

# CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 29, No. 2

Fall 2006

## PROGRAM

### Monday, September 25, 7:30 PM

#### **“Patent Medicine and Early American Bottles” Bill Beckett**

Local bottle and old-medical-advertising collector Bill Beckett will talk about early American bottles and the patent medicine industry. His talk will include how early bottles were made and an overview of Connecticut’s glass-making history. He also will discuss Cheshire medicines and drug stores. Bill has been an avid bottle collector for almost 30 years. He will welcome examples from the audience; so feel free to bring along items of interest for sharing or identification.

### Monday, October 23, 7:30 PM

#### **“Ninth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers - Connecticut’s Irish Regiment” Bob Larkin**

Since retiring from SNET, Cheshire resident Bob Larkin has taken a deep interest in the Ninth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers, a regiment in which one of his ancestors—as well as 11 men from Cheshire—served during the Civil War. Known as the “Irish Regiment” due to the predominance of first generation and Irish-born soldiers, the Ninth was raised and mustered in New Haven. In 1862, the men arrived on the Mississippi with orders to excavate a canal to bypass the Confederate batteries at Vicksburg. Some 150 members perished in the endeavor. Bob will have tales of the adventures and heroism of individual soldiers and will also update us on plans to place a Connecticut monument to the Ninth Regiment in the Vicksburg National Military Park.

### Monday, November 28, 7:30 PM

#### **“The Lore and History of Telegraphy” Harold R. Kramer**

See Harold R. Kramer’s website <http://www.geocities.com/haroldrkramer/index.html> for a preview of the fascinating topic in store for us at

## Fall Calendar

Sept. 25	Monday 7:30 PM	Membership Meeting & Speaker
Sept. 30	Saturday 9 AM—3 PM	Antiques & Collectibles Sale (rain cancels)
Oct. 16	Monday 7:30 PM	Board Meeting
Oct. 23	Monday 7:30 PM	Membership Meeting & Speaker
Oct. 28	Saturday 9 AM—3 PM	Antiques & Collectibles Sale (rain cancels)
Nov. 20	Monday 7:30 PM	Board Meeting
Nov. 27	Monday 7:30 PM	Membership Meeting & Speaker

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

this meeting. A Cheshire resident, Harold is a collector of telegraph keys and telegraphy instruments. He will tell us about the history of the telegraph, beginning with Samuel Morse’s first transmission in 1844, and how the invention, the Internet of its day, overnight moved mankind into a new era. He will accompany his presentation with artifacts from his collection, which includes a rare reproduction of the Vail sending key, the original telegraph key made by Morse’s assistant Alfred Vail for the first telegraph instrument.

Harold is now chief operating officer of the American Radio Relay League, the national organization for amateur radio operators. He has been an amateur radio operator since he was 14 and has worked in both cable television and the broadcast industries.

# Betty Ives' Family Gives Society Cheshire-Related Items From Farm House During Visit In July

When Betty (Porter) Ives died on May 28, one day shy of her 94th birthday, she left the entire 164-acre farm and the farm house at 1585 Cheshire Street to the Cheshire Land Trust. She left the contents of the house to her only nephew in Montana and his children: a great nephew and two great nieces on the West Coast.

There was great excitement at the Historical Society when Betty's great nephew, Robert Porter, contacted us about the family's interest in donating items with Cheshire significance to the Society in her memory. The West Coast family arrived early in July: Robert Porter and his wife Michelle with two children; Anne Porter Daugherty and her husband Ron with their five-year-old son; and Laural Porter Houlihan, a news anchor for NewsChannel 8 in Portland, OR, who left husband Mike and four children at home. All had happy memories of many summer visits to "Aunt Betty" and the farm over the years. Together they worked for a week at the daunting task of sorting through the contents of the house, which had been occupied since 1861 by three generations of Ives. Each family packed a shipping pod with favorite pieces to send home. They also generously set aside a selection of Ives family memorabilia for the Society. The remaining house contents were sold at a much-publicized auction on Aug. 12.

The "Ives Farm collection" is on display in the Exhibit Room. Of special interest is a framed print of General Ulysses S. Grant; the wedding dress worn by Cornelia Atwater when she married Howard Ives in 1899; and their wedding photograph. The dress was found in good condition, wrapped in a paper bag and tied with string. Their wedding certificate was discovered later, and the Society purchase it, along with a 1902 baptismal certificate, Edward Ives' 1916 Cheshire grammar school diploma, and a decanter with four pressed-glass sherry glasses at the auction. Other donated items include "grandma's shawl", found wrapped in a 1909 New Britain newspaper; a partially completed quilt with material for backing; photographs of the farm and snapshots of Betty with Porter family



**Robert Porter of Powal CA, Betty Ives' great nephew; his daughter Elizabeth, age 11; and his sister Laural Porter Houlihan of Portland, OR, pose with the picture of General Ulysses S. Grant that the family donated to the Society.**

members; New Britain Illustrated (Betty's home city), c. 1888; a glass milk bottle stamped "E. R. Minor, Cheshire, Conn"; possible arrowheads from the farm; and a 1948 Farmers Handbook, which includes notes on the dates various cows were bred.

Society members who met this wonderful family were enormously impressed by their love and admiration for "Aunt Betty." Laurel Porter Houlihan, who has become a Cheshire Historical Society life member, said that, to the West Coast family, Betty represented "all the finest of New England virtues: honesty, humility, thrift, hard work and, above all, an overriding sense of duty." Laural has sent us a DVD of an interview she and Anne did with Betty in 2004 that we plan show at a meeting. Although she managed the farm for almost 40 years after her husband's death, Betty, who had been a payroll supervisor, says that she didn't really like farming. "It was too hard work," she says; but she really did "love the farm."

## “The Diggers” Are At Work Documenting Contents of House

Four member volunteers —Society Director and Town Historian Ron Gagliardi, Rick Smith Mike Raucci, and Brad Zambruski—have undertaken the enormous task of digitally documenting the contents of the Hitchcock-Phillips House. Since last spring, the group has been hard at work on most Sunday evenings.

The computer and scanner that you see in the Meeting Room were donated by Rick Smith specifically for the project. The group scans any pictures which fit in the scanner. For larger pictures and other items, they use their own digital cameras and download the photos into the computer. To date, the men have imaged all of the pictures on the walls on both the first and second floors, including the photographs in the two moveable displays in the Meeting Room.

The group has found that the biggest challenge is how to catalog the images. They tried and discarded one software program and are now working on a new system. After functioning for several months as “the disaster recovery group” and “the digital imaging group,” they recently gave themselves a new name, “The Diggers” ( d.i.g. from digital imaging group). We’ll be hearing more about them in the future!

### Thank You!

**Barbara Christoff, Judy Knott, Kathleen Connolly** for giving house tours to Cheshire Grange members on Aug. 2, the hottest night of the summer. It was a fun visit despite the temperature!

**Kristina Blackwell, Cheshire Frame & Art Gallery Inc.** for volunteering to open and clean the inside of the glass and add new acid-free backing on the Ives Farm General Grant picture.

**Cheshire Garden Club and Suburban Garden Club members** for maintaining our gardens so beautifully all summer.

**Priscilla Clark and Christine Tall** for staffing the Boutique-in-the-Shed on July 29.

**Doris Black** for polishing so much silver!

## ACQUISITION NOTES

- **Judy Kaprinski**, Sorghum Mill Drive— the wedding dress worn by her mother, Dee Kendrick Fienemann, when she married William Fienemann in 1936. They lived on Patton Drive, 1955-97.
- **Ralph Rowland (member)**— a nearly complete collection of *The Cheshire Herald*, first four-last four pages, 1969-1990, and *The Cheshire Citizen*, edited by his son, Roy Roland, 1990-91. Also several city directories, town annual reports, and other local records.
- **Robert Chesanow (member)**— the real Civil War telegram used in the “Walk Back in Time” and a biographical study, compiled from Internet records, on Carlos J. Huntley, Cheshire RR agent and telegraph operator in 1862. The information he found on line is amazing!
- **Nancy Colangelo, Prospect**—four framed Ed Gumprecht drawings of “Olde Cheshire” found at a tag sale. For over 20 years, Ed Gumprecht (1912-1982) sent original drawings of scenes from Cheshire history on his cards to friends at Christmas time. The framed prints are hanging in the Exhibit Room. A complete collection of scenes is in one of the postcard albums.
- **Harold Baldwin, Downers Grove, IL** – collection of letters, 1968-72, from Ed Gumprecht in Cheshire to Harold’s father, Howard Baldwin, in Florida. Howard and his wife, Marian, had moved from Cheshire to Florida. Ed’s letters are full of Cheshire news and stories. Harold has added notes to explain some of the personal references.
- **Tina Carmody, Peck Lane**—man’s black derby hat in original Knox (New York) hat box.
- **Joan Hodgson (member)**—beaver top hat in original Christy’s London, hat box, c. 1933.
- **Beverly Dunn, Oak Avenue**— silver-plated, Victorian-style tea service, originally a 25th wedding anniversary present for her mother-in-law, Mrs. Edward Dunn of Stratford. In the dining room.
- **David Clark, North Haven and Susan Schur, Willington**—framed 1950s watercolor of the Benjamin Holt/Levi Peck house (c. 1750), 551 Maple Ave, painted by D. Thompson. Originally owned by their maternal grandmother, Anna B. Peck Foster. Also Old Historic Homes of Cheshire and Cheshire documents.

### In Memoriam

**Barbara “Muffy” Merrill** June 23, 2006  
**Gail K. Becker** July 11, 2006  
We miss these members and send our sincere sympathy to their families.

# ULBRICHS GIVE 1850-51 CHESHIRE STREET QUILT

The audience at the Ives Farm Auction, Aug. 12, applauded when the auctioneer announced that the high bidder for the 1850-51 friendship quilt from a Cheshire Street home (not Ives Farm) had bought it for the Cheshire Historical Society. Our surprise benefactors were Past President and Life Member Dick Ulbrich and his wife Diane, who had visited the auction site earlier and decided to get the quilt for the Society.

Now on display in the second-floor bedroom at the Hitchcock-Phillips House, the quilt is a wonderful piece of Cheshire history. Each of 25 blocks has the name of the quilter carefully written in the

## Acrylic Painting of Peasley House Now in Senior Center Dining Room

The curators were at a loss last spring when new member Michael Raucci offered us a huge acrylic painting of the historic Peasley House, the gracious old home which was located on the present site of the Highland Health Care Center, corner of Highland Avenue and Curve Hill Road. Older Cheshire residents will remember how the beautiful, old house was converted to the Cheshire Convalescent Home, then Center, then Hospital, gradually disappearing in the construction of Highland Health Care Center.

The painting is attractive and historic, but the size and style did not fit the interior of the Hitchcock-Phillips House. Society Director Ron Gagliardi came up with a wonderful idea—the picture would be a great addition to the Cheshire Senior Center! You can see it now in the Senior Center dining room. The pale green and aqua tones in the picture look beautiful the against dining room walls, and folks at the Senior Center love it.



center in indelible ink. The names include 3 Bradleys, 1 Bronson, 5 Brooks, 3 Doolittles 1 Francis, 1 French, 1 Hitchcock, 4 Ives, 2 Judds, 3 Pecks, and 1 Smith. A few blocks give the age of the quilter. Most indicate “Cheshire” and the dates 1850 or 1851. Six quilters are from other towns: Bethany, Prospect, Southington, Middlebury, New Haven, and West Meriden.

The pattern is the well-known “Album Patch,” which is still popular with quilters.. It was often made as a gift for a bride-to-be. A group of friends would get together and each would piece a block and write or embroider her name on it. Our quilt may have been assembled by Mrs. Charlotte Ives, whose name appears on two blocks and also on the border. The colors are excellent considering the age of the quilt: a red and light blue border, light blue sashing with red corner squares, and wonderful mixture of colorful calico prints on white background.

Hats off to the Ulbrichs! The Society is thrilled to have this true Cheshire heirloom.

### Welcome New Members:

Kenneth & Sondra Amann, 381 Westland Ave.

Tom Hackett, 592 Mountain Rd.

Andrew & Brandi Martelli, 413 Juniper Lane

Laural Porter, 2932 NE 32nd Ave., Portland, OR

Michael Raucci, 768 Highland Ave.

## Do You Know Where Historic Scott's Junction Was Located?

When the new Dunkin' Donuts, which prominently displays a blow-up of this panoramic postcard labeled “Scott's Junction, Cheshire Conn.,” opened on South Main Street, the Society received a call from a customer asking, “Do you know where Scott's Junction was located?”

The “junction” was the spot on Maple Avenue where the trolley tracks intersected with other tracks going west (downhill) to Waterbury. Trolley travelers from Cheshire and surrounding communities patronized a lunch room there called The Shelter, started by entrepreneur Walter Scott. Scott also owned the Casino (center building) across the street, now the site of the present Waverly complex, 286 Maple Ave. The boardwalk which once led to The Shelter is visible on the right. The Shelter itself, much altered, is 291 Maple Ave.

## New Board Members

We begin the fall with a new Cheshire Historical Society president, a new treasurer, two new directors and a new curator:

**Marshall Robinson—President** was elected at the annual meeting in April to replace out-going president Ed Kania, who headed the Society 2001—06 and was elected as a director. Marshall comes with excellent experience having served as a director 2002-03 and as curator 2004 -06.

**Joanna Miller—Treasurer** replaces Connie Field, who resigned during the summer because of health problems. The Miller family, including husband Bill and young son Richard, joined the Society in 2005. Joanna has been a volunteer on the house-keeping team and portrayed a lovely Roxanna Hitchcock in the "Walk Back in Time" in May.

**Ray Verner—Director** was elected at the annual meeting in April. He is a 4th generation Cheshireite, now living on North Brooksvale Road right

across from the farm house where his great grandfather once lived. Both Ray's father and grandfather worked for Ball & Socket ("Didn't everyone!" he says.) Ray and his wife, Eleanor, who was in the first graduating class at Cheshire High School, are great resources for local history.

**Bob Cawood—Director** was chosen by the Board to replace Barbara "Muffy" Merrill, who died in June. Bob is a stamp collector and longtime member of the Cheshire Philatelic Society. He was instrumental in arranging for the donation of the Philatelic Society's Cheshire stamp collection, and later their \$4,000 treasury balance, to the Historical Society when the group became inactive.

**Mary Ellen Kania—Curator** was appointed by the Board in May to fill the vacancy created when Marshall became president. A longtime member and history buff, Mary Ellen served as a director for three years and as house chairman, 2002-06. She is newsletter editor.

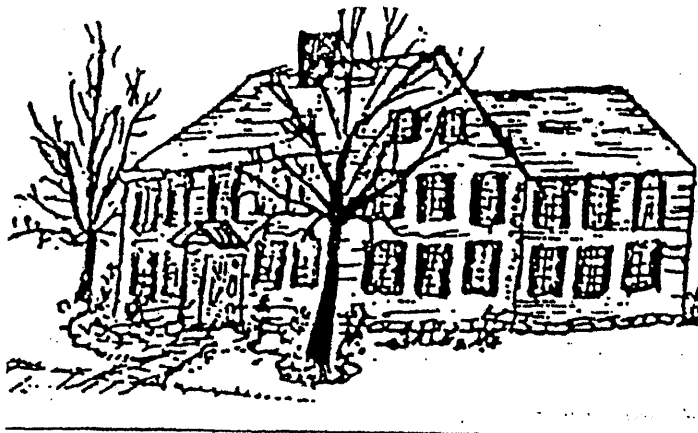
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## FINANCIAL REPORT APRIL 1, 2005—MARCH 31, 2006

NORMAL INCOME

If you require  
specific information  
about our financial statement  
please contact our Treasurer,  
Ed Kania, available at e-mail:  
[edwinkania@cox.net](mailto:edwinkania@cox.net)

**CHESHIRE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEWS**



**FALL 2006**

Cheshire Historical Society  
PO Box 281, 39 Church Drive  
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**Society Officers**

**President**

Marshall Robinson

**Vice President**

Gerald Devine

**Secretaries**

Barbara Christoff

Cara Luciani

Brad Zambruski

**Treasurer**

Joanna Miller

**Board of Directors**

Sally Bowman

Robert Cawood

Ron Gagliardi

Eleanor Herrmann

Ed Kania

Ann Massimino

Lois VanAlmkerk

Ray Verner

Pat Vita-Garber

**Curators**

Edgar Johnson, *emeritus*

Mary Ellen Kania

Warren VanAlmkerk

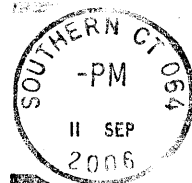
Kathleen Connolly, *asst.*

**Webmaster**

Diane Calabro

*Newsletter Editor*

Mary Ellen Kania



**NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, SEPT. 25**

**“Patent Medicine and Early American Bottles”**

