

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 25, No. 2

September 2002

COMING EVENTS

Sept. 15	Sunday	Board Meeting	1:30 p.m.	Oct. 28	Monday	Membership/Program Meeting: "The Brooks Family of Cheshire"- Jean McKee	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	Monday	Membership/Program Meeting: "The Untold Story of The Spirit of St. Louis" – Ev Cassagneres	7:30 p.m.	Nov. 17	Sunday	Board Meeting	1:30 p.m.
Sept. 28	Saturday	Antiques & Collectibles Sale	9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.	Nov. 25	Monday	Membership/Program Meeting "A Nostalgic Radio Trip" – Bob Schulz	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 20	Sunday	Board Meeting	1:30 p.m.	Dec. 15	Sunday	Christmas Open House	2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Oct. 26	Saturday	Antiques & Collectibles Sale	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (weather permitting)				

Starting September 8, the Hitchcock-Phillips House is open to the public on Sundays, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

FALL PROGRAM SERIES

All programs will be held in the Hitchcock-Phillips House at 7:30 p.m. and will be preceded by a brief membership meeting. Come and bring a friend! The public is cordially invited to attend.

Monday, September 23 – The Spirit of St. Louis: Cheshire historian and author Ev Cassagneres, whose new book, The Untold Story of The Spirit of St. Louis, was published by Flying Books International in August, will open our fall program series with a talk on his experiences while writing about the plane that made Charles Lindbergh famous. Ev, who has had a lifetime interest in aviation, is a recognized expert on Lindbergh and early aircraft. He has been working on the book over a 35-year period, separating out the errors and misconceptions that have grown up around the story and gathering the true facts about the plane, the Ryan NYP (New York to Paris).

Lindbergh learned of his project in 1968 and invited Ev to his home, providing him with much first-hand information. Since Lindbergh's death in 1974, his family has continued their interest in the project. The 21-chapter book has received high praise for its comprehensiveness and meticulous uncovering of data.

Monday, October 28 – The Brooks Family of Cheshire: Jean McKee, a ninth-generation member of the Brooks family in Cheshire, will present a family history, including new research on some of Cheshire's earliest settlers. The historic Brooks homestead on South Brooksvale Road, which is known for its stately house and

whitewashed barns, has been in Jean's mother's family since 1732. When Wallingford granted the "west farmers" separate village status, Thomas Brooks is credited with providing the area with the name "New Cheshire" (sometimes spelled Cheshier) in honor of his home city of Chester, England.

Jean retired in 1994 following a distinguished career in federal service, most recently as a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority. Since then, she has divided her time between Washington, D.C. and Cheshire. She currently serves on the Advisory Council of the New England Historic Genealogical Society located in Boston.

Monday, November 25 – A Nostalgic Radio Trip: Bob Schulz, a voice-over artist who brings old radio shows back to life, will take us back to the "golden days" of radio. From comic to sentimental, he will reminisce about radio personalities such as Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Fibber McGee and Molly, and programs such as "The Shadow Knows" and "The Lone Ranger."

A Woodbridge resident, Bob began home broadcasting as a young teen. He later joined WELI as a news reporter. In 1970, he switched to the production of television programs at Channel 8, where he worked behind the scenes for 24 years. His one-man performance includes fun, repartee and radio humor.

Welcome to New Members

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined us since the last newsletter: Ms. Sheila Batchelar, Mrs. Barbara Christoff, Mrs. Cara Luciani, Jonathan Manke, Mr. & Mrs. Paul and Arlla Simisky, and Walter O. Vogt of Dallas, TX. Also two new Business/Professional members: Mrs. Kristen Bowman, Pabco Inc. (Life Membership) and O. J. Mann Electric.

1873 Diary of Franklin Nichols Hall

We recently received a transcription of Franklin Nichols Hall's 1873 diary from his great grandson, Wallace E. Burnett of Seymour. During the year 1873, Hall, then a 25-year-old Cheshire bachelor, made brief diary entries almost daily. Example:

Monday, September 1 – Hoeing up & getting out Manure carried out 7 loads with horse. C (*older brother Charles*) building fence next to his lot.

While tersely written, the diary does give a wonderful sense of the daily routine of Cheshire farm life in the 19th century. In 1998, Mr. Burnett also sent us a transcription of the 1901-02 diary kept by Hall's wife, Ellen Linsley Hall. (She writes a little more fully in her diary.) Both diaries are located in the *Cheshire Books* section in the Meeting Room.

New Rug and New Refrigerator

The new industrial-strength carpeting, which was installed on the back stairway in May, has spruced up the house considerably. It also has improved safety on the stairway. The carpet is the same medium brown color and texture as the Meeting Room carpet. It was purchased from Ricci's Carpet, Linoleum & Tile Co., 1089 South Main Street.

In May, just days before the first Antiques & Collectibles Sale of the season, it was discovered that the old refrigerator in the apartment kitchen was no longer working. Since it is critical to the Sale to be able to provide cold drinks and refreshments for both the dealers and customers from that kitchen, we were in a quandary. Curator Edgar Johnson came to our rescue once again with the gift of a brand new GE 20.6 cubic foot refrigerator/freezer for the apartment kitchen. THANK YOU, Edgar!

2003 Third Graders Visit in Spring

A total of 303 third-grade students, 15 teachers, and 32 other adults from Highland, Chapman, and Doolittle schools visited the Hitchcock-Phillips House during May and June as part of their regular, Town of Cheshire curriculum. Norton and St. Bridget's schools are scheduled to visit this fall.

Volunteer guides were: Doris Black, Stephanie Casner, Priscilla Clark, Rosemary Cole, Ron Gagliardi, Mary Ellen Kania, Betty Martha, Ann Massimino, Gerry Mitlehner, and Marcia Robbie. The Society received wonderful thank you letters from many of the students! Samples are posted on the hall bulletin board.

Volunteer "Merry Maids" Clean Doll House

A special thank you to our own "Merry Maids", Gerry Mitlehner and Priscilla Clark, who volunteered to clean the Belknap doll house in the Toy Room. As far as we know, the doll house has not really been cleaned since Mrs. Belknap first arranged it in 1985. Gerry and Priscilla worked (*played* ?) diligently for over three hours – and the result is sparkling. Pris also made new bed spreads and curtains for the house.

On another day, Gerry came back and cleaned the antique toys on the Toy Room's enclosed shelves and the Craig miniatures in the Exhibit Room. If anyone else would be willing to clean a particular display, please contact Mary Ellen Kania or Curator Edgar Johnson.

FINANCIAL REPORT April 1, 2001 – March 31, 2002

Assets (Net Worth) – March 31, 2001		
Cash		\$ 4,301
CD's and Savings Account		<u>77,700</u>
		<u>\$ 82,001</u>
Income		
Dues and donations	\$ 4,765	
Interest Income	4,555	
Books & Publications Sale	3,472	
Antiques & Collectibles + Boutique	2,150	
Other	<u>773</u>	
	<u>\$15,715</u>	
Expenses		
House Operating Expenses	\$ 6,043	
Books for sale	2,739	
Printing and Mailing	1,574	
Other	<u>1,193</u>	
	<u>\$11,549</u>	
Net Income		<u>\$ 4,166</u>
Assets (Net Worth) – March 31, 2002		
Cash		\$ 8,308
CD's and Savings Account		<u>77,859</u>
		<u>\$86,167</u>

5 Society Members Participate in Town Study

Five of the 11 members on the Historic Preservation Study Committee appointed by the Cheshire Town Council last spring were Cheshire Historical Society members. Society Director and Assistant Curator Eric Anderson was chairman of the study committee. Other Society members who participated were Sally Bowman, Eleanor Herrmann, Society President Ed Kania, and Laraine Smith.

In August, following a 90-day study, the committee presented an excellent, comprehensive report to the Town Council. It is hoped this will lead to the establishment of a permanent Historic Preservation Committee for Cheshire. Good work, all!

The Mystery of Dr. Amos Hull's Two Tombstones

Thanks to our Cheshire Historical Society web site, President Kania received an e-mail from Lynn Friedman, vice president of the Norwalk Historical Society and historian of the Rowayton Historical Society, this summer. She was researching tombstones in their Brookside Cemetery, located on Rowayton Avenue. It has a large granite tombstone for "Dr. Amos Hull of Wallingford", who died in 1776, age 30. By searching on Google.com, she found that a "Dr. Amos Hull" built the Pliny Hitchcock House in 1764,. She wondered if there was any connection. Indeed, there seems to be! Ed and Mary Ellen checked our resources at the Society and have had a lengthy e-mail correspondence with her. (Cheshire, as you know, was officially part of Wallingford until 1780, when the Connecticut State Legislature granted it separate town status.)

The section on the Pliny Hitchcock House in Landmarks of Old Cheshire, states:

"Amos Hull was one doctor who made house calls, but since one of his legs was shorter than the other, he needed special saddles for his travels. From time to time, Dr. Hull served with the Revolutionary army, and on one of these enlistments he died. His personal effects were returned to Cheshire by Dr. Gould Gift Norton, who promptly proposed to Dr. Hull's widow and married her, acquiring her former husband's home and medical practice as well..."

Records in Joseph Perkins Beach's History of Cheshire, Connecticut from 1694 to 1840 show:

Parson Hall's Baptism Records: "April, 1746 – Amos of Doctor Hulls"

Marriages from Wallingford Records: "Amos Hull m. Martha Hitchcock October 17, 1764"

Parson Foot's Burial Records: "Dr. Amos Hull, died in camp – 1776"

Tombstone Records: "Dr. Amos Hull (at Norvill) d. October 3, 1776, age 30 years"

In text on the Revolutionary war, Beach also points out that "Parson John Foote, of New Cheshier, makes a special note (of 15 men) who 'died in camp.'" Their names, including Dr. Amos Hull's, are listed. Checking these names against the tombstone records, only one has a tombstone in Cheshire – Dr. Amos Hull.

The Kantias have not been able to locate the actual tombstone in Hillside Cemetery because so many of the old stones are illegible now. The existence of the stone, however, is also recorded in the 1934 list of Hillside Cemetery headstones: "Hull, Dr. Amos died Oct. 3, 1776 age 31 (Rev.War)", and Dr. Hull's name is listed on the DAR plaque at the cemetery entrance.

The Kantias and Ms. Friedman feel the "at Norvill" in Beach's tombstone records must refer to "Norwalk." Ms. Friedman is quite sure that their cemetery has "the body", and that the Cheshire tombstone was placed as a memorial. If so, a mystery still remains. Who erected the large, granite stone in the Norwalk cemetery?

Stay tuned! We hope to have a picture of the Norwalk tombstone in the next newsletter.

In Memoriam – Armand A. Brodeur, Sr.

Armand A. Brodeur Sr., Cheshire Historical Society president in 1985-86 and a current Board member, died June 7 at age 90. We are saddened by his loss and extend our deep sympathy to his wife Evelyn, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He was a good friend to the Society, and we shall miss him.

Cheshire Historical Society Officers

President	Ed Kania
Vice President	Ron Gagliardi
Recording Secretary	Doris Black
Membership Secretary	Sally Clark
Treasurer	Connie Field
1 st Curator	Edgar Johnson
2 nd Curator	Warren Van Almkerk
Assistant Curator	Eric Anderson

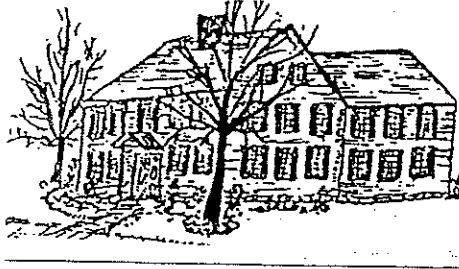
Board of Directors

- 2002-2005 Pat Vita, Stephanie Casner, Lois VanAlmkerk
2001-2004 Bob Sweeney, Ann Massimino
2000-2003 Eric Anderson, Mary Ellen Kania, Barbara Merrill

Committee Chairmen

- Antiques & Collectibles Sales – Lois Van Almkerk
“Boutique-in-the-Shed “ – Pat Vita
Program – Ron Gagliardi
House Tours – Mary Ellen Kania
Webmaster – Eric Anderson
Newsletter – Ed & Mary Ellen Kania

**CHESHIRE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWS**



SEPTEMBER 2002

Cheshire Historical Society
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