

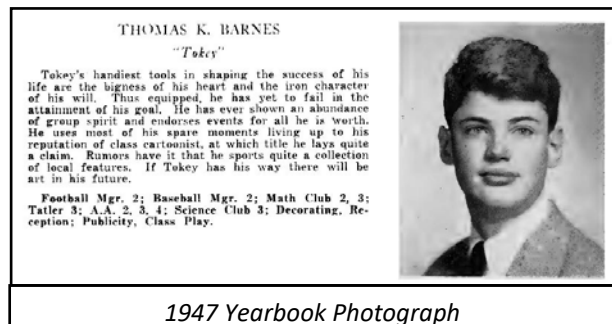


Tokey Barnes - By Lorrie Renker

Thomas Barnes (1928-1995), better known as “Tokey” around town, was a painter and a cartoonist. You have probably seen his work around Mansfield and didn’t realize it. His painting style was unique and portrayed colorful depictions of everyday scenes and life. His cartoons were often political and sports related.

Tokey grew up on Rumford Avenue and passers-by could see his light on in the attic where he worked on his craft. People remember Tokey for his “wicked” sense of humor and his determination to express himself through his art.

Tokey was born with Cerebral Palsy, learned to walk at age eight, and had speech challenges; but that never deterred him. Tokey once said: “I’m just as good as you or anybody else.”



1947 Yearbook Photograph

He graduated from Mansfield High School in 1947 and served as a class president. He commuted to Boston by train to attend art school and liked traveling by himself. He said: “When you’re willing to help yourself, you will find people willing to help you.” He tackled life head on! In 1954 he was interviewed by “Big Brother, Bob Emery” on his TV show. (Who remembers that children’s show?) The New Bedford Times said one of his art shows could be called “High and Wry Humor in Oil” although Tokey called it “Painting with a Point.”



So where can you find Tokey’s paintings around Mansfield? Check out Jimmy’s Pub, Stan’s Barbershop, Geno’s, (Also see page 4 for donation) and the Mansfield History Center. Many of the paintings are personalized with depictions of Mansfield people, businesses and famous sports figures. Take time to really look at his paintings and you can find Mansfieldians, buildings no longer there, and a lot of little depictions that will make you smile. If you are up for an adventure, you can ride the Island Queen out of Falmouth and enjoy four of Tokey’s paintings that have adorned her walls for 45 years.

Thanks, Tokey, for sharing your gift with us and for making your “point.”

Sources: *Mansfield News Articles: 3, 1954, December 27, 1956, September 15, 1960; The Boston Globe February 11, 1995: Talk with Deb Hinchey Vernon; Talk With Lou Certuse*

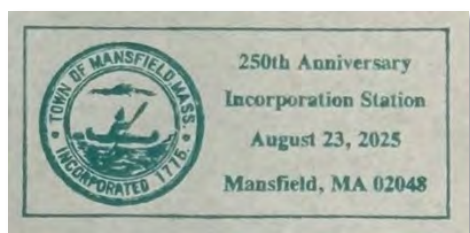
The Mansfield History Center received permission to reprint one of his works depicting the Mansfield Band parading down Main Street. Thanks to Doreen Alfonso for sharing this special work from her personal collection and allowing the Center to sell the prints to raise funds. They are available at the Copeland House. Half the proceeds will go to a scholarship fund in Tokey’s honor that is part of the Mansfield Citizens Scholarship Fund given to high school graduates each year. It was started by his neighbor and close friend, Joe Hinchey, “in recognition of the outstanding example set by Tokey Barnes of the ability of a handicapped person to achieve a great deal” and as a statement of the admiration he had for Tokey.



Official Postmark for Incorporation Day - By Nancy Breef-Pilz

The United States Postal Service has authorized an official postmark design to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Mansfield. It was modeled after the postmark used 50 years ago to celebrate the Bicentennial of our town.

A Post Office employee will be on hand at Memorial Park during Incorporation Day (Saturday, August 23rd) to officially cancel postage stamps. What a great souvenir and keepsake of the 250th Celebration!!



Mansfield Historical Society Treasurer, Ralph Merrifield, grew up in Mansfield and is also a stamp collector. He still has the envelope his father sent him back in August 1975 and remembers the Bicentennial postmark event. At that time, Mansfield was one of the first Massachusetts towns to be given approval for such a postmark and special First Day Cover envelopes were printed and sold. According to an article in the Mansfield News from that September, "The initial sale, on the day it was inaugurated, was 3000 envelopes bearing first class postage and the official cancellation indicia authorized by the United States Postal

Service." The postmaster reported they continued to get about 25 requests per day for the official cancellation, "and there seems to be no letting up on the demands."

After Kevin McNatt received authorization from the 250th Committee, Merrifield & McNatt filled out the necessary paperwork, designed the postmark & secured approval from the United States Postal Service. They are now working with the local Mansfield Post Office to carry out the actual event.

During the Incorporation Day festivities at Memorial Park on Saturday, August 23rd, a postal worker will be on hand from 12 to 5PM to sell stamps and apply the postmark to anything that has a postage stamp on it (postcards, envelopes, programs, pieces of paper, etc.)

Stamp collecting may not be as popular a hobby as it was in the 1970's, but the Historical Society has a variety of vintage Mansfield postcards & commemorative envelopes available for sale that can be stamped, postmarked and kept as keepsakes of this Sestercentennial celebration!



Bicentennial Official Postmark



Thanks to Blue Stone Bank for the recent donation of a Tokey painting of the old Mansfield Cooperative Bank shown on page 1! The MHC is thrilled to receive this work and add it to its Tokey collection of paintings and drawings.

Pictured (L to R:) Alan Benjamin, Lorrie Renker, Carie Bailey, Kevin McNatt, Emily Verra, Ralph Merrifield. (Nicholas Gervasi is taking the picture)



The History of 21 Hodges Street - By Ralph Merrifield

Leonard M. Hodges and his brother, Henry G. Hodges, moved from Norton to Mansfield in 1871. Because they were partners in a construction business, they bought some land just east of Washington Street (which was later renamed "North Main Street"), constructed a road, then built their two homes.



Two daughters of LM Hodges standing in front of their house, circa 1900

Leonard had a beautiful farmer's porch near the street and a mid-sized barn & carpenter workshop behind the house. Two decades later, he removed the farmer's porch and replaced it with a new 2-room addition. Leonard and his family were very active in the Mansfield community. He passed away in 1902, but his daughters still lived in the house for 30 more years.

In 1935, Robert and Mildred Merrifield drove down from Athol MA, along with their two children and nanny (Evelyn). Bob



Late 19th century advertisement. Their addresses were listed as 1 & 2 Hodges Street. Leonard's house featured a beautiful spiral staircase, proof of his stair building skills!

was transferred from the Union Twist Drill Company (Athol) to their Mansfield Division (S.W. Card). They rented a place on Chilson Avenue, then purchased the house at 21 Hodges Street from the LM Hodges estate 'just



Recent picture of the Merrifield/LM Hodges House (2024). Relatively unchanged in appearance over 150+ years.

after the Hurricane of '38". Mildred nicknamed it "The House of Nine Gables"

Here they raised their children, celebrated holidays, marriages, grandchildren & other special events, developed a wide circle of friends and became leaders in the community. When Mildred died, Robert married Evelyn... their live-in nanny !

In 2006, my wife, Nancy and I purchased the house from our grandparents' estate; we hope, someday, to pass it on to our future generations !!



Hodges Street first appeared on our 1871 town map (upper right). Interesting that the names of every other street in this area would be changed (Main to Rumford, Cross to Fulton, Washington to North Main, Bates to Court, Rogers to Park)



“One of the Prettiest Places in Town”: The Copeland House - By Andrew Todesco

Mansfield is blessed with many beautiful homes, old and new. But we at the Mansfield Historical Society are especially fond of 53 Rumford Avenue. At that address is the Copeland House, formerly the home of Jennie Copeland and now the Mansfield History Center.

Our story begins with Elijah and Abbie (nee Freeman) Copeland. They lived in a farmhouse on South Main Street where Mr. Copeland ran a large farm and Mrs. Copeland raised their only child Jennie (1879-1956). In time Jennie would graduate from Mansfield High School and attend Mount Holyoke College.



Jennie Copeland

While Jennie was away at Mount Holyoke, Mr. Copeland took ill and passed away. Jennie returned to be with her mother. Not farmers by trade, the farm proved too much for mother and daughter. They sold the farm and eventually bought land on Rumford Avenue where they built what would become the Copeland House.

The Copelands hired Lewis Packard as their builder. Mr. Packard had a sawmill at what is now 50 West Street along the Rumford River. There he cut and milled trees taken from the Copeland's other properties in town to build the Copeland House on Rumford Avenue.

On July 9, 1909, The Mansfield News reported the following: “Mrs. Copeland and her daughter are very pleased with their new home, and well they may be, for it will be one of the prettiest places in town.”

The house is a colonial revival foursquare style. It sits on a granite foundation, has a hip roof and a full front porch, which features a pleasant view of Fulton's Pond. The large foyer features a beautiful staircase with two landings that lead upstairs.

When the Copelands moved in, to the right of the foyer was a front parlor and with a dining room behind it. To the left of the foyer was the drawing room, with French doors and a fireplace. Behind the drawing room was the kitchen, complete with a built-in ice box and a coal-fired stove, later replaced by a gas stove. At the rear of the house a pantry connected the kitchen to the dining room.

The upstairs had three bedrooms and a full bathroom. Jennie's bedroom in the front of the house was connected to a study at the rear, where she is believed to have authored many of her writings on Mansfield history. There was also a full attic above and a full basement below.

Abbie Copeland passed away in 1919. Jennie Copeland lived the rest of her prolific life in the Copeland House. At times she lived alone, at other times with relatives. She occasionally took in boarders. Jennie organized the Mansfield Historical Society in 1951. In late September 1956 she suffered a heart attack at her home and was transported to Sturdy Hospital where she passed away.



James Wheeler, treasurer of the Mansfield Co-operative Bank, was the executor of Jennie Copeland's will. On the evening of December 17, 1956, Mr. Wheeler handed the keys to the Copeland House to Mrs. Warren Hopkins, who was President of the Mansfield Historical Society. Jennie had bequeathed the house and \$25,000 to the Society. The Copeland House has served as the Society's headquarters ever since.

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Mansfield Gears Up for a Historic Celebration: Our 250th Spirit Weekend!

Join us to celebrate a once-in-a-generation event filled with family fun, history and community spirit.

Mansfield is turning 250 and we're throwing a celebration worthy of our town's rich heritage and bright future! The Mansfield 250th Spirit Weekend, Friday, August 22nd-Sunday, August 24th promises to be an unforgettable, family-friendly event packed with activities, entertainment and hometown pride. Mark your calendars and get ready to make some memories as we celebrate!

Mansfield Spirit Weekend has something for everyone. Kids will delight in a lively petting zoo, pony rides, face painting and giant inflatables. Our Rec Department games are full of fun! Kids will also love the crafts tent and crowd-favorite Dragon Foam event, where foamy fun is sure to create laughter and excitement. Paddleboats and fire baskets on Fulton's Pond will delight the whole family.

History buffs can step back in time with captivating Historic Trolley Tours, Colonial reenactors and an old-fashioned Daughters of Liberty-style spinning contest and handspinning demonstrations. From a historic Mansfield movie to hosting Kick-the-bar games, fife and drum performances, horse-drawn carriage rides and live historical interpretations, the past will come alive right before your eyes.

Music lovers, get ready for a weekend full of great sounds! We'll feature performances from fife and drum corps, the Southeastern Massachusetts Community Concert band, the dynamic Navy Jack Tar Band and local rock bands that will keep the celebration moving all weekend long.

Feeling hungry? The Friday Mansfield Spirit Crawl downtown might be just the thing. Food trucks will be serving up delicious bits for every taste, and for the adults on Saturday, the beer garden offers a relaxing space to unwind and enjoy the music and atmosphere.

Whether you're 5 or 95, there's something for everyone to enjoy. It's a time to come together, celebrate our town's

(Continued on page 6)



250TH ANNIVERSARY SESTERCENTENNIAL EVENTS

August 22- 24 Incorporation Day Celebration

Mark your calendar for the weekend of August 22- 24 to celebrate the 250th birthday of the Town of Mansfield. On August 23, 1775, Mansfield, no longer the North Precinct of Norton, was incorporated and finally elevated to a town.

The festivities will begin at 6pm on **Friday, August 22** with the ringing of church bells throughout the town. Fulton's Pond will be aglow with Mansfield's own "Water-Fire", and as night falls, you can watch a movie under the stars, featuring Mansfield's 150th Celebration (c.1925).

Saturday, August 23, is a full day of celebration at Memorial Park on Hope Street. From 12 noon to 6PM, there will be activities for the whole family. Food trucks will be available, so plan to spend the whole day. There will be music, crafts, games and demonstrations.

On Sunday, August 24, we'll shift back to Fulton's Pond for our last day of activities including a Spirit Run, paddle boat rides and more music.

Friday, October 3rd

250th Finale Event TBD

Saturday, October 18th

Bonfire & Fireworks

Saturday, December 13th

Cultural Celebration

Visit Mansfield's official Sestercentennial Celebration website at www.mansfieldma250.com to keep up with the latest information and events

or use the QR code:





(Continued from page 4)

The Society soon knocked down the wall between the parlor and the dining room to create a meeting room. Aside from the society's ever-growing collection of Mansfield history, the house remains mostly unchanged.

In the last few years, the Society has reorganized the Copeland House. The drawing room now features historical displays. The outdated appliances were removed from the kitchen and the room now serves as an office. The pantry shelves now hold our collection of historical reference books such as yearbooks and voter lists. The basement has been cleaned, painted, and now features improved lighting, allowing for display of oversized items.

The Mansfield History Center is most fortunate to have the Copeland House as its headquarters. We are currently accepting donations toward either re-siding or re-painting the venerable Copeland House. If you are able to help, please contact us at mansfieldhs1775@gmail.com.



Copeland Home, So. Main Street

Author's note: The former Copeland homestead on South Main Street (Pictured above) no longer stands. It was leveled in the 1970's to make way for Route 495.

250th Merchandise Available for Purchase

Pins, tee shirts, cups and more. To purchase visit the 250th website by clicking [here](#).



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history, and look ahead to the future- all while having a whole lot of fun.

A celebration of this size wouldn't be possible without the help of volunteers- and we need you! If you'd like to be part of the action, lend a hand or help create a welcoming environment for guests, please consider signing up. Whether you can give an hour or a whole day, your support is invaluable.

Volunteers Needed! Contact the 250th Celebration Committee at www.mansfieldma250.com to help make our celebration amazing!

We can't wait to celebrate with you!



Historic Marker Program

The Historic Marker Program was established to honor and celebrate the history of the town of Mansfield and to create visibility, awareness, and interest in the individuals and families who helped shape our community.

Many people are curious about the house where they live and visit the Historical Society to find out more about their home and the many diverse people and places that made Mansfield what it is today.

The Historic Marker Program is a way for residents to share that knowledge with the broader community by purchasing a custom-made, dated sign that helps preserve the story of Mansfield.

[For details click here to visit our website.](#)

The Mansfield History Center now includes VENMO for payment.



The **Mansfield Historical Society** was founded in 1951 by local historian Jennie Copeland and a group of devoted charter members. We are 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to "preserving material relative to the history of Mansfield."

In 2023 the Society started doing business as the Mansfield History Center. We welcome new members. Visit our [website](#) to join.

Mansfield Historical Society and History Center
53 Rumford Avenue

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www.mhsma.org

The Mansfield Historical Society Newsletter

Nancy Breef-Pilz, Editor

Lou Andrews, Editorial Designer

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Fisher-Richardson House



The Fisher-Richardson House is open from 11AM to 2PM for guided tours each Sunday through the first Sunday in September. Admission is free. More information is available at www.mhsma.org.

Can't wait to visit the Fisher-Richardson House?

[Click here for a virtual tour.](#)



Books, old maps, vintage postcards, magnets and more available at the Copeland House, our table on Incorporation Day at Memorial Park (See page 5) or online at our [website](#).