

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 27, No. 1

Spring 2004

PROGRAM

Monday, March 22, 7:30 p.m.

"Treasures of our Reference Book Collection"

Mary Ellen Kania

"My First 7 Months as Town Historian"

Ron Gagliardi

The March program will be a double-header. Mary Ellen will discuss our rearranged reference collection, and Ron will report on successes and failures of his first seven months as town historian.

Books in the Society collection specific to Cheshire were recently inventoried, and other reference books were arranged by subject for easier access. Mary Ellen will give an overview of the new arrangement and the books most frequently used to research questions on Cheshire history. She also will highlight several particularly interesting items such as the program for "Dedication of the Soldiers' Monument, Cheshire, Conn. on the Fourth of July, AD, 1866" and Commander Admiral Hull Foote's 1854 volume, Africa and the American Flag.

Monday, April 26, 7:00 p.m.

Member Reception, Annual Meeting and

Election of Officers and Directors

"The History of the Pledge of Allegiance"

John White

In April, a reception honoring all members, particularly new members, will be held in the dining room at 7:00 p.m., followed by the annual meeting and election of officers and directors at 7:30 p.m.

Following the meeting, our speaker will be local author and educator John White, who is a Life member of the Society. His talk will be based on the new book he is writing, "The Pledge of Allegiance & The Star-Spangled Banner: A Patriot's Primer on the American Spirit."

Spring Calendar

March 22	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Membership Meeting
April 19	Monday 7:00 p.m.	Board Meeting
April 24	Saturday 9 AM—3 PM	Antiques & Collectibles Sale (weather permitting)
April 26	Monday 7:00 p.m.	Members Reception & Annual Meeting
May 17	Monday 7:00 p.m.	Board Meeting
May 29	Saturday 9 AM—3 PM	Antiques & Collectibles Sale (weather permitting)

Antiques & Collectibles Sales on the Historical Society grounds will continue during the summer on the last Saturday of the month—June 27, July 25, Aug. 29. Also on Sept. 26 and Oct. 31, weather permitting.

Except for Easter Sunday, the Hitchcock-Phillips House will be open to the public every Sunday, 2—4 PM, through Sunday, May 30. The house will be closed during June, July, and August.

If you would like to visit when the house is closed, call 272-8771 to arrange an appointment.

Lillian Andrews Bequest

The Historical Society Board is pleased to announce receipt of a bequest for \$1,000 from the Estate of Lillian Andrews, who died last March.

The Board is now considering how to best use this gift to honor Lillian's memory. She was Historical Society president from 1982-85 and curator and co-curator from 1981-1998. The first reading teacher in Cheshire and a former teaching principal at Darcey School, she established the program of yearly visits to the Society by 3rd grade pupils.

MORE ABOUT OUR KENSETT

After reading in our Winter newsletter about acceptance of the Society's John Frederick Kensett painting for inclusion in the upcoming *Catalog Raisonne* of Kensett works, Society Member Ruth Gleeton supplied us with the following very interesting reminiscence:

"John K. Howat, head of the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, co-authored with John P. Driscoll the catalogue John Frederick Kensett: An American Master. This was published in conjunction with the symposium on Kensett at the Worcester Art Museum in 1985. I attended it. Both Richard Ulbrich's and my name are mentioned in the Acknowledgments.

"In 1984, John Howat called me at our Library to arrange a meeting. I took him to see the Historical Society's painting, which, indeed, he immediately documented. He was appalled, though, how it was hanging on a rusty nail and suggested that a more secure and professional frame be considered. I recall that he said a larger version of the Falls was hanging in the White House. Richard Ulbrich, Catherine Brown, Susan Bullock, and John Howat came to our home for lunch—a delightful meal."

Thank you!

Special thanks to the following members who made contributions to the Society along with their 2004 dues! Contributions such as these allow us to keep dues at a minimum and still maintain our programs despite the ever-increasing costs of heat and insurance. Three cheers for:

Margaret Barth
Harvey & Peg Boutwell
V. Polly Casey
Barbara Christoff
Gordon & Millie Drazen
Mary B. Hobler Hyson
Robert & Ann Fennelly
Sterling Jewett
Carol Leach
Ann Massimino
Jean McKee
Helen Mertens

Richard Miller
Pabco Inc.
Phyllis Peck
Dennis & Joan Pilarczyk
Joan Rinaldi
John Romanik, Sr.
Bernice & Ralph Rowland
Lori-Ann Rusnack
Sue Smith
William Suter
Ray & Eleanor Verner

NEW MEMBERS

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members:

Peter Anderson, 214 Mountain Road
Ken & Lauren Backman, 108 Cornwall Ave.
Robert & Jeanne Chesanow, 214 Cornall Ave.
Sue M. Smith, 298 Redwood Lane

NEW EXHIBIT OF CLIFF SCOFIELD POSTCARDS

Visitors have been enjoying a wonderful, new exhibit of Clifford Scofield postcards on display in the south case in the Exhibit Room. The exhibit, which was arranged by Ron Gagliardi, an avid Scofield postcard collector, is the second of his Town Historian mini-museums.

Scofield has operated a postcard company from his home on King Road, Cheshire, for over 50 years. He has published thousands of postcards on a variety of subjects. Although he no longer takes the photographs, he still takes reorder requests for postcards in his extensive files. The infirmities of advancing age (he's 99) have taken their toll and have limited his mobility and sight.

According to Ron, Scofield signed many of the postcards for him. In an accompanying text, Ron points out that two pink and white dogwood postcards, used to promote the dogwoods in another Connecticut town, were actually taken of trees in Cliff's backyard in Cheshire. Particular favorites are the older postcards of Cheshire scenes such as the Waverly Inn in its heyday and the high school before renovation.

BOUTIQUE SEEKS ITEMS

When you're doing your spring cleaning, don't forget the "Boutique in the Shed." The committee is always look for saleable items. They don't have to be antique or collectible, but they must be saleable.

Donations can be brought to the Society any Sunday, 2 - 4 p.m., through the end of May or to the Boutique on sales days, the last Saturday of the month, April through October (weather permitting), 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

EIGHT COMPLETE COURSE FOR SUNDAY GUIDES

Eight trainees to become Sunday guides completed a two-session course on the history and contents of the Hitchcock-Phillips House in February. They are: Jonathan Amici of Waterbury and Sally Bowman, Lucille Benson, Nancy Lombardo, Carla Mills, Jane Richards, Ruth Ross, and Sue Smith of Cheshire.

At the start of the course, each participant received a booklet which contained house history and other basic information as well as copies of all the fact sheets from the various rooms. House Chairman Mary Ellen Kania and Curator Edgar Johnson explained to the group, "You don't really have to remember a lot of detail to be a guide, just know where to find the information on the fact sheet."

The trainees all agreed the class was a "fun experience." Most were surprised and delighted with the depth and breadth of our collection, and all enjoyed learning and sharing their expertise. Each new guide will volunteer on one to three Sundays this spring.

Proposed Slate for 2004 –2005

The proposed slate for 2004-2005 officers and directors will be voted on at the annual meeting on April 26.

Officers

President	Ed Kania
Vice President	Andrew Knott
Recording Secretary	Barbara Christoff
Corresponding Secretary	Cara Luciani
Membership Secretary	Sally Clark
Treasurer	Connie Field

Directors

2004 - 2007 Sally Bowman, Eleanor Herrmann, Marshall Robinson

2004—2006 Ron Gagliardi, Ann Massimino
(to fill unexpired terms of Eric Anderson, Mary Ellen Kania)

Nominating Committee: Arthur Hostage, Eleanor Herrmann, and Pat Vita, Chair.

Current directors—no election necessary:
2003—2006 Barbara Merrill; 2002—2005 Stephanie Casner, Lois VanAlmKerk, Pat Vita

DO YOU KNOW A WEASEL FROM A NIDDY-NODDY?

With input from new guide Nancy Lombardo, who actually spins on her own spinning wheel, we have improved the information in the fact sheet for the Textile Room on the second floor.

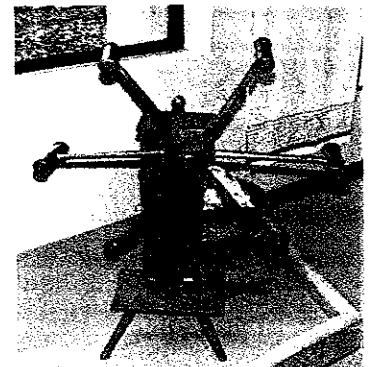
Both the weasel (yarn reel) and the niddy-noddy displayed in the Textile Room are devices for measuring and winding yard. When a weasel was used, the yarn was tied to one of the spokes and the wheel was turned. A gear on the side with a ratchet "clicked" with every full circuit (2 yards) of the wheel. Some people call this counter the actual "weasel"; however, more often, the whole device is called a weasel. After a certain number of circuits, you would hear a loud

POP, which would be the signal that the correct length of yarn and been measured out. The niddy-noddy is hand-held. One hand holds the center vertical piece while the other hand wraps the yarn around the two horizontal pieces.

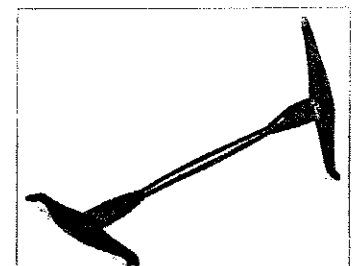
The weasel inspired the song "Pop! Goes the Weasel," possibly to keep children amused while they were reeling yarn.

"All around the mulberry bush
The monkey chased the weasel.
The monkey thought 'twas all in fun.
Pop! goes the weasel."

The niddy-noddy also has its own rhyme: "Niddy-noddy niddy-noddy,
Two heads and one body."



Weasel or yarn reel



Niddy-noddy

HISTORIC PRESERVATION WEEK TO BE CELEBRATED MAY 3—9

The Cheshire Historic District Study Committee and the Cornwall Avenue Neighborhood Association are making exciting plans to celebrate National Preservation Week, May 3-9. The tentative schedule includes:

Sunday, May 2 - elegant
Victorian Afternoon Tea
at the home of Ken and
Lauren Backman, 108
Cornwall Ave. Tickets,
\$20; seatings at 1:00 p.m.
and 3 :30 p.m. For reser-
vations call Joan
Kevorkian, 250-1951.



Monday, May 3— guided walk through the town center historic district. Meet at town hall at 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 8

- Eric Anderson will lead several "Door Yard Workshops" to discuss maintenance and repair of architectural features in old homes.

- Mrs. Sarah Moon, a 19th century owner of 214 Cornwall Ave. will "reappear" in her front yard (in the person of Jeanné Chesanow, the current owner) at 10:00 a.m. to talk about the house, her family, and the neighborhood in 1862.

ROADSIDE SIGN FOR SUNDAYS

If you've driven past the Green on Sunday mornings recently, we hope you saw the new 18" x 24" Route 10 roadside sign: "Historical Society / Open Today / 2 - 4 PM."

Plans are to have the sign up early on Sunday mornings and leave it through the day.

2004 DUES ARE PAYABLE

If you have not sent in your dues for 2004, you will find a dues envelope enclosed with this newsletter. If our records are incorrect, please let Treasurer Connie Field know.

Remember that dues are PAYABLE NOW!
Please forward your check as soon as possible.
We need everyone's support!

HISTORICAL SOCIETY FEATURED ON TV

In January, the Hitchcock-Phillips House appeared on Channel 3 television as part a feature on Cheshire, "Every Town Has a Story" with Scott Haney, on the 5:30 evening news.

Haney and a photographer came to Cheshire earlier in the month to film the program at the invitation of Town Historian Ron Gagliardi,. The feature opened with Town Crier Ron ringing his bell on our front steps and welcoming folks to Cheshire. Inside, there were several beautiful shots of the dining room, including the over-mantel painting and the witch balls, and of the parlor.

Other Cheshire sites featured were Lock 12, Arts Place, Tower Farms greenhouses, Barker Animation Art Galleries, and the giant Paul Bunyan statue on West Johnson Avenue. A nice addition was that Ron used his own video camera to photograph Haney and the photographer while there were here. Ron's tape, which included many interesting video sequences that did not appear on Channel 3, was shown later on town government Channel 14 (CTGC).

GIFT IN MEMORY OF RAIMON L. BEARD

We gratefully acknowledge a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Hitchcock of Avon in memory of Raimon L. Beard, Life member and past president, 1961-1963, who died May 27, 2003 in Chestertown, Md.

Ray, who held a Ph.D. from Yale University, is best remembered at the Society as the author of Reflections on the Canal in Cheshire. This excellent booklet remains the definitive source for anyone interested in the canal in Cheshire and continues to be a regular seller on our book table.

In Memoriam

Howard M. Ray January 23, 2004
Christopher W. Marx March 10, 2004

We are saddened by the death of these members and extend our sincere sympathy to their families.

1860s Map Finds New Home at Dodd Middle School

Thanks to Town Historian and Vice President Ron Garliardi, the large 1860s map, which originally belonged to Cheshire Attorney Tom Jackson, has a new home at Dodd Middle School.

After Tom's death, the map was a bequest to his partner, Attorney Phil Reed, who attempted to donate it to the Society. The map, however, is almost 5 feet by 6 feet and is simply too large to fit on any wall in the Hitchcock-Phillips House. Regretfully, the Board initially rejected it. However, after Ron's promise that he would find a suitable site for the map, the Board agreed to accept it. At that point, the map was in temporary storage in the basement of Attorney Kevin Hecht's office.

Dodd Principal Approached

Ron approached Dodd Middle School Principal Don Wailonis, who immediately recognized the value of having such a document on display in the school. In a short time, the map was beautifully re-framed by a Board of Education carpenter and is now hanging on a wall in the "library corridor," just beyond Dodd's main entrance lobby.

There is some deterioration of the paper, but basically the map is in excellent condition. Member and antiques dealer Kathleen Connolly, who is a member of the International Society of Appraisers, originally appraised the map at \$500. It is colored in soft rose, beige and greens and has a title box with a floral leaf border. In the box is the State of Connecticut seal and text which reads: "Clark and Tackabury's New Topographical Map of the State of Connecticut, Richard Clark, Robert and George Tackabury, 307 Wharton St., Philadelphia; G. M. Hopkins, trigonometrical surveyor."

All Connecticut Cities and Towns

The map shows all Connecticut cities and towns, outlined in red, and the principle railroads, major roads, rivers, and mountains. There are also smaller-scaled details of the principle cities: Norwalk, New London, Bridgeport, Hartford, Norwich,

New Haven, Stamford, Middletown and Waterbury. At one side of the map is a population chart from the 1850 census which shows the state population as 371,648, with Cheshire's population as 1,627.

In her appraisal, Kathleen noted the following interesting areas on the map, some of which no longer exist:

Barkhamsted: Hitchcocksville
Branford: Plum Orchard
Cheshire: Mixville
Colchester: Buckley Hill
Cornwall: Cream Hill
Enfield: Shakers
Glastonbury: Pontoosuc
Hamden: Whitneyville
Meriden: Hanover
Middletown: South Farms
Naugatuck: Straitsville
Newtown: Hawleyville
Southbury: Kettle town
Old Lyme: Laysville
Orange: Allington
Waterford: Jordanford
Woodstock: Kentonville
Wethersfield: Griswoldville

Brief Ceremony

There was a brief turn-over ceremony on March 11, which was attended by Ron; Ed and Mary Ellen Kania from the Society; Tom's cousin, Jack Egan; Principal Wailonis; and School Superintendent Greg Florio. A small brass plaque supplied by the school is in place at the bottom of the frame:

"Bequest of Attorney Thomas Jackson, Esq.

Gift of Attorney Philip Reed, Esq.

To Principal Donald Wailonis, Dodd Middle School
On Long-Term Loan from The Cheshire Historical Society

President Edwin Kania

Through the Office of Town Historian

Ron Gagliardi

March 2004"

Cheshire Historical Society News is published three times a year. Newsletter Editor: Mary Ellen Kania

**CHESHIRE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWS**



SPRING 2004

Cheshire Historical Society
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