

# CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 30, No. 3

Winter 2007-2008

## Holiday

## Open House

Sunday, Dec. 23

2—4 PM

*If you haven't visited the Hitchcock-Phillips House recently, don't miss this wonderful opportunity to see the house glowing with holiday cheer!*

### Decorations by Suburban Garden Club

*All exhibit rooms will be open and the 2007 acquisitions will be highlighted with red bows. You'll find holiday eggnog, cranberry punch, and old-fashioned Christmas cookies and comestibles.*

*Come greet old friends and meet new ones. It will be a season highlight!*

## Winter Calendar

*The Hitchcock-Phillips House will be open to the public every Sunday afternoon, 2—4 PM, until the end of May except for Sunday, Dec. 30, and Easter Sunday, Mar. 23.*

Dec. 23	Sunday 2—4 PM	Holiday Party
Jan. 21	Monday 7:30 PM	Board Meeting
Feb. 18	Monday 7:30 PM	Board Meeting
Mar. 17	Monday 7:30 PM	Board Meeting
Mar. 23	Easter Sunday	House Closed
Mar. 24	Monday 7:30 PM	Membership Meeting & Speaker

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members:

This year has progressed well. We have had interesting speakers at our membership meetings. Our boutique sales have been excellent this year which is a godsend considering the cost of heating oil. Our membership is stable. We have received some nice donations of items for the Society. Speaking of which, please keep in mind that we are always looking for unwanted items to sell in the boutique to help offset fuel bills.

Please try to join us at our annual Christmas Party. It's a very nice time and a good opportunity to meet the officers of the Society and old friends. Lastly, I will give you something to think about - the Society is open on Sundays from 2 to 4 PM during the winter. I would like to know how the membership feels about opening the Society during the Winter on request only. In view of the cost to heat the building, I think this idea may have some merit. Your thoughts?

Marshall

## MOSS FAMILY GATHERS AT HOUSE FOLLOWING FUNERAL

More than 20 members of the Moss Family from Texas, Washington, DC, and Connecticut gathered at the Cheshire Historical Society on Sept. 22 following graveside funeral services for W. Herbert Moss and his wife, Evelyn (Jeralds) Moss in the Memorial Garden at St. Peter's Cemetery. Herb was a 10th generation descendant of John Moss, an original settler in Cheshire in the 1600s, and the last of the many male descendents with the surname "Moss" to reside in Cheshire.

According to President Marshall Robinson, it was a great pleasure to have the Moss Family visit the Society. Following the morning funeral service and a family-reunion luncheon, family members adjourned to the Society to see our collection, which includes many Moss memorabilia. Marshall and Assistant Curator Kathleen Connolly greeted them and led house tours focusing on items connected with the family. Titus Moss, whose Civil War letters are a treasured part of the Society's collection, was the older brother of Herb's great, great grandfather, Julius Moss.

### Great, Great Grandmother's Gown

Of particular interest, was the lovely beige silk gown with hoop skirt which their great, great grandmother, Emerett (Bartholomew) Moss, wore at her wedding to Julius in 1855. The Society collection also includes many Moss family pictures, jewelry, and papers. "We were in awe of all the documents you have collected, and I think it has sparked an interest in all of us to go through papers we have in the attic and donate items of interest to the Historical Society," Herb's daughter, Jeanne Terrell, e-mailed after the visit.

Herb is survived by his daughter, Jeanne Terrell, granddaughter Nancy Bittner and husband John, and great-grandson, all of Dallas, TX, and by grandson Gordon Terrell and wife Lara of Washington, D.C. After retirement, Herb and Evelyn, who was head librarian at the Cheshire Public Library, 1955 to 1973, moved from Maple Avenue to Elim Park where they resided for a number of years. When Evelyn became incapacitated, they moved again to Dallas to be near Jeanne. Evelyn died in 2005. Herb died in June 2007.

## State Grant for New Heating System

The Cheshire Historical Society Board is still cheering for Economic Development Coordinator Gerald Sitko, who submitted the application for the Society to receive a \$23,250 grant from the state Historic Restoration Fund for a new heating system. The appropriation is a matching grant, which means that the Town will pay half of the project's cost.



Since the grant was not received until October, it will not be possible for the Town to prepare the bids and get work started before the end of this heating season. However, it is wonderful to know that relief from the old furnace's fuel consumption is on its way! The main part of the project will be the replacement of the monster boiler which was inherited from Humiston School more than 50 years ago. There is also an underground oil tank which needs addressing. Funds also should be available to cover an upgrade in the interior heating system and insulation in the ceiling above the third-floor rooms.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

- **Old photos** of Stephen Hotchkiss house and Enos Bunnell house (seen in *Old Historic Homes of Cheshire*). Gift from Kathleen Connolly, Southington
- **I Remember Cheshire in the Twentieth Century**. ed. Judith Boynton (duplicate); **numbered railroad and trolley track nails** (1924-1936) Gift from Robert Cawood, Cheshire
- **Quartz arrowhead** found at 87 Glenbrook Dr., Cheshire, in spring 2007. Gift from Peter Broadbridge, Cheshire
- **Waverly Inn "Since 1896" bronze-plated medallion** Gift from Evelyn Watkins, Cheshire
- **Cheshire Telephone Directories, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1978-79** Gift from Sherwood Dawson, Cheshire
- **Printed V-E Day, May 1945 note** of congratulations to Officers and Men of 8th Armored Division Gift from Herbert Strand, Cheshire
- **Vision in the Sky (New Haven's Early Years, 1638-1783) and From Puritans to Yankees (New Haven's Growing Years 1783-1861)**. Myrna Kagan, ages 10 up. Purchased for library by E. Johnson Book Fund

## A GREAT GIFT: RICHARD (Rick) SMITH MAKES NEW DVD TO WELCOME VISITORS TO HOUSE

The Cheshire Historical Society has moved into the 21st century with a new, 8-minute DVD to welcome visitors to the Hitchcock-Phillips House. Curator Mary Ellen Kania says she has wanted the house to have an introductory DVD ever since she saw a filmed introduction to the Florence Griswold House in Old Lyme several years ago. However, it seemed like an "impossible dream" until last June when Life Member Richard (Rick) Smith offered to film and produce a DVD about the house himself.—as a gift to the Society!

Rick is one of the Digital Imaging Group (Diggers) who has been photographing and scanning the Society's collection for more than a year. It was a magnificent offer! "You just write the script and tell me what photographs to use, and I'll take care of the rest," Rick said.

Rick did take care of everything, including numerous photography sessions, equipment for the narrator to record the narration, and more than 80 hours of video editing. Mary Ellen says that the script was fairly easy to write because much of it covers introductory material the Society has been using for years. However, the ability to tell the story of the house's history with pictures was very exciting!

### Two Hitchcock Portraits Included

The portraits of Hannah Lewis Hitchcock, first wife of Rufus Hitchcock, who built the house, and Lucretia Hitchcock Clark, their daughter, owned by the Connecticut Historical Society are used with their permission. The DVD also includes video of the tombstones for Hannah, Rufus, and second wife Flora Hitchcock in Hillside Cemetery; Rufus Hitchcock's store; Andrew Phillips, husband of Hitchcock's granddaughter; Dr. Robert Craig, and many others.

The earliest view of the house is shown in the over-mantle painting in the dining room, which was painted around 1810 by itinerant artist Sylvester Hall. The painting focuses on the church green and



Richard (Rick) Smith (right), photographer, editor, and producer of the new DVD, "Introduction to the Hitchcock-Phillips House", with Mary Ellen Kania, script-writer, and Josiah Rowe, narrator

the second meeting house of the Congregational Church, but in the upper left, Rufus Hitchcock's house appears clearly. The house is painted yellow with no south wing or dormers in the roof. The next picture, an 1836 woodcut of the church green by John Warner Barber, shows the house with the south wing, which was probably built about 1820 when the Hitchcock's son brought his wife there to live. The roof dormers were not added until the Academy bought the house in the 1930s.

Key to the success of the DVD is the very pleasant voice of the narrator, Josiah Rowe. A Cheshire resident who is pursuing an acting career, he graciously volunteered his services. The Society is delighted to make Josiah and his wife, Erin, complimentary members for 2008.

For viewing the DVD, the Society was able to purchase a 19" flat-screen TV set, greatly reduced, and a DVD player. Both fit comfortably and "quietly" into the Meeting Room wall bookcase. Although the decision to view the introductory DVD is strictly optional, recent visitors to the Society have been eager to see it and have given it rave reviews

**THANK YOU, RICK - AND JOSIAH!**

## PROVENANCE ON KENSSETT PICTURE RE-DISCOVERED

Thanks to a researcher for Artsplace, we have re-discovered the name of the donor of our small John Frederick Kensett picture of Niagara Falls. The donor's name was found by researcher Agnes Wnuk while she was checking for information for a new children's activity book on the Cheshire artist that Artsplace plans to produce.

Agnes was reading a chapter titled "Men of Cheshire" in the 1935 program for the Cheshire Tercentenary Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the Settlement of Connecticut. In a page about Kensett, she came across the following sentence: "Several years ago, one of his paintings was given Cheshire Library by Miss Marion Terry, a summer resident." She immediately contacted Library Director Ramona Harten. Ramona checked with the Library Board and staff and soon found out that the painting was now at the Cheshire Historical Society—one of the historical items the Library turned over to the Society in the 1950s when the Society first was formed.

Our acquisition records have now been updated, and the donor's name is clearly indicated on the back of the picture's protective frame. Provenance (original source) is very important on any museum acquisition. If anyone has any other information about Miss Marion Terry, please let us know.



Photo courtesy of Inge Venus

## Suburban Garden Club Renovates Foundation Planting on South Side

The Suburban Garden Club under the direction of Rita Giannotti completed a major part of the planned renovation of the foundation plantings around the south wing this fall.

Town workers had removed the old, overgrown plantings in front of the porch and along the foundation on the south side during the summer. In the fall, Suburban Garden club members tilled and fertilized the soil and planted the area with "more period" plants including spirea Vanhouttei and Nathan Hale mountain laurels. Stone Works of Cheshire donated two yards of mulch with free delivery that members spread along the foundation and in the garden on the north side of the house.

In the spring, Suburban Garden Club members plan to complete the plantings with period hosta and day lilies from their own gardens.

## Cheshire Garden Club Plants Bulbs

"The historic garden (behind the house) will look marvelous next spring," according to Inge Venus of the Cheshire Garden Club. On Nov. 7, Cheshire Garden Club members spent a morning planting a wide variety of colorful bulbs.

Fortunately for a small junco (snowbird) who had made his way into the Boutique Shed, the ladies noticed his plight. Inge made a quick call to Curator Mary Ellen Kania, who enlisted Ed to hurry to the house with the shed key. The traumatized bird was rescued by Cheshire Garden Club member Carol Goertz, who carried him outdoors. After resting in her hands for just a few moments, the bird recovered and took flight.

Nov. 7—Carol Goertz holds the tiny junco she freed from the Boutique Shed while Cheshire Garden Club members were planting bulbs in the Lucille Williams Historical Memorial Garden. At right, Ed Kania, who had arrived with the key to open the shed.

### Vintage Christmas Books on Display

An 19th century child's horse-drawn, push-sled filled with little, antique stuffed animals is the center of this year's Christmas display case created by Assistant Curator Kathleen Connolly in the Exhibit Room. Around the sled is a collection of vintage Christmas books and cards.

The oldest book in the display is the 1885 St. Nicholas for Young Folks, a handsome, bound edition of St. Nicholas magazines.



Other highlights among the children's classics are: 1912 edition of The Birds' Christmas Carol (1886) by Kate Douglas Wiggin; Miss Santa Claus of the Pullman (1913) by Annie Fellows Johnson, author of "The Little Colonel Series"; and

A Defective Santa Claus (1904) by James Whitcomb Riley.

Kathleen says her favorites are Miracle on 34th Street, Valentine Davis, the original 1947 printing, and an old clipping of "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus", reprinted from the 1897 *New York Sun* editorial.

### Books on Cheshire History Make Wonderful Gifts . . .

Cheshire history books including the must-have *Landmarks of Old Cheshire*, Cheshire Bicentennial Committee, and *Images of America, Cheshire*, Ron Gagliardi—as well as **Cheshire maps, posters, and post cards**—are on sale at the Cheshire Historical Society, Sundays, 2-4 p.m. - or call 272-8771 for telephone shopping.

### "Lights of Hope" to Glow In Front of House on JAN 6

Many thanks to the anonymous member who has given 30 "Lights of Hope" outdoor luminaries to be lit in front of the Hitchcock-Phillips House on Sunday, JAN 6. The Society is pleased to be able to join this town-wide event in memory of the Petit family members who were murdered so tragically this past summer.



Our historic house and the whole of Cheshire should be a beautiful sight for visitors leaving the Holiday Open House!

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## 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 2008. 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.

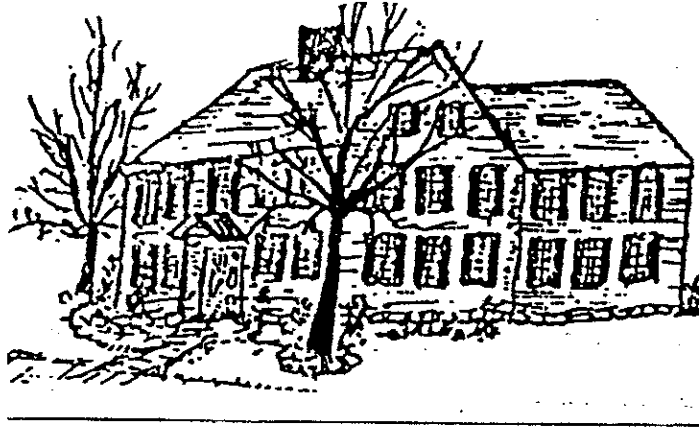
Classification of Dues

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <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 2007-2008**

Cheshire Historical Society  
PO Box 281, 43 Church Drive  
Cheshire, CT 06410  
[www.cheshirehistory.org](http://www.cheshirehistory.org)

***Society Officers***

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**Vice President**

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**Treasurer**

Ed Kania

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**Curators**

Edgar Johnson, *emeritus*

Mary Ellen Kania

Warren VanAlmkerk

Kathleen Connolly, *asst.*

**Webmaster**

Diane Calabro

**Newsletter Editor**

Mary Ellen Kania

**HOLIDAY PARTY, SUNDAY, DEC. 16**



## Cheshire Historical Society Reschedules Open House

The Cheshire Historical Society's holiday open house — postponed because of icy weather last Sunday — will be held this Sunday, Dec. 23, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the Hitchcock-Phillips House, 43 Church Drive on the green.

The party will feature holiday decorations by the Suburban Garden Club.

Refreshments will be served. The public is cordially invited.

Twenty-four new artifacts and books acquired in 2007 will be on display throughout the house. Each will be marked with a red bow and the donor's name.

Of special interest will be a Victorian banquet lamp, a wed-

ding present in 1901 to Richard and Helena (Talmadge) Williams. It was given by their grandson, Raymond Verner, and his wife Eleanor.

Except for an 1882-1886 prescription book from the John L. Foote & Co. Drug Store, Cheshire, which was purchased by the Society, all of the new acquisitions are gifts to the Society.

A new "Christmas Past" display by Assistant Curator Kathleen Connolly will be in the Exhibit Room.

It will show a 19th century child's push-sled filled with small stuffed animals and surrounded by vintage Christmas books.