

Cheshire Historical Society News

Volume 42, No. 1

*Keeping Cheshire's History Alive!**Spring 2019*

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.

MARY ELLEN KANIA (1931-2018) – SIX SIGNIFICANT CHANGES SHE MADE TO THE SOCIETY

The Cheshire Historical Society was commonly referred to as “Mary Ellen’s House” for at least a decade. Many visitors recall Mary Ellen asking them to be very careful in the Society house museum. Every tour with youngsters included Mary Ellen’s famous words delivered with both of her arms across her chest and hands on opposite shoulders:

I have to tell you a very important thing. VERY IMPORTANT thing. Everything in this house is old and valuable and fragile. It is very, very important that you not touch anything unless your guide says you can. I know it's hard. It's hard for me, too! But you need to do this for me. You need to “touch” with your eyes and with your heart. Look at everything and ask as many questions as you wish but keep your hands folded or in your pockets.

-Mary Ellen Kania speaking to the Doolittle School 3rd Grade School Tour in 2013



Mary Ellen Kania shows a Cub Scout group the mechanics of mortise and tenon carpentry in November 2012

It was common to see the children walking on their tours with their arms firmly across their chests as Mary Ellen had instructed them to do.

Mary Ellen was the Society Curator from 2006 to 2015. She brought the “museum” into our Hitchcock-Phillips House Museum. She was passionate about best practices, insisting that collection care be a priority. Clearly a strong believer in life-long learning, Mary Ellen attended numerous seminars to learn more about the best care of our artifacts and documents. Among her many accomplishments at the Society:

- Began to digitize our collection as soon as scanners became available, helping the original “Diggers” (a group organized by Ron Gagliardi to scan our collection).
- Wrote our first Disaster Plan.
- Organized our filing system numerous times.
- Cataloged all of the research books in the Meeting Room.
- Produced a DVD of the house museum that visitors watched prior to their tour.
- Created a Docent Training Program and authored a Docent Information Handbook.

As we were admitted to the StEPs best practices coursework through the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), Connecticut Humanities (CTH), and the Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO), so many of the topics addressed had at least been started at the Society by Mary Ellen.

Mary Ellen devoted hours and hours of volunteer time to the Society. She was strict about keeping the building clean and tidy. She had a certain vision of the building and the many display rooms and she made sure that all volunteers

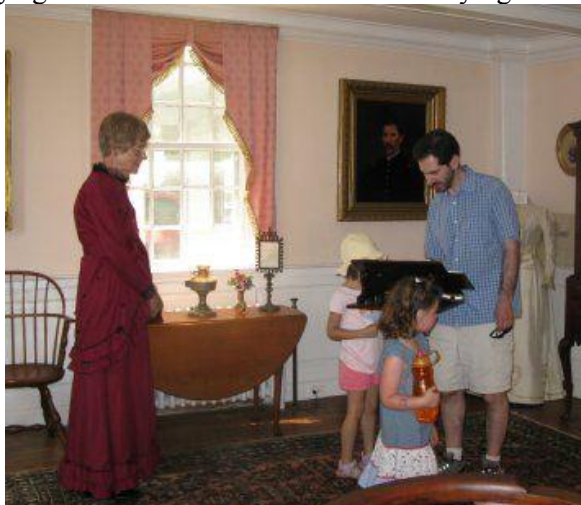
understood this vision and that the museum exhibits needed to be ready for viewing at all times. She would frequently wear a Colonial costume, a flattering cranberry colored dress -- we always wondered if she chose the color because she and her husband, Ed, lived on Cranberry Lane.

She really shined during the tours for children and young adults. Mary Ellen captivated these young audiences who would listen to her with rapt attention.

Mary Ellen Kania was an inspiration to us all. If we are very quiet, we can still hear her greeting the school tours at the front door, in front of the red doors with the green bull's eye glass windows. You can hear her saying:

Welcome to the Cheshire Historical Society. Look at the number over the door. What number is it? This is not a street number. This is the year this house was built. Everyone say this with me: 1785. The name of the house is the Hitchcock-Phillips House and I'll tell you about that name when we get inside. I'm going to ask you to come inside but please come in SINGLE FILE, one at a time. You'll walk all the way down to the back of the house where we have our Meeting Room. There will be chairs for the teachers and adults. The children can sit on the floor and we'll have a little introduction to the house.

Mary Ellen Kania's script for the Hitchcock-Phillips House tours



THE TROLLEY BELL WILL ALWAYS RING FOR DR. BOB



At the back entrance of the Meeting Room at the Society there is a brass trolley bell donated by Dr. Robert Chesnow (1935-2018) for our history trolley tours. While these history tours are once a year at best, the trolley bell gets a lot of use from our younger visitors, particularly on our third grade school tours, where the children ring the bell as they exit the building at the end of their tours.

We will miss Dr. Bob, who passed away this past September following a car accident. He was a delightful gentleman, always impeccably dressed, and always ready to dazzle any listener with his conversational acumen. He was a good friend to the Society and he will be missed. Feel free to ring Dr. Bob's bell anytime you visit the Society.

Photo from September 2016 when Dr. Bob was the Conductor on The Brooksvale Area & South End of Cheshire Historic Trolley Tour

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES THIS SPRING

- Saturday, February 2 – Spirit's Alive Encore, seated performance inside the Hitchcock Phillips House
- Thursday, March 21 – Historic Homes of Cheshire by Society Member Robert Kerson, reviews Nathaniel/Benedict Ives Homestead (1750), Deacon Ives Home (1724) and Steven R. Bradley House (1754) all located in Cheshire (event is at Cheshire Public Library, 6:30 to 8 p.m.)
- Wednesday, April 3 – Cheshire Grange honors Diane Calabro as the 2019 Cheshire Community Citizen (event is at the Grange Hall, Wallingford Road, 7:30 p.m.)
- Monday, April 22 - Cheshire Historical Society Annual Meeting. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Annual Meeting at 7 p.m. Entertainment & Reception follow the meeting.
- Tuesday, April 23 to Wednesday, April 24 – Give Local with the Connecticut Community Foundation has become one of our larger fundraising events. We encourage members to participate as the more people that make donations (of any amount) enable us to qualify for cash prizes. – Fundraiser
- May 1-2 – The Great Give with the New Haven Community Foundation has many Cheshire non-profits listed in this on-line fundraiser. The Society will also be listed – Fundraiser

- Sunday, May 26 – Memorial Day Parade (Society is closed as we will be at the Parade)
- Saturday, June 8 – CT Open House Day – Colonial Crafts & Games for Children and Families, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Saturday, June 15 – Our 47th Annual Antiques & Collectibles Sale, and our Shoppe Sale in the Shed on the same day as the First Congregational Church 82nd Annual Strawberry Festival – Fundraiser
- Friday, June 28 to Saturday, June 29 – WWII Military Reenactment with the First Canadian Parachute Battalion. Saturday will be a full day of presentations and military displays on the Society grounds.
- July 4 – Patriotic Reading on the Church Green at 10 a.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Society Members,

We were all saddened to hear of the passing of so many good friends, including Mary Ellen Kania. Several of us attended the service for Mary Ellen on January 19 at the Episcopal Church. We heard so many stories celebrating Mary Ellen. We will miss her very much.

I am feeling buoyed up by the success of the Spirits Alive Encore held on February 2nd. I expected we'd have to deal with bad (or typical) February weather. The weather cooperated. The event was extraordinary. I continue to receive feedback from guests who describe this as an amazing event. Many commented on how incredible the inside of the Hitchcock-Phillips House looked, as it had been staged for the event with eight rooms being set up as small theater areas. I can't thank our volunteer actors and event volunteers enough. They all made magic happen that night! As always, the Society owes a debt of gratitude to the Mulholland and Holtzman families. We would not be the organization we are without your support and the hours and hours of time all you all devote to our Society.

You can contact me directly at cheshirehistory@che.necoxmail.com for more details.

BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE: <http://www.cheshirehistory.org> FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SOCIETY AND OUR UPCOMING EVENTS

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 always welcome new members and guests.

CHESHIRE GRANGE HONORS DIANE CALABRO WITH "2019 CHESHIRE COMMUNITY CITIZEN"

Ruel Miller, President of Cheshire Grange #23, contacted Society President Diane Calabro that the Cheshire Grange would like to honor Diane as their 2019 Cheshire Community Citizen. Ruel explained that this is one of the Grange's highlight meetings of the year and will be held on Wednesday, April 3rd at 7:30 p.m. at the Grange Hall on Wallingford Road. The evening will include entertainment, a teacup auction, and a reception that will follow the meeting.

Please make every effort to attend this meeting! What a wonderful tribute to our all-volunteer organization.

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. Our e-mail is cheshirehistory@che.necoxmail.com or call (203) 272-2574.

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

President	Diane Calabro (2012-present)
Vice President	Cara A. Luciani
Membership Secretary	Justin Navarro
Recording Secretary	Mitzi Romano
Corresponding Sec.	Shirley Brady
Treasurer	David Dent

Directors:

<i>Clare Leake</i>	2016-2019	
<i>Jaime Grant</i>	2016-2019	
<i>Marshall Robinson</i>	2016-2019	
José Rodriguez	2017-2020	
Lois Van Almkerk	2017-2020	Charter Member
Pat Vita	2017-2020	
Tracy Ajello	2018-2021	
Reneé Barley	2018-2021	
Colleen Fitzgerald	2018-2021	

Appointed Positions

Curator: OPEN, Assistant Curator: Ilona Somogyi - Clothing Historian

Facilities House & Grounds Manager: David Calabro

Student Liaison Jacob Lanzer, CHS Class of 2019

SPIRITS ALIVE ENCORE EVENT ASTONISHES GUESTS

On Saturday night, February 2, the Society had an event like nothing else previously done in our house museum. Joyce Mulholland and Dawn Marchand organized an astonishing event where nine volunteer actors portrayed Cheshire residents who told their story about their lives and the times they lived in. We have had this special Spirits Alive fundraiser for five years, our major fundraiser, in the historic Hillside Cemetery over two nights during the full moon in October. We had sold out our 2018 event by the end of Labor Day Weekend last year and many people complained that they did not have a chance to see the new Spirits perform their tales.

Joyce and Dawn offered to make an encore event, selecting Ground Hog Day as a perfect date (based on the movie of the same name with Bill Murray, where the day repeats). The all-volunteer actors said they would do it.

Laying out the flow of performances was a new challenge. Guests registered in the Shed behind the main building. They entered the backdoor of the Meeting Room and began their tour through eight rooms. Each room had chairs arranged and also needed space for the actors to move around. Joyce and Steve Mulholland brought and borrowed accent lighting as using the overhead fluorescents in the various rooms was not optimal for the Spirit's performances. Clare Leake donated dozens of black curtains to separate rooms and hallways. Dave Calabro and his brother Mark Calabro set up pop-up tents between the Shed and the backdoor to keep guests protected from the chilly night as we anticipated inclement February weather. Bad weather missed us as the sub-zero Polar Vortex from two days previous was dissipating and our evening's twenty-three degree weather seemed almost balmy. However, Steve Mulholland might well disagree as he spent almost the entire day and evening outside doing general set up as well as creating the candlelit pathways and directing people from their cars to the entrance being used for the event. One guest asked why he wasn't wearing a hat and gloves and another guest piped up that Steve never does.

Suddenly it was four o'clock on Saturday afternoon and guests began to arrive. Ready or not, we had an event to hold. The tours were small, only eight people to a tour. The actors said it was an intimate atmosphere. Most actors had to think about keeping their voices lower than they would for an outdoor performance to thirty people. "It's so much easier not having to project my voice," Mary Dattilio said. One guest said it was all she could do not to reach out and console the grieving Mother Hitchcock. Several guests had done the outdoor tour in October and came back to hear the Spirits again. People left saying many, many nice things about the tour.

Will we do it again? The actors were very happy with the evening. We expect to see this happen again in the future. There were a few lessons learned at this event but they were minor and many were resolved by the second or third tour group. Being accustomed to managing groups of thirty every fifteen minutes, it was a very different evening to manage groups of eight every twenty minutes. It seemed very calm and quiet in the Shed where Pat Vita did the registration, Cara Luciani did the raffle basket, and Colleen Fitzgerald greeted people and organized the refreshments. Inside the building,

we had the Widow Kye return. Angela Jannetty portrayed the 1770 purported witch. Eric Nelson, John and Muluken Marchand, Mitzi and Scott Romano, Phoebe Hall, Ted and Joyce Holtzman, and Judith Mercugliano were inside, performing many tasks such as guiding guests to their next Spirit, managing coats, and promoting the Society.

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 Dr. Cheshire, CT 06410

CHESHIRE: 325 YEARS OLD!

This year celebrates the 325th anniversary of the Town of Cheshire. Events are being planned with the many groups in town. Keep an eye out for these special activities!

FACILITIES UPDATE

I am writing this on what I hope is the coldest day we'll experience this winter. Today is January 21st, MLK Day. It was below zero when I woke up, with a wind-chill making it feel much lower. Predictably, a pipe burst in the back apartment and Cheshire's Public Works responded in minutes when we called about the damage. Thankfully the water damage was limited to an area with no museum artifacts. Our old refrigerator got wet but it held up fine.

In spite of the cold, we are doing something extraordinary in the house museum. This is a first. We're setting up each room for a vignette for the Spirits Alive Encore and this has meant moving a lot of things to accommodate traffic flow and chairs. It gives us an opportunity to try a large fundraiser in February.

We're waiting out the cold winter weather and looking forward to spring!

WHY WE'RE SPENDING THE WINTER WRITING A STRATEGIC PLAN

There is a lot of competition in our town and in our area for an all-volunteer house museum open for two hours on Sundays. There are a lot of museums, and visitors have limited amounts of free time and interest to visit these many sites.

Part of the Best Practices that were shared during our StEPs program was the need to create a Strategic Plan. We struggle without a systematic process that would help us set an ambition for our Society's future and determine how to best achieve these goals. A Strategic Plan would help us connect three key areas: our mission, Keeping Cheshire's History Alive which defines our purpose, our vision, which describes what we want to achieve and, finally, an action plan, that sets out how we will get there and what tools and resources we'll need to make this happen.

Similar to having your house appraised by a building inspector, we have been reviewing the many operations, activities, collections, and display areas in our museum. This has been many weeks of volunteer hours as we have moved room-to-room to make these assessments.

Why should we do this?

We are a treasure. Don't take our word for it.

“Cheshire Historical Society was off-the-charts great.”

Top 10 Treasures from Small Museums by William Hosley, Connecticut Explored, Summer 2016, pg. 15

With a Strategic Plan in place, we can continue to complete the StEPs program as many of the segments include the requirement for such a plan. Additionally, as we apply for grants we are asked if we have a strategic plan. We're hoping that in a few more months we will have our plan.

There are roughly 11,000 Starbucks locations in the United States, and about 14,000 McDonald's restaurants. But combined, the two chains don't come close to the number of museums in the U.S., which stands at a whopping 35,000. This statistic is taken from the Museum Universe Data File (MUDF), compiled by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). That file of "known museums in the United States" encompasses some 35,144 institutions, making this statistic literally true ... albeit for a much more expansive definition of "museum" than most laypeople would employ.

www.snopes.com/fact-check/a-museum-on-every-corner/

WHAT MAKES THE SOCIETY “OFF-THE-CHARTS GREAT”? START IN THE PARLOR

First time visitors to the Cheshire Historical Society say two things:

“I had no idea this place was so big!” and “I’d need to come here many times to see everything you have!”

When visitors enter the Parlor, our guides tell the story of the two granddaughters of Rufus Hitchcock, Maria Scoville Clark Phillips (Mrs. Andrew Wheeler Phillips) born in 1823, and her younger sister, Lucretia Hitchcock Clark born in 1826. These are women of a “certain age,” in 1890. They would have been in their twenties during the Civil War and that might have been the most influential and impactful period of their lives, especially as they would have seen the troops parading on the Church Green in front of their home.

These women would have watched all of Cheshire from their Parlor windows throughout their lives. What did they see? What did the Green look like in their century? What’s going on in Cheshire? In 1890, they are only in Cheshire during the summer months as their childhood home is now a summer residence. The rest of the year they are in New Haven. What was life in the city like for these country girls? The Munson Hotel next door is likely full with summer visitors avoiding the heat of the New Haven city.

We are working on our Strategic Plan and our volunteers have sat in each room and critiqued what they have seen as if we were all first-time visitors. Overall, we’d give the Society an “A” for our artifacts and exhibits.

We have five interpreted rooms to date: The Parlor (1890), Dining Room (1860), Keeping Room (1810), the Craig Bedroom (1865), and the Cheshire Academy Dormitory Room (1956). These rooms should be spaces designed for visitors to react and reflect on what they see – putting our guests in a moment in time and providing a sense of place captured in the room they have entered.

Tours start with our red front double doors with early “arrow” hinges and latch and original bull’s eye glass panes that show pontil marks (the rough circular scar on old blown glass which is caused when the glass is broken from the pontil). The old-fashioned latch is something visitors find easy enough to enter but a bit tricky to operate when they want to leave. The front vestibule, a cheerful space with finely carved details on the stairs to the second floor, allows access to visitors to go to the left to the Parlor, to the right to the Dining Room, or they can go directly up the stairs. All visitors go to the left. There is some strange instinct or design (or perhaps it’s just the way the front door opens) that directs everyone to the Parlor.

What do our current visitors see as they enter the sisters’ parlor? There is a stunning portrait of Amasa Hitchcock over

the fireplace. He was one of Cheshire's two Civil War Naval heroes. (The other was Admiral Andrew Hull Foote). He was the grandson of Rufus Hitchcock's cousin and business partner. Two beautiful Staffordshire pieces are on either side of George and Martha Washington (Circa 1880). Typical of fireplace walls in houses of this period, ours is quite fine with upright pilasters and dentils along the top.

Visitors are intrigued by the Aaron Willard banjo clock (Boston, early 1800s). The Willard Brothers’ clocks were famous. Brother Simon Willard invented the first banjo clock in 1802. We also display an advertisement for these clocks.

We have many reverse paintings in our collection. Reverse painting on glass is an art form consisting of applying paint to a piece of glass and then viewing the image by turning the glass over and looking through the glass at the image. The Parlor boasts a reverse painting of "Constitution-Guerriere battle," the first naval battle in the War of 1812. The British frigate "Guerriere" surrendered and soon sank, a major American victory. The Constitution was commanded by Captain Isaac Hull, who was born in Derby, CT in 1773.

One intriguing portrait, known only as “Grandma,” displays a dour older woman in a lace cap. Her identity is unknown in this American folk art piece (circa 1800), however she seems to view everything around her with a soured eye.

Another notable portrait is of the twenty-five year old Lt. Edward A. Doolittle of Cheshire, who died while serving with the 20th Conn. Volunteers in Stevenson, AL, in 1863. This was painted from an earlier photograph taken at J. G. Steiger, Chapel Street, New Haven and was extensively restored in 2007.

Two photos display Benaja Beadle (1815-1890) and his son, William Beadle (1837-1863). Benaja was the late Curator Emeritus Edgar Johnson's great grandfather. Benaja operated a wagon and blacksmith shop at corner of Main Street and Highland Avenue. He married Julia Ann Hitchcock, a cousin of the Hitchcocks who lived in this house. Benaja and Julia Ann’s son, William, served in Company A, 20th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, along with other Cheshire men. He died of wounds received in battle. His name is inscribed on the Civil War Monument on the green.

The most prominent piece of furniture is the high boy, a Queen Anne style in cherry wood; bonnet top, fine wide dovetailing in the graduated drawers. This was made by craftsmen in the Connecticut River Valley, probably in Wethersfield, during the Revolutionary period and was a gift of Miss Mary Hotchkiss.

Tucked in the corner is a Beethoven Golden-Toned Parlor Organ made by the Beethoven Organ Co. (est. 1880) and was donated by Robert and Dorothy Sansonetti of Cheshire. It is a reed organ, also called a parlor organ, pump organ, cabinet organ, or cottage organ. It generates sound by using free metal reeds. These organs were cheaper and more portable than pipe organs and were widely used in smaller churches and in private homes in the late 19th century. In the early 1890s, Howard “Pop” Durand, who would live across the street from the Hitchcock-Phillips House a few years later, was selling organs such as this in New Haven.

Another Interpreted Room on the First Floor?

Ted Holtzman has attended almost every Strategic Plan meeting and has done a fine job. Ted has been giving tours at the Society for several years, including the third grade school tours. He shared that he tells the story of the Hitchcock Family, of how people would have lived their lives in 1785 and beyond. He finds the first floor interpreted rooms (the Parlor, Dining Room, and Keeping Room) are more robust for visitor experience as he can describe family life in a way that relates to our guests. “I go from an interpreted space to an interpreted space to an interpreted space...and then I am here.” Ted gestured to the Exhibit Room. “I would like to see this room become the Domestic Industry Room, meaning a room that would complement the Keeping Room and show how the business of the home was conducted.” We could uncover the fireplace behind the paneled wall – something the Board talks about frequently. We could have hands-on activities for guests as this could be a room of replicas that can be handled and used. Ted, thank you for sharing your suggestions! These are the kinds of ideas we are seeking as we develop our Strategic Plan.

Each of our interpreted rooms is as rich in history and detail as the Parlor. As we work on the interpretive stories for these rooms, we need to create a factual, historical narrative to share in future docent trainings. Our Strategic Plan meetings have come up with a number of ideas to improve the visitor experience. Our docents and tour guides generally have only a few minutes to convey as much of the information you’ve read above to our guests and visitors. What should they choose to share? What is the most notable or would make the best impression of the Parlor Room display? What should a visitor take away from this room? What interaction can a guide have with a visitor to make the experience more meaningful? How can we incorporate technology, such as using cell phones or flat screens, to showcase or highlight our displays?

We would be grateful for any members who might want to stop by on a Sunday afternoon and pull up a chair in any of these interpreted spaces. Let your imagination run a little bit and share your thoughts.

Note: The historical facts in this article are from Mary Ellen Kania’s [The Cheshire Historical Society Hitchcock-Phillips House Information for Guides](#) (2012)

WWII REENACTMENT AT THE SOCIETY ON JUNE 28 & 29

We are planning on having a WWII Reenactment on the Society grounds on Friday afternoon, June 28, through Saturday afternoon, June 29th. Commander Lewis Merritt of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion visited the Society and offered to have his group do an overnight encampment. The Society did something similar in 2015 when we had a Civil War Reenactment and it was very popular. Commander Merritt explained that the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion was an airborne infantry battalion of the Canadian Army formed in July 1942 during the Second World War. It served in North West Europe, landing in Normandy during Operation Tonga, in conjunction with the D-Day landings of 6 June 1944 and in the airborne assault crossing of the River Rhine, Operation Varsity, in March 1945. After the end of hostilities in Europe, the battalion was returned to Canada where it was disbanded on 30 September 1945. Commander Merritt would plan to bring a Quad Four Military Vehicle that will be on display in the back of the property. The group would offer military talks through the day on Saturday. There are a number of details to attend to before we can confirm this event, but we are excited to be able to consider this worthy event.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

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 two significant donations to date in memory of Mary Ellen Kania who gave countless hours of volunteer time and changed the face of the Cheshire Historical Society for the better. We received \$400 in Door Donations since September. 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 and add to our donation jar. As Member Eigil Wium said, these are **Pennies from Heaven**. (Contributions made from September 13, 2018 to February 5, 2019.)

Altogether, we received \$4,085 in donations from our members between September 12, 2018 and February 5, 2019. Our VERY SPECIAL THANKS to:

Ed and Ann Kania Foundation - In Memory of Mary Ellen Kania (\$2,500)

Voya Financial Advisors Volunteer Service Award for Mitzi Romano (\$750)

The Quinn Family - In Memory of Mary Ellen Kania (\$250)

Jean Edson - In Memory of her husband, Ralph Edson (\$200)

Roberta Havlick

Guilford Senior Center (for their "Charming Cheshire" tour of the Society)

Eric Nelson (donated his speaker's fee)

Jeff & Reggie Belmont

Peter Merriman - In Memory of his father

Wells Fargo Community Fund

Valley United Way

Photo: Gingerbread House Village at Christmas Party



We would also like to thank David & Karin Arai, and their **Maier Design Group** in Hartford for their *Corporate Membership* with the Cheshire Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL – YES, IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

Dear Cheshire Historical Society Members,

I hope you are still enjoying the afterglow of our Christmas Holiday Open House at the Hitchcock-Phillips House in December. I enjoyed myself immensely, and I hope you did too. I still can't thank Joyce Mulholland and Joyce Holtzman enough for all of their creative hard work in orchestrating the day. They made our Meeting Room look amazing. Thanks also to the Suburban Garden Club. They made the entire first floor and entrance look even more amazing. The impressive flower display in the center of the Meeting Room was done by Ginny Donovan. We had a beautiful choral presentation by Lori Fine's Cheshire Voice. And thanks always to my husband, Dave Calabro, for helping to put together the Gingerbread House Village of the Church Green in the Dining Room. It was our best Christmas Party ever and we had record attendance.

Now 2018 is in the books. We have a lot of plans for 2019 with improvements to our collections displays, implementing more youth programs, the completion of our first Strategic Plan, and an even better (can that be possible?) Spirits Alive Tour on October 11 & 12, just to name a few goals and activities coming up this year.

Enclosed is your membership dues billing for FY 2019. As we ask every year, please be generous in supporting the Cheshire Historical Society. We are a 501(c)3 and we so need your financial support every year to pay the cost of our operating expenses (not sexy, but did you know that the natural gas to heat the building is over \$800 a month in the winter months and the electricity to keep the heat and humidity down for our collections is over \$350 a month in the hot summer months...which is why I particularly like the spring and fall months). We have our twice-a-year newsletter, our many educational outreach events, and a schedule of improvements and betterments for the museum. It is well worth keeping Cheshire's history alive and we do our very best in this regard – always with a view towards keeping expenses as low as possible. Please renew your membership on line at www.cheshirehistory.org or send your check, at your earliest convenience. Thanks so much for your on-going financial support. We promise to make good use of your contributions.

Best wishes, Diane Calabro, Society President



CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY – WE KEEP CHESHIRE'S HISTORY ALIVE!

SOCIETY PHOTOS COLLECTED IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS



Aida Rodriguez at the Ives Farm Day at the Farm in Sept.



Spirits Alive actors gather at the Society Meeting Room for one of many rehearsals for the October cemetery tour



Mitzi Romano and Diane Calabro at Ives Farm



Ted Holtzman is the Gatekeeper at the Spirits Alive Cemetery Tour



Mary Ellen Kania shows the mortise and tenon assembly to Cub Scouts in 2012

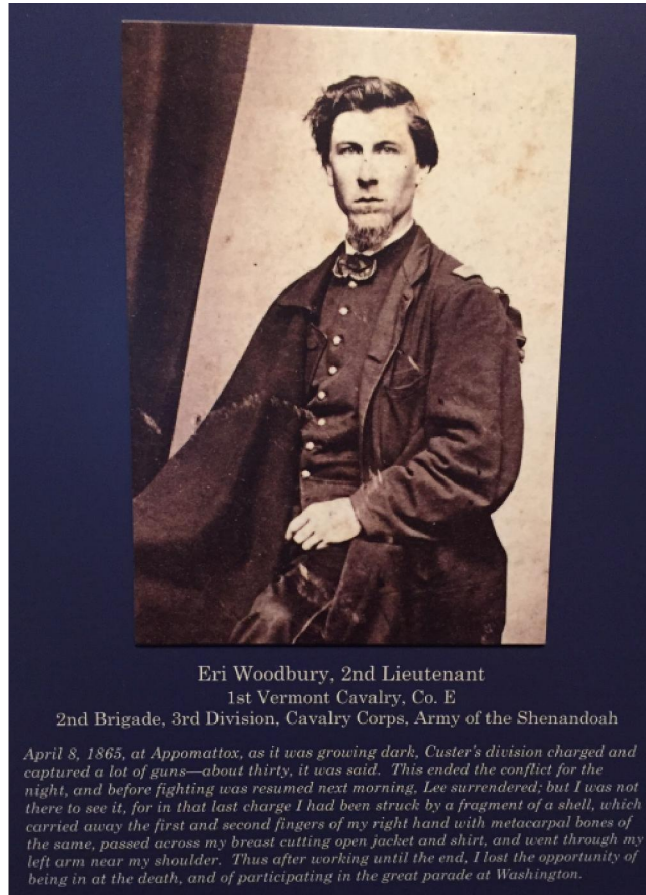


A crewel embroidery class meets Wednesday evenings at the Cheshire Historical Society, 100 Main Street, with Mrs. Ernest Miller of Plainville as instructor. Front row, left to right: Mrs. William Bell, Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Richard E. Pardee. Back row: Mrs. Joseph R. Johnson, Mrs. Harvott Goss, Mrs. Clarence Koss and Mrs. Allen Pardee. Others taking the course are Mrs. Robert J. Crutator, Mrs. David L. Baldwin, Mrs. Olga Chavis, Mrs. Daniel Coletta, Mrs. Alphonse J. Ch...

1964 newspaper clipping of a crewel needlepoint instruction class that met every Wednesday night at the Society



Door banner designed by Scott Romano for the Society



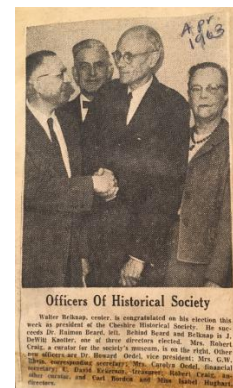
Shirley Brady took this photo during her many travels. The Society has his Medal of Honor on display: “The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to **Sergeant Eri Davidson Woodbury**, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 19 October 1864, while serving with Company E, 1st Vermont Cavalry, in action at Cedar Creek, Virginia.”



The Girl Scouts helped with the bottle washing for the many candle-lit Mason jars needed for the Spirits Alive Cemetery Tour



Director Marshall Robinson discusses Society issues (center photo).



Newspaper clipping is the Society Board in 1963. Mrs. Craig is on the right. The Mrs. Craig Bedroom is a display room at the Society (Civil War period interpretation).



Gingerbread House Workshop! Sophia and Ryan Davis create their masterpieces. Connor and Colin Luciani do the same. The Luciani brothers have participated every year from the very first workshop.



Joyce Mulholland and her mother, Joyce Holtzman, designed the Meeting Room for our Christmas Holiday Open House



Society President, Diane Calabro, at the Christmas Party with our almost official Society photographer, Inge Venus. In front of them is the sensational floral arrangement by Ginny Donovan (see page 8).



Above is a close up of the Gingerbread House Village of the Church Green in c. 1790.

On the right is a photo of our two Christmas Party “Stars”: Thomas Mulholland as Rufus Hitchcock and Taylor Solomon as his new bride, Hannah Lewis Hitchcock. They did a wonderful job portraying these historic figures!

