



Focus on Volunteers- The M&Ms  
Williamstown Historical Museum newsletter  
Spring, 2012

Marion Alton and Marion Wilkin are two of the longest-serving volunteers at the Williamstown Historical Museum.

Marion Alton began volunteering at the museum when she joined the Board in 1999. Before that she had worked as a secretary at the Williams College Infirmary and in a real estate business with her husband.

Marion Wilkin has been volunteering since 1993, when Williamstown Historical Museum was the Williamstown House of Local History and was located on the upper floor of the Botsford House. When she retired from her job as a secretary in the President's Office at Williams College, she was drawn in by another long-term volunteer and fellow Spruces resident, Katie Winn.

Although the two Marions did not know each other before, through working the same time slot over the years, they have become an exceptional team, affectionately called the M& Ms.

One of their jobs has been continuing the extremely useful topical newsclip file that Katie Winn had begun. This involves filing the many clippings pertaining to town affairs and local residents from the late 1800s and early 1900s that Katie had printed and cut from the North Adams Transcript microfilms, as well as more recent clippings. Both women enjoy this job, as they will often discover things they didn't know about, or see references to people they know in their reading. They also enjoy coming across funny or intriguing stories in the clippings, such as the article about a Williamstown court case in which a town homeowner is trying to collect payment from someone who rented her house for 4 months in the summer of 1903 and refused to pay, because the house was infested with bedbugs and she had to leave after only a few days of occupancy.

The M&Ms have also helped to organize large donated collections (for example records of town organizations like the League of women Voters), and indexing material in scrapbooks and written reminiscences, to make the information they contain retrievable.

Without their ongoing assistance researchers would be far less likely to find the information they are seeking! We'd also know less about our town's past than we do. So we'd like to give a big thank you to our wonderful M&Ms!