

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 29, No. 3

Winter 2006-2007

Winter Calendar

The Hitchcock-Phillips House is open to the public every Sunday afternoon, 2—4 PM, until the end of May, except for Dec. 24, Dec. 31, and Easter Sunday.

<i>Dec 17</i>	<i>Sunday</i> <i>2—4 PM</i>	<i>Holiday Party</i>
<i>Dec. 24 & Dec. 31</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>House Closed</i>
<i>Jan. 22</i>	<i>Monday</i> <i>7:30 PM</i>	<i>Board Meeting</i>
<i>Feb. 19</i>	<i>Monday</i> <i>7:30 PM</i>	<i>Board Meeting</i>
<i>Mar. 19</i>	<i>Monday</i> <i>7:30 PM</i>	<i>Board Meeting</i>
<i>Mar. 26</i>	<i>Monday</i> <i>7:30 PM</i>	<i>Membership Meeting & Speaker</i>

Holiday Open House Sunday, Dec. 17 2—4 PM

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to visit the Hitchcock-Phillips House during the holiday season!

The house will be filled with Christmas spirit. Come greet old friends and meet new ones. All exhibit rooms will be open and the 2006 acquisitions will be highlighted with red bows.

Holiday eggnog, cranberry punch, home-made Christmas cookies and comestibles.

All are welcome!

**HOLIDAY
DECORATIONS BY
SUBURBAN GARDEN
CLUB**

Suburban Garden Club Shares Recipe For Cookie Ornaments

The wonderful fragrance at the Historical Society during the holiday season comes from the old-fashioned, spice-cookie ornaments made by Suburban Garden Club members under the direction of Rita Giannotti, who shared the following recipe:

- 3 lbs. of applesauce (no sugar)
- 7.5 oz. cinnamon
- 1.25 oz. ginger
- 1.25 oz. ground cloves
- 2 Tbsp. arrowroot

Drain applesauce for 4 hours in sieve. Mix with spices. Form into walnut size balls. Use small cookie presses to shape. For each ornament, cut an 8" piece of thin ribbon, insert an awl into the middle, and push through top of ornament. Pinch closed to secure. Air dry for at least a week—or bake in 200° oven until dry.

Connie Field Loans Dorflinger —"the Crystal of Presidents"—for Holiday Display in Dining Room

In their preoccupation with Sandwich glass, many collectors neglect some equally famous contemporaries, one of which was the C. Dorflinger and Sons Glass Works in White Mills, PA. This venerable glass house, specializing in blown, crystal, etched, and cut glass for the "quality" trade, was in existence from 1851 to 1921.

Dorflinger crystal was sometimes called "the crystal of presidents." The factory made table glassware for the White House from the time of Abraham Lincoln down to Woodrow Wilson. The most elaborate of these presidential sets was made for Benjamin Harrison in 1890, originally consisting of 520 pieces and costing \$6,000. Other special orders were received from the Prince of Wales (later Duke of Windsor), W. K. Vanderbilt, and Mario Garcia Menacol, president of Cuba, 1913-21.

When she was growing up in the 1940s, former Historical Society Treasurer Connie Field remembers with great pleasure the trips she took with her father, Charles H. Forrest, to visit the beautiful Dorflinger showroom in White Mills, Pa. It was managed by John Dorflinger, a surviving relative of the glass works founder, Christian Dorflinger, and contained an amazing collection of crystal and glassware. In a nearby workshop, old-time artisans continued the work of cutting, engraving, and polishing, using "blanks" held in reserve from the original factory for over 30 years. "It was like a museum," Connie says. "We went at least five different years. In the workshop, I remember actually sitting on the lap of one of the engravers while he engraved a glass graduate into a beautiful vase." (Connie has given us this vase, along with an engraved glass beaker and a crystal shot glass, to add to our permanent collection.)

Connie's magnificent crystal water pitcher is a hand blown "blank" from the original glass works, which was over 35 years old when it was decorated in 1949. The pitcher has cut panels in the "strawberry diamond and fan" pattern, one of the oldest designs in the glass trade, combined with sprays of engraving. Only one other pitcher like it was made. Connie's Dorflinger exhibit at the His-



Former Historical Society Treasurer Connie Field with the crystal pitcher her father, Charles H. Forrest, bought at the Dorflinger showroom in 1949. It was hand blown at the Dorflinger glass works, White Mills, PA, in 1914.

torical Society also includes two sets of crystal water glasses, six individual crystal salt sellers with tiny silver spoons, and an exquisite, crystal mustard jar.

A retired high school teacher from Long Island, Connie moved to Cheshire from Garden City, LI in 1992. She took over as Historical Society treasurer in 1998 following Larry Gode's death and served until this summer when she resigned because of health problems.

Welcome to New Members

The Cheshire Historical Society is delighted to welcome the following new members. All are Cheshire residents.

Thomas Anderson, 496 Cook Hill Road

William Beckett, 15 Aspen Drive

Harold R. Kramer, 77 Cherry Street

Jeff and Maryann Sedlack, 19 Cornwall Ave.

Patty Wright and Brett Sogan, 480 Oak Ave., #62

Acquisition Notes

- **Photo of the Ebenezer Hough house, 304 Blacks Road**, taken in fall 2005 for an assignment to “recreate an historical photograph” for a Cheshire High School Photography II class — from Sandy Grabowski, Sandy Hook.
- **Classic Baseball Cards—The Golden Years, 1886-1956** by Frank Slocum with foreword by Yogi Berra (Warner Books, 1987) - from Ron Gagliardi, Dover Court,
- **Dorflinger crystal shot glass and engraved glass graduate and beaker, c. 1945**—from Connie Field, Old Towne Road
- **Vintage muff and muff box: 1934 GE Hotpoint electric iron; 2 ceramic door knobs**—Bob and Noreen Cawood, Ward Lane
- **Victorian rocking chair with stick-and-ball back; caramel, slag-glass hanging light fixture** from the home of Edward Williams (1877-1960), 57 Wallingford Rd.—from Ray and Eleanor Verner, North Brooksvale Rd.
- **Kerosene-heated Buckeye Incubator, c. 1900**—from Frances Sactomah in memory of her father, George A. Salvatore. The incubator was used on the Salvatore Farm (now Frances Court) off Oak Avenue.
- **1955 Photo from Cheshire’s 175th Anniversary Parade** taken by the late George B. Keeley of Hamden, *New Haven Register* photographer 1925-1970—from his daughters, Georgene McShane of Mt. Prospect, Ill. And Carol Bryan of New York City.
- **Chautauqua Imperial (Model E) wooden carpet sweeper**—from Elizabeth Morin, Argyle Road.

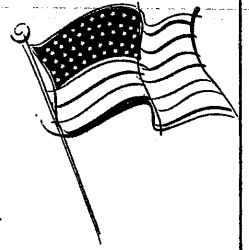
In Memoriam

Virginia Conti Eckerson September 5, 2006
Nelle (Chmura) Mokrzynski October 18, 2006
Harvey B. Boutwell November 20, 2006

We are saddened by the loss of these members and extend our deep sympathy to their families.

New Flag for Meeting Room

Thanks to the special interest of President Marshall Robinson, the Society is now able to open all meetings with the “Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.”



A handsome, 4' x 6', nylon, U.S. flag which flew over the Capitol in Washington, D.C. in 1982, the gift of Director Bob Cawood, on a new, indoor flag pole and stand purchased by the Society, has been placed in the Meeting Room. Everyone agrees it's a welcome addition!

Titus Moss Civil War Letters Read At Wallingford Historical Society

Cheshire Historical Society members Thom Peters and Sylvia Abbate did a reprise of their April 2005 reading of excerpts from the Titus Moss Civil War letters at a meeting of the Wallingford Historical Society in September. Wearing authentic 1860s costumes, they delighted the audience—and returned to Cheshire with a \$25 honorarium for our Historical Society. Thom forwarded the check to us in a tiny, Civil War-size envelope with a note from “Titus Moss.”

School Tours and Other Visitors

Third-grade classes from Norton School and St. Bridget's School visited the Historical Society on Oct. 12 and 23. In all, 125 children, six teachers, and 15 other adults had guided tours of the house. Many thanks to Barbara Christoff, Ann Massimino, Jane Richards, and Judy Knott, who served as tour guides.

The Society also had after-school visits from Girl Scout Troop #285 from Norton School; Brownie Troop #546 from Doolittle School; and Tiger Cub Scout Pack #114, which included boys from Highland School and St. Bridget's School

Out-of-town visitors included Frances (Foote) Brier from Palisades, NY, a direct descendant of Admiral Andrew Hull Foote and her daughter-in-law; Jennifer Fleisher from Montclair, NJ, who was researching Cornish miners in the U.S. and an ancestor, Matthew Trehwella, a foreman at the Cheshire Barytes Mine; Carol Clement of Hyattsville, MD, who was looking for information on Mary (Smith) Booth (1869-1943), who was born in Mixville and became a founder of the Daughters of Isabella; and Jesse Barna, Meriden, a Naugatuck Valley Community College student, who was working on a paper about Cheshire's role in the American Revolution.

Judge Oberst Shares Reminiscence About 1961 Deal By Which Town of Cheshire Acquired Mixville Park

Following is a reminiscence by Judge E. Ernest Oberst about the beginnings of Mixville Park. He recently gave the text to the Cheshire Historical Society for our Cheshire History Subject File.

"Sometime back in the early weeks of January 1961, Mr. & Mrs. Albert Adam came into my law office to discuss the possible sale of some acreage that partially surrounded Mixville Pond and which lay to the rear of their residence on Notch Road. My immediate thought was: What a fabulous piece of real estate to sell! It was then that I first learned that the pond was not owned by them, nor by any other land owner bordering the pond; in fact, none of the shore owners could use the pond without express permission. Instead, the use of the pond was the sole right and under the sole control of a family in Waterbury who owned the water rights to the whole pond. A day camp, I believe it was called "Camp Jolly", operated every summer on the Adams' land and had recreational use of the pond; but such operation was by virtue of leases from the Adams for the land and from the Waterbury family for use of the pond.

"Naturally my next question to my clients was: Would it not be best to first obtain these rights and then proceed to offer the whole package for development. Their answer torpedoed that suggestion at the onset. I was told that was impossible; that the family would never part with those rights, as many have tried to obtain them, but the family was following the advice of their father. He originally purchased these rights (Note 1), and just these "flowage" rights, which John Mix had obtained from neighboring farmers when he built the dam for his mill. (The mill operated on and off down through the years and I think finally sold by auction in the early 20s.) He purchased just these rights because he felt that some day they would be valuable. Hearing this, the only course I could then advise would be to have the acreage surveyed and a preliminary layout for the most advantageous arrangement for residential lots and roads.

"It was just at this point in our conference that the idea hit me: Would they sell their acreage to the town for a park if the Waterbury family would sell their water rights to the town for a park? They were thrilled by the thought but skeptical that the Town could get the rights. They said they would much prefer seeing their land remain in its natural state than houses and roads. The reason for my enthusiasm that a park might have possibilities was that I believed that if I could assure the Waterbury owners that there would be no speculation and high-priced land deals, but rather that this would be giving the townspeople a tremendous opportunity and everyone would benefit in the long run if the town purchased the land and water rights for a park.

"Fortunately, the attorney I contacted and who was the family advisor was quick to recognize that there was a good possibility my clients would eventually sell the land for a resi-

dential development and that there might well be no further opportunities to lease the water rights for campers; the ultimate result being that his clients would end up maintaining the pond to beautify the development and have a liability exposure without the income. He felt also that his clients might well be agreeable to selling the rights to the town if they could be sure the town would always hold on to them for a park and recreational purposes. We both felt that the conveyance could have that restrictive clause in it; and I felt the Town would accept such a deed.

"I subsequently received word from Waterbury that if my clients were willing to sell to the Town for the purposes stated then his clients would do likewise and gave me their price. I told him the plan of action should be as follows: The Finance Board and the Townspeople would have to vote on the matter so the best and safest plan would be for me to draw up two three-month exclusive options to purchase, accompanied by a \$100 check for each option, which would be lost if the options were not exercised. My next step was to make sure the whole matter was kept quiet until the checks were paid out and the options were signed.

"Friday nights were the weekly meetings of the Board of Selectmen. I asked Mr. Bens, our First Selectman, if I could present a matter to the Board in private session, which was granted. The Board then went immediately into executive session, two \$100 checks were drawn up and given to me. Needless to say, I lost no time delivering the checks and getting the options signed."

"Note 1 In the 1800s, John Mix built a mill using oxen to bring huge blocks of stone to build a dam to hold back the stream that flowed down from the Prospect hills. This stream flowed through many farmers' land so before he could dam the flow of water, he had to get permission from the neighbors to flood part of their lands. They agreed that he could hold back the stream until the water reached a mark that was cut into one of the rock slabs near the top of the dam. This marked the limit of the flowage rights given to him."

An article from The New Haven Register, March 13, 1961, reports:

"Led by Probate Judge E. Ernest Oberst, a host of town officials visited the Mixville recreation and bathing area in the west side of town Saturday morning. All seemed impressed with its potential as a facility for local residents.

"The pond and beach area with many recreational uses, plus water rights and a dam are under option to the town for \$68,000, largely through Judge Oberst's negotiation..."

Books on Cheshire History Make Great Gifts



- Landmarks of Old Cheshire—Cheshire Bicentennial Committee* \$35
Includes charming wash drawings and detailed histories of almost all 18th century houses still standing.
- Images of America: Cheshire* by Ron Gagliardi \$20
Town history from prehistoric times through 1929, contains 240 historic photos
- Our Town—Cheshire, Connecticut, 1780-1890* by Marion Moore Coleman \$35
Reflections, memories and historical notes, most originally published in *The Cheshire Herald*
- The Durand Family of Cheshire, Connecticut* by Sterling Jewett \$25
Collection of information on the musical Durand Family
- The Barite Mines of Cheshire* by Crawford E. Fritts \$10
Definitive study of Cheshire's early mines
- Reflections on the Canal in Cheshire* by Raymond L. Beard \$5
Excellent information on canal and Cheshire's Lock 12

1882 Map of Cheshire—18 x 24 inches—\$5

"Doors of Cheshire" poster—\$10

On sale at Historical Society on Sundays, 2—4 p.m., or call 272-2574 or 272-8771 for other hours.

Give a Cheshire Historical Society Membership!

The individual or family you select will receive a special holiday welcome letter, naming you as donor, and a one-year membership for 2007. Fill in the form below and return with payment to the Cheshire Historical Society, PO Box 281, Cheshire, CT 06410.

Member Name Telephone #

E-Mail (if available)

Street Address

Town Zip

Enclosed dues of \$ _____ for membership in The Cheshire Historical Society, Inc.

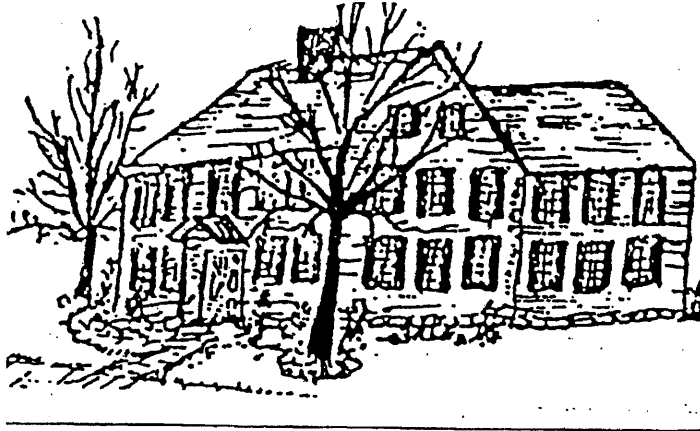
Classification of Dues

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen \$10.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business/ Professional \$30.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$150.00 |

Gift from

Address

**CHESHIRE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWS**



WINTER 2006—2007

Cheshire Historical Society
PO Box 281, 39 Church Drive
Cheshire, CT 06410
www.cheshirehistory.org

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HOLIDAY PARTY: SUNDAY, DEC. 17