

# CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 36, No. 2

Fall 2013

## PROGRAM

### Monday, September 23, 7:30 p.m.

#### **“A New Look at the Titus Moss Letters”**

**Charles Waggoner, Jr.**

Mr. Waggoner, current Junior Warden at St. Peter’s Church, will take a new look at the letters written by Cpl. Titus Moss to his wife Jeanette during the Civil War. In 1862, when Moss enlisted, he too was the Junior Warden at St. Peter’s Church. Charlie’s talk will bring a unique, personal perspective to the letters. The presentation also will include many excerpts from the letters, pictures of Moss and other family members from the church archives, and several new pictures recently re-discovered in the Society files.

### Monday, October 28, 7:00 p.m. *Note earlier time!*

#### **“Report on Paranormal Activities at the Hitchcock-Phillips House”**

**Adam Shefts, Director and Lead Investigator, Northeast Paranormal Investigations Society, CHS Member**

Following his paranormal investigations at the Hitchcock-Phillips House during the summer, Adam Shefts returns to reveal his findings. Come hear the true story (see follow-on story page four)

### Monday, November 25, 7:30 p.m.

#### **“Famous Academy Alumni**

**J. P. Morgan and Gideon Welles”**

**Ann Moriarty, Cheshire Academy archivist**

Cheshire Academy archivist Ann Moriarty returns to the CHS to discuss two well-known Cheshire Academy alumni: John Pierpont (J. P.) Morgan, American financier, banker, philanthropist, and art collector, who dominated corporate finance and industrial consolidation during his lifetime, and Gideon Welles, U. S. Secretary of the Navy in President Abraham Lincoln’s cabinet during the Civil War. Both men attended the Episcopal Academy of Connecticut (now Cheshire Academy) as boys. It should be fascinating to learn little-known facts about their lives as students.

## FALL CALENDAR

Except for holiday weekends, the Hitchcock-Phillips House (HPH) is open to the public every Sunday, 2-4 p.m. from April through December. It is also open by appointment on other days. Call (203) 272-8771 to schedule a visit.

September 1	Sunday	House is closed for Labor Day Weekend
September 7	Saturday	Booth at the Fall Festival Bartlem Park
September 9	Monday	DAR Luncheon Meeting
September 16	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
September 23	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Membership Meeting and Speaker
September 29	Sunday	First Annual Cheshire History Trolley Tour
October 5	Saturday	Booth at “Day at the Farm” Ives Farm
October 20	Sunday 2-4 p.m.	“Cheshire & the American Revolution” Exhibit opens
October 21	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
October 28	Monday <b>7:00 p.m.</b>	Membership Meeting and Speaker— <i>Note Earlier Time</i>
November 18	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
November 24	Sunday 2-4 p.m.	Gingerbread House Workshop
November 25	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Membership Meeting Speaker
November 28	Thanksgiving	Have a happy holiday!
December 15	Sunday	Holiday Christmas Party and Open House

*The Boutique-in-the-Shed will be open during Sunday visiting hours, 2-4 p.m. Closing in October—weather dependent. Sunday Visiting Hours continue through December 15, 2013.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS MEMBERS SHARE

### CHESHIRE FALL FESTIVAL SEPT. 7th A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Yes, we are cutting this close! You are reading this probably the day before the September 7th Cheshire Fall Festival. Director Pat Vita is coordinating this event and asks that all members stop by our booth at the Fall Festival. Anyone that might be able to volunteer for some part of the day, stop reading this newsletter and call Pat (203) 272-2574. Or call Cara Luciani at (203) 250-8450. According to Pat, "I would like people to call me if they are available to volunteer at the Fall Festival. Shifts will start at 11 am and continue throughout the afternoon 'till about 5 pm. We expect our booth to get a lot of attention so it would be nice to have at least two people, preferably three, to man the exhibit all day."

### ROBERT LARKIN SPEAKS SEPT. 7th IN MIDDLETOWN

Saturday, Sept. 7th, at 1 p.m., Bob Larkin will be giving a talk on the 9th Regiment CV at the Middlesex County Historical Society in Middletown.

### "A DAY AT THE FARM" IVES FARM CELEBRATION, SATURDAY OCT. 5th!

Enjoy a fun day at Ives Farm from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free admission for the barn grand opening festivities. There will be hay rides and nature trail hikes. Cheshire organizations and civic groups will be on hand to describe their activities and events. There will be antique and craft vendors. Come to the farm and have a great day! Contact Dave Schrumm for more details: [dsschrumm@cox.net](mailto:dsschrumm@cox.net)

### WREATH LAYING AT THE 9TH CV MONUMENT, NEW HAVEN, NOV. 10th

The Annual Wreath Laying at the Ninth Regiment CV monument (Sixth & Howard Ave., New Haven) is scheduled for Sunday Nov. 10th, 11 a.m. Event organizer, Robert Larkin, said, "It's held each year as close to Remembrance day (11-11-11) or Veterans Day as we can make it. I'm in charge of arrangements that include a bagpiper, Civil War re-enactors and a color guard from the Knights of Columbus, with coffee and donuts afterward at the Irish American Community Center in East Haven."

**Photo right: There are three plaques on the back and sides of the Monument giving the names of 252 who died during the war (four from Cheshire).**



**Volunteer Docents for Spring School Tours (l to r): Pat Pfurr, Judy Knott, Barbara Christoff, Marty Connolly, Joy Irish, Jane Richards.**

### GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON WEB SITE TO HELP WITH SCHOOL TOURS

The Cheshire Historical Society web site, now includes a ten-page guidance document to help teachers and others coordinate their child or young adult tour to the Hitchcock-Phillips House. The pdf document includes text used for the tour introduction, room photos with descriptions, and a few "Do's and Don't's" such as whether snacks can be eaten in the exhibit rooms (no), whether items can be touched (no, unless a docent says otherwise) and so on. As Head Curator Mary Ellen Kania has said many, many times, "Children, you may touch with your heart and with your eyes but not with your hands." The children enjoy these tours and some of their thank you notes are also included in this school tour guidance document. This is a good place to start for any Scouts or other youth group interested in booking a tour with the Historical Society. Any group interested in a tour of the HPH can phone Mary Ellen Kania at (203) 272-8771. Also refer to our web site: [www.cheshirehistory.org](http://www.cheshirehistory.org)



## CHESHIRE HISTORY TROLLEY TOUR! DING! DING!

The first ever trolley tour of historic Cheshire will take place on Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. Organized by the Cheshire Historical Society and the Cheshire Historic District Commission, the tour will explore the Cheshire Street area of town. There will be three 90-minute narrated tours on a comfortable trolley (bus). The \$20 tickets are now on sale for the 12:00 noon, 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. tours. [Note that there are only a few tickets left at the time of this writing.] They can be reserved by calling Pat Vita at (203) 272-3963. There are a limited number of tickets and they have been selling quickly. Each ticket includes a 48-page illustrated book written just for this special tour and several maps of the area for future exploring.

Located in the northeastern part of town, the Cheshire Street area is the only part of Cheshire located on the east side of the Quinnipiac River and was for a long time a village unto itself. There was a tavern, a school house and a chapel. All of these sites will be on the tour. The area was a Native American winter hunting ground and home to two African-American families including a black veteran of the Civil War. When next-door Meriden became an industrial city, the Cheshire Street area bustled as well: several small companies were built in the area including a tinsmithing shop, a sawmill/gristmill and a company that made costume jewelry. The area became a transportation hub as well with stagecoaches and trains stopping there.

**ARRIVE AT LEAST 10 MINUTES PRIOR TO YOUR TOUR. THE TROLLEY LEAVES PROMPTLY. IF YOU HAVE TICKETS AND ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND CALL PAT AS THERE IS A WAIT LIST.**

### *In Memoriam*

**Barbara Mehls Lee**

**February 10, 2013**

We were deeply saddened to learn of the death of this long-time member and extend our sincere sympathy to her family.

### **BOUTIQUE STILL A FAVORITE**

The Boutique-in-the-Shed will close for the season some time in October. Until then, please stop by. All of the proceeds go back into programs and upkeep of the Society. Come on in and poke around! The prices are right, and you never know what you might find. Open fall Sundays through October. Don't forget we are always looking for items, too. If you have collectible items that you wish to donate, call Assistant Curator Kathleen Connolly, (860) 518-6156.

The trolley tour will pass by a number of historic houses including the Curtiss Homestead (built 1797), the Elisha Rice House (built 1764) where tinware was made in a shop behind the house and the Parker Tavern (built 1790) where stagecoaches stopped. The tour will also make a stop at Riverbound Farm (built 1814), now the home of the Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society, where everyone will have a chance to stretch their legs and tour the home.

Several sponsors have generously donated funds to underwrite this and they will be listed in the program book.

The Society received two grants to underwrite the tour and book: one from The State Historic Preservation Office of the Department of Economic and Community Development with funds from the Community Investment Act of the State of Connecticut and a second from the Connecticut Community Foundation, a nonprofit organization and the first community foundation established in the state that serves the Greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills area.

On the day of the tour, the Cheshire Historical Society will be open from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. for those who'd like to stop in for a visit. Refreshments will be available. Call Pat immediately if you are interested.



**Life-size "Cut Outs" were painted by Diane Calabro, using photos and prints found in the Society collections. Above, Bob Chesanow photographs Pat Vita (left) and a visitor to the HPH. These cut outs will be on display at the Fall Festival and on the CHS grounds at the Trolley tour. Bring your camera and have fun!**



## PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION AT THE HITCHCOCK-PHILLIPS HOUSE

*By Stephen Mulholland,  
Cheshire Historical Society Student Liaison*

*The Northeast Paranormal Investigations Society visited the HPH on Saturday night, July 27th. Stephen was originally scheduled to stay with the team as they investigated but he had a schedule conflict. His parents, Steve and Joyce Mulholland, and his younger brother, Thomas, stayed through the night. Stephen was disappointed not to be able to attend the NPIS visit but provided this account of the evening's activities.*

My father described it as "very quiet with random periods of excitement." He was beginning to struggle to stay awake in the dark house when after midnight things began to get interesting. It was then that two images were spotted on the monitor screen. He said, "I was watching the monitor screen alongside one of the investigators when a very distinct image of a dark crescent shaped image steadily crossed the screen of the Keeping Room. I admit that it was actually a little spooky."

My mother was surprised to see how selective and critical the investigators were of their "readings." They took a baseline electromagnetic reading of every room and discounted any reading below the baseline. They discounted readings when, for example, a cell phone was too close. She had expected they would be quick to conclude that evidence existed, but they weren't. She felt sorry to admit to one of them that she didn't believe in ghosts. She hated to offend them, but couldn't lie. She laughs remembering that seconds after she told them this a call came from the Meeting Room, "Adam! Come quick. You have got to see this!" Seconds after her statement, a dark crescent shaped image crossed the screen monitoring the Keeping Room. The Keeping Room shares a wall with the room she was in [the Parlor]. My skeptical mom admits that it was a "very fun and cool coincidence that has got to make you think twice about the wisdom of discounting ghosts at ten minutes to two in the morning during a paranormal investigation."



**Joyce Mulholland took the photo above of the monitor screen set up in the Meeting Room.**

Thomas [Thomas Mulholland, Steve and Joyce's son] spent time in the Toy Room and laughingly referred to himself as "ghost bait." The youngest of the investigators detected electromagnetic readings in the Toy Room. When the other two investigators joined him, the readings stopped. When they left the room, it started again. They concluded that there was a presence that didn't want adults in the room, so Thomas, 14, and the youngest investigator stayed behind and asked questions to which the investigator felt like they received responses through electromagnetic recordings. While Thomas and the investigator were in the room a shiny ball of light moved from the right of the monitor screen to the left disappearing at the painting of one of the children. The image wasn't visible to the people in the room. Thomas says, "I was startled when I saw the video, because it [the shiny ball] passed right over my head and floated into the painting. That is very, very, very cool." Thomas said, "I am very happy that the Cheshire Historical Society invited me to be present. I watch Ghost Adventures, The Dead Files, and Ghost Hunters, and it was very cool to feel like I had walked into an episode of one of these shows. I got to see how the equipment worked. It was great."

**ADAM SHEFTS, DIRECTOR OF NPIS AND NEW CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBER, WILL PRESENT THE PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION FINDINGS ON MONDAY NIGHT, OCTOBER 28TH AT 7:00 PM (NOTE EARLIER TIME FOR THIS MEETING) AT THE HITCHCOCK-PHILLIPS HOUSE. PLEASE PHONE FOR A RESERVATION AS WE EXPECT THIS TO BE A PACKED HOUSE. TEL: (203) 250-9350 (DIANE'S HOME) OR (203) 272-2574 (CHS OFFICE). THE EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. COME IN COSTUME IF YOU WISH!**

## CURATOR'S NOTES

By *Mary Ellen Kania, Curator*

Lois and Warren VanAlmkerk have given the Society a beautiful luncheon cloth, hand-woven in Cheshire in 1897 by Esther Cook, a Wallingford seamstress. It is now displayed on the dining room table. You can see by the seams that the fine cotton was woven on a 24" loom. It is labeled "No. 6" so she must have made at least six similar cloths.

Be sure to admire it on your next visit.

Special thanks to 8th-grader Jack LaMadeleine, Meadow Brook Place, for volunteer help during the summer. Jack came several afternoons to help with cleaning in the basement and attic and yard work. The spider-web filled basement was a special challenge, and Jack did a wonderful job!

Cheers for both the Cheshire Garden Club and Suburban Garden Club members who have maintained the gardens around the house this summer. They've been a special pleasure for every visitor. We are particularly pleased with the colorful, new planting around the town history plaque in the front yard.

Betsy Panke and her aunt Jean McKee have given us a nice collection of family pictures from the Peasley family, who occupied the house at 745 Highland Ave. before it was demolished to become the site of Highlands Health Care Center. In addition to family members, the collection includes pictures of the house and interior views.

Sunday volunteer, Colleen Fitzgerald, has staffed the Boutique-in-the-Shed almost every Sunday this summer. Sales have been brisk on many days, and Colleen has been a great help. If weather permits, the Boutique will remain open through mid-October.

## TIM WHITE'S SOLAR VISION

In October 2010 Cheshire lost one of its Town Council Members. Cheshire resident and former Councilman Tim White had found a new calling. As a CPA, he had been asked to move to Haiti to be the Finance Director of a Norwich, CT-based charity, the Haitian Health Foundation.

While he had a heavy heart from leaving Cheshire, Tim was thrilled with the opportunity before him. Although he knew he was relinquishing the comforts of living in America, he knew he had to go. He committed to 18 months and got more from his experience than he ever imagined, including the feeling of having a truly positive impact with some of the most impoverished people in the world.

At about the same time he was completing his mission, Tim was accepted into Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Starting in August 2012, he's been focused on the nexus of energy and the environment, trying to build the business case for a more sustainable world – which led him to his current project.

## 1870s DOCUMENTS DISCOVERED IN WALLINGFORD ROAD ATTIC

While building a new master bedroom in their 1840 farm house, 241 Wallingford Road, this spring, Lisa Drazen and her husband, Kevin Meehan, were astonished when a packet of old Hotchkiss documents and letters was found in the attic. Although the house was originally a



Hotchkiss family home for generations, two other families had lived there before Lisa's grandfather, David Drazen, bought the house and Drazen Orchard property in the 1950s. Yet, when the carpenter reached up between the beams in the attic floor, there was the old packet, evidently tucked away long ago by a family member.

Lisa has given the materials to the Historical Society, and they are now in our files. They include over 20 items such letters, a wedding invitation, news clipping on "Isthmus Canal" routes, a Masonic booklet. There is a Mount Holyoke catalog, a program from Phillips Academy, Andover, MA; and a Brown University newspaper, possibly memorabilia from friends. Several items pertained specifically to Arthur Hotchkiss, one of the more colorful family members and inventor of the Cheshire watch. These include a writ for an unpaid promissory note and a self-published booklet outlining proceedings during which he was excommunicated from the Congregational Church because of a disagreement with the minister over temperance. At the time he was 25 and a very outspoken young man.

Tim is trying to help Cheshire households to go solar. For years, solar electric (and solar hot water) have been available to homeowners, but expensive. According to Tim, the prices are falling precipitously. The economics now make sense for many Cheshire homes with the cost as low as \$10,000 for some. And if your electric bill is around \$100/mo or \$1,000/yr, that would be a ten year payback. So with solar panels that typically last 20 to 30 years, you'll be saving a lot of money in the not-so-distant future.

The official Town of Cheshire Solar Choice Program will run for 20 weeks for sometime during the September to February timeframe. With Tim leading as the volunteer outreach coordinator, Cheshire will have three solar installers who will give discounted prices to residents. You can visit [www.geostellar.com](http://www.geostellar.com), enter your address and see what you can learn about your home from Cheshire's solar map.

Look out for more details around town or contact Tim (203) 233-0474 or [timwhite98@yahoo.com](mailto:timwhite98@yahoo.com)

## **“CHESHIRE & THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION” NEW EXHIBIT SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, OCT. 20th**

An exhibit of items from the Society’s collection of artifacts from the American Revolution will open Sunday, Oct. 20. A special attraction will be a portrait of a “younger” George Washington from the Estate of the late Nancy Davis Sachse. The portrait is designated to become part of the Society’s collection at a future date.

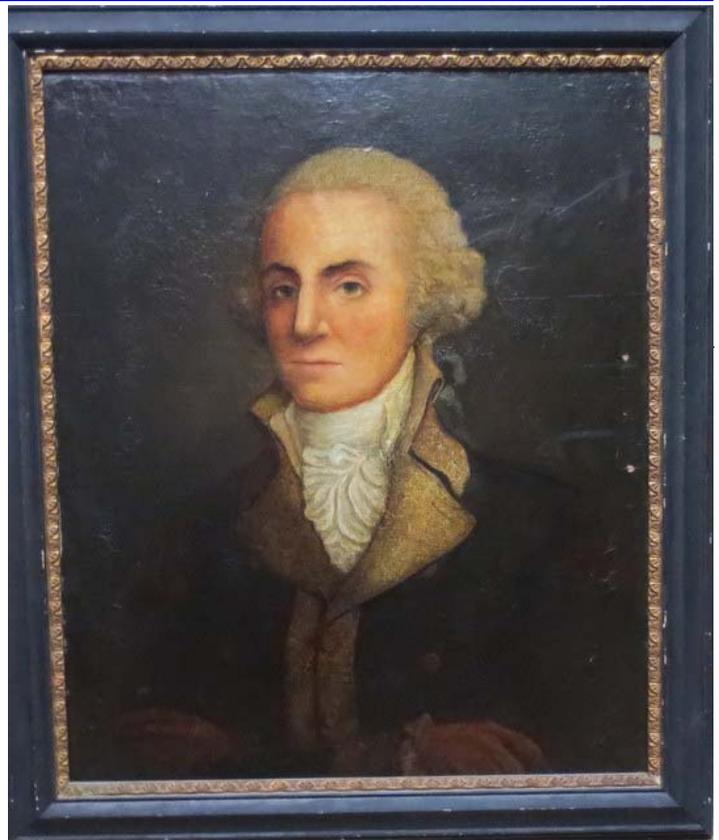
Also on display will be new colored prints of the four Amos Doolittle engravings of the battles of Lexington and Concord; the Jan. 24, 1776 commission of “William Law, gentleman,” as First Lieutenant of the new company of Cheshire Volunteers; and an original copy of an 1882 pay voucher for Josiah Smith of Cheshire. There will be a wooden canteen used in both the Revolutionary and Civil wars, a two-pound cannon ball, and recognition of the more than 250 Cheshire men who served for various periods of time from 1775 to 1783.

The exhibit is being arranged by Curator Mary Ellen Kania, who received the portrait from the estate of her longtime friend, Nancy Davis Sachse. Nancy spent retirement years in Mt. Carmel and at Elim Park Place. Her father bought the painting from a Connecticut antiques dealer in the 1940s for his 18th century home in Mt. Carmel.

There is a note on the original backing that the portrait was of George Washington, and that it was the personal property of Thomas Johnson. There is no additional early provenance, and no artist’s signature. It is possible that the picture may have been copied from a miniature.

The friendship of Thomas Johnson, original owner of the portrait, and Washington is well known. Johnson attended both the first and second sessions of the Continental Congress, and is credited with “formally nominating” Washington as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army in 1775. He later served as governor of Maryland and was appointed by Washington to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The special exhibit will remain on display through the end of the year. The portrait then will be hung in the Cambridge, MA home of the Kania’s son, Ed Kania, Jr. At a future date, it will be given to the Society in memory of William and Nancy Davis Sachse.



**This portrait of a “younger” George Washington will be among the items featured in the “Cheshire and the American Revolution” exhibit, Oct. 20– Dec. 22.**

## **A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

*By Diane Calabro*

This summer was a busy one at the Cheshire Historical Society. We had a steady stream of visitors taking advantage of our Sunday hours as well as many people at our Boutique-in-the-Shed. We had private tours, school tours, and a paranormal visit that gleaned surprising results. Our Fall Program is robust and we hope to see a large turnout at all of our events.

You will read about the loss of our stately trees on the back cover of this newsletter. That was a difficult decision to make. Another safety update had more positive results: the installation of a Knox Box, a device that holds a key to the Hitchcock-Phillips House and is able to be opened by the Cheshire Fire Department in the event of a fire emergency. Such an emergency happened when our alarm system notified the CFD to come out. The Knox Box provided easy access to the building. The alarm unit had a malfunction. Having a key available for entry potentially avoided breaking through the original front door of the HPH!

Please try to attend as many of our events as can be possible. Mark your calendars for the Gala Holiday Party on December 15th! This is the Social Event of the year!

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***WE ARE OPEN ON SUNDAYS  
THROUGH THE FALL FROM 2PM TO  
4PM. PLEASE BE SURE TO VISIT US  
AT LEAST ONCE ON A SUNDAY.  
IT CAN'T ALWAYS BE FOOTBALL!***

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**TIMES AGO***By Ron Gagliardi*

Times ago. . . at least a decade ago.

I was visiting my friend (and former Cheshire resident) Martin Lambert at the Hamden office where he worked with Bernard Nitkin. The entire place was festooned with vintage memorabilia of all sorts. Much to my surprise, above a doorway, looking quite "distressed" was a large, gray sign with black letters painted upon the outline of a very long rolling pin. "Thorpe Ball Bearing Rolling Pin Compy" proudly advertised that the "Compy" had been located beneath the original location of the sign. And I knew that the "Compy" had been located in Cheshire, near the intersection of Maple Avenue and West Main Street.

I mentioned to Marty that if they ever wanted to sell that sign, I would be interested in buying it and bringing it "back home." He said he would keep me in mind. Years later, after the death of Bernard Nitkin, Marty was packing up some of the office memorabilia, preparing to relocate. Thankfully, Marty remembered that I had inquired about the possibility of purchasing the Thorpe sign. He called me up and informed me that he would like to make a donation of the sign to the Gagliardi Historical Artifacts Collection. I was pleased and honored that he would entrust the "care and feeding" of the sign to me. I drove to his office a few days later, removed the sign from above the door where it had stood guard for so long and thanked him.

The sign resided in my very crowded garage for a while. One day, I took it out to visit the Cheshire Historical Society where a dedicated historian declared, "I covet that sign." At the time, the Society didn't even own one of the Thorpe ball bearing rolling pins. The Blomstroms have since donated one that had made the round trip from a relative's house out west back to its birthplace.

Another time, I took the sign to visit the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce office where it now resides in the MONAT (Museum Of Now And Then) display.

*Thorpe rolling pins are the finest quality hardwood maple rolling pins available. They feature an unbreakable steel center rod, streamlined handles, and special bearings. The heavy weight and perfect balance of these superior pins make rolling out any dough easy. The barrel is 15" long, 3.5" in diameter.*



While I was showing it to Sheldon Dill and Joan Nardello, Ruel Miller walked

in, saw the sign and said, "I worked in the Thorpe Ball Bearing Rolling Pin Company when I was in high school." What a coincidence! Ruel went in to describe his job, that of assembling the rolling pins. I was surprised to learn that the rolling pins were just assembled here, that no manufacturing was done in the building. He went on to reveal many more interesting tidbits that he later described in a letter to me and in an article that appeared in a local newspaper. I've "rolled on" enough for now.

By the way, you may be shocked to learn that you probably have overlooked a picture of this historical sign at the top of the images on the cover of the 2011/2012 Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Community Guide. Surprise!

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## New Members, Contributors

Welcome to the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter:

Robert Belletzkie, Prospect  
 David & Michelle Dent, Trout Brook Rd., Cheshire  
 Morgan Dent (Student Member), Cheshire  
 Lisa Drazen & Kevin Meehan, Wallingford Rd., Cheshire  
 Wesli Dymoke, Broadview Rd., Cheshire  
 Colleen Fitzgerald, Alpine Dr., Cheshire  
 Dr. John Hoffman, Clearwater Beach, FL  
 Ed Kania, Jr. (Life), Cambridge, MA  
 Jaime McCormick, Wildwood Dr., Cheshire  
 Mulholland, Stephen (Student Member), Cheshire  
 Mulholland, Thomas (Student Member), Cheshire  
 Michael Rogers & Carolyn Williams, Talmadge Rd., Cheshire  
 Mary Savold, Weatherside Rd., Cheshire  
 Adam Shefts, Wallingford  
 Helen J. Williams, Southwick Ct., Cheshire  
 Tom Winters & Beverlee Blair, Cherry St., Cheshire

Also, our thanks to the following members, not mentioned in the spring newsletter, who made contributions in addition to their 2013 dues:

George Adair & Cynthia McMillian  
 Sally Bowman  
 John Knott  
 Robert Larkin  
 Joe Robinson  
 Arlla Simiski  
 United Bank  
 Inge Venus



## PANNONE DISCOVERS “STRANGE STONES” — INDIAN ARTIFACTS



**Above:** Kristen and Mario Pannone with their children, Carolena and Mario Charles, on their new deck at 403 Dryden Drive.

**Below:** Indian spear point and partial knife blade from the late Archaic Period (1500 BC—3000 BC) that Mario found while digging footings for the deck.

Earlier this summer, Mario Pannone was digging new footings to replace his deck at 403 Dryden Drive when he found two small, strange stones. He was about 4 feet down, and knew at once that he had discovered something special. Jim Jaskot, town finance director and the Historical Society’s volunteer “subject-matter expert” for Indian artifacts, has identified them as a quartz spear point and part of a chert knife blade. He believes both are from the late Archaic Period, 1500 BC—3000 BC. They can be seen in the Industry & Gun Room, where they are new additions to our collection of Indian projectiles and tools found in Cheshire.



**Photo Right:** The new look as visitors enter the rear of the beautiful Lucille Williams Garden: the hydrangea is no longer in the shadows of the large conifers. The Cheshire Garden Club plans to make the area new focal point as a container garden with seasonal displays.

(photo by Inge Venus)

## KENSETT PROJECT AT ARTSPLACE

*By Joan Pilarczyk, Artsplace Director*

Artsplace in conjunction with the Friends of CPFA/Artsplace, Inc. is pleased to announce that all third grade classrooms in Cheshire have been supplied with a 24-page activity book on the life of Cheshire resident and fine artist John Frederick Kensett. The book is accompanied by an impressive teacher resource guide containing fascinating town and state information. The Kensett project, made possible through grants provided by Connecticut Community Foundation/CCF, The Friends of CPFA/Artsplace, Inc, and the Shalvoy Family, was successfully launched to a special audience of over 100 participants on May 19, 2013 at Artsplace.

Civic and community organizations are now being offered a free 30-40 minute program about John F. Kensett. This informative program, possible through the CCF Sponsorship Grant, will provide an Artsplace staff member who will share the children’s activity book *A Young Artist’s Birthday Adventure: A Story about an American Artist, John Frederick Kensett*, show a 22-minute video on Kensett’s life and travels and answer questions. The first community presentation will take place at the Rotary Club on September 12. Interested organizations are invited to Artsplace to learn more, or to schedule the program.

We owe much gratitude to The Cheshire Historical Society for the successful completion of both Kensett projects. Thank you for generously sharing your lovely historic home, your artifacts, documents, photos and paintings. Thank you most especially for your encouragement and enthusiasm of our goal to increase community awareness of the fine artist and Cheshire resident, John Frederick Kensett!



## COMMEMORATION OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE BIRTH OF OUR NATION AND READING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, JULY 4, 2013

As part of the Bennett Family's activities to celebrate the documents that made the Fourth of July possible, Ed Kania organized the reading of the Declaration of Independence by CHS Members:

Jeanné Chesanow (photo right; also our Town Historian),

Bob Larkin, Morgan Dent, Charles Dimmick, Phyllis McNeil, Scott McNeil, Ernie DiPietro, and Diane Calabro. This was a worthwhile event and we look forward to our participating in 2014.



## DOOLITTLE REUNION BRINGS RUG BRAIDER TO SOCIETY

Born at Grace Hospital in 1933, now Yale-New Haven Hospital, Ann Doolittle Eastwood celebrated her 80th birthday in her Venice, Florida home. Ann attended the Doolittle Family Reunion in August. She saw the braided rugs in the Toy Room and asked if one of her students had made any of these rugs. Ann recalls providing rug hooking and rug braiding instruction to several women in Cheshire in the early 1970s. She lived in Madison, teaching her popular classes in Cheshire, Southbury, and other towns, saying, "I didn't realize there was so much hooking!" In 1952, Ann's grandmother-in-law taught her these rug making basics. "It was a very primitive style," she said, adding that she also learned on her own. She learned more fabric arts from her husband, a realistic artist. She used special wool dyes. She used citric acid and white vinegar as a mordant.

Looking at the two rugs in the Toy Room, Ann said the smaller rug, seen in the photo, is plaited, where the braids are flat and folded over. The rug was very well constructed because the stitching could not be seen. The larger rug has the seam on the side. Ann explained, "You go under the loop, under the strip of wool, under the next one like lacing a shoe." "This rug is "as is," meaning the wool would be right off the bolt, not repurposed. Ann would buy wool from a Woodbury barn. The May Coat Company in New Haven used to sell wool remnants for 25 cents a pound. Now Ann sells wool off the bolt for \$26 a yard (a yard is just about a pound of wool). Many thanks to Ann for sharing this information with the CHS.

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Cheshire Historical Society is actively looking for new members—Members are our strength! Please ask friends and neighbors to join the Society! Details can be found at [cheshirehistory.org](http://cheshirehistory.org) or by calling (203) 272-2574

**SPECIAL STUDENT RATE AVAILABLE**

## E-MAILS FOR HISTORY QUESTIONS

**Town Historian:** [cheshirehistorian@cox.net](mailto:cheshirehistorian@cox.net)

**Our CHS Curator:** [maryellenkania@cox.net](mailto:maryellenkania@cox.net)

**For 9th Regiment CV:** [robertolarkin@yahoo.com](mailto:robertolarkin@yahoo.com)

## A Note From Our Cheshire Historian, Jeanné Chesanow:

There are now two copies made of the original John Asa Peck Civil War letters. So for those who may want to read these letters, and they are super, the copies can go out on loan. Peck writes well, and relates details of life on the front lines. His tent mates, at one point, were George Keeler and E. Benham. A good read for anyone -- really great for Civil War buffs and teachers of American History. He tells it like it was, praising the Negro soldiers as the best, and describing how Keeler got his big toe shot off... Contact: [cheshirehistorian@cox.net](mailto:cheshirehistorian@cox.net) for more information.

## Below, Ann Doolittle Eastwood from Venice, Florida critiques the handmade rugs in the Toy Room



## Looking For Honey Pot, The '50's and '60's?

Part Two of this Cheshire golf course story will appear in the Spring 2014 Newsletter.

## DOOLITTLE FAMILY LUNCHEON & TALK PART OF 10 YEAR REUNION

Nancy Rose Redling organized the weekend-long reunion of the Doolittles of America and included a visit to the Cheshire Church Green, a tour of the Congregational Church, picnic lunch on the Green, and a talk given by Mary Ellen Kania on Saturday, August 3rd. The Doolittles are a knowledgeable group, especially about Cheshire history. They listened raptly to Mary Ellen's description of the Doolittle Family, their history and their impact on Cheshire. We plan to see them in 2023 when Nancy organizes their next visit.



Above: The Doolittles arrive in their fine DATCO Bus

## GOOD-BYE OLD FRIENDS

It is with much sadness that we went forward with the removal of the cluster of conifer trees on the north side of the Hitchcock-Phillips House (HPH) in July.

**Below: The HPH without the large trees (right rear)**



Deemed a safety hazard by local and state authorities, these conifers were cut down, their wood being sent off to a mill, and their stumps remaining as an area where planters or other seasonal displays could be placed.

Cheshire Historical Society  
PO Box 281, 43 Church Drive  
Cheshire, CT 06410

# FALL 2013



Use this QR code to quickly visit our CHS website.

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[www.cheshirehistory.org](http://www.cheshirehistory.org)

**Sunday September 29th - Cheshire History**  
**Trolley Ride - The History of Cheshire Street**

**Tours leave PROMPTLY at Noon, 2 p.m., 4 p.m.**  
**from THE CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**See Page 3 for more information.**