

THE EASTFIELD RECORD



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FALL 2019

EASTFIELD'S GOOD FORTUNE

❁ THIS YEAR'S FOUNDERS' DAY WILL ACKNOWLEDGE "BILLY" McMILLEN AS A FOUNDER OF EASTFIELD ❁

At a summer 1975 Brigade of the American Revolution event in Glens Falls, N.Y., a thin Albany County militiaman took a second look at some finely made camp furniture outside the tent of a Loyalist officer from Billup's Corps of Staten Island. The craftsmanship and accuracy of the reproduction furniture impressed the militiaman, and as he stood there, a sharply clad, stocky lieutenant approached from tent's shadows—he had made the items. "Hi, I'm Billy McMillen," said the lieutenant. "Hello, my name is Don Carpentier," replied the Albany defender. Shared friends had been telling them they must meet, and it finally happened. An incredible partnership had begun.

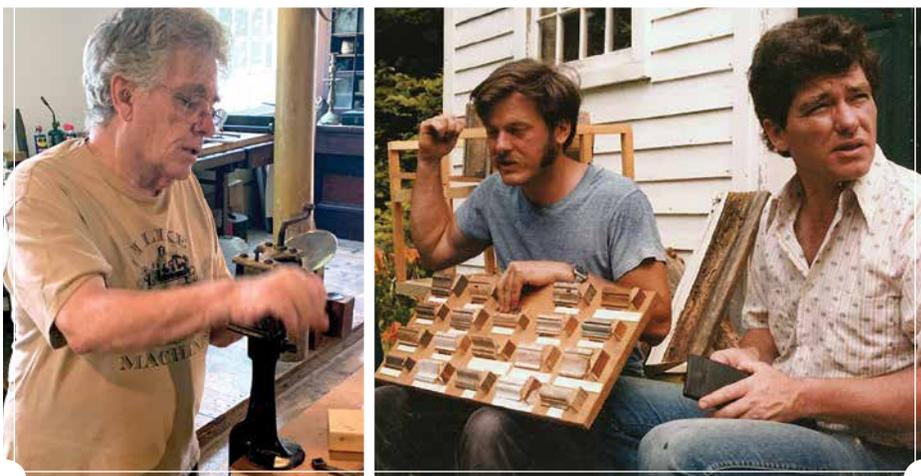
At this year's Founders' Day, the Historic Eastfield Foundation will celebrate that incredible partnership by a simple, but significant, gesture: Moving the possessive punctuation in "Founders" to indicate plurality and include William "Billy" McMillen as one of the Founders of Eastfield along with Don Carpentier. Eastfield is unquestionably primarily the result of Don's drive and ambition. But just as unquestionably, Billy deserves the recognition as a Founder for his critical role at Eastfield.

Their work together began in October 1975, Billy's first visit to Eastfield. He and Don spent a lot of time talking in the Yellow Tavern about their shared passion for early buildings and antiques. After that, Billy would travel to Eastfield from Staten Island when he could on weekends to help Don disassemble and move buildings to the growing village.

The first large building Billy helped move was the 1836 First Universalist Church from Duaneburg, N.Y. He did an architectural rendering of the meetinghouse framing so it could be disassembled for transport, and also



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: A 1990S WETPLATE IMAGE OF TWO GOOD FRIENDS. DON CARPENTIER, LEFT, AND BILLY McMILLEN, RIGHT, POSE WITH THE TOOLS OF THE TINSMITH'S TRADE OUTSIDE OF EASTFIELD'S TIN SHOP, WHERE BILLY FIRST TRIED TINSMITHING; DON AND BILLY EXPLAIN VARIOUS FORMS OF DECORATIVE MOLDING TO A CLASS IN THE 1980S; BILLY WORKING ON A BURRING MACHINE AT THIS SUMMER'S TIN 1 WORKSHOP. STILL AS SMOOTH AS EVER.



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A REMARKABLE INSPIRATION

It's hard to believe that it has already been five years since Don Carpentier passed away. At the time there were comments that Eastfield Village would also soon pass away and that the Historic Eastfield



Foundation could never do justice to Don's legacy. Happily that has not been the case. The foundation has worked tirelessly not only in managing and expanding our renowned workshops in early trades and historic preservation but also in the physical upkeep and improvement of our "campus," Eastfield Village.

All of this would have been almost impossible to achieve were it not for the one person next to Don Carpentier who was (and is) responsible for the Eastfield phenomenon: Billy McMillen.

For four decades Billy worked alongside Don on almost every project in the village. From planning and teaching workshops to delving into the minutiae of the various trades our workshops have covered. For these reasons we are dedicating this issue of the *Eastfield Record* to Bill McMillen and his remarkable skills. As I have often said, "I want to grow up to be Billy'.

*Peter R. W. Schaaphok
President, Historic Eastfield Foundation*



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Billy McMillan, continued from page 1

developed the numbering plan for each piece of the frame so it could be reassembled.

Billy honed his preservation skills while working at Historic Richmond Town on Staten Island, a historic site his father, Loring, founded and administered as director. He grew up there, and started working at Richmond Town in 1963. The ca. 1740 Guyon-Lake-Tysen house was the first building he helped to restore. Over the years he refined his preservation skills, but he learned tinsmithing at Eastfield.

During one of his weekend trips to Eastfield, a tour was coming in to see the developing village. Don asked Billy to interpret the Tin Shop even though he had no experience with that craft. Don showed him some patterns, and told him to do his best. Billy traced out and made two wall sconces, which he still has. From that beginning, he has become one of the finest tinsmiths in America.

Perhaps the best thing about Billy and Don was that they wanted to share their knowledge with others. In 1977, the Eastfield Workshop series began. Since then the workshops have run every year, through thick and thin, and through Don's untimely death in 2014. Thousands of students have come away richer for learning preservation skills at Eastfield, the realization of Don and Billy's vision. Billy has taught at least 154 classes at Eastfield by himself or with others, and 97 of those were with Don.

Billy retired from Richmondtown in 2003, and he and his wife Judy quickly moved to the Albany area so they could be closer to Eastfield. The village has had to share him a bit, as he has consulted and done work for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Colonial Williamsburg, and other historical sites. But Billy has spent most of his retirement energy serving on the Historic Eastfield Foundation board, which he joined in 1990 and Judy joined in 2003, teaching classes, and working on Eastfield's treasured buildings. He's the force behind weekly volunteer workdays that keep the village looking better and better. He'll be 78 at the end of September, and his skills are as sharp as ever.

Don was the visionary, creative genius who never stopped moving or thinking. He saw Eastfield in his mind before it was built, and he knew what it could become. Billy is the technical wizard, the craftsman who unravels any problems with his hands and his mind.

We can be left to wonder at the good fortune that brought two geniuses together to blend their talents to help a cluster of old buildings in rural New York grow to national prominence. But there is no doubt as to how fortunate Eastfield is. The Historic Eastfield Foundation is proud to move that possessive. Don and Billy are the Founders' of Eastfield.

BILLY FAST FACTS

- » *First visit to Eastfield*
October 1975
- » *First Eastfield building worked on*
"One of the outhouses"
- » *First Eastfield workshop taught*
1977
- » *Number of workshops taught. (So far)*
154
- » *Married Judy*
November 28, 1975
- » *Favorite Beer*
Beaver Bite IPA
- » *Food Indulgence*
Raw Oysters
- » *Favorite Sport*
Dominoes in Briggs Tavern
- » *What can't he do*
Nothing

JUDY, HIS BELOVED



Judy McMillen, Billy's wife, has also been a long-time part of Eastfield. She also made her first visit to Eastfield in October 1975, and over the years she has taught classes and made memorable tavern dinners for students and guests. Judy oversees the production and layout of each year's HEF workshop brochure, serves on the foundation board, and has put in countless hours helping Eastfield thrive, with no intent to slow down.



Wednesdays are for Work!

THE WEEKLY VOLUNTEER CREW HAS BEEN HARD AT IT

Billy McMillen guided regular Wednesday workday volunteers Art Thorman, Nick Lawler, Peter Forward, and Greg Joly in more than 600 hours of work from late April until Labor Day. The consistent turnout allowed them to break into two, and sometimes three, independent teams, which has greatly increased productivity.

The Briggs Tavern back porch is really looking great. The small room on the porch has a six-panel door and transom window, crafted during the winter by the crew in Billy's basement. Two chamfered posts with lamb's tongues were carved and put in place after the fascia and soffit were installed. That allowed the plastering class to lath and plaster a new porch ceiling. The volunteer team also finished clapboarding the porch-side kitchen ell, which was then painted. No more plywood scabbing!

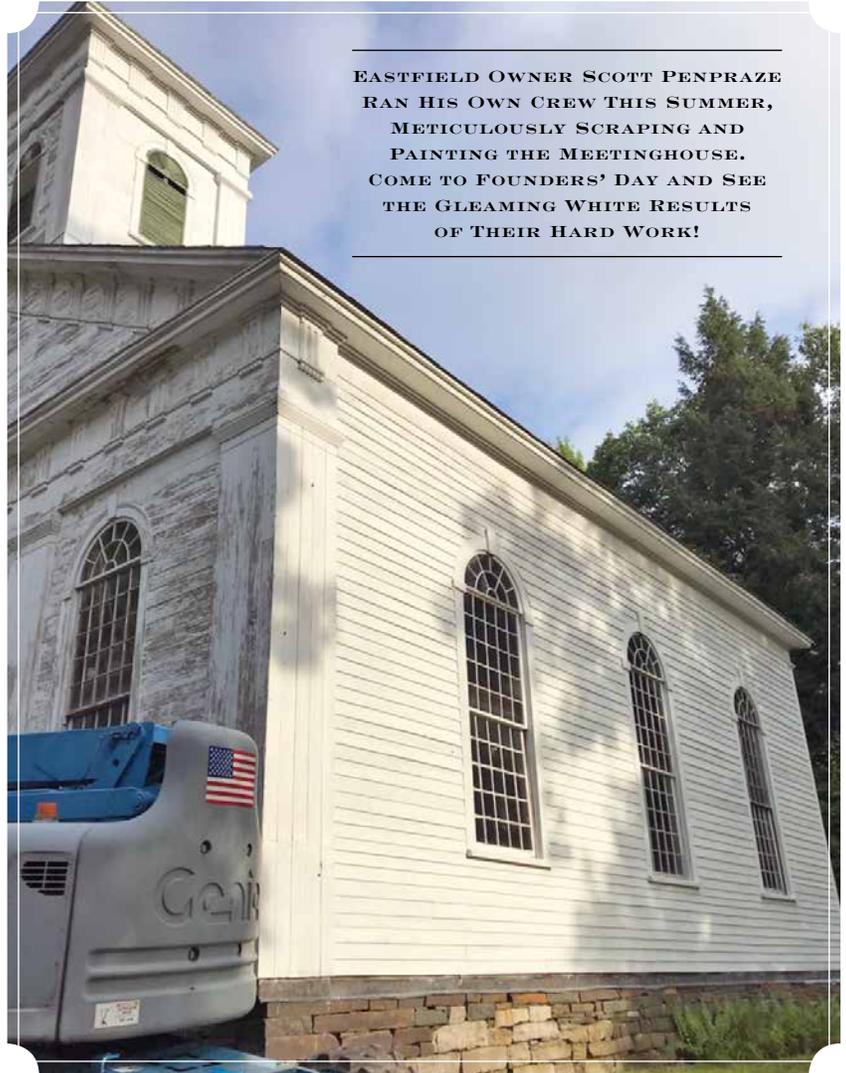
The volunteers also have been milling lumber for the library's shelving and the meetinghouse's water table.

Add in all the hours of sorting and cleaning in several of the buildings (You would be amazed at the contents of every drawer in the Carpenter's Shop!) and it's understandable how fortunate the team was to have Art Thorman providing homebrewed beer at the end of each taxing, but productive work session.



SOME SPECIAL THANKS!

Blacksmithing instructor Olaf Jansson made a new frisket for the Columbian printing press, a necessary item that press has lacked since its mid-1980s arrival in Eastfield. Steve Mankowski, instructor for Advanced Blacksmithing, crafted a historically accurate thumbpiece for the Doctor's Office Norfolk latch.



EASTFIELD OWNER SCOTT PENPRAZE RAN HIS OWN CREW THIS SUMMER, METICULOUSLY SCRAPING AND PAINTING THE MEETINGHOUSE. COME TO FOUNDERS' DAY AND SEE THE GLEAMING WHITE RESULTS OF THEIR HARD WORK!

HISTORIC EASTFIELD FOUNDATION



FOUNDERS' DAY 2019

Saturday, September 21

11:00 to 4:00 – \$20, pay at the gate – children free!

Join us for *Historic Eastfield Village's Annual Open House!*

Tour the Village's collection of more than 20 Historic Structures and their Furnishings, dating from 1789-1840

Observe and interact with Master Craftsmen plying their trades: **PRINTER, TINSMITHS, BLACKSMITH, CABINET MAKER, POTTERS, SCISSOR ARTIST, SLATE CARVER, FLAX WORKERS, CIDER MAKER, HISTORIC DOLL MAKER & more!**

1830's Militia drilling & firing demonstrations, 19th C. Magician, Music, Historic Lighting Demo, "Shape-Note" Singers, Children's Storyteller, Miniature Hot Air Balloons & more!

"Ploughman's Lunch," Tea & Treats, Antiques & Handcrafted items, all available for purchase

Historic Eastfield Village, 104 Mud Pond Road, East Nassau, NY 12062

For more info: EastfieldVillage@gmail.com

www.HistoricEastfield.org

follow us on Facebook: "Historic Eastfield Foundation"



Fall Fundraiser!

GUY FAWKES DAY
NOVEMBER 2, 2019



\$150 PER PERSON

(PRE-PAID/PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

3:30 p.m. Event begins | 4 p.m. Lectures and discussion
5 p.m. Buffet Tavern Dinner | 7 p.m. Bonfire

The balance of the evening will be filled with nightcaps, music, games, and talk in the Briggs Tavern.

IN 1605, Guy Fawkes got caught trying to blow up England's House of Lords, part of a larger plot to assassinate King James I. Fawkes' capture foiled the scheme against the King, and celebratory bonfires were lit throughout London. In the late 1970s a number of Eastfield "regulars" started getting together in early November for an evening of jollification that coincided with Guy Fawkes day. Thus the tradition was born. Unfortunately, after a few years the event dwindled. The Historic Eastfield Foundation, however, has now revived that combustible holiday, and Guy Fawkes day will be a major fundraiser for Eastfield. Imagine all the fireplaces ablaze and soft candlelight in the Briggs Tavern while you feast on a sumptuous hearth-cooked tavern meal, enjoy great conversation, an intriguing lecture, and lively music while you sip tasty period libations. After all that, guests will go out in the crisp November air to celebrate Fawkes' capture with a huge bonfire as you watch Eastfield's brush pile go up in flames, along with an effigy of Guy Fawkes. Plan to be at Eastfield for this unique inflammatory event, and watch for more details on the Historic Eastfield Foundation's website and Facebook page.

Summer Workshop Success

12 SUMMER WORKSHOPS

4 SELLOUTS

80-PLUS ATTENDEES!

The HEF had a great summer workshop season, with one more to go, HEF Vice President Niel De Marino's Georgian Kitchen in October. It's almost full, so hurry and sign up at historiceastfield.org. Plans are already underway for 2020 workshops. Stay tuned!



INSTRUCTORS GREG JOLY, LEFT, AND STEPHEN SWORD, RIGHT, FLANK STUDENTS OF THE PRINTING WORKSHOP PROUDLY DISPLAYING THE RESULTS OF THEIR INKY WORK.

"The Textiles in America workshop was excellent! Knowledgeable, approachable presenters, and fantastic after-hours conversations about all things textile-related. Bonus: A great night's sleep in a pristine historic building, complete with a gorgeous privy."

*–Carrie F., Hunterdon Township, N.J.
Textile workshop attendee*

THE MISSION OF THE HISTORIC EASTFIELD FOUNDATION



1. TO TRAIN MEN AND WOMEN IN A RANGE OF EARLY AMERICAN TRADES AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION SKILLS.
2. TO ENCOURAGE CRAFTSPERSONS AND PRESERVATIONISTS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO SAVE THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE PAST.
3. TO PRODUCE PUBLICATIONS, SPECIFICALLY A PERIODICAL AND SINGLE-SUBJECT PUBLICATIONS, AND PRESCRIPTIVE AUDIO-VIDEO MATERIALS, AND SYMPOSIA FOR BOTH THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND A PROFESSIONAL AUDIENCE.
4. TO DEVELOP A COLLECTION AND LIBRARY APPROPRIATE TO EARLY ARTS AND TRADES AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION.
5. TO DEVELOP A LONG-TERM PLAN FOR CONTINUING THE GOALS AND PURPOSES OF THE FOUNDATION.
6. TO MAINTAIN FACILITIES NECESSARY TO FURTHER THE FOUNDATION'S EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES.

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