

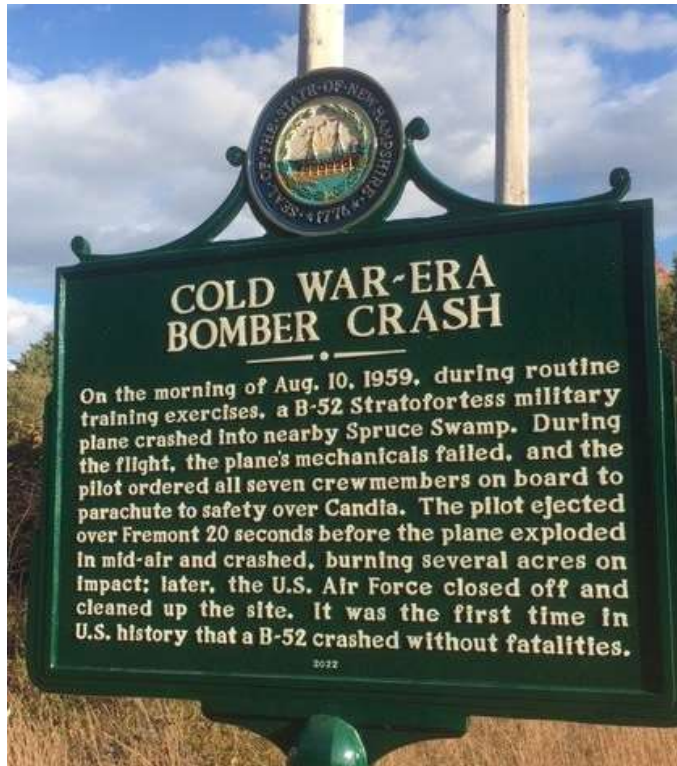
## Report of the Town Historian HISTORICAL REVIEW OF FREMONT in 2022

**GROWTH:** 2022 was a year of many positive and not-so-positive changes. The Town is experiencing once again a very serious growth spurt as it reaches the 5000 population mark now, or in early 2023 -- some of which seem to be threatening the very rural appeal of our so-called "scenic little country town." Several new homes were built around Fremont, especially on the southside of town, with new developments starting to take place with **Heritage Farm Estates** off Scribner Road, **Liberty Lantern Estates** off Main Street, **Iron-Horse Industrial Park** off Main Street, and a proposed very substantial 55+ Housing Development expected to be approved and built behind Susan's Way in 2023. These along with several new houses built on Copp Drive, Main Street, South Road, Sandown Road and in Grist Mill Estates, it soon becomes quite apparent that Fremont, which was once a fairly affordable blue collar off-the-beaten-path-town, has now been given a serious second-look by many potential developers who are building new homes costing between \$500,000 to \$800,000! Even smaller, less pretentious homes around Fremont are now selling between \$300,000 to \$450,000! With Fremont literally being in the center of New Hampshire's "golden tri-angle" that territory between Portsmouth, Manchester & Nashua, and with larger surrounding towns like Raymond, Epping, Kingston & Sandown growing expeditiously, it will become much more difficult than ever if Fremonters are not vigilant in striving to preserve and maintain the true rural character of our town which the vast majority of residents genuinely love, cherish, and appreciate.

There were a couple of small victories this year at least: The wonderful restoration of the historic **circa 1765-1768 Sherburne Sleeper / Dr. William Hardy Tavern & Barn** located at 454 Main Street a few feet west of the 1800 Meeting House & 1802 Town Pound did much to enhance and preserve the integrity of that iconic and historic New England scene. An enduring and most appreciative **Thank You to the ever-dynamic Danley Family** for restoring this historic old New England Tavern where several early 19<sup>th</sup> century Town Meetings took place when adjourned from the frigid-cold 1800 Meeting House before wood stoves were installed in 1840. Sadly, due to decay, it was necessary to take down the historic circa 1800 Corn Crib that was located just behind the existing barn. Now there are only three remaining old corn cribs still standing in Fremont.

**Many thanks to Jeremy Wright** for restoring the cupola atop the magnificent old 1791 Barn built by Enoch Smith and later owned for 183 years by six generations of the Ezra & Timothy Currier Families. The house located at 173 South Road was sold out of the Currier Family in 1981 to Woodrow & Dorma West whose family sold it in the spring of 2022. Thankfully, Jeremy decided to restore the cupola instead of replacing it with a new and smaller version. This is, among others, one of the most beautiful barns in Fremont.

In early October, the State of New Hampshire erected another State Historical Marker on Route 107 / Main Street that commemorates the historic **1959 B-52 Cold War Bomber Plane**



**Crash in Spruce Swamp.** There have been 95 B-52 plane crashes since 1955 and the Fremont crash was the first and only crash to NOT cause any fatalities despite the plane exploding in mid-air!!

This is the sixth state historic marker in Fremont putting our Town in second place (only after Concord's 13), with the largest number of state markers in New Hampshire.

**WEATHER IN 2022 – Winter** started off in mid-January with an extremely frigid cold spell on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Temperatures dropped between 20 to 30 degrees below zero! A slight breeze made it feel even colder around Fremont. It was so cold that barely anyone went outside that day. This was followed by a blustery

Blizzard / Nor-Easter on January 29<sup>th</sup> with 30 to 35 miles per hour winds. It was VERY COLD and the storm dropped 8 to 9 inches of snow, which was better than the 18 to 20 inches that was expected. The snow fell horizontally and kept the streets primarily clear of traffic all day! It was definitely a quiet & peaceful day with almost everyone staying right at home during an old-fashioned New England winter storm. Interestingly, despite the cold and severity of this storm, an assortment of birds were feeding all day long at birdfeeders!

By March 11<sup>th</sup> it had been a normal cold winter. There were several picturesque snowstorms throughout February & March that left a fine, light covering of snow over Fremont's landscape. There were also numerous maple trees tapped for maple sugar sap in February & March all around Fremont, the most trees this author can ever recollect in over 60 years. Sadly, the customary old gray metal sap buckets are gradually being replaced with plastic buckets and/or light blue plastic sap bags hanging from the trees. The weather during sap season was nearly perfect in 2022 for sap to flow with several warm days and cool nights.

**Spring** - mild and mostly pleasant between March and early May. The peepers were heard by this author for the first time on April 6<sup>th</sup>. The spring weather took turns being cool, cold, windy, rainy and occasionally warm. By Memorial Day it was pleasantly warm and even hot during the last days of May. June was more of the same, only with very little rainfall, causing dry conditions.

**Summer** - July & August were very hot & humid causing the drought of 2022 to get worse here in Fremont and elsewhere in southeastern New Hampshire and southern New England. Many residents had to watch their wells through the hot summer months. The drought did not start to ease up until late September. Compared to out West and down South where temperatures skyrocketed between 108 to 114 degrees during mid-summer, we here in southern New Hampshire had it downright pleasant. By July 15<sup>th</sup> it was very dry despite an

occasional rain shower or two during the first half of July. New Hampshire residents were asked by the media to curtail any unnecessary water usage to help minimize the effects of this drought. There was a six-day HEAT WAVE near the end of July – all in the mid to high 90's and very hot and humid! There were two strong thunder & lightning storms on July 24 that dropped heavy rain but the two storms combined only lasted 15 to 25 minutes if even that! It didn't help minimize the drought of 2022 whatsoever. Lightning struck 578 Main Street on July 12<sup>th</sup>, doing enough damage that it was necessary to tear down this pre-1857 Victorian-era house that was owned by the Bishop Family in that section of Fremont formerly called "Bishopville" where several Bishops lived and built houses during the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. **By the end of August, the drought became very severe in southeastern New Hampshire** and there were so many days in the 90's in July & August that **the summer of 2022 ranked second only to 1955 with the most summer days ever in the 90's!** The long heatwave and humidity was unbearable for most people. There was finally a heavy rainfall over Labor Day which helped a little, lessened the dryness and provided much needed water to home gardens and wells.

**Autumn** – considering the severe summertime drought of 2022, autumn was surprisingly very impressive with countless trees showing vibrant red, orange & yellow colors especially the bright red maple tree located just a few yards west of the 1800 Fremont Meeting House. It was a pleasant and comfortably warm autumn. **The first snowflakes of the season fell briefly on November 17<sup>th</sup>** with two brief windy snow squalls happening within two hours of each other on that day.

**Winter** - The first substantial snowfall took place on December 11<sup>th</sup> with 2 ½ inches falling. On December 23<sup>rd</sup> a severe 2-inch rainfall with high winds struck Fremont reeking havoc with downed powerlines, fallen trees & branches, 40 to 50 mph winds, sporadic and long-term power outages, some lasting right through December 27<sup>th</sup>. Mild temperatures dropping from 40 degrees in the afternoon to near 10 degrees within just three-or-four hours causing rain-coated roads to freeze. A serious car accident happened at the intersection of Main Street & Red Brook Road causing those two roads to be closed down for a couple of hours. Luckily, the vehicles didn't crash into a nearby house. Damage was much more serious elsewhere in New Hampshire and throughout the Northeastern United States as this blizzard raged across the Midwestern states towards New England turning to rain by the time it hit parts of New Hampshire. This storm ruined many peoples' travel plans for Christmas all across the nation because of cancelled air flights and dangerous road conditions. **There were over 70 fatalities nationwide due to this vicious storm.**

**The FIRST SWATTING INCIDENT IN FREMONT** - on the night of February 24, 2022 the Rockingham County Dispatch received a call from a Fremont resident saying he lived on Midnight Sun Drive and that he had just shot and killed his mother. He also said he was going to kill his brother and himself. The caller then hung up abruptly before any other information could be gathered. Fortunately, it was a hoax and nothing became of the incident. Fremont Police immediately informed the community of the danger of these types of calls and how they require immense amounts of time, energy, investigation, and taxpayer monies to track down the culprits. Incidents of swatting have occurred all around the country, mostly in large cities, or at residences of the rich and famous. Sadly, these incidences are increasing nationwide and

are seriously jeopardizing the security and safety of those unfortunately impacted by these irresponsible, foolish pranks.

**THE 14TH ANNUAL SB-2 DELIBERATIVE SESSION** took place on Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:00 am at the Ellis School Pettengill Gym. For the second year in a row, both the School & Town Deliberative Sessions took place together on the same day. Sixteen School and Town Officials attended the School District Meeting with 35 voters in the audience. Safe Covid-19 practices took place with all but three people refusing to wear a face mask, and voters kept a space of 5 or 6 feet distance between them. The big topic on the SD agenda was petition article #8 requesting that voters (parents) decide, not the School Board, whether students will wear face masks to school or at school events. There were several pro and con debates about this. This will be non-binding vote regardless of how the vote turns out on March 8<sup>th</sup>. The SD Meeting started at 9:10 am and adjourned at 11:35 am.

The **TOWN SESSION** had the usual 16 Town Officials in attendance with only 17 voters in the audience. Again, Covid-19 safety measures were implemented for the second year in a row. The big topic on the Town agenda was a petitioned article requesting that the Automatic Vote Counting Machine be replaced with people hand counting ballots instead. There were mostly pro-arguments supporting the continuance of the vote-counting machine as it saves time, and the costs associated with hiring more people to be on hand to count ballots, especially now that the Town has approximately 70 to 800 people voting at Town elections with numerous Warrant Articles to count votes for. The Town session started at 11:39 am and adjourned at 12:55 pm.

On Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup> Fremont State Representative Josh Yokela was one of only 13 Republican State Reps who voted to support a constitutional amendment that would allow NH to secede from the Union. This measure was soundly defeated 323 to 13 at a vote held in the State House. A vote in favor of this amendment was considered by many Democrats and Republicans as “treasonous” to their oath of office.

**TOWN ELECTIONS** held on March 8<sup>th</sup> saw 803 Fremonters voting, out of roughly 3,300 registered voters, at the Ellis School Pettengill Gym between 7:00 am and 8:00 pm. Voters resoundingly voted down eliminating the Ballot Vote Counting Machine during elections, and a petitioned Warrant Article to allow parents instead of the School Board the right to decide if children should wear face masks in or on school property was also defeated. All 16 of the WA passed, as did the School District Articles.

**BOSTON POST CANE PRESENTATION** was made on May 19<sup>th</sup> to Fremont native Jerlina “Jerlene” Norma (Healey) Jalbert, aged 92 born in 1930. She was the fourth child born to Charles Merton Healey & Bessie (Brown) Healey. Select Board members Gene Cordes, Neal Janvrin & Roger Barham were all in attendance as was Town Administrator Heidi Carlson, Town Historian Matthew E Thomas, and roughly 25 relatives of Mrs Jalbert. The presentation of the Boston Post Cane among various New England towns has been a time-honored tradition awarded to the oldest long-term resident of Fremont since 1909.

**THE ANNUAL RENAISSANCE FAIR** was held over two weekends in mid-May at Brookvale Farm on Martin Road. Thousands of people throng to this popular and amazing Middle-Ages Re-enactment Event loaded with various crafts & food booths, talented musicians, jousting competitions, axe throwing competitions and so much more. The Renaissance Fair has been held in Fremont since 2017, but was held originally in Kingston going back to 2005. There are

all kinds of re-enactors portraying various people from the Middle Ages, and is a truly colorful and outstanding event that is extremely well organized and well-worth a visit.

**MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCES** were held for the first time since 2019 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. It was a sunny, blue-sky day, about 78 degrees, with about 300 people present. The Graces Notes sang acapella music again, Amelia Earnshaw sang America The Beautiful brilliantly as always, the Highland Scottish Bagpipers performed in their usual awe-inspiring manner. The various speakers did their parts respectfully and appropriately. American flags were placed upon every Veteran's grave in all the Fremont Cemeteries, with updated flagstaffs and placed upon several new Veteran gravesites. There is now a complete list of Veterans buried in all Fremont cemeteries.

**HIGH INFLATION** – Starting in early 2022, the US has experienced inflation skyrocket to over 40%, the highest since 1979. The price of gasoline, heating oil, propane, electricity, food, mortgages, rents, interest rates, automobile costs, airfares, travel expenses have all dramatically increased! All this plus still contending with the Covid-19 Pandemic has made life for the vast number of Americans extremely difficult and worrisome like no other time in modern American history since the Great Depression & World War II. Yes, we have had difficult economic periods in the past 70 years when there was high inflation such as the recessions of 1976-1984, 1991-1995, and of course the most serious one of 2008-2016 with its high job losses & unemployment; and the gas shortages of the early 1970's. Other than the fact that we now have a very low unemployment rate with many jobs paying higher wages, THIS PARTICULAR YEAR 2022 has been for many millions of Americans, proven to be the most economically challenging year in several decades where everything is coming together to make sustaining a comfortable, decent lifestyle very difficult. Apartment rents have increased 25% or more; buying a home has skyrocketed ridiculously making home ownership practically impossible for many non-affluent young people. Interest rates have gone from 2.5 to 6.5% and beyond. Obviously, there is still a huge number of people who will always continue to maintain consistently high-lifestyles by putting countless unessential items on credit cards or spend money unwisely.

The **COVID-19 PANDEMIC** has subsided considerably during the spring of 2022, but many New Hampshirites are still coming down with the virus and several are still dying. As of December 13<sup>th</sup> Fremont has had 1,251 infected with Covid since the start of the Pandemic in early 2020, and there have also been a few Fremonters that have died of Covid related illness. The use of masks and keeping six feet distance in public places gradually diminished as the middle of the year advanced. It was nice to be able to feel "free" to do what one wanted to do without worrying too much about Covid for another summer and autumn. The Monkey Pox Virus was another healthcare concern in 2022, but fortunately, very few New Hampshirites were impacted by that new virus during the middle of 2022. People with FLU increased significantly in 2022 and it has overwhelmed many hospitals with patients during the end of 2022. Your Town Historian also submitted to the New Hampshire State Historical Society an in-depth history of the COVID PANDEMIC IN FREMONT and how the Town responded to it and the effects the pandemic had upon the Town. Several other towns have also done the same.

**STATE REPRESENTATIVE RACES** – An unprecedented five Fremonters threw their hats into the State Representative political ring this year to vie for two District Seats that cover the Town of Fremont. Candidates Ellen Douglas, Dennis Acton, Larry Miner, Josh Yokela & Emily

Phillips all ran for the two State Rep positions. Russ Kelly of Brentwood ran as an Independent as well. Republicans Yokela & Phillips were the winners for the two seats during the November 8<sup>th</sup> State Mid-Term Elections. There was an unprecedented 75% voter turn-out with 2,417 ballots cast out of 3,376 in Fremont! This was the largest voter turn-out for a Mid-term Election in New Hampshire history with nearly 600,000 people voting statewide. Fremont also voted 647 YES to 1,475 NO against having another NH Constitutional Convention in 2024. The last NH Constitutional Convention was held in 1984. This is the longest period of time the State of NH has not held a Con Con in its 234-year history going back to when the state joined the Union on June 21, 1788.

The **37<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GRASS DRAGS & WATER COMPETITION** took place over Columbus Day weekend October 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, attracting 45,000 people to Brookvale Farm on Martin Road. This event was first held in Fremont in October 1982, but then held annually starting in 1985. This is the largest event of its kind in the world and attracts people from all over the country and Canada. All three days were ideal for this event in 2022. Snowmobiles race down a 500-foot-long grass strip, and on a water pond, while motorcyclists race up a tall dirt hill doing acrobatic maneuvers in mid-air. This event with numerous outdoor ski-doo and motorcycle equipment sale tents, food booths, and various related paraphernalia is sponsored by the NH Snowmobile Association. With the help of local Police, Fire, EMS and associated organizations, this event runs very smoothly & efficiently. Helicopter rides are also another popular activity held as part of this huge annual event. The bright white lights at night illuminating the Grass Drag Fields can probably be seen from the moon, not to mention all the numerous campfires lighting up the hundreds of campsites situated upon the adjoining fields.

The **NH MUSCLE CAR ASSOCIATION** held its annual Muscle Car Show at Brookfield Farm on Martin Road on Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. The venue location proved to be an ideal location to show off literally hundreds of antique cars and trucks as a few thousand people attended this special event on a perfect sunny autumn day.

The **FREMONT HISTORICAL MUSEUM** wrapped up a very successful year with nearly 200 people visiting the Museum during warm-weather months and via special appointments. Visitors thoroughly enjoyed the exhibits and asked numerous questions about Fremont's history, landmarks, prominent people, etcetera, in addition to asking questions about surrounding towns as well. Special tours of the Museum and 1800 Meeting House were given to the Mont Vernon, Deerfield, Frankestown, and Hillsborough NH Historical Societies. **THANK YOU** to all Fremonters who supported the 2022 Warrant Article to place another \$10,000 into a Capital Reserve Fund. This money will be used for a future addition onto the Fremont Museum so the Historical Society can have more room to store and exhibit vital pieces of town history that are being added to our collection each passing year. Our goal is \$50,000 of which we currently have \$20,000. We hope to eventually build a three-bay carriage stall shed onto the west end of the current Museum to house the ca. 1861 Town Hearse, 1848 fire engine, and circa 1870's logging sled, as well as other large historical items. We hope we can count again on your support in 2023.

**HAUNTED HAPPENINGS** took place on Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup> at the 1800 Fremont Meeting House. 100 visitors came out to hear and learn about ghost stories, haunted houses, witches, phantoms, tragic deaths, unearthed buried bodies, and to see the old horse-drawn Town Hearse all with the interior and exterior of the Meeting House exuding an atmosphere of

thunder & lightening, ghosts, skeletons, spiders, battery-operated candles, and pumpkins. Nationally noted story-teller Papa Joe Gaudet, and Town Historian Matthew Thomas were the featured presenters of these fascinating and little-known stories. The Fremont Parks & Recreation Commission sponsored this first-time event and much credit is due them for its great success.

**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA** took place on Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at the Town Hall. Numerous holiday wreaths were placed upon Veteran's graves in the various cemeteries around Fremont. Many thanks are due Gerry Tilley and Joe & Patricia Sequino for all their hard work in organizing and making this annual event happen as well as the Fremont Scouts.

The **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING & SANTA CLAUS VISIT** took place on December 2<sup>nd</sup> with Santa's second visit and ride-around town on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Both were a great success! Youngsters and adults thoroughly enjoyed these two special Town events that did much to add cheer and happiness to an otherwise challenging year for many.

A **VERY UNFORTUNATE GUN-RELATED INCIDENT** happened on Thursday December 22<sup>nd</sup> when a young man was accidentally shot in the abdomen at his home on Whittier Drive. He was taken to Portsmouth Hospital where he fortunately survived the gunshot wound.

**SPECIAL THANKS** are due to the ***Fremont Garden Club*** for all their hard work in decorating Fremont throughout the year; to the ***Fremont Open Space Committee*** for clearing and maintaining the various Town Trails; to the ***Fremont Conservation Commission*** for preserving Open Space and obtaining vital grant money to do so; to the ***Fremont Parks & Recreation Commission*** for all they do to sponsor enjoyable Town events all year-long; to the ***Fremont Athletic Association*** for sponsoring various sports activities; to the ***Fremont Food Pantry*** in collecting and distributing food to those in need; to the ***Fremont Troop #1 Boy Scouts*** in collecting canned goods for the Food Pantry; to the ***Town Office Staff*** that work so hard to make the Town run smoothly, and to local citizens that help out with Spring & Fall Town Recycling Days, and to those who help clean up town roadways of litter each spring. Last but not least...to our dedicated members of the ***Fremont Police, Fire Rescue, & Highway Departments*** for all they do to continually keep us safe throughout the year.

~ FREMONT IS SO LUCKY TO HAVE YOU ALL!!~

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**IN MEMORIAM:** Here are some longtime Fremont residents that we lost in 2022. They will be greatly missed by many who knew and appreciated them for all the good they did in this world.

**Robert N Stiner** aged 94, served on the Fremont Conservation Commission. He enlisted in the US Navy during WWII before finishing high school, graduating both high school & college shortly after the war. He became a commercial airline pilot for 35 years and flew numerous overseas flights with Pan American Airways, including over Communist East Berlin & Non-Communist West Berlin, Germany. Bob was a meticulous and well-organized gentleman farmer who kept "*Aggravation Acres*" on Scribner Road incredibly tidy and neat. He loved raising horses & cattle on this scenic circa 1820-1830 house & barn.

**Dennis Howland** aged 73, served on both the Fremont Open Space Committee & Zoning Board of Adjustment. He was a very enthusiastic & knowledgeable man with many positive & worthwhile attributes. Dennis did so much to help promote an appreciation of Fremont's conservation land and how to preserve and maintain it.

**Paul Stevens** aged 75, served several years on the Fremont & Epping Police Departments and was a hard-working, dedicated officer. Paul received two Purple Hearts & the Bronze Star Medal as a Sergeant in the US Army during the Vietnam War.

**Matthew K Hayes** aged 37, a former Fremonter who moved to Brentwood later in his young life. He attended and graduated from the Berklee College of Music where he studied Music Synthesis and won the Brian Eno Production Award. He entered the musical engineering field where he mixed, produced, and recorded live sound. He was a two-time Grammy nominated music engineer. He left behind many devoted friends & family.

**Maurice Robinson** aged 91, always happy to help out the Town with his quality carpentry skills who stepped up to the plate whenever needed. Maurice was an outstanding example of a dedicated Fremonter, who was down-to-earth, genuinely wise, and very devoted to his family.

**Kirsten L Butler** aged 58, longtime owner & operator of Fremont's *Country Club For Kids Daycare*. Kirsten was a kind, good-natured person who was very dedicated to both family & friends. She also did much to help those dealing with substance abuse issues as a respected certified counselor.

**Frederick Tidd** aged 70, an active, longtime member & leader of both the Fremont Cub Scouts & Boy Scout Troop #1 for many years. Always positive, cheerful, and a very hard worker and very dedicated to his family.

**Chester "Chet" Menter** aged 96, quiet and unassuming yet a man of great patriotism and many kind deeds. Served in WWII in the US Navy at age 17, and later enlisted in the US Air Force during the Korean Conflict. Chet was another very hard worker with many talents and was a very fine person.

**Susan Bonagura** aged 84, a cheerful, outgoing individual who served enthusiastically and competently as Fremont's Welfare Director for many years and was a longtime member of the Fremont Garden Club. Early in life she held several important secretarial and administrative assistant positions in both the Australian Consulate and Australian Embassies in San Francisco and Washington DC. She did much to enhance and better the lives of the elderly in later years. She and her late husband Leonard gracefully hosted the Fremont 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at their farm back in 1989.

**MANY SINCERE THANKS** to one and all who give so much of their time, energy, expertise, and generosity to help make Fremont such a pleasant and enjoyable place to live. Your kindness and support do not go unnoticed. **A VERY HAPPY, HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS AND PRODUCTIVE NEW YEAR 2023** to one and all!

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew E Thomas  
Town Historian