its light may she not even seem to live again.

Symbols and emblems may fade and decay, but the truths underlying our national life will live on forever. They are worthy our highest aspirations as they are inspired, and it is not too much for them to live. May you, and the generations after you, ever hold them in honor and in trust, and may you live long, the land you have made great by your deeds and achievements.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,

Isilbut Thompson

Through-

Capt. H. J. Bailey

Commander, Post 22,

Milford, Mass. Feb. 22<sup>d</sup> 1887.

Comrade, Lincoln Post, No. 3.

Dept. of the Potomac,  
Washington, D.C.

The Golden Eagle was presented to Post 22 G.A.R. and has stood sentinel over the headquarters for nearly one hundred years.











- No. 1—Congregational Church.  
 " 2—Methodist Episcopal Church.  
 " 3—Episcopal Church.  
 " 4—Baptist Church.  
 " 5—Universalist Church.  
 " 6—Roman Catholic Church.  
 " 7—Unitarian Church, Hopedale.  
 " 8—Town Hall.

- No. 9—Music Hall.  
 " 10—Post Office.  
 " 11—High School.  
 " 12—Hopedale Machine Company.  
 " 13—Dutcher Temple Company.  
 " 14—Geo. Draper & Sons.  
 " 15—Jones & Shippee Shoe Mfy.  
 " 16—Estabrook Wires & Co.



# MILFORD



Printed by CHARLESCRAFT PRESS, MILFORD, MASS.

**D. MASS.** 

No. 17—Greene Brothers' Mfg

18 Johnson Rust Co., Boot Mfg

19 Colburn, Fuller & Co., Boot and Shoe Mfg

20 T. R. Spaulding, Straw Hat Mfg

21 Lee Lally, Boot Mfg

22 Claffin & Flayser, Boot Mfg

23 H. Wilford, Machine Works

24 R. E. Foster, Boot Mfg

No. 25 Moses Walker, Boot Mfg

26 J. L. Buxton, Boot and Shoe Machinery

27 B. H. Spaulding, Straw Hat Mfg

28 Milford National Bank

29—Home National Bank

30 Mansion House

31 Lincoln House

32 Milford Hotel

# Bicentennial Commission 1980



## BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

**TOWN OF MILFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01757**  
**200th ANNIVERSARY 1780 - 1980**

James J. Buckley, Jr., Saul Kraft, Co-Chairmen,  
Patricia Genoa, Secretary; Harold Murphy, Treasurer

### Members of the Milford Bicentennial Commission

Event	Date	Name
Beauty Pageant	January 26	Mr. Peter Concannon
Ethnic Dinners	March 9	Mrs. Elaine McNanna
Ecumenical Service	April 10	Mr. Harold Murphy
Road Race	May 17	Dr. James Buckley
Parade	June 15	Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Brenna
		Mrs. Dolores Doura
Fireworks and Concert	July 4	Mr. Saul Kraft
		Mr. Harold Murphy
Militia Mock Battle	September 14	Mr. Donald DeLorme
Historical Tours	September 21	Mrs. Ruth O'Connor
		Mrs. Virginia Stoddard
Ball	October 4	Mrs. Catherine Bavosi
		Mrs. Patti Genoa
Trade Show		Mr. Richard Duffy
Musical Events		Atty. Arlen Johnson

# Milford 1980



**Tower of St. Mary's as viewed from western end of Main Street by Draper Park.**



**Milford's Middle School East, former Central Elementary and St. Mary's Central High School.**



**United Methodist Church on Exchange Street with parsonage added for Sunday School.**



**Trinity Episcopal Church on Congress Street.**



**Milford Plaza on Medway Road.**





**Milford Police Station on Main Street.**



**General William Draper statue with Sons of Italy Memorial and Congregational Church in background.**



**Milford's Catholic Elementary School.**



**South Main Street fire station.**



**Foster Forbes Glass Company on National Street.**



**Ted's Diner on Main Street operated by Anthony Trotta for over 40 years.**



**Waters Associates on Maple Street.**



**Post office built in 1964.**





**The new court house built on West Street in 1968.**



**Lovett Albee's 1850 home at 35 Main Street restored for Charlescraft Press.**



**Millford High School opened in fall of 1973.**



**Pine Street Baptist Church with new spire erected in 1979.**



**Louisa Lake drained in 1979 for the rebuilding of the dam.**



**Milford Hospital in 1980.**





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