

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 35, No. 2

Fall 2012

FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

MEMBERS ARE OUR STRENGTH

My few months as the president of the Cheshire Historical Society have been busy and exciting. I've been involved in school tours as the "Assistant to the Docent," saw the Dodd Middle School Time Capsule revealed, was the "Assistant to the Curator" for the 100th Anniversary Girl Scouts of America Presentation, and am one of several new students currently enrolled in "Docent 101" class in this Fall with Curator Mary Ellen Kania. The term "room by room" has taken on a whole new meaning as I strive to learn more about the contents of the Hitchcock-Phillips House, as well as the care and upkeep needed to maintain this structure.

While the historic Hitchcock-Phillips House and the collections inside this grand old dame are the jewels in our Cheshire Historical Society crown, our members are the real core and strength of our organization. We rely on a small operational team to manage the daily tasks, primarily guided by Mary Ellen and Ed Kania. To help with this responsibility, our Board of Directors has organized three committees: House & Grounds, Outreach & Education, and Finance.

* **House & Grounds Committee** is charged with the oversight of the buildings and grounds, maintenance and management, and the Emergency and Disaster Recovery Plan.

* **Outreach & Education Committee** will strive to increase our membership, work on friend-raising and fund-raising, educational outreach, communications, publicity and events (the "fun stuff," right?).

* **Finance Committee** manages assets and budgets.

This is an ideal opportunity for you to get involved in the CHS by joining one of these committees depending on your areas of interest and expertise. Are you not sure how or where to start? If you don't already own a copy, I would recommend the purchase of Landmarks of Old Cheshire from our Historical Society Gift Shop. This is an outstanding book about

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Fall Calendar—corrected

Sept. 8	Saturday	Fall Festival - Bartlem Park
Sept 15	Saturday 1—5 p.m.	DAR Open House at Historic Enos Brooks House
Sept. 17	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
Sept. 24	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Membership Meeting & Speaker
<u>Oct. 15</u>	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
Nov. 4 & Nov. 11	Sundays 12:30-2	Two-part docent class "Contents of House" —call to reserve space now—
<u>Oct. 22</u>	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Membership Meeting & Speaker.
Nov. 18	Sunday 2:00 p.m.	3rd Annual Build-a-Gingerbread House Workshop —call to reserve space now—
Nov. 19	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
Nov. 26	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Membership Meeting & Speaker
Dec. 16	Sunday 2—4 p.m.	Holiday Open House
Dec. 25	Tuesday	Christmas Day

The Hitchcock-Phillips House will be open on Sunday afternoons, 2—4 p.m., for the rest of the year except on the Sunday before Columbus Day and the Sundays after Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. The Boutique will be open Sundays, 2—4 p.m., through Oct. 21, except for Columbus Day Sunday.

PROGRAM

Monday, September 24, 7:30 p.m.

"Memphremagog or Bust! The Connecticut River Company, the Farmington Canal, and their Battle for the Upper Connecticut River"

Richard DeLuca

Historian and transportation engineer Richard DeLuca of Cheshire will discuss the construction of the Farmington Canal and the competition between the Farmington Canal and the Enfield Canal companies for trade on the upper river. His talk will be

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FROM THE PRESIDENT *(continued from pg. 1)*

Cheshire and a remarkable survey of our local history. It should be on every coffee table in every Cheshire living room (although my copy is so full of notes and sticky tabs, I probably need a “company only” copy!).

The best gifts in life are the unexpected treasures we find along the way. but you may need to make that way broader by getting involved, sharing your time and talents, and learning more about our town history by reading or visiting the Historical Society on Sunday afternoons. I very much hope you’ll contact Mary Ellen or me to join a committee.

With my warm regards,
Diane Calabro

Enroll Now for Two-Session Course about House Contents, Sundays Nov. 4 & 11

A new two-session course on the history and contents of the Hitchcock Phillips House, taught by Curator Mary Ellen Kania, will be held Sundays, Oct. 28 and Nov. 4, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. The course is designed for prospective docents, but is open to anyone interested in learning more about the house. The first session will include a brief history of the house and a detailed look at contents on the first floor. The second session will focus on the second floor rooms. No previous knowledge is necessary. There is no charge, but advance registration is necessary. Call Mary Ellen, 203-272-8771.

NEWS BRIEFS

Special thanks to **Mike Kennedy at Total Tree Care** for donating time and labor in June to trim the magnolia tree in front of the Hitchcock-Phillips House. The tree was badly damaged by the early snow storm last October.

The Cheshire Historical Society has received a \$500 donation from the **Bristol-Myers Squibb Company Employee Volunteer Award Program** in recognition of the volunteer hours contributed to the Society by **Webmaster and new President Diane Calabro**, a Bristol-Myers Squibb employee.

Cheers for volunteer docents **Barbara Christoff, Martha Connolly, Joy Irish, Judy Knott, Pat Pfurr, and Jane Richards**, who provided tours for over 225 third-grade students from Norton, Doolittle and Chapman schools in May and June.

A handsome, double bookcase has been donated by member **Dave Schrumm**. It is providing welcome additional storage space in the Craig Room.

...PROGRAM*(continued from page 1)*

drawn from information in his new book Post Roads & Iron Horses: Transportation in Connecticut from Colonial Times to the Age of Steam, (Wesleyan University Press, 2011). The book also will be on sale at the Society that night. Even if you feel you are already familiar with canal history, this talk should bring us some fascinating new information!

Monday, October 22, 7:30 p.m.**“New Project to Help Students Learn about Cheshire-born Artist John F. Kensett”****Joan Pilarczyk**

Joan Pilarczyk, director of ArtsPlace will talk about Artsplace and the Cheshire Performing and Fine Arts Committee fascinating new project to help students learn about Cheshire-born artist John Frederick Kensett. Now well underway, the project includes production of instructional material about Kensett for all Cheshire third graders and an adult-targeted multi-media production. Be among the first to learn about this exciting venture!

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

Program to be announced.

New Members, Contributors

Welcome to the following new members and warm thanks to the following members who have made special contributions since the last newsletter.

New Members

Tina Carmody, 1826 Peck Lane, Cheshire
Certa-Pro Painters, 994 N. Colony Rd., #320, Wallingford 06492 (Business/Professional)
Shane Cianci, 390 Bee St., #32, Meriden 06450
Ed Dalton, 721 Moss Farms Road, Cheshire
Mary Denos, 1088 Amherst Place, Cheshire
Mary DiPietro, 49 Hillcrest Ave., Waterbury 06705
John Fournier, 18 Quarry Village Road, Cheshire
Fiorella Iannitti-Vazquez, 368 Charles St., Cheshire
Joseph Montefusco family, 74 Cedar Ct., Cheshire
Ted & Susan Pappas, 133 Spring Street, Cheshire
Al & Marie Stapkowski, 8 Kirock Place, Westport 06880

Additional Contributors since last Newsletter

Barbara Christoff, William Suter
Linda Lewis McCoy in honor of Jean McKee

FROM HONEY POT COUNTRY CLUB . . . TO CHESHIRE GOLF CLUB . . . TO CONDOS . . .

Part I, the 1930s and 40s

By Jeanné R. Chesanow, Town Historian

This article came into being thanks to e-mail queries and comments from Mark Perullo, who grew up in Cheshire and rode his bicycle through the abandoned course.

Additional research by Diane Calabro, Mary Ellen Kania, Bob Larkin, and Beth Shutts.

On Sept. 4, 1929, the stock market rose to new heights encouraging investors to buy, invest, and start new ventures – like a golf course in Cheshire! On Sept. 30, 1929 seven men filed a certificate of incorporation, under the name Honey Pot Country Club, Inc. a corporation with capital stock of \$50,000. Signing that day, in the presence of Bernard Pellegrino (Notary Public) were: J. Raymond Cummings, 1266 Townsend Avenue, New Haven; Arthur N. Sheriff, Church Lane, Cheshire; Carl Schmidt, 2844 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden; Joseph C. Hinds, 847 Woodward Avenue, New Haven; Leonard S. Schutte, 285 Edgewood Avenue, New Haven; J. R. McGowan, the Roxbury School, Cheshire; and George A. Atwater, R.R.D. West Cheshire. The nature of their business was stated as “Purchasing, taking or leasing or otherwise acquiring land and buildings for the purpose of providing a country club, to lay out and prepare such grounds for golf links and other athletic sports, and to provide pavilions, club house, refreshment rooms, and other conveniences in connection therewith...” Also “to raise money by subscriptions and to grant any rights and privileges to the members of such club.”



FORMER HONEY POT COUNTRY CLUB clubhouse,
290 Country Club Rd. , now a private home.

On Oct. 7, 1929 the Honey Pot Country Club, Inc. leased 36 acres from George E. Atwater, one of the members of the new corporation. They signed a five-year lease for the use of 35 acres of land that Atwater owned along Town Farm Road (later Country Club Road), near Honey Pot Brook. The lease was for only 35 acres but included an agreement that they could lease or buy for \$12,500 another adjoining parcel of 40 acres, bounded on the north by land of Louis E. Payne and on the west by the first tract of land described in the lease.

On Oct. 29, the stock market crashed, but the golf club survived. In the spring of 1930 the investors went ahead and bought a small parcel of adjacent land containing a house (originally built in the 1790s), which became the red clubhouse, complete with a pair of lions out front. (This house, now white but still numbered 290, is in its same location on what is now Country Club Road.)

In 1934, Honey Pot Country Club, Inc. extended their lease on the land. The golf club evidently was thriving because, on Sept. 20, 1934, two golfers playing at Honey Pot competed in the first annual invitation best-ball tournament for the John D. Chapman Memorial Trophy. The contestants played at various courses. As reported by the *New York Times*, Honey Pot golfers J. Sinnott, Jr. and F. J. Head, whose combined score was 81, came in 14th. The winners, William Meany and Charles Munson of Waterbury, playing at the Greenwich Country Club, scored 70, one point lower than the next three pairs. The names of the caddies on that day are not listed, but some kids had fun doing that job. As Warren S. Jones wrote in *I Remember: Cheshire in the Twentieth Century* by Judith Boynton: “Farther up the road was the Honey Pot Country Club. A caddy could make 50 cents for 18 holes and maybe a 25-cent tip.”

An article which appeared in the *Southington News and Times* (August 9, 1940) was titled “Country Club Started in 1922.” This article, about the Southington course (still in operation on South End Road) stated that, “The 1940 membership in the (Southington) club is probably the largest active

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NEBRASKA COUPLE CROSSES U.S. TO CHESHIRE, CT

By Dr. Robert Chesanow

In early July, CHS President Diane Calabro received an e-mail from Vickie Ortiz, McCook, Nebraska. Mrs. Ortiz had been researching a branch of the Moss family and believed that, on her mother's side, Albert Moss Sr., born in Cheshire, July 2, 1789, was her third Great Grandfather. She was eager to trace Albert Sr. back to John Moss I, a progenitor of this family line. Critical to her work was establishing the identities of Albert Moss's father and grandfather. She and her husband, David Ortiz, a sergeant on the McCook, NE police force, planned to fly into Hartford on July 6. Knowing that some members of the Moss family who were born in Wallingford and Cheshire moved to New York and Pennsylvania, Vickie planned to go from Hartford to Lovinia, NY, then to Camilus, NY, then on to New Milford (Susquehanna County) PA. Albert Moss, Sr., moved to New Milford, PA where, on March 14, 1819, at age 27, he married Beulah Pierpont. The Ortiz couple would then come to Cheshire on July 12 and 13 to continue their research at the Cheshire Historical Society and graveyards in Cheshire and Wallingford, and do some Moss-Family-oriented sightseeing. Accordingly, Diane alerted the Society Curator Mary Ellen Kania and Cheshire Town Historian Jeanné Chesanow.

Moss Treasures

On July 12, the interested parties met Vickie and David in the Cheshire Historical Society. Mary Ellen brought out a number of Society treasures relating to the Moss family, including a handwritten copybook from the 19th century recording the family history. There was an item about a Moss family reunion in 1900 with a photograph showing a number of very long-lived Moss family members. Jeanné had done research of the electronic records relating to John Moss I and his descendants. As it turned out, the handwritten copybook had the crucial bit of evidence firmly establishing Albert Moss, Sr., as a direct descendant of John Moss, Sr.

Mary Ellen conducted a brief tour of the Hitchcock-Phillips House. Among the many Moss memorabilia was the wedding dress worn by Emerett Bartholomew Moss when she married Julius Moss, a nephew of Albert Moss, in 1855. On an upstairs

wall was a painting of the home (no longer in existence) where Albert grew up, built by his father, Joel Moss I. There was the tiny sampler stitched by 12-year-old Philocia Moss in 1820. Later, Philocia married Delos Hotchkiss, who among other achievements, owned what was believed to be the largest apple tree in the state. The story of the Moss family in Cheshire is, of course, more than the documentary record.

Our visitors were able to get some of the true flavor of how the family lived through visits to Moss Farms Road, "Moss Rock", the old mill pond, and St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Vickie and her husband were most grateful. David Ortiz photographed every page of the little copybook and promised the Society a digital copy so that future researchers would have the material available without possible harm to the original. We said our good-byes on the front walk of the Hitchcock-Phillips House with handshakes and heartfelt hugs all around.

Note: Vicki and her husband are good examples of the out-of-town people who contact the Historical Society each year for genealogical information. Often, the Society cannot answer all questions; however, it is a special pleasure to assist Moss descendants. The Society has an outstanding collection of Moss memorabilia, including the Civil War letters of Cpl. Titus Moss. Most of these letters are now found on our website www.cheshirehistory.org

... Honey Pot Country Club

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group ever to be enrolled since its organization. **Discontinuance of the Honey Pot Country Club of Cheshire caused a number of Cheshire residents, some of whom were former members of the Southington Club, to rejoin (the Southington club).**" What this article did not say was that the golf club in Cheshire continued, but under a different name and ownership.

During the 1940s, the golf course continued as the Cheshire Golf Club. Doris Black, now a resident of Elim Park retirement community, remembers seeing the lions outside the red clubhouse. She recalls that she had great fun playing the small nine-hole course. One tee, down in a hollow with little visibility, had a bell on a post that had to be rung before teeing off because you couldn't see the golfers ahead! To be continued . . .

Read more about this golf course in Part II, the 1950s and 60s, in the next newsletter.



RECENT GIFTS from the collection of Dr. Myron and Mrs. Lura Gorman, Key West, FL

TWO CHILDRENS' PORTRAITS ARE ADDED IN TOY ROOM

Delightful matching portraits, c. 1850, of two little children in brown and red dresses are new additions to the Toy Room. The pictures are gifts from the collection of Dr. Myron and Mrs. Lura Gorman of Key West, FL.

In the spring, Mrs. Gorman closed her home in Key West. After e-mail correspondence with the Cheshire Historical Society, she decided that the Society would be the perfect new home for the portraits. She had them professionally packed and shipped to us at her own expense. The Gormans lived in Cheshire in the Charles Chauncey Hall House, 551 Maple Ave., from 1986 to 1989. In 1989, Dr. Gorman was transferred to Seattle. They found the paintings a short time later in Seattle while exploring a local antique shop. It was love a first sight!

From a Hall family in Connecticut

It was not until they were purchasing the pictures that the Gormans found out that they had come from a Hall family in Connecticut. Mrs. Gorman's daughter, Hilary Dolbeare, says that the dealer told her parents that he had bought the pictures in West Virginia from the last remaining member of a Hall family. One of the children was named Clara, and the other was listed as "sibling." The town of origin was listed by the dealer as Middletown, CT, but on the back of one of the paintings, the Gormans found a note (no longer existing) "Hall Sisters, Cheshire." They were delighted to think the pictures may have come from the town where they had owned a Hall house. So far, the Society has been unable to confirm the exact identity of the children.

The portraits are large—34" x 46"—and were framed by the Gormans. They fit beautifully on available wall space, and the children are just the right ages for toys. Happily, the room also contains a 1950s watercolor of the Hall house, 551 Maple Ave., which the Gormans owned while they were in Cheshire.

In Memoriam

Elsa Hotchkiss Bradford	June 24, 2012
George O. Ellis, Jr.	July 22, 2012
Eleanor Herrmann	July 31, 2012

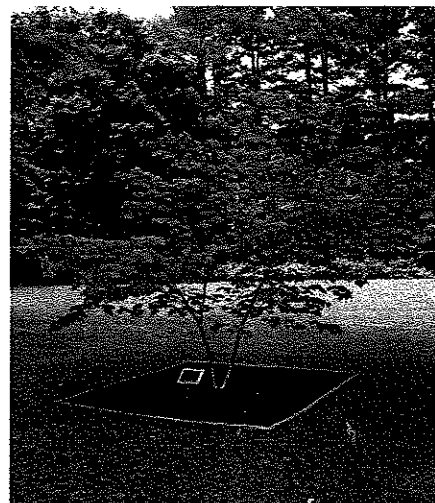
We were deeply saddened by the deaths of these longtime members and extend our sincere sympathy to their families.

"Freedom Tree" Thrives at Last

In 2002, both Cheshire garden clubs collaborated to plant a Clara Barton redbud tree on the grounds between the house and the First Congregational Church as a memorial to the victims of September 11, 2001. For the next couple of years, it was touch and go, but with careful pruning and TLC the tree finally thrived and grew two trunks. This spring, for the first time, the "Freedom Tree" sprouted beautiful pink blossoms from both trunks—symbolic of the collaborative gesture by the two Cheshire garden clubs.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, members from the Suburban Garden Club, along with some spouses, placed the finishing touches on this project by delineating the area around the tree with red bricks and spreading mulch. The final task was placement of a post and a plaque that reads: "Clara Barton Redbud in Honor of the Victims of September 11, 2001 from the Garden Clubs of Cheshire."

Article and photo by Inge Venus



CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS



What is this? This is a QR code to enable people with phone apps to quickly access our CHS website.

FALL 2012

Cheshire Historical Society
PO Box 281, 43 Church Drive
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www.cheshirehistory.org



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SEPTEMBER MEETING - Monday, Sept. 24

“Memphremagog or Bust! The Connecticut River Company, the Farmington Canal, and the Battle for the Upper Connecticut River”

Author Richard DeLuca