

The Cheshire Historical Society

Volume 23, No. 1

June 2000

Is it a curse or a blessing to live in interesting times? Whatever your view, we are, indeed, living in interesting times. Surely, many of you were delighted when New Year's Eve 1999 was finally over and we were into the year 2000. You may be tired of hearing it, but it was an incredible evening all over Cheshire. The Hitchcock-Phillips house was full to the brim with people, probably more toured that night than normally tour in three or four years. We weren't prepared for so many visitors, but we loved every minute of it. Frank Papandrea entertained us royally, and we ran out of food for the first time ever. Hopefully some of our many visitors will return and bring others with them. We all love our "house" and want to share it with as many as possible.

As you know, the Society does not have general membership meetings in January or February, so we were pleased to provide the Cheshire Newcomers Club with meeting space in February. Another memorable evening occurred as all the lights went out. Even Edgar Johnson and Clayton Crabtree, our super men volunteers, could not get them to work. We owe a huge thank you to Dan Walesky who performed his magic and made the lights go on again. He too is now a super man volunteer. The Cheshire Newcomers were a delightful bunch. Many commented that meeting by candlelight and using flashlights to help the speaker set up made their evening more interesting and the atmosphere more authentic. Gracious women indeed!

The Society opened its doors in March to a group of vintage homeowners who met to discuss reevaluation and its impact on their taxes. Many were members of the Society and others have since joined. We welcome the opportunity to work with other community groups in as many ways as we can.

The annual meeting and election of officers on April 24, was an event you shouldn't have missed, primarily because, as is traditional, it was combined with a potluck supper. Clayton Crabtree, who is almost as interested in food as he is in genealogy, provided a delectable pot roast with gravy. As always, food provided by the rest of the membership was equally delicious.

Warren Van AlmKerk brought in an interesting object for show and tell. It is pictured on the next page. No one knows exactly what it is. We hope to discover its meaning and report at our September meeting. Dick Miller shared a story he is adding to his family history that is on file as part of our collection. Be sure to see it someday when you are visiting.

Serious business at the annual meeting resulted in the following officers and directors being unanimously elected:

President	Pat Vita
Vice President	Clayton Crabtree
Recording Secretary	Doris Black
Treasurer	Connie Field
Corresponding Secretary	Linda Libengood
Membership Secretary	Joy Deegan
House Tours	Lois Jean Meek
Publicity	Dottie Drufva
School Program	Elizabeth Giardino
Curators	Edgar Johnson
	Warren Van AlmKerk

Board Members:

2000 – 2003

Mary Ellen Kania
Scott & Linda Libengood

*Previously Elected

1999 – 2002

Clayton Crabtree
Stephanie Casner
Lois Van AlmKerk

*Previously Elected

1998 – 2001

Armand Brodeur
Arthur Hostage
Ann Massimino

By the Nominating Committee on April 16, 2000:
Doris Black, Betsy Fox, Helen Mertens

IN MEMORIAM—WE MISS YOU ALL.

ALICE EWASKIO, Harry's wife, Lillian's sister. A wonderful lady, who helped as a guide in the school program. She always came with a covered dish or a donation for the tag sale or a kind word. Alice had other volunteer jobs in the community too numerous to mention. In addition to her family and friends, many organizations feel a significant loss.

BOB FLETCHER—We're sorry for the loss Viola and the rest of Bob's family have suffered. He was a loyal and devoted member of the Society. We miss his smile and questions—we always knew he was listening!

ELIZABETH BELKNAP—Many years ago, she donated the wonderful dollhouse upstairs in the toy room. How wonderful to leave something behind that gives pleasure to so many.
Mrs. Belknap—a fine lady!

PERCY HAMILTON GOODSSELL, JR.—I'm sure many of you read his incredible obituary.
What a life!

How fortunate we were to have been touched by these people.

Can you help us? If you have information, please call Clayton Crabtree at 272-3790.

“Dear Historical Society Members,

“I am hoping you can help me with finding out some information on old West Cheshire. In particular, I am interested in finding out any information on the mill or factory whose pillars still stand in the stream pond on Huckins Road. I have tried looking on historical maps in the library, but most of these end at the railroad tracks, or, at best, the Notch-Mixville area. I'm not even sure what year they date from, but I would guess no earlier than 1860, based on the rate the pond has silted in.

“Obviously at one time, there was some industrial activity in the area. Growing up on the corner of Winslow and Huckins, we would find such things as coal dumps and dig up odd bits of rusted machinery. There is also the remains of what could easily have been the remains of an old, tree-lined dirt street high up near Darcey School. When the town cut down trees to widen Huckins, some of the trees they cut were literally a hundred years old.”

A PLEA FOR VOLUNTEER HELP

The burden of keeping the house open every Sunday for most of the year falls heavily on Lois Jean Meek, Edgar Johnson, and Clayton Crabtree. Without them, the House would often be closed. Lois Jean really needs a co-chair who would help her organize Sunday open house. If you can help, please call her at 272-5247 or Pat Vita at 272-3963.

Elizabeth Giardino continues to do an outstanding job with tours for third graders. It's a pleasure to watch someone who loves what she does. In addition to members Doris Black, Stephanie Casner, Sally Fazzino, Ann Massimino, Gerry Mittlehner, Vivian Kacey, and Elizabeth, we have Fran Bontatibus, Rosemary Cole, and Marcia Robbie helping. Alice Ewaskio is very much missed. Please call Elizabeth at 272-5093 if you would like to join this dedicated group.

Many thanks to Ray Scory who lived in Cheshire since 1974 and recently moved to Florida. A distinguished photographer, he donated some of his work, especially pictures taken at Waterbury Farrell, to the Society. Remember when Waterbury Farrell was a major industrial player in our community? Again, take a look at the albums some day when you're here.

STUFF, REQUEST FOR

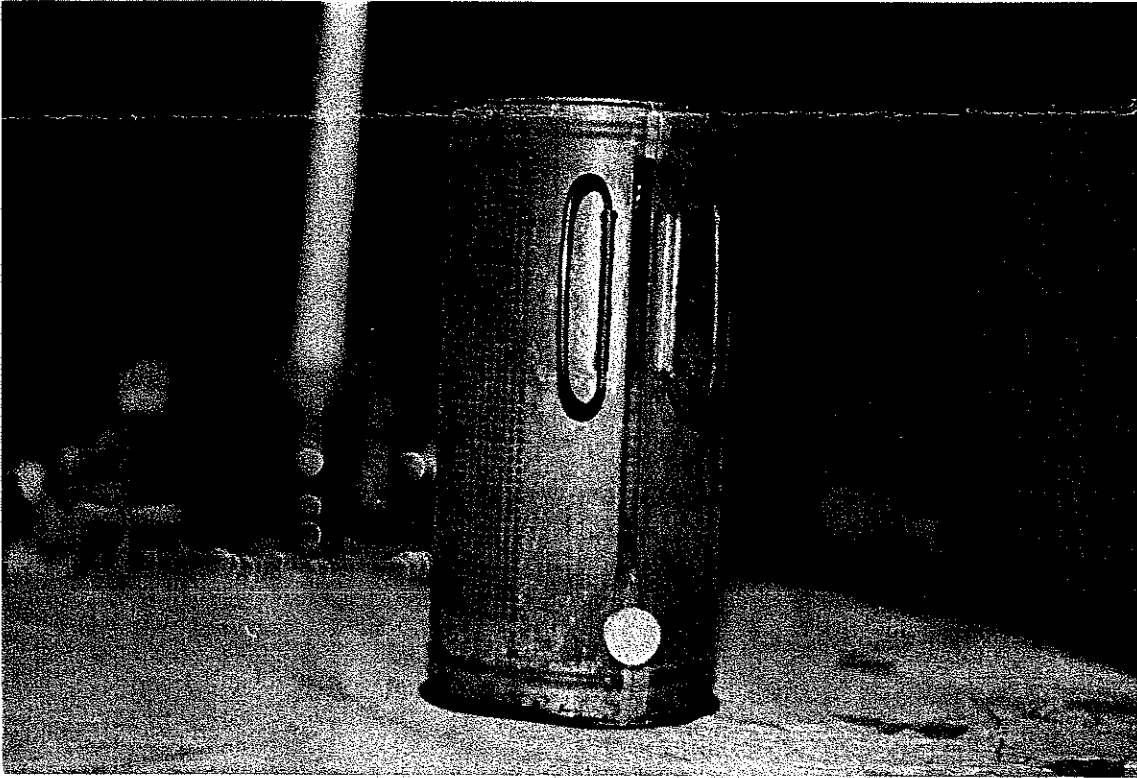
The Van AlmKerks started hosting dealers on the Green again on the last Saturday in April. We were delighted to see such a fine group. The more dealers we have renting space, the more the Society benefits. We also benefit from the Boutique in the Shed, which has no overhead, and all merchandise is donated. Everything earned goes directly to the Society. We need more STUFF!! Call Clayton Crabtree at 272-5790 or Pat Vita at 272-3963 if you have anything to donate. Your past generosity and continued future generosity are greatly appreciated.

OUR OLD HOUSE

If you haven't noticed that a lot of work has been done on the Hitchcock-Phillips house, take a look! Much old rotted clapboard has been replaced, and Park and Rec crews have removed overgrown shrubs. The house is ready for repainting. We're looking forward to a fabulous new look for "our old house."

A NEW MEMBER

The Board of Directors of the Cheshire Historical Society has voted to give an honorary membership to Don Walesky, president of OJ Mann Electric, for his extraordinary support and assistance to the Society.



This is Warren's object. Do you know what it is? If so, plan to share it with us at the September meeting.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Don't forget to support the Antiques & Collectibles Sale and our own Boutique in the Shed. We'll be there on June 10, at the Strawberry Festival and will continue to be there on the last Saturday of each month through October.

SEPTEMBER 2000 PROGRAM

On Monday, September 25, at 7:30 p.m. come and hear about Connecticut Clocks from Tom Grimshaw, President of the American Watch and Clock Museum of Bristol. Vice President and Program Chair, Clayton Crabtree, says Mr. Grimshaw will look at any clocks or watches you bring to the meeting.

Cheshire Historical Society
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The Cheshire Historical Society welcomes new members. If you are interested or know someone who is, call our membership chair, Joy Deegan at 272-4349.

If you have suggestions for projects or programs, call our Vice President, Clayton Crabtree at 272-5790.