

THE EASTFIELD RECORD



VOL. 2 No. 1

FALL 2023

We're very pleased to again issue the Eastfield Record. In my short year as president I've seen significant progress toward long-term sustainability of the Foundation. The challenges resulting from the loss of our beloved Billy McMillen have been many but the Foundation has stepped up to the challenge and continues to honor and sustain both Don's and Billy's legacy.

This year has seen a substantial amount of maintenance of the Village through the efforts of the Wednesday Crew which, since Billy's passing, has been ably coordinated by VP Peter Forward and Director Greg Joly.

This summer's Workshops have been very well attended with many first-time visitors to the Village, all of whom waxed enthusiastic about the sense of history that the Village engenders and the excellent hands-on experience in the various crafts. As expected with Billy McMillen's reputation, the Tin I, II & III workshop was quickly sold out. We had a new Singing School Weekend workshop and Rabbit Goody returned after several years to entrance us with her knowledge of weaving.

A new Squarespace website was developed early in the year which has made publicity, communication and registration much simpler and effective than the previous website, including accepting and managing payments.



A secure document management and archiving system has been implemented to assure that our history and operational documents are securely archived and available for use as required.

Our Board has worked hard to assure long term sustainability....but it is a small board and we're actively pursuing additional members with specific interests and expertise.

All said, it's been a very productive year. Kudos to all those who made it so!

Robert Roemer
President
Historic Eastfield Foundation

Above: This year's Tinsmithing Workshop in progress.



Historic Eastfield Village

Physical Address:
104 Mud Pond Road
East Nassau, N.Y. 12062

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 100
East Nassau, NY 12062
historiceastfield.org

Eastfield Village is private property and not open to the general public except during workshops, special events, or by appointment.

FOUNDER'S DAY CHARTER EXTENSION!

Founders' Day September 23, 2023

We look forward to a very successful founders' Day to celebrate the legacy of Don Carpentier and Billy McMillen. As with previous Founder's Days we have a program of craft demonstrations, entertainment and excellent food prepared by Becky Hendricks and her culinary team in the Briggs Tavern kitchen.

Founders' Day 2022

It was truly another successful Founder's Day and a time to reflect on the history of Eastfield Village and the Historic Eastfield Foundation and

how that history reflects the continuity and sustainability of both. Eastfield Village was founded with Don Carpentier's relocation of the first building at the Village, the Blacksmith Shop, in 1972. Eastfield Village celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2022! The Historic Eastfield Foundation was chartered by the New York State Board of Regents in 1992. The Foundation celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2022! These anniversaries reflect great support from our history and historic craft community, volunteers, and leadership from Don, Billy and the Board.



Our new postal address

There has been some confusion about our postal address in the past which has changed primarily for the convenience of the secretary or treasurer. In order to avoid confusion and misplaced mail we have established a permanent USPS box which appears on our website:

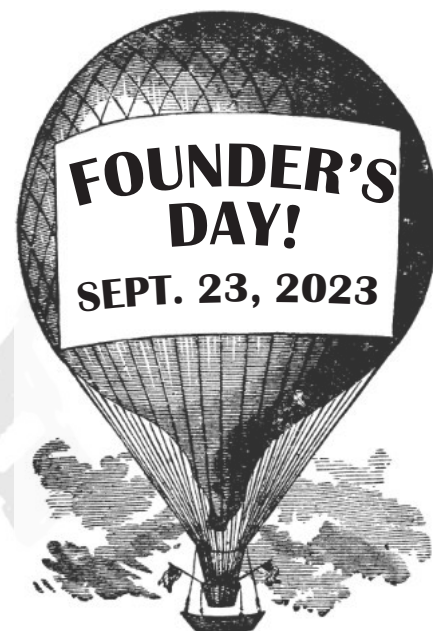
P.O. Box 100
East Nassau, NY 12062



Our Charter and Tax-exempt Status

Historic Eastfield Foundation is chartered by the NYS Board of Regents as an educational institution, initially in 1992. We've received a renewal of our charter and are going to apply for a permanent charter.

We've also received reaffirmation of our non-profit status as a 501 (c) 3 organization from the IRS. Consequently, donations to the Historic Eastfield Foundation continue to be tax exempt.



WEDNESDAY CREW

THE WM. H. MCMILLEN
COMMEMORATIVE WEDNESDAY CREW



By Greg Joly

In 2022 and for many years before, Billy McMillen put a call to a large number of volunteers to meet at the Village to perform maintenance and improvements to the buildings and grounds. The “Wednesday Crew” has become the backbone of the physical aspect of the Foundation. In addition to routine maintenance it’s members, under the leadership of Peter Forward and Greg Joly, continue to provide expertise in various elements of restoration and construction.

From May Day to Labor Day, the WC has clocked over 400hrs of volunteer labor while averaging 5-6 persons per session over 17 Wednesdays. We began with a general spring cleaning of the buildings, then various weed-whacking and brush clearing projects as needed. But our major project has been the completion of the new Briggs’ wood/portapottie-disguise shed: nailing studs were anchored into place, 100’s of board feet of clapboards were milled, planed, hand-planed and installed. Two louvres were constructed and fitted to their framing. While clearing-out and sorting lumber from the Carriage shed, we found enough pit-sawn/hand-beveled planks to sheath the interior wall. By Founder’s Day, we hope to have the building painted and stowed with firewood. Other projects have included the building of a soak-tank for the rush seat caning workshop, the beginning installation of an emergency/handicap ramp in the back of the church, the identification and labeling of bindery tools in the print shop and the prep and clean-up for the 2023 workshop season. To top our labors off, each Wednesday was enlivened by music and beer on the Briggs’ back porch. (Still no sighting of Billy’s mermaid on the rock in the



Lower Pond!) Several of these afterhour gatherings have included cooking in the Briggs’ kitchen such delights as Rob Z’s venison pastie, Kaelin’s mastery of fireplace wafer-making and raspberry pie. All often washed down with Art’s bottle-aged brews. Ahead of us is prepping for Founder’s Day and the celebratory memorial gathering on Guy Fawkes Day for our illimitable leader, Billy McMillen.

The Board

The Board of the Historic Eastfield Foundation

Robert Roemer, President
Peter Forward, Vice President
Ingrid Schaaphok, Secretary
Christopher Tintle, Treasurer
Niel De Marino
Carrie Feder
Greg Joly
Jeremiah Rusconi
Peter Schaaphok

We would like to increase the size and complexion of the Board to relieve some very long serving members and add needed experience and expertise. We have a description of the roles that we need and are contacting several individuals we believe could serve in those roles. Anybody who would like to learn about potential service or with suggestions for prospective Board members should contact us at historiceastfield@gmail.com.

Website

A new website, www.historiceastfield.org, was designed and populated this summer by Lance Petersen and Nick Raposo. The site uses the Squarespace platform and was designed to meet all of the needs for outreach, information and everything required to manage registration and payment for our Workshops and other events. This year all but one of our workshop registrations were made and paid for through the website, either through PayPal or Stripe.

Facebook

Our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/HistoricEastfieldFoundation, is being updated regularly and provides the most current information about all of the Foundations' activities including our Wednesday Crew, Workshops and special events

Document Management and Archiving

The loss of Don Carpentier and Billy McMillen resulted not only in the loss of our founders, mentors and dear friends, but the loss of a great deal of institutional memory. One of the major efforts this year has been to find, recover and consolidate a large number of documents, both digital and hardcopy. They've been uploaded to our Google Drive, a secure and carefully structured on-line repository to assure that we have an institutional memory going forward that can be accessed for information and uploading by those who need it. When anybody finds a piece of historical information about Eastfield Village, please send it to us at historiceastfield@gmail.com or alert us to its existence for potential upload to our files. We are also collecting historical hardcopy documents about the Village for a consolidated and secure hardcopy repository.



WORKSHOPS

Our 47th Annual Early American Trades and Historic Preservation Workshops were made a great success with our talented workshop leaders all of whom have regional if not national recognition.

While there were many participants who had been to the Village before, there were many new participants who were impressed with the Village and their total immersion in early 19th Century life while staying at the Briggs Tavern and experiencing life of that period. We will be forever thankful to Peter Forward for his resolve and tenaciousness in pulling together the workshops, both reaching out to the leaders and coordinating the individual descriptions and mailer that went out this year.



Offerings included

Hand Tool Woodworking ☞ Peter Forward

Natural Rush Seat Weaving ☞ Tracey Ledder

Letter Carving in Stone ☞ Allifon Blake Steel

Vernacular vs. Fancy: Family Weaver & Fancy Weaver in the Rural Northeast ☞ Rabbit Goody

Basic Blacksmithing ☞ Olof Janffon

18th Century Singing School Weekend - Allifon Blake Steel

Timberframing ☞ Rich Friberg

Tin smithing - Levels I, II & III ☞ Steve Delifle & Rich Eckert

1st Course in Hearth Cooking ☞ Gwen Miner

Blacksmithing: Make a Toaster ☞ Dick Sargent



Regretfully Early American Printing had to be canceled but Greg Joly subsequently pulled the registrants together for a visit to Timothy James' working 19th century bookbindery in Troy, NY.

We look forward to the 48th Annual Early American Trades and Historic Preservation Workshops in 2024. Watch our website, your e-mail and your mailbox!



William F. McMillen

September 30, 1941 to November 9, 2022



By Chris Tintle

William (Billy) McMillen, age 81 of Glenmont New York passed away quietly at home on November 9th. Billy was born on Staten Island and lived there for his entire life until he retired and moved to Glenmont in 2003. One of the main reasons that he moved to Glenmont was to be closer to Eastfield, a place that was very near and dear to his heart.

He first visited Eastfield in the mid-1970s and began a lifelong friendship with the village's founder, Don Carpentier and together they began the classes in historic trades and preservation which remained a passion of his for the rest of his life. He truly felt at home at Eastfield and

spent as much time as he could there, using the majority of his vacation time from his job as supervisor of restoration at Staten Island's Historic Richmond Town, where he worked for more than forty years. He often took his two sons along with him during the summer and they had experiences that lasted a lifetime.

The Eastfield of the 1970s was even more rural than it is today. Billy loved it there. You could certainly argue that Billy was born into the wrong century with his aptitude for so many trades in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is true that he would have been at the top of his field in any century, we were lucky enough to have had him in our time.

Billy was there at the beginning with the establishment of The

Historic Eastfield Foundation and served as a board member in various roles right up until his passing. He helped Don Carpentier move and restore many of the buildings in the village. In fact, he was still helping to restore Eastfield's buildings the week before he died, working on a new timber frame that he designed. He was part of the "Wednesday Crew" that met every week from April through October to work on various projects at the village necessary for the village's upkeep, including a large amount of restoration work on the Briggs tavern.

He loved to go antiquing with his wife Judy and his friends and loved finding unique items at a flea market, antique shop or tool sale. The fact that he might already have three or



four of the same item wouldn't stop him from getting another one! Over the years, he also acquired a large collection of American material culture, tools, and firearms.

After losing Judy in March of 2021, he remained passionate about Eastfield, and it was truly one of the things that kept him going. He loved the setting of the Briggs tavern at Eastfield more than just about anywhere else and was an ace at dominoes, made great rum punch, and could entertain with his stories for hours. He was a friend to all and always gave others his time, talent, and treasures.

He was a big fan of craft beer and single malt scotch and sharing a pint or dram with Billy is one of the things that all of us will miss. Those conversations are truly ones to treasure. To see his eyes light up when he was talking about one of the many

things that he was passionate about was unforgettable.

Anyone who met Billy even briefly knew what a savant he was. A master, truly, of many trades, he could grain paint a box, deftly use a molding plane he restored, and design a timber frame dwelling. But as a tinsmith, he was in a league of his own and the maker of the most intricate tin items. He helped train many tinsmiths across the country, and his knowledge was critical to the establishment of the thriving tin shop at Colonial Williamsburg, where he donated many of the tools used in the shop. He would love that the Tinsmithing course took place this summer at Eastfield with two great instructors (and friends of his) that carries on another of his lasting legacies.

He had a true passion for life and had so many more things that he

wanted to do. More traveling, spending time with family, consulting on historic buildings, more tinsmithing, more time with friends and of course teaching more classes at Eastfield. We will all miss Billy but thank him for everything that he did to advance the preservation of historic trades, restoration and for the impact that he had on each of us. He will always live on in our memories.

A memorial service will be held for Billy in the church at Eastfield on Saturday, November 4th at 2pm.

