

Cheshire Historical Society News

Volume 41, No. 1

Keeping Cheshire's History Alive!

Spring 2018

Our Mission: Keeping Cheshire's history alive through our museum's collections, exhibitions and programs.

Our Vision: The Cheshire Historical Society will be integrated in the life and interest of the community as an accessible source of historical information and knowledge.

OUR SPRING 2018 PROGRAM

Sunday March 25 2:30 p.m. – Arms of the American Revolution talk

Monday March 26 7:30 p.m. – Craft Beer talk

Sunday April 15 8:30 a.m. start, All Day – Ride the Ghost Train! MW&CR Train Tour with Bob Belletzkie (Meriden town line to Waterbury)

Monday April 23 – 7:30 p.m. Vaudeville and Cheshire: The History of the Durand Family in Cheshire

Saturday June 9 – All Day - Antiques & Collectibles Sale & Event, CT OPEN HOUSE DAY alongside Congregational Church's Strawberry Festival

May Preservation Event

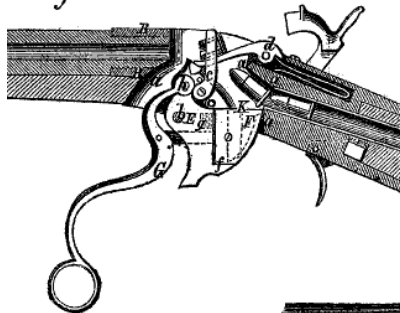
Jacob Lanzer, Society Student Liaison, is organizing a concert using music from the 1800s. We'll let you know more about this important fundraiser! Be on the lookout for more information and date.

GIVE LOCAL – April 24-25 - Donations to Cheshire Historical Society

<https://givelocalccf.org/>

36 Hour On Line Give A Thon

Let's give back, give together and give more! It's an annual giving tradition! Hosted by Connecticut Community Foundation and sponsored by Ion Bank Foundation for the sixth consecutive year, Give Local Greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills will be held on April 24-25 to benefit the vital work of hundreds of nonprofit organizations in the region. Cheshire Historical Society asks that you consider making a donation to our Society to help us with our important preservation work. From the evening of April 24th to the evening of April 25th – **TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF GIVING** – please go to the Give Local website and make a charitable donation to Cheshire Historical Society as well as other area nonprofits.



Sunday March 25 – 2:30 p.m.

Arms of the American Revolution and the Percussion Revolt with Rifleman's Myth

By Fred Kerson

On Sunday, March 25th, come to the Society for a special Sunday Afternoon Speaker Event with Fred Kerson, President of the Stratford Gun Collector's Association. We have a musket in our Keeping Room (colonial kitchen) Display that has been listed to be a piece from the Revolutionary War time period. Kerson will prove without a doubt that this musket could never have seen the face of George Washington, in its entirety. However, it could have seen Davy Crockett or Jim Bowie. Kerson invites you to listen to his talk and you decide!

Kerson will also explain how a soda bottle revolutionized warfare in the early nineteenth century and what this had to do with the downfall of the Revolutionary War weapon system. Kerson will describe why it was replaced and with what. Kerson said, "I will also tell you about the vaunted Kentucky Rifle Man as an American Myth of the American Revolution. Find out how I can

make this claim!" The two main long arms of the American Revolution made by competing counties is another area Kerson plans to cover: An original Charleville type Pre-Revolutionary musket versus an original Second Model Brown Bess English made musket of the Revolutionary War period. "I want to tell you about the pros and cons of each model and the problems of fighting with either weapon and why they were not the first choice of either military commander and I will explain why."

Fred Kerson is current president of the Stratford Gun Collector's Association which is the third largest Gun Collector's organization in the state of Connecticut. Founded in 1947 they held famous Gun Shows at the Stratford State Armory from 1961 to 2001. For the past few years they held Gun Shows at the American Legion Hall in the town of Orange Connecticut. The Stratford Gun Collectors Association will be holding a Militaria Show on May 18 and 19, 2018 at 6 Rubber Avenue, Naugatuck, Connecticut.

The Society talk will be on Sunday, March 25, at 2:30 p.m.

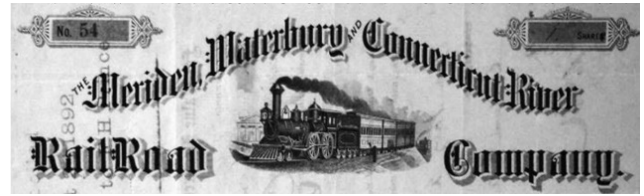
Monday March 26 – 7:30 p.m.

What is With the Craft Beer Craze?

By Mike Haseltine, Better Half Brewery



On Monday March 26th, come to the Society for a refreshing and fun talk by brewery entrepreneur, Mike Haseltine, co-owner of Better Half Brewery in Bristol. As we consider that Cheshire colonists seldom drank water and more often drank home brews such as beer and cider, we are pleased to present a talk on craft beer making. Mike Haseltine, an ESPN employee for the past 12 years, has decided to explore a career in brewing that so many often dream of. Having gone back to school to perfect his craft he is now a recent graduate of the American Brewers Guild and takes great pride in his hand crafted brews. Come by to learn more about the process of this new craze and even try a sample for yourself!



Sunday, April 15 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

RIDE THE GHOST TRAIN - WEST!

Meriden, Waterbury & Connecticut River RR to the Brass City and return via Cheshire Street Railway

With Bob Belletzkic

The Cheshire Historical Society is pleased to announce a bus tour of historic railroad and trolley lines in the area on Sunday April 15, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Air-conditioned luxury coach has Wi-fi, AC outlets, and restroom.

Westward from Cheshire Street, we will follow the Meriden, Waterbury & Connecticut River RR to Union Station, Waterbury. On the eastward return trip, the route of the Cheshire Street Railway trolley line will be traced. Service on the MW&CR lasted from 1888 to 1924 and on the CSR from 1905 to 1934. Photo stops are planned to view beautiful old stone culverts and railroad bridge ruins.

Bob Belletzkic, TylerCityStation rail historian, will be narrating.

Ticket price of \$55 includes 120-page souvenir tour book, lunch, and reception to follow at CHS. Tour departs from CHS, 43 Church Drive, Cheshire 06410 at 9:00 AM sharp; your arrival should be from 8:15 to 8:30 for coffee and registration.

Further instructions to follow with reservations. This is a CHS fundraiser. We always sell out so get your reservations in early to assure the financial viability of the tour. Phone (203) 272-2574 for details or email ASAP to cheshirehistory@che.necoxmail.com You can also make payments on our website: www.cheshirehistory.org

BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

<http://www.cheshirehistory.org> FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SOCIETY AND OUR UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Meeting, April 23 – “Gathering of the Clan” 7 p.m. Reception at 6:30 p.m.
Cheshire’s Ties to Vaudeville: The History of the Musical Durand Family and Mention of Eva Tanguay, “The Girl Who Made Vaudeville Famous” By Diane Calabro, Society President



Our Annual Meeting will celebrate our 67th year as the Cheshire Historical Society. Every member of the Society is encouraged to come to our Annual Meeting on Monday evening, April 23rd ... and bring a friend! We are opening our doors at 6:30 p.m. with a reception and social gathering. At

seven o'clock we'll hold a brief business meeting and we'll recap the highlights of the past year. At 7:30 p.m. Diane Calabro will give a talk on Vaudeville's ties to Cheshire. Very little of Vaudeville remains today. There were no recordings and the posters and other ephemera tell some of the story. We are very lucky to have the memoirs of Howard “Pop” Durand describing his show business days. As you will read further in this newsletter, the Durand Family was a career vaudeville family. There were many challenges to this lifestyle, and certainly many joys. Diane will also reveal a surprise she found while researching Vaudeville history: Eva Tanguay's tie to St. Joseph Street in Cheshire. It will be a fun evening and all are welcome.

OTHER SOCIETY DATES

Visit the Society on Sunday afternoons. Except for holiday weekends, the Cheshire Historical Society (the Society) 1785 Hitchcock-Phillips House (the Museum) will be open to the public every Sunday, 2-4 p.m. through the end of the year. Check our website for more information. Our nineteen-room house museum is also open by appointment on other days. Call (203) 272-2574 to schedule a visit for a private tour or for research purposes. The Society offers WiFi to our researchers and guests. We have a Meeting Room that comfortably seats 30 people and is available for use following Town of Cheshire requirements.

Society Board Meetings for 2018

Board Meetings are the third Monday night of the month:

Spring Board Meetings are January 15, February 19, March 19, April 16, May 21, and June 18. Board Appreciation Dinner is Saturday, July 28.

Fall Board Meetings are September 17, October 15, and November 19.

The Society begins our new year on May 1st. If you are interested in joining our Board of Directors, please contact Diane at

cheshirehistory@che.necoxmail.com.

Other Groups Meeting at the Society

Cheshire Horse Council meets at the Society on the second Monday evening of the month.

Cheshire Toastmasters meets at the Society on the first and third Wednesday evenings of the month.

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) meets on the second Monday afternoon of the month

The Society and these organizations welcome new members and guests.

The Cheshire Historical Society, Formed in 1951

The Cheshire Historical Society, Inc. is incorporated under the laws of the State of Connecticut as a non-profit, educational institution. All contributions to the Society are tax-deductible for Federal Income Tax purposes. The Society operates the Hitchcock-Phillips House Museum which was built in 1785 and has 19 display rooms and is located on the Church Green at 43 Church Drive, Cheshire CT 06410. Corporate headquarters for the organization is located at the Museum and can be reached by phone at (203) 272-2574. Visit our website at www.cheshirehistory.org.

Membership in the Society is open to anyone with an interest in history. Benefits include annual mailings, two newsletters a year, and voting privileges at organizational meetings. Dues payments are a significant part of our operating budget for the Museum. Members are also eligible for volunteer programs. We will also try to give members advance ticket sales information for our events when and where possible.

Contributions of original articles, news items and/or photographs, in addition to suggestions for the improvement of our newsletter are solicited and welcomed. Contact Diane Calabro at the Society. Design and layout of the newsletter is provided by the Society Board of Directors.

From the President

Nothing comes up in search engines if you google the Durand Family. Ancestry.com lists the family names without photos. Howard Durand was a showman, a vaudevillian, and not even an image of this prominent Cheshire resident appears. How is it that a man so used to the spotlight has vanished?

The Society did a vanity printing titled **The Durand Family of Cheshire** by Sterling Jewett in 2000. We used Vaudeville and the Durand Family as our theme for the 2017 Christmas Open House. This newsletter provides information about the Durand Family – which will now make the Durand Family searchable on the internet – and this is the first of three planned efforts to expand the reach of the Durand Family collection held by the Society. We are going to submit the Durand Family story and photos from our collection to Cheshirepedia

(<http://www.cheshirepedia.org>). Please visit this website if you are not familiar with this “all things Cheshire” site. Finally, we will explore reprinting the Jewett book with an ISBN number. Please let me know any other ideas or thoughts you might have on this.

You’ll notice that this newsletter has a different look. For the past several years we’ve had an opportunity to have no printing costs for the 300 twelve-page document we send out twice a year. We struggled with facing our first printing costs for the newsletter for this edition when a family who enjoyed our Gingerbread House Workshop offered to cover the printing costs for this edition.

We are so grateful to many people and I’d like to recognize some of them: The Mulholland Family and the many volunteer actors and support to make our incredible Spirits Alive! Cemetery Tour so remarkable (and profitable) for the Society. Our steadfast Sunday volunteers: Shirley Brady, Colleen Fitzgerald, Clare Leake and Mitzi Romano to name a few. Our resourceful Student Liaison, Jacob Lanzer, for his help and support. Our Student Crafts volunteer, Nuala Hall, for her ongoing ideas and inspiration. The Suburban Garden Club for their amazing display at our Christmas Open House. There are many more people who make our organization special and I thank you very much.

Sunday afternoons continue to be busy as we have many volunteer activities and many visitors and researchers stopping by. *Please feel free to just drop in.* We’ve always got something going on (and nice snacks) so if you see our OPEN sign is lit (this sign was donated by Norm’s Barbershop), please navigate your car to 43 Church Drive and visit.

Read on and enjoy. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome and we invite you to submit articles for our consideration for the Society newsletter.

Cheshire Historical Society Board of Directors**Officers:**

President	Diane Calabro (2012-present)
Vice President	Joyce Mulholland
Membership Secretary	Justin Navarro
Recording Secretary	Mitzi Romano
Corresponding Secretary	Shirley Brady
Treasurer	David Dent

Directors:

<i>Colleen Fitzgerald</i>	2015-2018
<i>Cara A. Luciani</i>	2015-2018
<i>Diane Ulbrich</i>	2015-2018
Clare Leake	2016-2019
Jaime Grant	2016-2019
Marshall Robinson	2016-2019
José Rodriguez	2017-2020
Lois Van Almkerk	2017-2020 Charter Member
Pat Vita	2017-2020

Appointed Positions**Curator Team**

Curator	OPEN
Asst Curator	Ilona Somogyi - Clothing Historian

Facilities

House & Grounds Manager: David Calabro

Student Liaison

Jacob Lanzer, Cheshire High School Class of 2019

Boy Scout Eagle Project Update

The Cheshire Historical Society is grateful to the many Boy Scouts who chose our house museum as the location for their Eagle Projects.

Troop 92:

Quentin Arai - Creating an Office from Old Kitchenette Project (Status: completed 2016)

Jake Butler – Creating a Garden Podium (Status: completed 2017)

Matt Engels – Shelving in the Tool Room (Status: waiting for approval to begin)

Troop 51:

Harrison Dent - Exterior Improvements to Shed and Memory Garden (Status: completed 2016)

Thomas Mulholland - Third Floor Dormitory Room Project (Status: completed. 2015)

Stephen Mulholland - Protective Film on Windows Project (Status: completed. 2015)

Troop 198:

Jake Miller - Creating a Way Finding Sign (Status: completed 2016)

Our House Museum qualifies as a **Place of Historical Significance** for Cub Scouts or other groups who need to complete this visit requirement. Call or email to set up an appointment for a visit.

The Durand Family of Cheshire Connecticut

The Five Musical Durands

By Sterling M. Jewett, August 1994

Many of us in Cheshire still have fond memories of the musical Durand family. During the 20's and 30's the five Durands delighted townspeople with their musical variety shows at the Cheshire Grange Hall, the Town Hall and at churches. The five Durands included Howard "Pop" Durand, his wife, Alida, daughters Jessie and Stella and son, Dexter.

"Pop" Durand was born Nov. 21, 1859 in Branford, CT, son of Second Adventist ministers. When he was two years old the Durands moved to a farm in Cheshire where they resided most of their lives.

When "Pop" Durand was 19 years old he bought a violin for 99 cents, a bow for 30 cents and rosin for five cents. Within weeks he was a fiddler and square dance caller for barn dances.

On "Pop" Durand's 22nd birthday, he married Alida Hubbard who played the piano and learned to play the drums and other instruments. Their three children became very talented musicians. Jessie and Stella sang, played various brass and woodwind instruments, and did a clog dance. Dexter played the violin, banjo and trumpet, and sang comedy tunes. When he was young he was billed as "The Boy Marvel." Dexter's son Harlan perfected the "Punch and Judy show" which he learned from "Pop" Durand.

"Pop" Durand was a versatile musician, humorist and ventriloquist. He performed over 10,000 shows from coast to coast. Many of his shows were his one-man shows which included trick and fancy fiddling, ventriloquism with his dummies, and his popular "Punch and Judy show." More often he performed in circuses, minstrels, and famous vaudeville shows.

In 1904 the Durands moved to Wallingford Road, Cheshire and lived in the dwelling now occupied by antique dealer Lorraine Smith. In 1905 "Pop" Durand produced his own vaudeville show billed as "The Five Musical Durands" or "Momma and I, and The Three Kids." They performed over 3700 shows in every state

except Florida and North Dakota. In 1916 the Durands retired from show business and moved into a dwelling on Foote Street behind Town Hall. Foote Street and the dwelling were removed to make way for the new Town Hall addition.

When I returned to Cheshire in 1954 I became pianist for Jessie Durand, Stella Durand Borgeson, and Stella's husband, Harry Borgeson, an accomplished violinist. Stella and Jessie would sing, dance, and play the antique sleigh bells. I borrowed the Durand family sleigh bells, two dummies, and two violins which I used in various shows for about 30 years.

The late town historian, Edward Gumprecht, willed his collection of Durand memorabilia to the Cheshire Historical Society. The collection includes programs, posters, and dummies which are treasured mementos of the talented Durands who brought joy to so many.



Howard W Durand

Found 526 Records, 16 Photos and 143,487 Family Trees

Born in Connecticut, USA on 1859 to William Andrew Durand and Maria Louise Smith. Howard W married Alida Helen Hubbard and had 6 children.

Family Members

Parents

William Andrew Durand
1822-1903

Maria Louise Smith
1827-1906

Spouse(s)

Alida Helen Hubbard
1862-1941

Children

Jessie Mary Durand
1883-1973

Harold Colman Durand
1888-1898

Vera Edna Durand
1900-1902

Dexter William Durand
1885-1944

Stella Maria Durand
1891-Unknown

Victor Edward Durand
1904-1904

From:

https://www.ancestry.com/genealogy/records/howard-w-durand_21313779

From The Diary Of An Old Showman

By Howard W. Durand (written approx. 1936)

(reprinted from Sterling Jewett's book, "The Durand Family of Cheshire, Connecticut." 2000.

Selections from the original manuscript).

I was born in Branford, Connecticut, on the 21st of November, 1859, but the first I remember of my life was living in Cheshire, Connecticut, and being taken to the Depot to sing "The Girl I left Behind Me" to the soldier when they started for the Civil War. I also remember very clearly going down to the barracks in New Haven and seeing the soldiers drilling, some in uniforms, and some not. This is still vividly impressed on my memory.

After moving twice we were located in the same town but about a mile from the center, and here I went to the little "Red School House" when I was six years old. Sometime after, at mother's suggestion, my father took me to a circus in Waterbury. I still revere their memory for that trip, where for the first time I saw the spangles, and it seems from that time the "Show Business" was

instilled into my system, for soon after my older brother, and I put up a horizontal bar in the side yard and a trapeze on the maple tree. I spent most of my time here, and I know now I was a clever acrobat for my age; why I turned out a “musical artist” instead of an athlete I can never imagine.

We had a small cabinet organ, and my brother was quite a remarkable performer on it. I used to play on a comb with him, and he made a gadget to fit the comb, that looked much like a fife, and I used to move my fingers so that I appeared to be playing an instrument. We had some dance business and perhaps that was the starter in music.

In 1872 when I was 13 years old we moved to Saratoga Springs, New York, and it seems the old circus spirit came on again, for I had a horizontal bar, a trapeze, and a tight rope from the barn to the house on which I spent quite some time. My father went up to Vermont and bought a beautiful little Morgan horse, and in the fall when the garden was past I made a circus ring and rode him bareback, used to jump banners, and paper hoops to the amusement of large crowds. I used to go down town after the mail with Jack horse and coming home I would stand up on him with only a halter, he running full speed, and it came to be almost a habit for the citizens and boarders to line up on the street to see me go by. In after visits I often heard stories of those days.

I passed a “Ninety-Nine Cent” store, and there in the window for weeks I had seen a violin marked for .99. One day my Lady Luck stopped me, turned me around and I went back and bought that Violin. I took it home in a paper box and the son of my landlady said, “What you got there, Howard? A fiddle? Let’s see it.” I passed it over to him and he took it out, turned it over and over, snapped the strings, tuned it up and said, “Where’s the bow?” I had not thought of the bow, evidently did not know it was necessary, but I went right back and asked for a bow, which they handed out to me, a sickly homely looking thing, for thirty cents, and they threw in a piece of rosin. I almost ran back to the house, where I found out that Charlie (the son) was a really wonderful fiddler, and before I went to bed I could run the scale and had started on a tune; and I lived with it all my spare time night and day.

The dry goods store [where I was working as a teenager] failed and I was out of a job, when I was offered a job of tending fires, to dry off wall plastering, so it would not freeze, and I took my violin and books with me and between times when I tended fire, I played and practiced “calling-off” for country dances. I became so proficient that I had plenty of dance work, but I was

often ashamed to take jobs that an old man had had for years. I was earning more than I had ever thought possible, as they passed the hat for the “fiddler” and I often got eight dollars and sometimes more. (Do you see anything of my Lady Luck, or was it PLUCK?) I had an offer come to me to do Props, and later “gripping” (Handling the old fashioned scenery) in the Town Hall Theater, and along comes a well-established minstrel, and the manager offered me a job as Property Man, and play drums in the band, and although my Parents objected strongly at first, they signed up with him and away I went as \$6 “Pec and Pad.” Before long I found myself substituting for many acts, as in those days some of the performers would be very much “indisposed” on Monday night, and “Harry, you do Blank’s end, or Joe’s comedy tonight” got to be quite a common order. By this time I had graduated from drums to cornet, and so the season ended.

On the closing of the show I went back home, and my Brother and I joined out with a temperance lecturer, singing and instrumental work, (a la Moody and Sankey) and did very well. Then my brother married and went to New Haven, CT, and I filled in a good season playing dances, but father sold out in Saratoga, and we followed down to New Haven, where I got a job with the New Haven Organ Company, and had a dandy job for a year or more, and what with dances and some club work I banked a nice little roll. In 1881 I fell in love with a little lady, and on November 21, 1881, I was married, and after 55 years we are still lovers. I got through with my job, bought a half interest in a Grocery store, and believe me if I had bought a new carriage and a pair of horses, taken my new wife and toured the country stopping at good hotels for the same time I was partner in that grocery store, I would have made money.

[Durand struggled to find jobs and finally was able to purchase a costume company in New Haven.] We took what was his work room and partitioned it off to live in, and although it was mid-summer we managed to get along, as I played some dates and dances, and other work I picked up, and in the Fall business began to come in and we had a remarkable season, with Masquerades, Amateur Dramatics, Coaching, and Club Work, so that we paid our rent, interest, and some on the principal.

That spring I had a good offer from the Kickapoo Indian Medicine Company which I accepted and not only put in a pleasant summer, but as we stayed on a stand two or three weeks, and changed program every night I was kept hustling for new acts. It was the greatest schooling I have ever had in my more than fifty years in the show business.

The next winter season was a repetition of the first only much better, and as New Haven was a great “dog town,” i.e., openings for new productions, I did a big business in new wardrobe, make up, props, etc. so that I had free run of the theaters and got acquainted with many performers, and when a company needed fill-in bits, they would come to me and my little daughter was often called on to do child parts, on account of sickness or “temperament.”

I accepted another season with the Kickapoos, and we put in the entire time in Philadelphia, and that fall I doubled up with a clever comedian, and a musical artist and we opened in Keith’s Bijou, jumped to Huber’s New York; Keith’s, Boston, and booked as long as I could stay away from the store.

I was out with a company, and was doing my ventriloquial act with my two talking figures at a matinee performance, when I noticed a messenger boy coming in and the telegram was handed to me on stage. Suspecting what it was I opened it and read it aloud; here it is: “Arrived safely at seven thirty, Mamma and I send love. Signed Harold Coleman Durand.” The audience evidently thought it was part of the act and made no demonstration, but the performers took it in and I or someone told them the meaning, and it was a “riot.” Right here on the same stage the next night I saw the first stampede and panic I had ever seen. I was doing my figures; the theatre was crowded; a rear seat tipped over with a crash! Someone yelled “fight,” then “fire,” and the stampede was on, a terrible sight. I jumped up throwing my figures in the air, trying to make myself heard, I yelled there was no danger, and finally got them, told them I saw it all, and stopped them. But I was so exhausted, and hoarse that I could not finish my act.

I only stayed with the show a few days more as I wanted to see my wife, and new boy, and I was needed at the store. [The costume store was too much for Mrs. Durand to manage along with the growing Durand family. Howard Durand left the stage, sold the costume business. Durand describes his four children as being expert on several instruments and his wife was a pianist.] Now I had a five piece orchestra that could play almost anything and we used to take entertainment’s, and dances which were very popular then, and the children went to school steadily.

I was now offered engagements by many managers to travel, and I accepted some for summer work, and even put out a family show of my own, but one night stands did not appeal to us and we went back home. The following summer I accepted a Park job near Poughkeepsie, and we had a fine time doing specialties, and playing dance music. That fall I signed with a

railroad show opening in Denver Colorado, received my transportation from them in advance, and we lived on the car for some time, and I find my referring to my date book we traveled that season over 16000 miles in eight months, but the show was overloaded for the country we were playing, and as I had such a large advance, I never received a cent of salary, and the show busted in Dallas, Texas. During our trip through Kansas, the alkali water made the entire troupe sick. Our little Harry became dangerously so, and in spite of all our care, he died and is buried in Fort Worth, Texas. We showed that same night in Dallas – “The show must go on.” That night after the show, we found that the Treasurer and Backer had skipped, and left us stranded. But we still had our stateroom, kitchenette and dining-room on the car.

The big Dallas Fair was in full swing and I landed a ballyhoo job immediately and worked three days, when a manager from Fort Worth vaudeville theatre offered us an opening and we stayed with him five weeks, when we opened with a road show and played seven weeks of one and two night stands in Texas; we came back to the same theatre and stayed three weeks more, erected a pretty little headstone for our boy, and were on easy street. [This season ended]

So ended the most trying tour of our experience. I had plenty of offers, some of which I accepted, and as the children were pretty well grown up, I signed a contract with a combination for 42 weeks staying with the same show three seasons.

Following this, I felt an itching to go to the Coast again, landed a contract for a Vaudeville Circuit, to open in Denver, for the second time. There I found it was Grand Army week and the manager told me we would have to do four or five shows a day, and the act must not run over ten minutes, so my son and I went to the Hotel picked out some of our best numbers, whistled them over for length, fixed up music for the Orchestra, and here was born the vaudeville act, “The Five Musical Durands,” and with the exception of putting in two encores we never changed it in any particular, performing it for more than 3700 times, from Coast to Coast in nearly every State in the Union, Canada, and the Maritime Provinces. With the exception of one season with a combination, we did the same act in vaudeville, until we retired from Show Business [in 1916].

*The Society has two copies of **The Durand Family of Cheshire Connecticut** (printed in 2000). We have many photos and ephemera as well. You are welcome to come by for further research.*

Facilities Update

As always, we need to recognize the support we receive from the Town of Cheshire, specifically the Public Works Department. The Town has done a formidable job in maintaining the exterior of our building: new exterior painting and a new roof were recently accomplished. We also appreciate the snow removal that has been done seemingly as soon as the first flakes fall to the ground.

We also want to recognize the unfailing efforts of the Suburban Garden Club and the Cheshire Garden Club for maintaining our flower and garden beds. The Suburban Garden Club did an outstanding job for our Christmas Open House with their Vaudeville-themed decorations. Our thanks also to Boy Scout Jake Butler. Jake and his work crew have likely resolved their Poison Ivy contact from Jake's Eagle project to clean up the northwest corner of our property and install a platform area suitable for an outdoor podium. We hope to use this new space for activities in spring and summer.

Our short term interior projects for 2018 include much needed painting of our foyer trim and staircase and painting of ceiling and trim in the Craig Bedroom. The Craig Library continues to be organized to make this an accommodating area for researchers. Tim Slocum, Home Fabric Mills, gave us a very fine discount on twill fabric and window treatments were updated in many rooms at the cost of under \$10 per window.

Always lots to do at the Museum, but always a labor of love to maintain and preserve this fine structure and our collections.

SAVE THE DATE!

Monday, June 4th

Debunk'd: History Myths and Mysteries - Offering Fresh Perspectives on Age-Old Issues

Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO) Annual Conference

Central Connecticut State University, New Britain

Disclosure: Diane Calabro is a member of the CLHO Board of Directors

Curator Update

The Society is still seeking a qualified volunteer who would be interested in becoming our Curator.

As we wait for this person, we are working steadily towards collection goals as outlined in the Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (StEPS), a program of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). We received a grant from Connecticut Humanities to have collections consultant,

Brenda Milkofsky, provide us a two-day workshop last August with the goal of writing needed collection documents. We have approved a Collections Plan and are currently writing our Collections Policy based on this instruction.

We continue to strive towards making the visitor experience a rewarding one at our house museum. Come visit and we'll tell you the history of the Hitchcock-Phillips House Parlor. We've set the year at 1885, one hundred years after the house was built. The two Hitchcock Family descendants, sisters Lucretia H. Clark and Maria Scoville Clark Phillips (and Maria's husband, Prof. A.W. Phillips) now use this house for a summer residence. The Wallace Hotel is thriving on the other side of the Church Green. What are their lives like? What do they talk about? What's the news of the day? Come to the Society and we'll turn the clock back and tell you some **Stories from the Parlor**.

We dedicate ourselves to the best care and stewardship of our collection as we can possibly manage. We're always looking for Sunday afternoon volunteers. And if you know of any museum professional that has spare time and might want to stop by, it's 43 Church Drive.

Accessions – 2015-2017

We have updated our accessions listing going back to donations made since 2015. Ninety-two items were added to the Society collection. We wish to thank the following donors for their generosity in providing the Society with items that have relevance to Cheshire's history:

George Adair
 Robert Allard
 Steven Bergeron (Loan)
 Jill Bournival / Norm's Barbershop
 Laura Brennan
 Marsha (Polly) Brooks
 Marguerite Laura Brooks
 Robert Cawood
 Rosetta Chatfield
 Pamela (Trivelli) Combies
 Edward Dobbins, Jr.
 Ralph Edsen
 Farmington Historical Society
 Judy Fenney
 Ron Gagliardi
 Ted Holtzman
 Boardman W. Kathan
 Jessica Kingsbury
 Joseph & Alice Magnarella
 Patricia Mullaney Marshall

Joe Miller
 José Rodriguez
 Marty Samualson
 Simsbury Free Library
 John Welch
 Richard Woodsworth
 Ralph Zingarella

A full listing of these items can be found at our website: <http://www.cheshirehistory.org> or by contacting the Society at (203) 272-2574.

Glaciers to Greenhouses by Our Town Historian

The Society is pleased to share that we have received a copy of the *draft* manuscript of Town Historian, Jeanné Chesanow's latest work, **Glaciers to Greenhouses**. We hope to work with Jeanné to publish this manuscript. Please stop by if you would like to see this document. We would welcome any donations to specifically support the publication of this work.

The Tail of the History Hound By Mitzi Romano

Many organizations have mascots. UConn has Jonathan the Husky; Yale has Handsome Dan the Bulldog. In late 2017, the Cheshire Historical Society acquired its first mascot – the History Hound.

The History Hound started out as my relatively unassuming companion, Maverick, joining me on walks about town, while I captured photos for the Society's Instagram and Facebook accounts. He made his first, uncredited appearance, perched on various rocks to help advertise Eric Nelson's March 2017 Rock Identification Workshop. Then, he joined me for the 4th of July Declaration Celebration on the Green, and ended up being featured on the front page of the next edition of The Cheshire Herald.

But a star was not yet born. He made a few more guest appearances on our social media accounts, looking for information about discoveries in the woods, and advertising the Grange Fair and Spirits Alive, and he continued to accompany me on my photographic expeditions. He also became familiar with the grounds of the Hitchcock-Phillips House, and a quick game of fetch in its back yard became the reward for his companionship on these travels.

This prompted Diane Calabro to suggest that he might be a "History Hound," even if he can't actually enter the House. And that is where his official story begins!

Maverick loves exploring the great outdoors, and Cheshire provides many opportunities for exploration. Some paths are fairly well-traveled, such as the Farmington Canal Trail. Others, such as Mixville Park, are well-known, but have a hidden history. Still others are off the beaten path.

Our first "Tail of the History Hound" took readers on a trip to the back country of Mixville Park to check out the remains of the old rope tow and the trolley tracks, while also providing some history about the Park itself. We followed this up with a more sedate trip down a portion of the Canal Trail and explained how a landlocked town came to have a "Beachport". Our most recent "Tail" enlisted the aid of Joy Vanderlek of the Cheshire Land Trust and Dr. Charles Dimmick to find a copper mine exploratory pit, the remains of the Cross Rocks Copper Mine, and some mysterious holes bored into a boulder on Boulder Road. This trip also landed us an article in The Cheshire Citizen.

Two more "Tails" are currently awaiting publication, and three more are in the planning stages. As long as there are scents to sniff, places to explore (preferably with water nearby ... the History Hound is a lab mix and loves wading through ponds and streams), and maybe a celebratory game of fetch at the end of the trail, the History Hound will be on the job!

Thank You for Your Generosity

We want to thank you! We had several very generous donations in the past months. Thank you for thinking of the Cheshire Historical Society. So many of you included a little extra donation with your annual membership renewal. We are grateful to you for that extra contribution. We are also grateful to those of you who were able to include corporate matching for donations and recognition of volunteer service. We received \$3,840 in donations from our members between August 2017 and February 7, 2018.

Our VERY SPECIAL THANKS to:

Jane Richards

Diane Ulbrich

Bristol-Myers Squibb Volunteer Service Award

for Diane Calabro

Voya Financial Advisors Volunteer Service Award

for Mitzi Romano

Jean McKee

Friends of Cheshire Library

(Spirits Alive Event in January 2018)

Cheshire Horse Council

Frank Donovan (GE Foundation Matching)

Barney Kathan in appreciation

for Trail Work done by Eric Nelson

Diane & Dave Calabro
Catherine & Ray Schleier, Brewster NY
(in memory of Domenic Calabro)
 Juline Beier
 James & Janice Matson
 (Bristol-Myers Squibb Matching)
 Richard Frantz, Jr.
 Edward & Christine Albrecht
 Peter Merriman
 Louis & Mary Ann Ricciuti
 Dorothy Watkins
 Pat Cumstone
 Roger & Heather Chase
 Valley United Way
 Barbara Christoff
 Adelaide Marx
 Patricia Sienkowski
 Janet Price
 Bob LaRosa
 Barbara Ann O'Brien

We also received \$333 in Door Donations since August. We very much appreciate this from our visitors and researchers. Note that we are very happy to have those jars, boxes and other containers of pennies and other loose change you have at home. We'll happily sort them and roll them up. As Member Eigel Wium said, these are **Pennies from Heaven**. (Contributions made from August 1, 2017 to February 15, 2018)

Bequests to Cheshire Historical Society
 If you have included the Society in your will, thank you!
 We'd like to keep a record of your generous action.
 Kindly send a copy to:
 The Cheshire Historical Society
 Attn: David Dent, Treasurer
 43 Church Drive, Cheshire, CT 06410

@YOU! Do We Have Your Email?
 Contact Justin Navarro at

justin.navarro@che.necoxmail.com or at (203) 272-2574 to update all of your contact information. This will ensure that you not only continue to receive important Society e-mail alerts, but also the link to our newsletters.

ARTSDAY Returning for 30th Year!

March 18th from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cheshire Academy Dining Hall. Fifteen artists will demonstrate hands-on activities. A free event suitable for children ages 5 and up. Support art in Cheshire and have an opportunity to see historic Cheshire Academy.

Membership Update

By Justin Navarro

Somehow, I have now been your Membership Secretary for three years! In that time, we have updated our record keeping, launched a new website, and added the ability to collect dues and special event ticket fees online. Over the past three years, we have grown from 201 member units (individuals, families, and businesses), to 221. As we receive renewals and new member subscriptions for 2018, I'm hopefully we'll continue to steadily grow that number.

I would like to personally thank those Lifetime members who continue to donate each year and those who donate above and beyond their annual dues. Every dollar counts and we know you have a many other commitments for your financial resources.

Although we have a number of fundraisers throughout the year, the Spirits Alive program being one of the most popular and profitable, a robust membership indicates a healthy organization. With that in mind, we encourage you to bring friends and family to our events that may be of interest and recommend they join as well!

If you have not yet renewed, you may still go to **<http://cheshirehistory.org/wordpress/membership/>** to do so. And as always, I'm happy to hear from anyone at justin.navarro@che.necoxmail.com.



More Jars Please!

Spirits Alive Needs Jars and Tealights

Mason jars, spaghetti sauce jars, and any pint-, quart-sized or larger (or "interesting") jars clean and with the label removed (soak for a bit in hot, soapy water and most labels slide right off). Drop them by our back door (where the brick walk is) at your convenience. We would plan to use about 1,500 jars for the Spirits Alive Tour in October so please do not put these glass jars in your recycle! Save them for the Society. Also needed are Shepherds Hooks, oil lanterns, and packages of tea lights (IKEA has the best prices for these and **this is a key need** as we will use about 6,000 tea lights for our cemetery tour). Cash donations can also be made to support costume needs for what has become our major fundraiser. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Antiques & Collectibles Sale & Event
CT OPEN HOUSE DAY
Saturday June 9th

The Cheshire Historical Society is proud to host our 46th Annual Antiques Sale. Next door to our event, the historic First Congregational Church is holding their 81st Annual Strawberry Festival & Crafts Fair, a traditional New England festival featuring farm-fresh strawberry shortcake along with grilled foods, handmade crafts, amusements and entertainment that are fun for the entire family.

The Society has been truly blessed to have had Lois and Warren Van Almkerk running the Antiques and Collectible Sale for the last 45 years. Lois has shared that the A&C Sale was first held at the Cheshire Academy grounds and was later moved to 43 Church Drive. The Van Almkerk siblings managed this event beautifully for years, setting very high standards. Lois weathered many changes. The once monthly sales became annual. The market and interest for antiques has seemed to dwindle in past years. And, most tragically, Warren Van Almkerk passed away, leaving a hole that will never be fully replaced. We will never be able to express our gratitude to Lois for the contributions that she and her family have made to the Society.

As we enter the 46th year for the A&C Sales, a new volunteer has stepped forward to take the torch. Society Director Clare Leake is the chairperson for this year's event. With many years of experience (and a very supportive family of antique professionals), Clare is making some changes. Clare is looking for antiques and collectible dealers as well as for artisans and craftspeople who can create art items that harken back to our history. For example, weavers who use old looms, woodworkers, potters, metal workers, vintage fabric collectors, quilt makers, people who do vintage needlework, to name a few areas. If you or someone you know repurposes materials in a delightful and creative way, we'd be interested in having you at our event.

June 9th is also Connecticut Open House Day and the front lawn of the Society building will focus on history and historic demonstrations. We hope to have several craftspeople showing our guests how to weave, to spin, to do woodwork, to preserve food, and more.

This is a RAIN or SHINE event.

Call (203) 272-2574 and leave a message for Clare if you are interested in this event. We can send a Registration form to you. Or check our website.



NEW THIS YEAR! Spaces (numbered in this small drawing) will be given as available so dealers will be asked to indicate their choice and the assignment will be made first come first serve.

Photo Montage by Mitzi Romano

The following photo montage was created by Mitzi Romano who manages our Instagram account and assists with Facebook and our Website.

The Lady in Pink spent the past decades wearing two wigs, a bonnet, and a Civil War era bridal gown. Her dress was carefully archived to “rest” this piece, revealing this young miss. She has garnered quite a few surprises as volunteers encountered her in various locations in the building. Our storage is at a premium and what exactly do you do with a five foot high mannequin who is between assignments? Her first location was a *temporary* resting spot (unclothed) on the bed in the Student Dormitory Room causing visiting Thomas Mulholland (timing is everything) to have a near cardiac event. “Mrs. Calabro! There’s a GIRL in the Dorm Room!” Former Cheshire Academy House Master, Robert Gardiner, would certainly tell us that isn’t the first time those words were uttered in our building! Thomas has officially named the mannequin “Marsha” from the Twilight Zone episode “The After Hours.”

Inge Venus, Cheshire Garden Club and President of the Connecticut Federated Garden Clubs, is seen standing by the Dining Room fireplace mantle (and her outfit very nearly matches our 1920 costume display) at our Christmas Open House, admiring – as we all did! – the lovely floral displays, greenery, and interpretations by Cheshire’s wonderful **Suburban Garden Club**.

**COME VISIT THE SOCIETY ON
 SUNDAY AFTERNOONS!**

Or, by appointment (call 203-272-2574)