



Official 250th photograph by Bob Lorenz to be framed and hung in the entrance of the Hart House.

"The Hart House is more than a relic of our past. It is the living, beating heart at the center of our community today and a priceless gift and profound symbol of hope for our future."

Olivia Gaidry, OSHS student volunteer,
excerpt from her speech at 250th celebration

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From the President

Often, when plans are made and executed, the review meeting has a list of many ideas around "I wish we had". It is seldom that you hit that perfect 10. When you do, you feel it and you know it.

From my point of view, we achieved it this summer on the 250th celebration days of June 25 and July 9.

First of all, we had perfect weather on both days. Then we had two special US Coast Guard bands; the Brass Quintet for the celebration program and the Dixieland Jazz Band for a 90 minute concert on the grounds. They were awesome!!!

On the 25th each person who participated, whether it was to deliver chairs and platform, cut the grass at the last possible minute to look its best, fix the speakers and microphones, set up the tent and chairs, prepare the refreshment area and serve, bake, oversee the exhibit, address the public, deliver the proclamations, appear riding a bike from James Pharmacy in the gelato bike from Italy, help the Revolutionary War reenactors, attend to the Fife and Drum Corps, work in the gardens, take the pictures, hand out programs, greet the public, clean up, was wonderful. When the Quintet ended the program and the Chester Fife and Drum Corps started marching from the First Church of Christ to the front of the House and over to the driveway lawn, playing the songs of the time when the House was built, meeting up with the reenactors, it stirred the heart

and soul; as it did when the program began with the Coast Guard playing the National Anthem.

On the 9th, the preparation was different for the US Coast Guard Dixieland Band Concert. It was necessary to upgrade electrical power and prepare for heavy speakers, etc. The concert was fabulous! No one will forget one of the musicians dancing with his adorable little girl or the band marching in the audience to "When the Saints Come Marching In". The band received a standing ovation from the audience that was sitting in every corner of the yard and around the gardens. They were professional, outstanding musicians and lots of fun. We had sun, a breeze, beautiful gardens, a House built for the ages tenderly preserved and music from the best. As someone said to me the next day, "It was a little slice of Heaven".

Our Killam and Bessette Farm to Table Dinner, sponsored by Liberty Bank, with all local products, the Rhode Island Fiddlers, wine tasting by Paradise Wine and Spirits is a great way to have fun and support the groups who work so hard to keep farming alive and well in our state... another great time coming!

A participant said: "Your birthday party is forever in my memory".

We witnessed generosity, service, patriotism, kindness, thoughtfulness, inspiration, camaraderie, gratitude, love, dedication and, yes, perfection.

Marie

New Way to Go Antiquing

After exploring Long Island Sound between their Milford home and the Old Saybrook shoreline, new boat owners Richard Morrival and his wife Nancy Wohlsen piloted their Bavaria 36 Cruiser, the "Canberra," to the town docks at the end of Sheffield Street and took their dinghy to shore.

From there they set out walking and, as Richard notes, had the "happy accident" of coming upon the Old Saybrook Historical Society's Antique Show where they purchased a folk art whale plaque crafted by Keith Emack, of Blue Whale Antiques.

Before the day was over the first-time visitors had explored as far south as Saybrook Point and as far north as the railroad station.

Acknowledging that it was a different way to go antiquing, they enjoyed their visit and described Old Saybrook as an iconic New England community where everybody was helpful and friendly. Oh, yes... The whale plaque was delivered for them to the boat.

Tedd Levy



Worthington Family History Society



Led by Philip M. Worthington, the 91 year young historian from the UK, close to 20 descendents of Worthington visited the Archives recently; some from as far away as Australia and as close as Niantic. Their New World saga began with Nicholas Worthington's arrival in the Saybrook Colony in the 1640's. Philip's history of the family in the UK, prior to 1700, took 5 years of research prior to starting genealogy - for a total of 25 years! He had acquired so much information that he had embarked (12 years so far) on the 17th and 18th century sequel.

Everyone found something of interest and enjoyed seeing the home of their ancestors.

Submitted by Diane Hoyt



Catherine Myers donated two lovely Sheraton chairs as a legacy gift from her aunt, Dorothy Mitchell, who volunteered at the Hart House in the 1990s before moving to Florida. At that time, Dorothy had donated to the Historical Society a Revolutionary War powder-horn from Saybrook, and also a Sheraton wingback chair. Dorothy always treasured her time with the Society, so when her niece inherited two Sheraton chairs from her aunt, she decided that these chairs should make their way back to the Old Saybrook Historical Society. They have been placed inside the Hart House hallway and look beautiful!!

Quite a Figure

There almost always is a surprise under the tent sheltering appraisers at the Historical Society's antique show and this year was no exception. Amidst the many quiet realizations that Grandma's cookie jar was not a substitute for a retirement account, there are unanticipated exclamations of "Oh, my gosh. I had no idea it was worth so much!"

This year, as in the past, appraisals brought forth expressions of glee and glum.

Amidst the old and unfamiliar objects, there were many in the range of a few hundred to several hundreds of dollars - a 1930s Springer Truck and toy steam shovel, together, appraised at \$800, a bronze plaque of Teddy Roosevelt at \$400 to perhaps \$1000, an unidentified miniature memorial mourning portrait, framed with an encased lock of hair at \$500 until more was known about the artist, and other appraisals that generally satisfied the owner's curiosity if not their desire for instant wealth.

But the show stopper was a 17-inch-tall Harlequin art deco statue on a marble base, made

of silver bronze with ivory hands and face. The late 1920s object brought several of the appraisers to the table in excited discussion.

They agreed that the figure was fashioned by Demetre Chiparus (1886-1947), a Romanian sculptor who lived and worked in Paris, and one of the most important sculptors of the Art Deco period.

The consensus appraisal was that the figure would have a retail value of \$30,000 to \$40,000 and should be brought to an art specialist at a major auction house for authentication and further appraisal.

We were unable to interview the owner who apparently left with some haste.

Tedd Levy



Photos by Tedd Levy

Hart House Garden

Here it is mid July and the Hart House Garden has already been the site of three very successful events.

Our annual Perennial Plant Sale was held in conjunction with the Antique and Appraisal Day on Saturday June 3th, a day of “unsettled weather”. While Karen & Peter Dolson, along with Curt Wendler worked all Friday, chalking out grass-spaces & putting up tents for the antique vendors, we spruced up our display of potted perennials. Many of the garden favorites sold out quickly. The variety of iris blooming this spring has made a stunning addition to the garden. We had several requests for the Iris rhizomes. So next year iris rhizomes will definitely be available for sale. Rain or no rain, we are fortunate to have so many faithful buyers for the plants dug from the Hart House Garden.

This year we are managing the garden with only 5 gardeners; Anu Koiv, Bonnie Penders, Carin Roaldset, Joanne Goduti and me. It is a big task but this crew is really dedicated. The gardens have never been lovelier, (in my not so humble opinion). It’s a nice place to work and we warmly welcome any new helpers.

I want to thank three past volunteers who gave their time to help make the HHG such an outstanding public garden: Beverly Kegler, Sherry Eldridge and Adriann Downes.

Friends and families and lots of children helped celebrate the Hart House 250th birthday on June 25th. The weather cooperated and the gardens were filled with happy people out to see the Revolutionary War encampment, the Chester Fife and Drum Corp and to hear the U.S. Coast Guard Brass Quintet. It was the opening of the summer exhibit



and we were delighted to have a talk by Walter Woodward, the State Historian. A very successful day on the campus.

Sunday, July 9th, was a perfect summer afternoon. The U.S. Coast Guard Jazz Band set up their equipment above the dingle and entertained a “capacity” crowd with great jazz music. A fabulous event in a fabulous setting.

The new Lady Fenwick Herb Garden created and tended by Bonnie Penders is growing well. This is a garden containing herbs specifically for women’s needs, used in colonial times. Bonnie has developed an information booklet that hangs on a shepards crook nearby. She graciously gives interesting tours of the Teaching Herb Garden and the Lady Fenwick Herb Garden for visiting groups.

We are pleased to be selected by the CT chapter of The Herb Society of America for their monthly meeting, on September 11th, in the Hart House Gardens. The Herb Society of America is dedicated to promoting the knowledge, use and delight of herbs through educational programs and research and sharing the experience of its members with the community.

The garden is also the “glorious” setting for the society’s annual major fundraising event: Harvest Time at the Hart House: A Farm to Table Dinner. Buy your tickets early. This will definitely be a “sold out” event.

Come spend time visiting the gardens. The Monarch butterflies are back and enjoying the milkweed & beebalm we planted for them.

*Linda Kinsella,
HHG Keeper*

Celebration of the 250th



Members of the Connecticut Sixth Regiment
Revolutionary War Reenactors



State Representative Devin Carney prepares to present
the Society with a General Assembly Proclamation



Old Saybrook First Selects



250th Anniversary Crowd



Old Saybrook High School historical society
volunteer speaker Olivia Gaidry



James Pharmacy "Gelato on V"
tastes of gelato



Reverend Canon Ellendale M. Hoffman, Grace Episcopal
Church, Old Saybrook



Student singers from Old Saybrook High School, from left,
Breydan Medbury, Liam Welsh, Amy Young and Olivia Gaidry

Anniversary of the Hart House



Man Carl Fortuna



Members of the Chester Fife and Drum Corps marching in front of the Hart House



Reverend Edward Cornell, Senior Minister, First Church of Christ in Old Saybrook



"Wheels" wagon serve free



United States Coast Guard Brass Quintet



Refreshments



Connecticut State Historian Walter Woodward (blue plaid shirt, white tie, under tent)



The 250th Anniversary celebration served as a backdrop to the Society's new Lady Fenwick Herb Garden

Time is Money

Frederick William Hotchkiss Sheffield and His Liberty Bank Account

A long standing connection between Saybrook history and Liberty Bank was recently reaffirmed when the Bank became the major sponsor for this year's celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Gen. William Hart House.

The connection begins in 1844 when a savings account was opened in Middletown Savings Bank, now known as Liberty Bank, by 19-year-old Saybrook resident Frederick William Hotchkiss Sheffield.

Young Frederick deposit \$8 into his new account and returned six months later to add another \$18. Soon after Frederick moved to Utica, N.Y. where he where he went to work for a local merchant and married Darah Spencer, his boss's daughter.

After his marriage, Frederick and Darah moved to Dubuque, Iowa where he opened a store and became respectable and prosperous as a bank president. Misfortune struck when a cashier absconded with bank funds and Frederick felt he had to raise money to repay depositors who lost money. He then returned to Utica where he worked building and repairing wagons.

He did not remember the account until the late 1890s when he was no longer pressed for funds and, in 1902, when a grandson was born and named Frederick in his honor, he sent the passbook with a letter as his gift to the baby.

He said it was "a great satisfaction" to have had your parent give you my name. I am sending a bank book which some day may be useful, he said, and "is the result of my first earnings previous to 1839 but was not deposited in the bank until 1844."

The amount deposited, he noted, was \$26.00, and with interest now totaled \$508.35.

The account continued to grow and in 1931 reached \$1016.13. By 1941 it was \$2296.34. By this time bank officials were noticing this unusual account with no activity.

An article in August 1944 was published by the steel company where Frederick Sheffield was an attorney, and noted the unusual savings account which now totaled \$2505.50.

In 1960 Middletown Savings opened the first bank in Old Saybrook and they marked the occasion by having William Coe, a teller, ride the 28 miles from Middletown on horseback to commemorate

Frederick Sheffield first deposit 116 years earlier.

The Sheffield account was the first opened in the new Saybrook branch and totaled \$3,738.62.

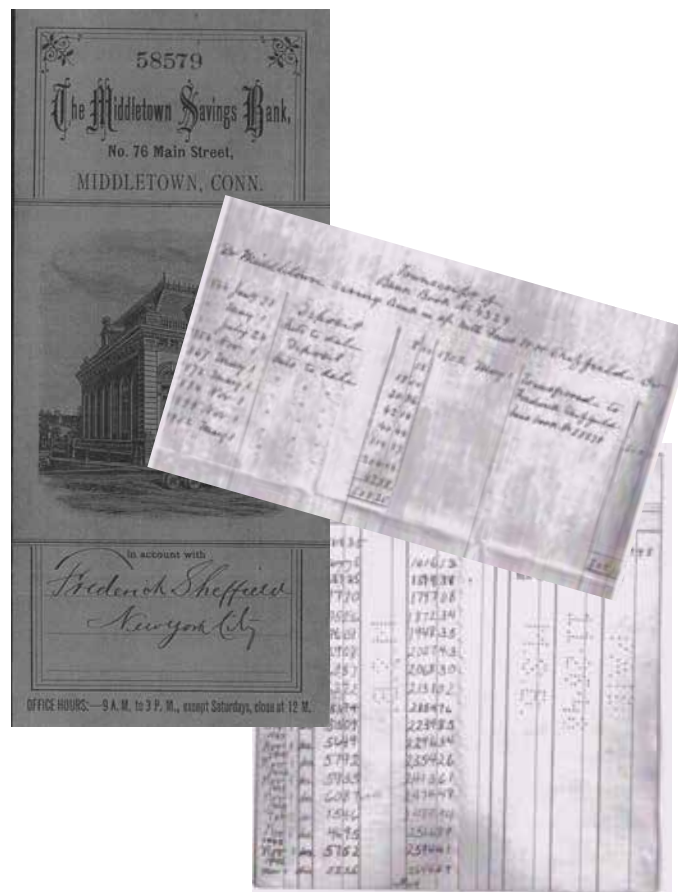
And, as his grandfather before him, in 1969 Frederick Sheffield requested that the account with a balance of \$5411.31 be transferred to his ten-day old grandson, James.

This pattern came to an abrupt end in 1994, when Frederick William Hotchkiss Sheffield's great-great grandson decided to withdraw the funds totaling some \$32,000, he says, to help pay graduate school costs.

The family still retains an account at Liberty Bank today. It is thought to be the oldest direct descendant savings account in the U.S.

It does show a very early and unique relationship between Liberty Bank and Old Saybrook history and the Historical Society is proud of their support for the 250th anniversary celebration of the Gen. Wm. Hart House.

Tedd Levy



Harvest Time at the Hart House



September marks the unofficial end of summer and the start of harvest time on many New England farms. So, it is an ideal time to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Gen. William Hart House with farm-fresh food, fine wines, and favorite melodies, all under a large tent on the beautiful Hart House campus.

“Harvest Time at the Hart House: A Farm to Table Dinner,” will be held Saturday, September 9, 2017 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Killam & Bassette Farmstead of South Glastonbury will be providing the “Fresh from the Farm Dinner” which will feature a gourmet menu augmented with Killam & Bassette produce.

The Killam & Bassette family farm relationship with Old Saybrook began in 1998 when they became one of just two vendors at the first Farmer’s Market in town. They continue to do the Saybrook Farmer’s Market today along with more than two dozen others.

From their 85 acre farm along the Connecticut River they raise all natural, non-GMO, USDA pork and chickens and quality vegetables and fruits. Their “Farm to Table Dinners” have become in demand throughout the state for offering nutritious products that contain no nitrates, growth hormones, steroids, or artificial ingredients and, they explain, “are raised with lots of love and care.”

A fine wine tasting, and other beverages, will be provided by Paradise Wines & Spirits of Old Saybrook. Lively musical favorites will be performed by the Old Fiddler’s Club of Rhode Island, a group popular throughout southern New England and the oldest continuing fiddle club of its

kind in the U.S.

The event, as well as other 250th Hart House anniversary celebration activities, is generously supported by Liberty Bank.

Tickets for this fund raising event are \$125 per person and are available at the Frank Stevenson Archives, (350 Main Street, Old Saybrook), Thursday between 9:00 – 12:00. For further information or tickets, call 860-395-1635.

Thursday, June 29th a light went out when Drinagh Garofalo, good friend and hardworking member of this Society passed away. She moved to Old Saybrook 10 years ago. Soon after, she became active in the Old Saybrook



Historical Society joining the Ways and Means Committee. Drinagh was always available to help with whatever needed to be done to ensure the success of events we were planning. She made time for us while continuing to work part time as a nurse. In addition, she never shirked her duties as a mother of 3, and grandmother to 3 beautiful grandchildren. Never complaining and always demonstrating her “take charge” attitude made her easy to love and impossible to forget. We were beyond fortunate to have her in our lives for the time she was with us. We will miss her and send our heartfelt thoughts and prayers to her family and friends.

*Donna DiBella, Chair
Ways and Means Committee*

Lafayette in Saybrook

Earlier this summer Julien Icher, a visitor from the French Consulate in Boston, stopped at the Old Saybrook Historical Society seeking information to use in developing a "Lafayette Trail." This "Trail" would retrace the triumphal tour taken in 1824 by French citizen and American Revolutionary War hero, the Marquis de Lafayette.

Lafayette's "grand tour" began in New York City on August 15, 1824 and lasted to September 1825. He visited all 24 states as the "nation's guest" and traveled along the Connecticut shoreline with an overnight stay at the Humphrey Pratt Tavern in Saybrook.

Julien Icher is the project manager for the development of a "Lafayette Trail" that will map and promote Lafayette's route, including his stop at the Humphrey Pratt Tavern on the corner of today's Old Boston Post Road and Main Street.

Built by Humphrey Pratt in 1785, the residence and tavern was in a prime location for weary travelers on the New York to Boston route who stopped for refreshments or an overnight stay before moving on.

It was here, late in the day on August 21, 1824 that the Marquis de Lafayette and his entourage arrived and that evening a reception and dance was held in his honor in the second floor ballroom.

This 20' x 40' ballroom is notable for its "spring floor," which serves as a bouncy shock absorber for those engaged in this merriment and remains today largely as it was more than 190 years ago.

"I was stunned by the state of conservation," Julien said after seeing the ballroom. "It looked like 19th century people patronizing the tavern were there yesterday."

Stories about Lafayette's visit have persisted in local lore. Before departing the next day, he



supposedly enjoyed a wonderful breakfast of waffles cooked by Emily Pratt, Humphrey's daughter.

After breakfast he supposedly went to Pratt's general store, located just north of the Tavern, and moved in the mid-1800s to eventually become the James Pharmacy.

Here he supposedly purchased saddle soap, or possibly a pair of woolen stockings.

However shrouded in mystery, that purchase has been commemorated longer than anyone knows at the James Pharmacy with Saybrook's most famous but imprecise sign, "In this shop LAFAYETTE made a purchase in 1824."

The Pratt Tavern was in Pratt family from 1785, including the time from 1793 when it was the town's first post office, until 1943 when it was sold to Richard Stueck who owned and operated a boat repair shop during World War II in the Shoreline Electric Power Station. Stueck sold the Pratt residence in 1992 to educator George Foote and his

family and they have lived there since. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

After his brief Saybrook stay, Lafayette ferried across the Connecticut River to visit with Robert McCurdy in Lyme and then set out on the new Lyme to New London Turnpike.

His "grand tour" of the US electrified and unified the nation. He was welcomed by vast crowds who came to honor the man who had fought beside them to help secure America's freedom.

The Lafayette Trail is in the very earliest stages of development. For further information and to follow its progress, visit: thelafayettetrail.com.

Tedd Levy

US Coast Guard Dixieland Jazz Band Concert in Hart House Gardens



Photo by Tedd Levy

The United States Coast Guard Dixieland Jazz Band was organized in 1970 to perform classic jazz, blues, and rags with a “New Orleans” flavor. The Dixieland Jazz Band has entertained audiences across America, in the former Soviet Union and in England. Notable venues include the open-air theater in Disney World, the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, at the “Galaxy Jazz Festival” in Milwaukee, the Embarcadero in San Francisco, the John F. Kennedy Center Millennium Stage in Washington, D.C., and at Mardi Gras in New Orleans. The group has also performed on numerous radio and television broadcasts across the nation.



Photo by Tedd Levy



Photo by Tedd Levy



Photo by JH Torrance Downes



Photo by JH Torrance Downes



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General William Hart House - Restoration of 32 Windows

The Old Saybrook Historical Society has kicked-off the restoration of the General William Hart House 32 windows! This restoration project is starting to receive donations, and we are in the process of applying for a matching grant.

Gulick & Co. is working on a sample window restoration which included repair of sash and window sill decay, replacement of cracked window panes, installation of sash stays and sash stop-bead adjusters and installation of new weather strip at the lower sash and at the meeting rail of the double-

hung windows.

Each window will be restored so that the bottom sash is functional; allowing ventilation for the summer months. Before this project started, only 2 of the 32 windows were 'operational.'

As a token of appreciation,

the names of each window-restoration benefactor will be recognized at each restored window location. If you are interested in adopting a window, please contact Marie McFarlin or Ed Armstrong at 860-395-1635 or by email at contact@saybrookhistory.org.

Ed Armstrong



Mark Your Calendars

- September 9** -- Farm to Table
- September 11** -- National Herb Society, Connecticut Unit-Day on Campus
- October 11** -- Annual Meeting
- October 29** -- Annual Cypress Cemetery Tour
- December 10** -- Annual Wassail Party

