

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 39, No. 2

Keeping Cheshire's History Alive!

FALL 2016

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

Membership in CHS 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 HPH. Members are also eligible for volunteer programs.

SPEAKER PROGRAM

All programs will be held at Cheshire Historical Society Meeting Room located at 43 Church Drive

Monday, September 26, 7:30 p.m.

◆ **History is a Maze: Treasures of South Brooksvale** by the History Trolley Tour Planning Group including John Fournier, President of Cheshirepedia, and Jim Vibert, Alternate on the Historic District Commission. Did you know that in 1868 there were over nine different types of mills, four distilleries, eight blacksmiths, four operating mines, a slaughterhouse and other manufacturing companies flourishing in Cheshire at this time? Learn more about the history of this important area of Cheshire.

◆ **Monday, October 24, 7:30 p.m.**

◆ **News From the Graves: Sharing the Stories of Spirits Alive: Cemetery Tour Actors Tell the In-Depth History of the Cheshire People They Portrayed.** Come hear what it was like to portray Cheshire residents who lived hundreds of years ago. These volunteers have researched the people they re-enacted. Many of our actors feel they "channeled" the person they portrayed. Hear about Cheshire history and have the opportunity to ask the actors questions.

◆ **Monday, November 28, 7:30 p.m.**

◆ **Child Labor in Cheshire and the World Beyond: The Role of the Child 1500 to Present.** Ehsan Hoque, MBBS, Ph.D., Executive Director of Cheshire-based Distressed Children & Infants International (DCI), will give a compelling talk on the role of the child. The motto of his organization is "Children Helping Children." We look forward to a very interesting evening with Dr. Hoque.

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.



Through the bulls-eye glass of the Society's front door. Photo by Mitzi Romano

**Inside This Special Issue:
150th Commemoration of
Cheshire's Civil War Monument:
The Civil War Monument on the
Church Green was erected in 1866.
Our 150th Commemoration was held
on Saturday, July 9th., 2016**

FALL CALENDAR

Except for holiday weekends, the Cheshire Historical Society (CHS) Hitchcock-Phillips House (HPH) will be open to the public every Sunday, 2-4 p.m. through the end of the year. Check website for more information. Also open by appointment on other days. Call (203) 272-2574 to schedule a visit for a private tour or for research purposes. CHS now offers WiFi to our researchers and guests. Our Meeting Room is available to community groups for rental (contact cheshirehistory@che.necoxmail.com for details).

SUNDAYS: Visitors Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m.
Tours are available.

SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 10 Chamber of Commerce Fall Festival
- Sept. 11 Gala Champagne Shoppe Sale
at the Society 2-4 p.m.
- Sept. 17 Land Trust Ives Farm “Day at the Farm”
10 - 4 p.m.
- Sept. 19 Board Meeting - 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 25 South Brooksvale History Trolley Tour
Noon, 2 p.m., 4 p.m. (tickets are limited)
- Sept. 26 Speaker Meeting - 7:30 p.m.

OCTOBER

- Oct. 14-15 Spirits Alive Tours 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- Oct. 16 Spirits Alive Appreciation
(Society will be closed)
- Oct. 17 Board Meeting - 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 24 Speaker Meeting - 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 29 Cheshire Horse Council Pony Ride

NOVEMBER

- Veteran Recognition Event - TBD
- Nov. 21 Board Meeting - 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 24 Thanksgiving - Eat Turkey!
- Nov. 27 Gingerbread House Decorating (Reservation is required)
- Nov. 28 Speaker Meeting - 7:30 p.m.

DECEMBER

- Dec. 18 Christmas Party & Open House
Noon to 5 p.m.
- Dec. 19 Society is now closed and will
reopen March 5, 2017

FROM THE PRESIDENT: This issue is devoted to a very special event: the 150th Anniversary of our Civil War Monument. I was involved in many planning meetings to accomplish this wonderful Commemoration held on Saturday, July 9, 2016. The backbone of this event was the strong community and volunteer support that made the day possible. As you read through this issue, consider if you can contribute more of your time and your talent. We have so much to do and we would be so very grateful for your help, especially on Sunday afternoons. Thank you, Diane Calabro.

Gala Champagne Super Sale at the Shoppe in the Shed on Sunday, Sept. 11, 2 to 4 p.m. Final sales event for the season at The Shoppe (formerly known as the Boutique-in-the-Shed). The Shoppe contains items donated by members from their attics and cupboards for the sole purpose of selling in this quirky and irresistible setting (these are not and never will be any item from our Society collections!). All proceeds benefit the Society. Complimentary sparkling cider and baked goods. Come by and have a sweet treat and perhaps find a special treasure to purchase at the Shoppe!

It's all for a good cause - so please come by!

Facilities Update

By David Calabro, House & Grounds Chairman
Biggest change at the Society was installing air conditioning to protect our collections. In past summers our humidity levels rose to 85% to 95% in some areas of the building. I'm sure you noticed that the musty smell wasn't there this summer. Better for people, certainly much better for our collections. We have a sign out front now thanks to Boy Scout Jake Miller. We have shades in the Meeting Room provided to us from Home Fabric Mills at a great price. Our new wayfinding sign was installed this summer (Eagle Project by Jake Miller). As always, we want to thank Cheshire Public Works (George Noewatne, Kathy Doherty, and Keith Baron) for their ongoing support and help with the HPH.

Thank you to Christine Pittsley: A Brief Assignment, But Much Was Accomplished!

The Society would like to thank Christine Pittsley for her volunteer effort as our Curator. It is no small task to take on the organization and redirection of a curating program as wide ranging and almost entirely paper-based as is the current format at CHS at this time. Christine has put in countless hours setting up an electronic database of our very large inventory of objects, photographs, flat files, paper files, rare books, clothing, fabrics, quilts, and more. It would take not only one very motivated and technically proficient person (and that would be Christine), but likely an army of volunteers to accomplish this goal. We want to recognize the work effort that Christine has made to the Society, as well as the guidance and support that she provided to get us on the right path for our collections' care. The Society wishes her the very best in all of her endeavors.

Curator Update

WANTED: A very special person or persons to coordinate Curator, Collection Management, Archiving, Electronic Inventory, Acquisitions, and more. Finally, we'll need a dedicated team of people who can work together and with our Board to review the inventory in the HPH, interpret our collections, update our exhibits, and work with the public to present the CHS as a world-class organization. We will also be working on a strategic plan and collection and care policies in 2017. We now have nineteen display rooms and numerous items that need more refined archived storage. We are looking for volunteers who could manage 10 to 20+ hours per week for many, many years. This is the perfect "encore career" for people interested in history and keeping history alive in Cheshire.

E-mail to cheshirehistory@che.necoxmail.com or call the Society at 203-272-2574.

Acquisitions update will appear in our next Newsletter.

Society Board of Directors

Officers:

President	Diane Calabro
Vice President	Art Sides
Membership Secretary	Justin Navarro
Recording Secretary	Open
Corresponding Secretary	Shirley Brady
Treasurer	David Dent

Directors:

Three year terms begin in the month of May

José Rodriguez	2014- 2017
Lois Van Almkerk	2014- 2017
Pat Vita	2014- 2017
Colleen Fitzgerald	2015- 2018
Cara A. Luciani	2015- 2018
Diane Ulbrich	2015- 2018
Clare Leake	2016- 2019
Jaime McCormick	2016- 2019
Marshall Robinson	2016- 2019

Curator Team

Curator	Open
Assistant Curators	Ilona Somogyi - Clothing Historian

Facilities

House & Grounds Manager: David Calabro

Student Liaison

Thomas Mulholland, Class of 2017

Spirits Alive Tour is October 14 and 15 All New Tales!

Tickets are available now at the Historical Society (Sunday afternoons from 2 pm to 4 pm) or by phone at (203) 272-2574 or (203) 250-9350 (Diane's home phone number), or by e-mail to Cheshirehistory@che.necoxmail.com

Tours are at Hillside Cemetery. Tours begin at 5 p.m. Tours last about an hour. Tours depart every 15 minutes. Last tour is at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$10 each.

We sold out last year - so please reserve / purchase your ticket as soon as possible!

THANK YOU!

We want to thank you!

Major Contributors

Diane Ulbrich
 Lady Fenwick Chapter, Daughters
 of the American Revolution
 Reed Durand
 Marcia Collins
 Big Y Supermarket

Other Contributors

Michael & Shirley Brady
 Lisa Drazen
 Solomon Family
 Jim Vibert
 Mulholland Family
 Seinkowski Family
 Lori Ann Erkson
 Robert Korpinen

We also collected \$390 in Door
 Donations.

This included several buckets,
 jars, and boxes of loose change!
 If you have pennies and other
 coins that you've been meaning
 to do something with, send them
 our way. We'll roll them up and
 give you credit for a wonderful
 donation to the Society! We
 also have a number of people
 who are giving us their deposit
 bottles.

Every little bit helps in this
 economy!

**(Contributions made from
 Mar. 4, 2016 to Aug. 18, 2016)**

Boy Scout Eagle Project Update

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

Troop 92:

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

Troop 51:

Harrison Dent - Improvements to Shed and Memory Garden (Status: completed. Eagle Award January 2016)

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

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

Troop 198:

Jake Miller - Creating a Way Finding Sign (Status: completed. Eagle Award pending tentative. November 2016)

The Brooksvale Area & South End of Cheshire Historic Trolley Tour

Sunday, Sept. 25, 2016

Jim Vibert
 Narrator and Trolley Conductor

For Tickets, Call Pat Vita at (203) 272-3963
 Tours depart promptly at noon, 2 pm and 4 pm

TICKET COST \$25

Prompt Departure from
 The Cheshire
 Historical
 Society
 on the Green
 43 Church Drive
 Arrive a few minutes
 early, please

*Tour is
 Rain or
 Shine*

TOUR LASTS
 APPROXIMATELY
 1 1/2 HOURS

SPONSORED BY
 THE CHESHIRE
 HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 &
 THE CHESHIRE
 HISTORIC DISTRICT
 COMMISSION
 &
 CHESHIREPEDIA



Ann
 Aronoff
 2016

Bequests to Cheshire Historical Society

If you have included the Cheshire Historical 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
 P.O. Box 281, Cheshire, CT 06410

@YOU!

Do We Have Your Email?

Contact Justin Navarro at cheshirehistory@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.

Forest Seedlings – Maps – Canals: unintended discoveries in research of Brooksvale and south Cheshire

By John Fournier, President, Cheshirepedia

Research is often a maze that sometimes brings one back to where one starts.

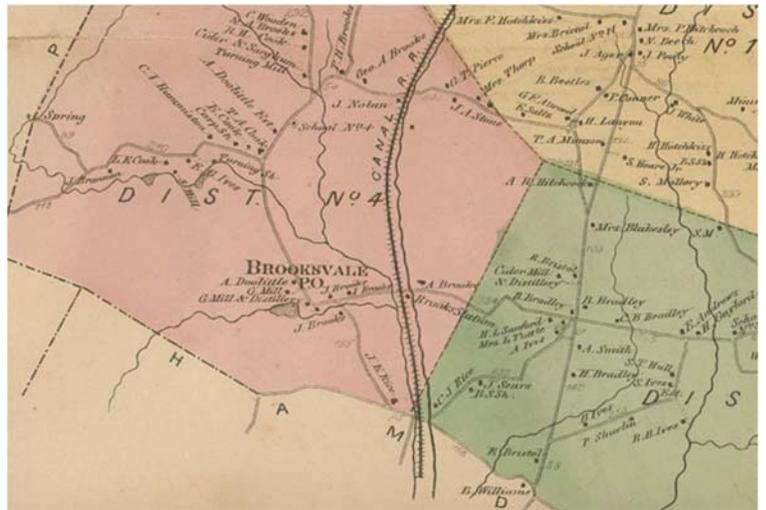
One sets one's mind on finding some information on a piece of property or historical event and suddenly the path of discovery leads one in a direction you didn't envision at first.

Writing a booklet on the south end of Cheshire for the Trolley Tour, focusing especially on the South Main Street and Brooksvale areas, has allowed some interesting finds.

Northeast Forestry Company was the precursor to what is now known as Cheshire Nursery. At the beginning of the 20th century hundreds of acres north of Cook Hill Road and to the east of Route 10 once had thousands and thousands of saplings being grown. These trees were being replanted across many areas of New England that had been deforested due to the large amount of land that had been turned over to agricultural purposes. Eventually this enterprise became the largest nursery in the state dedicated to the growing of forest seedlings. And until being informed by Trolley Tour narrator Jim Vibert and beginning my own research I never knew that Northeast Forestry Company had even been in existence.

Further research led to the examination of an 1868 map of Cheshire, found in the Beers, Ellis and Soule's Atlas of New Haven County. Upon examining where Northeast Forestry Company (and subsequently Cheshire Nursery) was located there was evidence of an "R Bristol" and "Cider Mill & Distillery" on this location. "R Bristol" turned out to be Rier Bristol, who owned a large amount of property in the south end of town, including some barite mine property.

Seeing "Cider Mill & Distillery" led to me wondering how many other such businesses operated in Cheshire in 1868. It turns out that there were over nine different types of mills, four distilleries, eight blacksmiths, four operating mines, a slaughterhouse and other manufacturing companies flourishing in Cheshire at this time. Now known as the "Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut," Cheshire clearly had many other enterprises in town besides agricultural ones, even in the 19th century.



Looking at the whole map also shows the Canal Railroad practically bisecting the town. The railroad, of course, followed the Farmington Canal. The canal had been an active transportation route for nearly 20 years from the late 1820s until the mid-1840s. The speed of the railroad and problems plaguing the canal through most of its existence hastened its demise but remains of it are clearly still evident today, particularly at Lock 12 Historical Park on North Brooksvale Rd.



But what intrigued me was the name "Brooksvale Station" on the map. This railroad stop was installed on the Canal Line and significantly helped promote trade and business in the Brooksvale area in the 19th century. The station was a contributing factor in having a post office in Brooksvale. In fact, the Enos Brooks home was the location for the post office for several years. The post office existed in the area from 1858-1913. The photo shows the flag station that existed next to the railroad line, on the east side of the tracks just south of South

Cheshire Civil War Monument Commemoration July 9, 2016

Commemoration

By Robert Larkin

Our Cheshire Civil War Monument is now 150 years old. The Cheshire Historical Society helped organize a commemoration event to celebrate the monument's anniversary, held on Saturday, July 9, 2016 at the monument, on the Cheshire Historical Society property, and the Church Green.

A Civil War encampment conducted by Company F of the 14th Connecticut with marching drills, rifle firings and artifacts displays, as well as separate tents for associated historians and authors.

Speeches on the Church Green about the improvements made to the monument as well as highlights of the monument's history.

Re-enactor appearances by President Abraham Lincoln and Admiral Andrew Foote.

Civil War music provided by Connecticut State Troubadour Tom Callinan.

We should make sure to thank the Town of Cheshire for the wonderful job they did on both the monument restoration but also the new stone apron around the monument's base. A big thank you should also go out to you and the Cheshire Historical Society for all that went into the commemoration event. We should also remember the generous gifts given to support the event by the Connecticut Community Foundation

(CCF) and CT Humanities as well as those individuals and businesses throughout the town that made important donations both financially and with their talent.

Our Civil War Monument is a unique tribute to those who enlisted from Cheshire and gave so much to preserve our country during a war that cost more American lives than any other. It is often quoted that the number of men dying in the Civil War was more than in all other American wars from the American Revolution through the Korean War combined. We should all be aware of the sacrifice paid and recognize our Civil War Monument and its history.

The Commemoration had a number of memorable high points. The Civil War re-enactors with their marching drills, rifle firings, tents and displays were realistic, educational and entertaining. John White was excellent with his presentation on hometown hero, Admiral Andrew Hull Foote, whose statue at the U S Navy Monument in the Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi is perhaps the largest of a CT Civil War soldier or sailor in this country. President Abraham Lincoln's appearance, with the help of Howard Wright, was both educational and thought provoking. Wright will appear as Lincoln at a ship commissioning in Newport, Rhode Island this fall along with CT and RI senators and congressmen, as well as Michelle Obama. The contribution to the event by Cheshire Town Historian, Jeanne Chesnow, cannot be underestimated. Her talk and recent book, "Cheshire Remembers: Men & the Monument" will be remembered and appreciated for years to come. The book covers the history and lives of many early Cheshire patriots, their regiments, their family struggles, their war records and their deaths.

In 2066, the monument will be 200 years old. Maybe we should remember to start our commemoration planning early.

Forest Seedlings (Continued)

Brooksvale Road. A train would only stop at a "flag station" if it was signaled to do so. Looking at this photo also reveals the amount of open space there was at the time the photo was taken due to agricultural endeavors. Sleeping Giant can be clearly seen in the distance, unlike now.

And that amount of open space reminds one of the origins of the Northeastern Forestry Company. Its very existence was due to the vast amount of forest that had been cut down over the previous 200 years throughout New England to help create farms and open fields for grazing animals. Arborists began to realize in the late 1800s that the stripping of so much forestation had unintended consequences for the ecosystem. New England went from being 30% forested in the mid-1800s to the present-day where nearly 75% of the area is forested.

Research is indeed a maze.

—John Fournier, President, Cheshirepedia

Come visit the Society on Sunday afternoons from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. We have a lot to offer our visitors so please take some time to stop by! We have wonderful docent-lead tours.

There's always *something happening* at the Society!

COMMEMORATION SPEECHES:

Rededication by Tim Slocum, Town Council

On behalf of the Cheshire Town Council I am honored to be here today and to welcome all of you to the rededication of the Civil War Monument that has stood proud on this magnificent Green for 150 years.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Bob Larkin, The Historic District Commission, and The Historical Society, my colleagues on the Town Council and Jerry Sitko for their help along the way.

To put some of today's events into perspective I'd like to share a few bits of local history with you while leaving the larger story to those who will soon follow me over the course of today's great event.

The Congregational Church with its elegant steeple spire has come to define the town center. It was built on this property in 1826. It was one of several church meeting houses in Cheshire.

Across the street is our town hall. It was built in under a year for the grand sum of \$8,000. It opened January 1st 1868. The town center is little changed over 150 years with much of its original architecture intact.

Now we come to the Civil War Monument itself. It was conceived at the close of the Civil War, financed with a donation of \$1,000 and matched by the town fathers. For the huge sum of \$2,000 this monument was erected a year before the town hall and at 25% of the cost of the town hall. That's enormous. Owing to the prosperity of mining and other commercial interests there was some wealth in this largely agricultural town but I do think it speaks to the deep rooted generosity that has been at the heart of Cheshire's soul since its founding.

I've lived in Cheshire all of my life. For many of us the monument was a little noticed fixture on the green. About seven years ago as Mayor I had the honor to make welcoming remarks to those assembled on the Green for the Memorial Day remembrance celebration. I prepared by reading up on the monument having known there was an early photo of it in one of my favorite locally centered books, "Landmarks of Old Cheshire". I learned a lot and shared a bit of it that morning. I also noticed the monument, particularly the grassy area around its base, was tired and far less grand than it was in the 1890 photo. Of course there were far greater priorities that persisted over the town financial obligations but over the years and with a little persistence and buy in from likeminded people and volunteers we have done something about it. As you can see, a fitting bluestone apron surrounds the beautifully rejuvenated granite shaft and bronze plaques commemorating the Civil war dead and its veterans from Cheshire.

Now I must admit the monument's restoration cost was nearly ten times its original cost but it was well worth the treasure to once again honor the fallen, those who served and all among us who understand and appreciate the value they have placed in all of us and above all in the idea of this great nation with their sacrifice.

A Gathering to Commemorate

by Diane Calabro, President, CHS

Thank you, each and every one of you, for coming today. This is an important event for our Town and having you here means so much to us.

We are gathered today to remember and honor. We are very proud to be standing in this same spot, as Cheshire residents and guests have gathered 150 years ago, 100 years ago, 50 years ago, and now today. In 2066, some of the younger people in the crowd today will be standing in this same spot, on this same Church Green, doing what we are doing today. This is the continuum. This is our heritage. This is our civic duty. 150 years ago, families stood here devastated by a war where brother fought brother. One quarter of the soldiers from Cheshire did not come home from the Civil War. Remember that this monument stands for something important to us: the sacrifice made by these men for our freedom.

The Cheshire Historical Society is proud and honored to have organized this event. You've seen that the front lawn of the Hitchcock-Phillips House has become a Civil War Encampment with Company F of the 14th Connecticut setting up tents. CT Humanities provided a grant for Co. F to be here today. We are happy to have our State Troubadour Emeritus, Tom Callinan, here today. Tom will be here entertaining us through the early afternoon.

You've heard about the significant contribution from the Town of Cheshire in restoring the Monument from Tim Slocum from the Cheshire Town Council. We would all like to thank the Town of Cheshire for this and their continued support of our event. We'd also like to thank the First Congregational Church of Cheshire for their help and support. We have three historical buildings making a triangle around the Church Green and representatives from each group: Town of Cheshire, First Church, Cheshire Historical Society - created today's event. Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, also housed in a historic building, also helped. Clearly we like our history in Cheshire.

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A Gathering (continued from previous page)

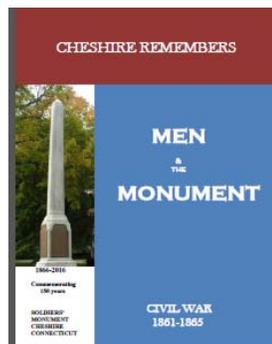
We are grateful to many people. Bob Larkin, the event chairperson, is very high on this list. He has spent the past 3 years preparing for this event. We'd like to thank Jean McKee for making the first and very generous donation to this event specifically for the development and publication of the special Commemoration Book that you'll hear more about in a few minutes. We'd like to thank Jeanné Chesanow, our Cheshire Town Historian, who has also spent so much of her time, researching, writing and creating this special book.

Again, we'd like to thank CT Humanities for bringing you Company F and later, President Lincoln, portrayed by Howard Wright. Connecticut Community Foundation also provided us with a substantial grant.

Darter Specialties gave us an incredible amount of help and support with the event t-shirts honoring Cheshire Civil War soldiers. Ilona Somogyi created the designs for these t-shirts. We'd like to thank R.W. Hine Hardware, Barker Specialty. We'd like to thank Sylvia Nichols and Cheshire Nursery for the wreath. Central Connecticut Chiropractic, Rick Smith, Big Y. Cheshire Community Chorus, The Bennett Family. There are many, many groups and people who made this day possible. We'd like to thank our many volunteers who helped in planning and who are here today helping on the grounds.

I'd like to now introduce Jeanné Chesanow, our Cheshire Town Historian. She will be telling us about her new book Cheshire Remembers that covers the monument's history, regiments, soldier stories and more. This book is available at the table over there and the special price for today is \$10. You can also order a commemorative t-shirt and see CDV photographs of many of the soldiers who fought for Cheshire on the digital show. This is all in the front of the Hitchcock-Phillips House.

The Cheshire Historical Society is proud to offer "Cheshire Remembers." This is a fascinating book about the history of our Monument. It is available for \$10 at the Society. Supplies are limited. Call Diane at (203) 272-2574 to purchase your copy.



About Our Monument

by Jeanné R. S. Chesanow, Cheshire Town Historian

How did we come to have this monument?

Going back to its beginning -- it all started with a PARTY – a happy occasion! The war had ended – spring of 1865 -- and our soldiers had begun to come home. The 20th Regiment was the unit that had the most Cheshire men in it – almost 70 had enlisted in that regiment, and most of them in Company A. So it was decided that there would be a welcome home party for the 20th. They arrived home in late June and shortly after that many members of the community turned out for a big party. The selectmen were there -- clergymen --- business men were there, including George Jarvis – he had grown up in Cheshire and later had done very well in New York – he was a bank president –living in Brooklyn but he'd come to Cheshire for the celebration -- it was a loud party, lots of conversations, storytelling – it seems that soldiers back from terrible experiences still have hilarious stories to tell about things that happened along the way – so there was a lot of laughter. Until a story was told about a comrade who had not made it back... the room fell silent and there was a sadness on the faces ... at that moment, George Jarvis rose to his feet and said, “Let’s build a monument to all those who gave their lives.” He reached into his wallet and pulled out one of Uncle Sam’s greenbacks -- it was a thousand dollar bill! – and put in on the table saying – “I’ll donate this to the Monument -- if you can match it!”

Well, a stir went round the room – men stood up, wallets came out, bills piled up and the match was made, even exceeded -- and the Monument was on!

A committee was formed – a huge block of the finest white granite was quarried up in Thomaston and shipped down by rail. Robert Wright a designer-architect of some note --- came up with a design that was elegant in its simplicity. An obelisk 20 feet tall, rising out of a broader section with curved corners where the soldiers’ names would be carved, and supported by a sturdy base. On the South side of the base, in raised capital letters would be the name LINCOLN and on the North side, also in raised capital letters the name of local hero Admiral FOOTE.

Continues on next page.

About Our Monument (Continued from previous page)

There would be 29 names carved into the Monument and an inscription on the East side: “To perpetuate the memory of those who lost their lives in the War of Rebellion”.

By April of 1866 it was standing in place on the Green, under a sheltering canopy of elm trees. There was a stone walkway around it, and around that a wrought iron fence open on one side. There was an immediate and emotional reaction to the Monument when it was put in place. All the names were of men who had been killed in battle or who had died of disease or wounds in the South. Many of their bodies had not been brought North, so that the Soldiers’ Monument (as it was called) became a kind of “memorial stone” almost like a stand-in gravestone for those buried elsewhere but remembered here, and grieved-for here. The dedication on the 4th of July in 1866 served as a “Memorial Service” that provided some closure. Among the people gathered there that day were veterans, widows still in mourning, and children who had lost their father. Col. Wooster of the 20th eulogized the fallen men; he recited their names, and actions, and places of their death. After evoking memories of the soldiers, Wooster spoke with pride of a glorious victory. “Our soldiers fought for liberty, for freedom against oppression and they prevailed!” And he blessed God that “the rebellion that threatened us has been trodden under the foot of the invincible Union armies” and blessed God for “our noble-hearted women”. He closed with words of hope for a bright future for our country. Joyous music followed and then a feast.

As the years went by, and the surviving veterans began to pass away, there was a suggestion that the names of all who served in the Civil War -- as it began to be called -- should appear on the Monument. Many more names would have to be included. The way to do that would be to put metal plaques on the sides of the Monument. There was an outcry at that suggestion -- that covering over the carved names was like defacing a gravestone -- like disrespecting the dead. But eventually the proposal to add the bronze plaques won out and they were installed in 1916. By that time we had lost most of our Civil War veterans, our living testimonials -- so again the reaction to the new plaques was a deeply emotional one. There were very few soldiers who lived to see their names on the Monument, but there were many family members who were proud to see their fathers and grandfathers’ names included on the plaques.

There was town wide sorrow mixed with pride at the public recognition of these men’s service to our country.

Now in 2016 our 150-year old Monument is newly cleaned, surrounded by a handsome new stone walkway -- the bronze plaques are polished and preserved. But what of our feelings toward it?

Proud descendants? We could only find a handful and they live far away.

Can we today understand the sacrifices made, can we have deep feelings for this piece of granite?

One hundred and fifty years ago, Col. Wooster, at the 1866 dedication, said, “This granite pile will hold in sacred veneration the names of those who died for their country, and it will convey to future generations our grateful recognition of their sacrifices.” Those were his expectations of future generations.

Bob Larkin asked me to write a book -- a Commemorative Book -- to help us remember. The book is called Cheshire Remembers the Men & the Monument. The story of each Cheshire soldier is in it, also a description of the small quiet farm town that Cheshire was back then. Looking through the book may stir feelings for what this Monument stands for.

I will close with something that Titus Moss -- Corporal Titus Moss -- wrote to his wife Jennette at home on Moss Farms Road. He addressed the letters to “West Cheshire” because Jennette would be picking up the mail at the West Cheshire Post Office on West Main Street near the railroad station.

He wrote: You wished to know if I was sorry that I had enlisted. I was thinking it over a day or two ago and came to the conclusion that if the circumstances were the same I should try it again. I have not given up the idea of coming home not by any means. God grant that there may never be cause for another war in this world. I trust that this may be speedily brought to a close.

Titus Moss was killed at the battle of Chancellorsville a few months later, on May 3, 1863. His body was never recovered from that field -- but his name is on the Monument.

Note: An envelope with West Cheshire written on it, was seen lying on the battlefield at Chancellorsville. On that embattled Sabbath day, no one picked up the envelope.. We’ll never know if that was Titus Moss’s last letter.

Note: 24 children in Cheshire lost their fathers in the Civil War.

The Life of Admiral Andrew Hull Foote, The Gunboat Commodore by John White, local author and patriot

The story of victory, great and glorious, is always the tale of death, wounds, and anguish. (Col. Wooster)

Andrew Foote is known as the Gunboat Commodore for his Civil War exploits. His name is inseparably linked with some of the most daring and important achievements of the Civil War. His life is worthy of emulation by youth. His personal bravery was no less remarkable than his Christian character. His sailors loved and trusted him. He asked his men to face no danger he did not share. He shrank from no duty, shirked no responsibility. Rising by merit alone from a subordinate position to the rank of Admiral, he was always the same simple-hearted, unpretending man, doing his duty for God and country.

Foote was born in New Haven on September 12, 1806 to Samuel and Eudocia Foote. He was the second of three sons.

As a young boy, Andrew played on the docks at Long Wharf, where his father had a shipping company which imported goods from the West Indies. Andrew watched ships enter and leave the harbor, and soaked up stories of naval life and heroism in the War of 1812.

But his mother's influence upon him was equally strong. She had great concern for the moral and religious welfare of her children. Likewise, Andrew's father was the son of Rev. John Foote, who served as pastor of the Congregational Church here in Cheshire for 46 years. So Andrew was steeped in the Puritan tradition, and throughout his life was a deeply devout Christian. On ships in later life, he led prayer groups and delivered sermons on Sundays. He also led the temperance movement to abolish "flogging and grogging" in the U.S. Navy. In the 1840s, he was responsible for abolishing the grog ration on his ship, the first in the U.S. Navy to go "dry." His temperance campaign spread through the fleet until, in 1862, it was officially imposed on the entire navy. Flogging was abolished a few years before that, in 1859.

When Andrew's grandfather, John Foote, died in 1813, Andrew's father, Samuel, moved into his father's house here on the corner of Cornwall Avenue and South Main Street. That house, of course, is the well-known Foote house.

Andrew was seven when he came to Cheshire. He was educated at Cheshire Academy. One of his schoolmates was Gideon Welles, who would later become Secretary of the Navy in Lincoln's cabinet. Andrew and Gideon were lifelong friends, and that helped Andrew to advance in rank and obtain naval commands he desired. However, all sources agree that he was anything but self-serving. His promotions were earned and well deserved. He was gallant in combat, an excellent leader of men, and what was perhaps most satisfying to himself, he was regarded as a good Christian gentleman by those who knew him.

Young Andrew was eager for the military life. He told his parents of his desire to follow the sea, but the Naval Academy did not yet exist; it was founded in 1845. So in December 1822, Foote sailed as a midshipman on his first sea service. It was against the pirates of the West Indies. That was soon followed by a cruise to the Pacific and, in rapid succession, a series of cruises and advancements which made him sailing master on the ship *St. Louis*, then flag lieutenant of the Mediterranean Squadron and, in 1837, executive officer of the *John Adams* on a three-year world cruise.

Foote had returned to Cheshire in 1828 to marry Caroline Flagg, the daughter of Bethuel Flagg. They had two children, one of whom died at age 4. Caroline herself died in 1838 only ten years after marrying Foote.

Four years later, in 1832, Foote married his second wife, also named Caroline. She was Caroline Augusta of New Haven. They had five children—three sons and two daughters.

During his military career, Foote traveled the world including China, Africa, and the South Pacific. He saw action in each location, including an antislavery patrol off Africa from 1849-51. In 1854 he wrote a book about patrolling against the slave trade. It was entitled *Africa and the American Flag* and was written right here in Cheshire while he was on several months' leave from active duty.

As executive officer of the ship *Cumberland*, from 1843-45, Foote made her the first temperance ship of the navy. When the Civil War began he was in New York in charge of the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Continues on next page.

The Life of Admiral Andrew Hull Foote **Continued from previous page**

In August 1861 Foote was promoted to Captain and put in charge of naval operations on the upper Mississippi River at St. Louis. His job was to create an inland navy for operation against Confederate strongholds on the western rivers. Foote quickly went into action, building and manning of ships, and leading them into combat. The fleet was improvised from whatever ships could be converted or built in a hurry. The result was the first ironclad flotilla of gunboats in American history.

Foote was brilliantly effective in command. His first major operation was the February 1862 attack on Fort Henry and Fort Donelson with Ulysses S. Grant, who was a Brigadier General at the time. Fort Henry was on the Tennessee River; Fort Donelson was on the Cumberland River. They controlled traffic on the rivers; if the Union forces could capture them, the way would open to take the Mississippi and give the Union control of the waterways all the way to New Orleans.

The plan called for a coordinated attack with both the army and navy, but when Foote arrived at Fort Henry he found the Confederate defenses lacking and he decided to act. With the river in flood, Foote sailed straight into the fort and the Confederates surrendered. Grant moved forward to attack Fort Donelson, but he opened the attack too soon. Foote arrived late and he went straight into action. During the battle he was wounded in the foot by a piece of iron shrapnel from an exploding cannonball and by wooden splinters. While the Confederates repulsed Foote's attack, Fort Donelson eventually fell and Foote received much of the credit.

The capture of Fort Henry is chiefly memorable as the first engagement in history in which ironclad gunboats were subjected to a practical and severe test—a test which demonstrated that ironclads could work well. The battle between the Monitor and the Merrimac did not take place until almost a month later.

Foote's next action was the attack on Island Number 10 which held a commanding position in the middle of the Mississippi River. During the battle he was on crutches from his foot wound. It forced him to move to a shore position. After the battle, his health continued to deteriorate so far that he had to step down from command. In June 1862, Foote moved to Washington, where he was promoted to rear admiral and given the Thanks of Congress. His new duty was chief of the Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting.

The wound Foote received at Fort Henry is what eventually killed him. It caused him such agony that he was temporarily detached in May 1862 and his squadron transferred to another admiral.

But he was determined to do his utmost for his country, whatever the sacrifice. His life, he said, was not his own and should be freely surrendered at his country's call, which to him was service to God. He sought active sea service and was given command of the South Atlantic Squadron. He left New Haven in June 1863, intending to depart from New York to assume command of the squadron. However, his disabilities overcame him in New York. Instead of taking his position in the blockade of Charleston, he took to bed in the Astor House hotel, where he lingered for ten days in great suffering and then died there on June 26, 1863. With his family and friends gathered around him, and assured that he must die, he waited calmly for the end. His last intelligible words were, "I think God for His goodnesses to me—for all His loving-kindness to me; He has been good to me; I thank him for all his benefits."

Foote's body lay in state in the rotunda of the State House on the Green in New Haven, which was then the co-capital of Connecticut. He was buried in the Grove Street Cemetery of New Haven, where his grave is marked by a large monument. The New Haven Colony Historical Society has a fine portrait of Admiral Foote and other mementos.

Foote was eulogized by many. His old schoolmate, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Wells, paid tribute to Foote in a general order to the officers and men of all ships with this statement:

"A gallant and distinguished officer is lost to the country. The hero of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, the daring and indomitable spirit that created and led to successive victories, the Mississippi Flotilla; the heroic Christian sailor, who in the China seas, and on the coast of Africa, as well as on the great interior rivers of our country, sustained with unfaltering dignity and devotion, the honor of our flag, and the cause of the Union; Rear Admiral Foote is no more."

Foote's life work was the navy, and for that he received the Thanks of Congress twice and a letter of thanks from President Lincoln. Since Foote died, three ships of the United States Navy have been named USS Foote, in his honor.

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FALL 2016



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Cheshirepedia: cheshirepedia@gmail.com



— Drawing by Warren Van Almkerk

Button-making at the Cheshire Historical Society by Leslie Hutchison, Archivist, Cheshire Academy

While the buttons didn't rise to the artistic level of those made by the Ball and Socket factory, the custom pin-on buttons available at two recent historical society events did offer a fun and sentimental keepsake for visitors during special events in June and July.

Given that volunteers were stationed within the hallowed halls and lovely yard of the Hitchcock Phillips House, the mechanical button-making machine fit right in with the ambiance of the surroundings. The machine uses a metal die, a lever and a spring device to apply pressure to thin metal circles which are crimped together to form the button. Simple design, no electricity needed!

Society president Diane Calabro provided dozens of designs from which to choose: historical figures from Cheshire as well as Native American portraits, peace signs and the crowd favorite, the Cheshire Cat. Some youngsters colored the paper designs before they were pressed onto the button.

Cheshire Academy and the Cheshire Historical Society collaborated on the button-making activity. We look forward to many more rewarding partnerships in the future. After all, we're long-time neighbors!

Sample button designs on right

Coming!

**September 25 - South Brooksvale
History Trolley Tour**

**September 26, 7:30 p.m. Speaker:
History is a Maze: Treasures of
South Brooksvale**

**October 14-15, Spirits Alive
Cemetery Tours**

**October 24, 7:30 p.m. Speaker:
News from the Graves**

**October 29: Pony Rides for
CT Humanities**

**November 27, 2 p.m. Decorating
Gingerbread Houses**

**November 28, 7:30 p.m. Speaker:
Child Labor in Cheshire and the
World Beyond**

**December 18 Christmas Party &
Holiday Open House**

1866-2016

Cheshire Civil War
Monument

Is 150 Years Old!
www.cheshirehistory.org

1785

Hitchcock-Phillips House



www.cheshirehistory.org