



Spend a Perfect Day in Old Saybrook

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Photo by Bill Roberts

OLD SAYBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
HOSTING
for HISTORY

SHOWCASE OF HOMES 2016



SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 10, 2016
10 AM - 4 PM

THE HART HOUSE BOUTIQUE
will also be open from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM
featuring six local craftspeople and artisans who
will be offering unique, locally made items

SIX PRIVATE HOMES PLUS GENERAL WILLIAM HART HOUSE

◆ ALL OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ◆

TICKETS AVAILABLE JULY 20TH
AT MAR FLORAL & BOTANICALS, SAYBROOK COUNTRY BARN,
THE WINE CASK AND THE FRANK STEVENSON ARCHIVES BUILDING,
350 MAIN STREET THURSDAYS 9 AM TO NOON

Advance Sales \$25, Day of event \$30
For more information call 860-395-1635
or visit www.saybrookhistory.org



Photo by Bill Roberts



Photo by Bill Roberts



Photo by Bill Roberts



Photo by Bill Roberts



Photo by Robert Lorenz

Six local businesses will be set up in the Hart House from 9:30 to 4:30 -- 2Tasty Toffee, Beads for Dreams, The Lyme Tree Woman's Exchange of Old Lyme, Mayflower Soaps, Peaceable Hill Paperie and Clay Bodies Pottery.

Society Officers, Trustees & Volunteers

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Ed Mosca, *1st Vice President*
Linda Kinsella, *2nd Vice President*
Ellen Lepak, *Treasurer*
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Marie McFarlin
Wendy Mill, Youth & Family

Ways & Means
Donna DiBella

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President's Message

The past months brought much activity and many wonderful surprises to the Society.

We were the recipients of two donations that will allow us to buy a much needed storage shed, as well as another generous gift, that will give us the means to restore a folk art painting of Saybrook Point before 1870.

We were surprised and thrilled by Marek Sarba's gift of his painting of Elisha Hart and the donation of the frame by Joseph Matteis (page 6).

We are also grateful to the Mill family for the donation of the Saybrook letters (page 5).

Through the legacy gift from the Elise Bischoff estate we did over the south lawn and installed the sprinkling system. The Marge Anderson legacy for the Hart House enabled us to begin the improvement of our exhibits on the second floor and provide excellent shade covers for the windows of three

rooms repainted this winter (page 6).

The third grades from Goodwin School (page 3) and the fifth grade from St. John's School visited the Hart House and Bonnie Pender's new teaching garden, a great addition to their visit.

The Annual Antique and Appraisal Day has become an extraordinary community event (page 6).

We are planning and organizing for the Home Tour which will be a memorable day. It is gratifying to see the tremendous support and generosity that surrounds us daily to help us in this endeavor.

I hope that when you look at the pictures and read the articles in this newsletter that you will be pleased to see what your commitment as a member to our mission is accomplishing.

Marie

Student Volunteers Honored



Marie McFarlin with Old Saybrook High School senior student volunteers (from left) Sam DiPalma, Kyle Jackson, Reagan Mason and Ruthie LaMay and (insert photo: Adina Ripin). The five were recognized for their four years of outstanding volunteer service to the Historical Society. "Thank you for creating an environment where I could learn, teach, have fun, make connections and create valuable memories that I will cherish forever," said Reagan. "I hope that you will continue to provide this opportunity for years into the future because it has such an amazing impact on those who have participated." (Photo by Tedd Levy)

Corrections: The Spring edition contained two errors -- the misspelling of art restoration expert Joseph Matteis's last name, and the misidentification of Elizabeth Hart Allen, a daughter of Elisha Hart, not the granddaughter of Gen. William Hart.

Summer Activity Abounds at Hart House Gardens



Local pre-schoolers visit in June.



Backdrop for Old Saybrook High School student volunteers' prom photography...



Historical Society croquet party on the South Lawn.



... as well as wedding photography: "The opportunity to take pictures at the Old Saybrook Historical Society was very special and memorable, and the Flanagan/Nelson family is very grateful."



Goodwin School third-graders explore the new teaching garden with Bonnie Penders, who created the garden with an associated guidebook.



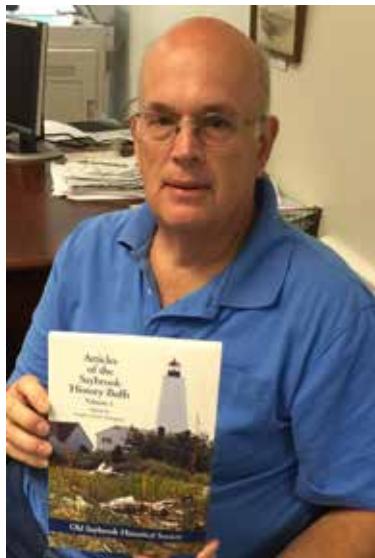
Bonnie and her Teaching Garden guide.

Archivist Publishes 'Articles of Saybrook History Buffs'

During the 1990s, a dozen or so history minded Old Saybrook residents established an informal organization, called the Saybrook History Buffs, to research local history and share their findings with other members. The written essays were collected in two large binders that remain a popular resource for people studying the town's history.

Gregory Thompson, the Society's Archivist, has compiled and edited a selection of these essays into a 310-page publication, "Articles of the Saybrook History Buffs," the first of what will be a set of four volumes.

The initial edition includes 20 articles covering lighthouses, railroads, the first fort, the name "Saybrook" and the Saybrook Platform, the Town Hall and Terra Mar,



Gregory Thompson with volume one of "Articles of the Saybrook History Buffs."
Photo by Bill Roberts

the water company and Water Street, and noted figures Col. George Fenwick, Maj. John Mason and Gen. William Hart.

"When I first came upon the original essays, I found them so interesting I wanted to make them more easily available to the general public," Greg said.

Preparation of the first volume took several months and he anticipates completing the series sometime in 2017. Greg contributed his time and paid for the production costs of the book, which will be sold to benefit the Society.

Copies are \$25 and are available Thursdays between 9 a.m. and noon at the Frank Stevenson Archives, 350 Main St., Old Saybrook; by calling 860-395-1635; or via the website saybrookhistory.org.

What's Happening in the Archives

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

Newest Contributions

- Warranty Deeds for shore properties: Chalker to Barnes. Donated by the estate of Liz Callender.
- Architectural drawings of the Hart House. Donated by Robert Carter.
- Letter ca. 1875 from Benj. Bushnell to Mary Thompson related to history of Bushnell family. Donated by Greg Thompson.
- Postcards and photos of Daniel Wadsworth Cottage ca. 1920. Located corner of Old Boston Post Road and Lynde Street. Donated by Dr. William Abbate.
- Large, detailed map of the Upper Cemetery with plot size and burial names. Donated by Scott Carson.
- Miscellaneous items excavated from Fenwick. Donated by Sallie Boody.
- Stoneware pitcher, inscribed Old Saybrook. Donated by Debra Wolfe.
- Framed pencil sketch of "Old House" (Parker House) by Harriet Hoag. Donated by Judith Chace.
- Collection of 18 letters written 1805-1836 by Pratt and Lynde families. Donated by Don & Wendy Mill (page 5).
- Collection of Hart keepsakes, i.e., lockets, beaded bags and fans. Donated by Liz Putnam.

- Framed, original pen and ink drawings of USS Constitution and the Bunker Hill Monument by R.E. Kennedy. Donated by Marie McFarlin.

Library

- 1961-62 SNET Telephone directory for Old Saybrook, Essex, Deep River and Lyme. Donated by Mike Reynolds.
- Two limited edition Whittlesey genealogical books with handwritten notes. Donated by Scott Brinkerhoff.
- "Articles of Saybrook History Buffs, Vol. 1." Donated by author, Greg Thompson.
- Chaplinville Union Chapel Assoc. handwritten, bound book. CT Walk Book, primarily bird watching. Donated by Dotty O'Neill.
- Beers' Commemorative Biographical Record of Middlesex County (prominent and representative families), 1903. Donated by Judy Grover.
- Collection of eight historical books written and autographed by Thomas Fleming; "Founding Mothers," by Cokie Roberts; and "George Washington's Secret Six" among others donated by Jean Well Golicz.

By Diane Hoyt
Administrative Assistant, Archives

WWII Event & Exhibit Opening Draws 100+ Visitors

"June 12" -- a date which will live in the minds of many as a most pleasant memory -- was a day for "Remembering World War II." The day began around noon with the arrival of two authentic jeeps and was soon followed with tents and displays of military gear and weapons that attracted at least two highly appreciative World War II vets and many passersby to the Hart House campus, where they also saw beautiful, carefully kept gardens.

At mid-day more than 100 patrons filled the Grace Church Fellowship Room to listen to songs and stories by Rick Spencer, who delivered a program developed specifically for the Historical Society. Another highlight was the recognition given to five Saybrook High School seniors who have been dedicated student volunteers for the past four years (page 3).

And, huge thanks to those who researched, collected and selected, and then thoughtfully displayed an engaging, informative, museum-quality exhibit. The result drew raves from the many residents who visited the Exhibition Gallery. They also enjoyed delicious snacks and refreshing drinks served by charming hosts.

Great thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Marie and her volunteers who gave their time and talent to make this kick-off event a success.

By Tedd Levy



Audience listens to Rick Spencer's World War II stories and songs.

Mill Collection

Donald and Wendy Mill -- he a police sergeant in Clinton and she the program coordinator for Youth and Family Services in Old Saybrook -- were in Martha's Vineyard cleaning out an old trunk that Don's father purchased at an auction many years earlier. They came upon a folder and were about to consign it to the trash when they realized that it contained some old correspondence.

What they found were 18 letters, most written in 1806 and 1836, by members of Saybrook's Pratt and Lynde families. They shed light on everyday life and concerns that close family members shared about sickness, death, weather, crop prices, land bought and sold, debts owed, and goods traded.

And they were not hesitant with their comments or opinions. "We had a most terrible sermon from Mr. Smalley," one wrote, "his darts flew in every direction." They also showed a keen awareness of world events. "Bonaparte is not dead," one reported, "I hope he will humble the Pride of Britain before he makes Peace with them."

Thanks were expressed for the "fine shad" that was sent and noted that "the market for corn is dull, there is a great deal of it in this place." And family business matters were discussed. "I have sold my property for seven hundred dollars and have bought a small farm... [with

more] comfortable hours and larger barn."

Wendy Mill, who along with her son Andrew -- one of the first student volunteers at the Old Saybrook Historical Society -- donated the collection to the Historical Society so that other people could learn from, enjoy and appreciate them.

Don's parents were antique dealers in central Connecticut and frequently bought and sold silver, chinaware and other items at auctions. They probably obtained the letters at an upstate auction, took them with them when they



*Andrew and Wendy Mill with the 19th-century Old Saybrook-related letters they discovered.
(Photo by Tedd Levy)*

moved to Martha's Vineyard and now they have come full circle by returning to Old Saybrook where they were originally sent.

The collection will be archived and made available for interested visitors, genealogists and researchers.

Hart House's Governor Winthrop Annex Updated

As described in the President's Message (page 2), the legacy gift from the Elise Bischoff estate allowed for the installation of a new sprinkling system, while the Marge Anderson legacy for the Hart House enabled the beginning of improvements to exhibits on the second floor.

The upstairs Governor Winthrop Annex room is being overhauled and is now receiving new display cases for Fort Saybrook artifacts and other important objects from the Society's collections.

In June the new irrigation system was completed. The system includes 19 sprinkler-heads with an automatic three-zone control system and rain sensor. The new irrigation provides needed support for the volunteers of Hart House Gardens.

By Ed Armstrong
Facilities Manager



New irrigation system's control center. (Photo by Ed Armstrong)



New exhibit area highlights the Gov. John Winthrop Jr. collection. (Photo by Bill Roberts)

Portrait of Capt. Elisha Hart

Marek Sarba, an artist and resident of Old Saybrook, has painted and donated a portrait of Gen. William Hart's younger brother, Elisha, which now hangs in the Hart House dining room. Joseph Matteis, noted art conservator who restored the Society's Elizabeth Hart Allen portrait, generously provided the gilt frame for Marek's painting.

Elisha was the father of the seven daughters renowned for their "beauty" and energy.

Elisha and his family lived next door to his parents, Reverend and Mrs. William Hart, near the properties now occupied by the St. John's Catholic Church and Rectory.

Previously, Marek had donated his painting of General Hart. His paintings are on display at Mystic Seaport's Maritime Gallery; Historical Society of Maryland; Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Va.; Merchant Marine Museum in Kings Point, N.Y., and Great Lakes Historical Society.



Marek Sarba with his painting of Capt. Elisha Hart. (Photo by Ed Armstrong)

Antiques & Appraisal Day



Hundreds of visitors flocked to the Hart House Campus and the First Church of Christ's historic Triangle Green for the Fourth Annual Antiques Sale & Appraisal Day June 4. The event was a success for the Society, vendors, collectors and the curious.

Noted Authority Kicks-Off Chapman Lecture Series

Kenneth Florey, professor emeritus at Southern Connecticut State University, a long-time specialist in woman suffrage memorabilia, will discuss the Connecticut women's suffrage movement and display representative objects from his nationally recognized collection.

He has lectured on the subject in the United States and abroad, appeared on television, written articles and is the author of "American Woman Suffrage Postcards: A Study and Catalog" and, most recently, "Women's Suffrage Memorabilia: An Illustrated Historical Study."

Historians have long recognized the importance of memorabilia to the woman suffrage movement, but the subject is difficult to explore given that items are scattered in various collections and museums. Many researchers do not have easy access to the postcards, badges, sashes, toys, ceramics, sheet music, and so forth that suffragists produced.

Following Professor Florey's talk, there will be an opportunity to purchase his book and have it signed.

The presentation will be at the Acton Public Library (60 Old Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook), at 7 p.m. The public is welcomed and there is no charge.

Homemade Eel Pots and More Added to the Archives

Late last summer, Dale Wilbur Newton of Hebron, Conn., donated six homemade eel pots, as well as a clamping basket and clamping rake that belonged to his grandfather, Wilbur Irving Newton (1883-1957).

Mr. Newton related that his grandfather owned land and cottages on Great Hammock Beach on what is now Barnes Road. He lost his cottages in the hurricane of 1955 and never re-built them. He had a home in West Hartford and was employed by The Hartford Times for more than 50 years.

"When he first acquired the property, there were no roads and he had to take a boat across the Oyster River. There was no electricity and he relied on rainwater, using large barrels to collect water from the roof of the cottage.

"He would get shiners and mummichogs at low tide by dragging a net with another person near the sand flats in front of his cottages," said Mr. Newton. "They would be used as bait for the eels, which he would clean and skin and cook."

Cypress Cemetery Tour: 'The Way We Were'

Cypress Cemetery, the 'ancient burial ground,' will again be the site for a tour of the art, architecture and final resting places of some of both prominent and some interesting but less well-known individuals.

Old Saybrook Historical Society board of trustee member J.H. Torrance Downes, who is also on the Cypress Cemetery board, will lead the tour. He will be assisted by several Old Saybrook High School student volunteers, who will share information about some of the individuals buried in Cypress.

The tour will be held, light rain or shine, on Sunday, October 30, at 4 p.m. There is a \$5 charge. Children under 16 accompanied by a parent or guardian are admitted free.



Society student volunteer Jonah Nucci provides insights during last year's Cypress Cemetery tour. (Photo by Tedd Levy.)



The Old Saybrook Historical Society

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Mark Your Calendars

SEPTEMBER 10 -- Hosting for History
"Showcase of Homes" 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
See page 4 for details (front cover).

SEPTEMBER 25 -- David Naumac and Dr. Kevin McBride discuss the final report on the American Battlefields project, focusing on the Saybrook Fort dig, and present artifacts from the dig to the Society. 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Vicky Duffy (formerly Pashebashauke) Pavilion at Saybrook Point (page 7).

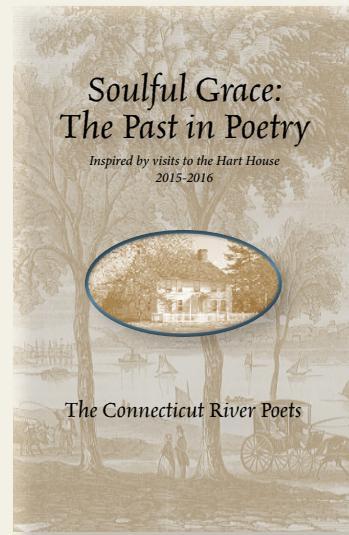
OCTOBER 12 - Annual Meeting at Hart House. Refreshments at 5 p.m., meeting at 5:30.

OCTOBER 20 -- Chapman Lecture, talk by Ken Florey, "Memorabilia from the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Movement", Acton Public Library at 7 p.m. (page 7).

OCTOBER 30 -- Cypress Cemetery Tour, 4 p.m. (page 7).

DECEMBER 11 - Wassail Party at the Hart House, 4 to 6 p.m.

HART HOUSE POETRY READING



Poetry reading August 27, 3:30-5 p.m., by members of the Connecticut River Poets who visited the Hart House many times and wrote poems inspired by what they saw and heard. A chapbook with the poems will provide a written memory of their work. The reading is free and open to the public. (Cover design by AC Proctor of Essex Printing.)



www.saybrookhistory.org