



It's been a
very good year

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From the President

The "Help Us Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Hart House" banner was designed by trustee, JHTorrance Downes, and hung on the front fence for the year of celebration. It is now preserved in a box in the Archives Building. The proclamations we received from the governor's office, the Ct. Legislature and the Town First Selectman are framed and hung; the official photograph by Robert Lorenz graces the entrance to the Hart House and many special memories from the covers of local magazines, articles written, programs from events, exhibit displays are preserved.

What cannot be placed in a box or on a wall are the moments that filled us with joy and pride. They reinforced the importance of saving our history and preserving symbols that tell its stories. The year was reminiscent of the feelings evoked when looking at a Norman Rockwell painting...simple truths and wishes; young and old of all walks of life, all different beliefs, sharing, helping, caring. We do not take these moments for granted and are grateful beyond words for all who were instrumental in providing them.

May this legacy continue!

Marie

With gratitude to:

William Mclaughlin and **Matthew Rubin** for six years of service on the Board of Trustees

Judith Chace for serving as Recording Secretary for 5 years on the Board of Trustees

Arlene Sakatos for serving as Acting Chair of the Investment Committee for three years

Wayne Harms, Trustee, for accepting the Chair of the Investment Committee

Theodora (Teddi) Kopcha for accepting the position of Recording Secretary

Saving the "Old" in Old Saybrook

With an increasing number of historic buildings in danger, the Old Saybrook Historical Society established a preservation award in 2016 to recognize those who have shown outstanding leadership, conducted exemplary programs, exhibited exemplary stewardship or who have made significant contributions toward preserving our historic resources.

From a list of some two dozen local possibilities, the 2017 "Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation" was presented to Stephen and Carol Huber who own and maintained the John Whittlesey, Jr. House on Ferry Road.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the John Whittlesey, Jr. House may have been constructed as early as 1649 as a block house to store ammunition for Fort Saybrook.

It was the residence for John Whittlesey who, with his brother-in-law William Dudley, operated the ferry between Saybrook and Lyme for many years starting in 1662.

The Hubers purchased the house after a multi-year legal dispute with an out-of-state 'charitable' organization that claimed ownership and intended to sell it upon gaining ownership. After several years, the current owners prevailed in court. Since then they have researched its history, consulted with



Marie McFarlin presented the engraved bowl to Hubers at the Annual Meeting.

architectural historians, and maintained, restored and in a few cases replaced original architectural features.

Today, the house serves as the Huber's gallery where they buy and sell antique samplers stitched by young girls in private schools between 1650 and 1850. While the gallery is open for special events and by appointment, the Hubers exhibit their antique samplers, silk embroideries and other textiles at the nation's leading antique shows. Further information is available at: <http://antiquesamplers.com>

The first Preservation Award was presented in 2016 to Herb and Sherry Clark for their educational programs and maintenance of the Elder Bushnell House and Farm on the Boston Post Road.

The Hubers received the Society's "Preservation Bowl" at the annual meeting and have also been recognized on the Preservation Plaque in Town Hall.

The preservations awards committee consists of William Childress, Christine Nelson, Barbara and George Maynard, Ed Mosca, Tedd Levy, and OS Historical Society president Marie McFarlin. The committee welcomes recommendations for future recipients of the Award. Comments or questions can be sent to: contact@saybrookhistory.org.

Tedd Levy



Historical Society Receives “Battlefield Protection” Grant

In August 2017 the National Park Service, American Battlefield Protection Program, announced that Old Saybrook Historical Society received a grant of \$43,000 to “help local communities preserve and protect America’s significant battlefields.”

The Historical Society grant will support preservation and educational programs and materials regarding the sites associated with the Siege and Battle of Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War. The project builds on the recent archaeological work done by the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center.

The actions associated with the six-month Pequot siege of Saybrook Fort (September 1636 – March 1637) were the first time the English and Natives in New England fought each other in a sustained conflict and the sites and actions associated with the siege are the earliest recorded in New England.

The Old Saybrook and other Pequot War sites are increasingly at risk from a lack of public knowledge

about their significance.

In addition to the Historical Society, grants were awarded to the Fairfield Historical Society to define the Pequot War Battle of Munnacommock Swamp and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation to develop a report and an educational forum for battlefield preservation and expanding understanding of the Pequot War.

Old Saybrook Historical Society president Marie McFarlin has announced that Historical Society member Tedd Levy will serve as project director.

Further information about the grant is available at: nps.abpp/grants/planning-grants

To learn about the Battlefields of the Pequot War Project, visit: pequotwar.org

For questions about the Old Saybrook Historical Society and this grant, email the Historical Society at: contact@saybrookhistory.org.

Tedd Levy

Treasure Saved from Trash

They were only a bunch of old letters and other papers found in the attic and headed for the trash can when the house was made “broom clean” for new owners. For historians and others, it is a familiar story with a regrettably familiar ending and it was about to be repeated when the Harriet Lord homestead was sold a few years ago in Deep River.

Enter Judy Grover, former president of the Garden Club and longtime resident with her husband Jim of Old Saybrook. Harriet Lord was Judy’s grandmother and before the place changed ownership, Judy salvaged an old box of letters, receipts, and other paper items from the attic and has stored them in her house for the past several years.

After recently going through a few of the items she realized that many were old and interesting and did not want them destroyed.

After speaking with Historical Society president, Marie McFarlin and Archivist, Greg Thompson, she decided to donate them and have them placed

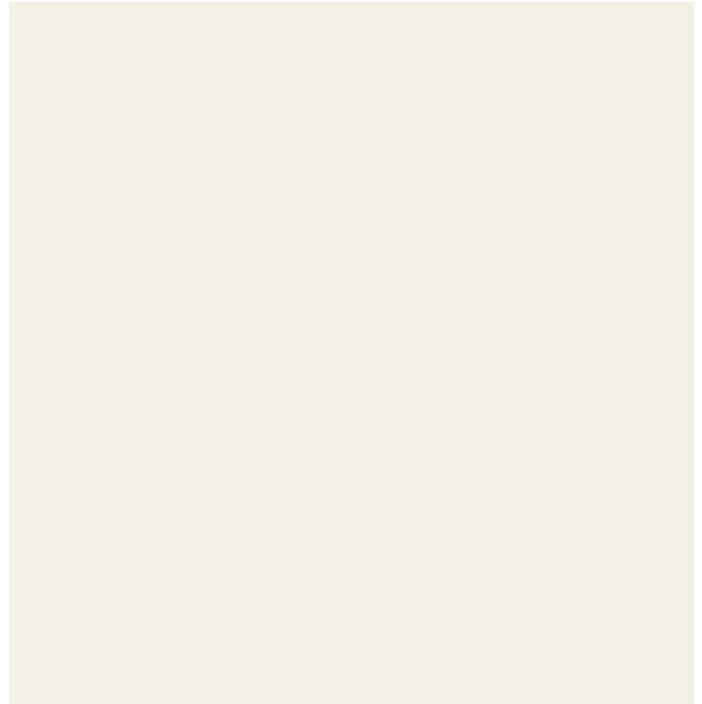
in the Frank Stevenson Archives. This August she arrived with a large collection of correspondence, legal documents, receipts, hand drawn maps, small account books, handbills, wills and probate records, and other items that had been in her family for many years.

A few letters were written shortly after the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the earliest appears to have been written in 1711, and dozens of items date from the 18th and 19th century. Most are related to the prominent Lord family but some are to or from other important Saybrook residents.

According to OSHS president McFarlin, “after members of the Archives review the contents of this wonderful collection, it may add to our knowledge of Saybrook history.”

Judy Grover said she knew the Archives with its climate controlled vault would be a good place to keep them. “They are part of our history,” she said, “and should be preserved.”

Tedd Levy



250 Years of History

The General William Hart House

THE OLD SAYBROOK HISTORICAL Society celebrates 250 years of the General William Hart House with an exhibit titled *A House for the Ages*. The exhibit features a look at the Hart House through the centuries, from a glimpse into the lives of some of its notable inhabitants, to its most recent chapter under the Society's stewardship.

The Hart House has had a few different owners over its lifetime, starting with General William Hart and his bride Esther Buckingham. General William Hart was a military leader in the Revolutionary War who led the 1st regiment of Connecticut Light Horse Militia to Danbury, CT for Tryon's raid. He was also a merchant involved in the West Indies trade, as well as a large investor in land during the sale of Connecticut's Western Reserve. Hart's investments helped to fund public school systems

in the state and westward expansion for American growth.

In 1854 the home became a boarding school for girls to learn needlepoint, music and French, as well as some liberal arts. The school was owned by Miss Hetty Wood. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Berrian and Walker families had modernized the home to have a more modern luxury look and feel. The Hart House

Henry Ives Clark

Among the many wonderful things that were donated recently is an audio recording made in 1934 of Henry Ives Clark, 93 years old and Old Saybrook's last living veteran of the Civil War. What is so unusual about that?

In the early 1930's, the American Dialect Society undertook a long-term project to document regional dialect variations of American speech. The project includes 893 field recordings made between 1931 and 1937. The original sound recordings are stored in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress. To make the recordings, Miles L. Hanley developed a system of recording sound on **8-inch diameter aluminum-based acetate records**. Several automobile batteries were utilized as the power source along with diamond-point needles and condenser microphones. **With the disc-cutting machine in the back of his car, Hanley traveled throughout New England.** This is long before personal computers and CDs.

Ron Clark, Henry's descendent and recipient of this recording, was now faced with a dilemma-how to "hear" the recording. He tracked down the history of this unusual disc through the Library of Congress and they in turn pointed him to a department that could indeed not only play it but would convert it to a modern CD. All of this took a lot of detective work and many, many hours but, in the end, he could hear Henry Clark relating the story of how he was almost killed at the battle of Port Hudson during Civil War. He also told of running a plantation near New Orleans after the War.

Henry eventually returned to Old Saybrook, raised a family, farmed, taught school, and served in town and state government.

If anyone would like copies of the transcripts of Mr. Clark's letters written during his Civil War service, please email or call us.

Diane Hoyt

Here We Come A-Wassailing!



*Judith Chace, Linda Kinsella, Kathleen Delmonico.
Photo by JH Torrance Downes*



*Carl Fortuna, First Selectman
and Marie McFarlin.
Photo by JH Torrance Downes*



Student Carolers. Photo by JH Torrance Downes

Facilities Report Update

The 2017 / 2018 “facilities improvement” year started with an initiative to restore the General William Hart House front entry area and to preserve the 32 antique windows. Additional Hart House plumbing and electrical code-compliant repairs were completed and the Old Saybrook Historical Society 20-year-old Archives Building gutters were replaced.

Restoring the Hart House front entry area and sign was previously postponed while we tackled higher priority maintenance. When the Hart House entryway demolition started, we found that cracked entry floor boards were caused by extreme wood distress of the sub-floor and sill-plate. The repair included removal of patched entryway floor boards and deteriorated sub-floor, sill plate and sill mortar. Our contractor found that the area that required repair was an “antique” repair which had been performed to address similar distress. Based on the condition of the “antique” fasteners, it was estimated that the previous repair was more than 100 years old.

The front entry restoration was accomplished with new granite-foundation- mortar, pressure treated sill plate structure, lead-coated copper flashing, new sub-floor (reclaimed material), brass threshold, one reclaimed wide-plank-pine floor board (to replace the previous five patches of the entry floor) plus restored entry threshold exterior & interior trim. The completed entry has an appropriate appearance for the 250-year-old Hart House (our contractor re-used the old pine floor board nails for an authentic touch).

Building code updates & improvements included weld-installation of new brackets for the Old Saybrook Historical Society sign, replacing the Hart House 69-year-old toilet and installation of a new exterior onion-lamp at the South side of the Gallery kitchenette.



We are pleased to report that restoration of half of the Hart House windows (16 windows) started on December 11. This first phase of the window “project” was funded by benefactors of the Old Saybrook Historical Society. We have initiated a matching-grant request for the second phase of the window project, which will enable us to complete the restoration of all 32 windows. **Winter Painting Planned**

Interior painting planned for this winter includes ceilings, walls and trim of the Hart House two-story entry hall, Tinsley Room and Library. Additional painting (much to the delight of our volunteer staff) will be performed in the Archives Building (office, lobby, bathroom and storage room).

Ed Armstrong

Fenwick Papers

A fascinating document of a presentation made to the Beaumont Society of Yale, by Dr. Richard Otis, was made to the Society through the generosity of Dr. Richard Reece and Mrs. Loretta Reece, of Old Lyme, CT. Called “The Fenwick Papers”, it gives a brief history of the arrival of the English to what is now known as “Old Saybrook” and the trials and tribulations of their lives in those early colonial years.

Much is said about the lives of George Fenwick and his wife “Lady Fenwick” and how instrumental they were in settling the area.

Lady Fenwick’s death is discussed and how her burial was located near the Fort. Her removal and re-burial, and what was found, was also discussed.

Greg Thompson

What's Happening in the Archives

As always, we are grateful to both the past and present donors who have entrusted us to protect and preserve the history of Old Saybrook.

Newest Contributions

"Commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the settlement of Old Saybrook". Donated by **Karen Rend**.

History of Slavery in Old Saybrook. Donated by **Bob Czepiel**.

Bayonet (found behind the post office); jar lid found in a wrecked ship in North Cove. Donated by **Paul Labriola**.

"The Christian Minister Studying to Know Christ", by Rev. Frederick Hotchkiss, pastor First Congregational Church. A sermon preached at internment of Rev. Richard Ely, August 23, 1817. Donated by **Tedd Levy**.

"Fenwick Papers", a presentation to the Beaumont Society of Yale by Dr. Richard Otis concerning the role of George and Lady Fenwick, with historical details. Donated by **Dr. Richard and Mrs. Loretta Reece**. (See story)

Photo Album, "Visit to Gardiner's Island, 8/9/1995" by group of Old Saybrook Historical Society members upon invitation of Robert Gardiner. Compiled by Harold Elrod. Donated by **Carolyn Taylor**.

Maps, 1932 Connecticut; set of architectural blueprints for Fenwick Point Road, 1929. Donated by **Joan Avery**.

Two Sheraton carved side chairs. Donated by **Catherine Myers**.

Autograph book, Old Saybrook High School class of 1935. Donated by **Tedd Levy**

Three china dishes from Riversea Inn, Fenwick. Donated by **Sally Boody**.

"Lady Alice Fenwick Memorial Herb Garden, 17th Century Herbs Used to Support Women's Unique Health Issues and their Remedies". Small booklet, **Old Saybrook Historical Society Gardeners, garden design by Bonnie Penders**.

Lord Family collection of 19th century letters and other ephemera. Donated by **Judy Grover**. (See story)

"My Dinners with Kate", hand-written journal by Tom Martin. Donated by **Gerald Wilson**.

Checks written on the Saybrook Bank by Henry Ives Clark, Town of Saybrook Treasurer, 1898. Donated by **Ron Clark**.

Photos of Henry Ives Clark (1840-1940) and Emma Rotella Chittenden. Biographical info and transcripts of Civil War writings of Henry Ives Clark. 1934 audio recording of Henry Ives Clark. Donated by **Ron Clark**. (See story)

Chippendale tea table and chair, ca.late 1800's. Donated by **Lori McDougall**.

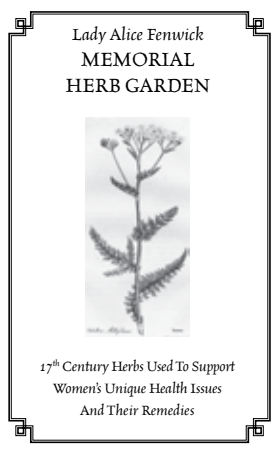
Library:

"Connecticut Witch Trials", by Cynthia Wolfe Boynton. Donated by author.

"Early Connecticut Houses", an historical and architectural study. Donated by **Jim Platt**.

"The Puritan's Thomas & Stephen Tracy: A personal Quest for Family Lineage", signed and donated by author, **Martin Booth Tracy**.

"As We Were on the Valley Shore", a bicentennial history of 16 Connecticut towns." Donated by **Tedd Levy**



Diane Hoyt

Hiding in Plain Sight (in Hartford): John Whittlesey, Jr.'s Saybrook Account Book

Resting in the archives of The Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) at its Hartford headquarters is a unique document, important to the history of Old Saybrook and the surrounding area: the account book of Lieut. John Whittlesey, Jr. for the years 1688-1706. Whittlesey, the oldest son of John and Ruth (Dudley) Whittlesey served the Connecticut Colony in both political and military offices. At a meeting of the General Court, held in Hartford, on the 19th of May 1696, John Whittlesey, Jr. was made deputy or representative for Say Brook. John was reappointed consecutively until 1704. His name is found among the list of those made "freemen" on the 5th of April 1704. In addition, he served as "Townsmen" during the year 1705.

John Whittlesey, Jr. (1665-1735) was a shoemaker by trade, and his account book includes his "accounts" with dozens of individuals and families in the Saybrook area (including members of the Pratt, Clark, Taylor, Large, Bushnell, Parker, Buckingham, Cone, Lee and Ingham families), as well as many unique family records, key to resolving longstanding genealogical questions about the early Whittlesey generations. As with other early account books, a close inspection yields amazing insight into the lives of the early colonists: in a largely non-cash economy, each adult survived by trading work, produce and/or merchandise for other work, produce and merchandise. So we see Whittlesey charging for shoes and receiving in return labor, grain and finished goods of all kinds.

CHS received the account book from the estate of his descendent, Mary A. Whittlesey of Rockville, in 1971. The small volume is accompanied in the CHS collections by a modern transcription, created in 1959 by Cleo M. Millerbaugh of Old Saybrook who, with her husband John, lived in and restored the Lt. John Whittlesey house on Ferry



Road. The original "account book" is actually written on extra-bound pages in a 1690 almanac published in Boston by John Tulley (also of Saybrook). It has recently been digitized and is available on the CHS website at <http://connecticuthistoryillustrated.org/islandora/object/40002%3A73536#page/1/mode/2up>. The transcript, though not yet digitized, is available to researchers at the CHS library.

Michael Burd

A Garden Visitor



Photo courtesy of Linda Kinsella



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Mark Your Calendars

Chapman Lectures are sponsored by the Old Saybrook Historical Society in conjunction with Acton Public Library. All presentations are free, open to the public and held at the Acton Library, 6 p.m.

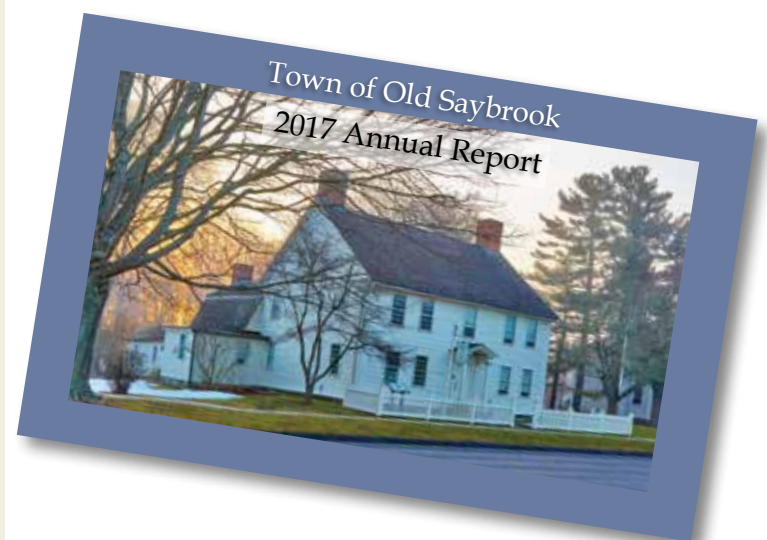
March 22, 2018 Morton F. Plant and the Connecticut Shoreline: Philanthropy in the Gilded Age. Presented by Gail B. MacDonald .

April 26, 2018 Connecticut Pirates & Privateers: Treasure and Treachery in the Constitution State. Presented by Wick Griswold.

May 17, 2018 Gillette Castle: A History. Presented by Erik Olfgang

May 24, 2018 Old Saybrook's Upper Cemetery. Presented by Scott Carson

Also mark your calendars for **May 27, 2018** at 4:00p.m. when Scott Carson will again lead a tour of the Upper Cemetery.



In recognition of the 250th Anniversary, this year the Old Saybrook Annual Report featured Robert Lorenz's photo of the Hart House.

