

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 34, No. 2

Fall 2011

PROGRAM

This will be an exciting fall! In addition to regular Monday night program meetings at the Hitchcock-Phillips House in October and November, we will co-sponsor with the Historic District Commission a series of three Sunday afternoon talks on Historic Preservation in Cheshire at other locations:

Sunday, Sept. 25, 4 p.m.: "Cheshire 25 Years Ago—the 1986 Historic Resources Survey of the Town"
Dr. Bruce Clouette **St. Peter's Episcopal Church**

Sunday, Oct. 16, 4 p.m.: "Community Cornerstones"
Jeanné Chesanow **Temple Beth David**

Sunday, Nov. 6, 4 p.m. "Saving My Barn, Four Owners Share their Stories"
First Congregational Church

By holding the programs on Sunday afternoons at outside locations, we're hoping to attract and accommodate a larger audience than is possible at the Hitchcock-Phillips House. See the enclosed flyer.

The two fall programs at the Hitchcock-Phillips House will be:

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

Program: "A History of the Cheshire Masons"
Stephen H. Eberle, Historian

The Cheshire Temple Lodge of Freemasons is one of the oldest lodges in the country. The Grand Lodge of the State of Connecticut was constituted in 1789, the year of George Washington's first inauguration; and was composed of 14 lodges throughout the state. The Cheshire Lodge was the second to petition for a charter, which was granted in 1790. Lodge historian Stephen Eberle of Cheshire will explain the tenets of Freemasonry, discuss the history of the Cheshire lodge and show pictures. Freemasons embrace the tenets of friendship, morality and brotherly love, using these teaching to better themselves, the community, and each other.

Fall Calendar

Sept. 10	Saturday	Fall Festival - Bartlem Park
Sept 12	Monday	DAR Meeting
	12 noon	
Sept. 19	Monday	Board Meeting
	7:30 p.m.	
Sept. 25	Sunday	Historic Preservation Series & Membership Meeting
	4:00 p.m.	
Oct. 16	Sunday	Historic Preservation Series
	4:00 p.m.	
Oct. 17	Monday	Board Meeting
	7:30 p.m.	
Oct. 24	Monday	Membership Meeting & Speaker
	7:30 p.m.	
Nov. 6	Sunday	Historic Preservation Series
	4:00 p.m.	
Nov. 21	Monday	Board Meeting
	7:30 p.m.	
Nov. 24		Thanksgiving Day
Nov. 27	Sunday	Gingerbread House Workshop
	2:00 p.m.	
Nov. 28	Monday	Membership Meeting & Speaker
	7:30 p.m.	
Dec. 18	Sunday	Holiday Open House
	2—4 p.m.	
Dec. 25	Sunday	Christmas Day

The Hitchcock-Phillips House will be open to the public on Sunday afternoons, 2—4 p.m., except on Columbus Day weekend, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

Monday, November 28, 7:30 p.m.

Program: "Cheshire Railroads Stations"
Robert J. Belletzkie

Bob Belletzkie, who lives in Prospect, is web stationmaster of www.tylercitystation.info, a website which documents old Connecticut railroad stations. At the turn of the 20th century, Cheshire was served by two railroad lines with at least five active station stops.

Using his website, Bob will show us the original Cheshire rail routes and stations together with a wealth of fascinating information on how the early train schedules operated. Bob is one of the true experts on local railroads. Don't miss this opportunity to hear him.



Enlargement of center section of photograph showing 20th Connecticut Regiment 1865 reunion at Gettysburg for the dedication of regiment monument on Culp's Hill. Col. William B. Wooster, wearing straw hat, stands right. George W. Warner of Bethany, who lost both arms in the battle, is seated on the rock.

When the dedication ceremony began, the monument was covered with an American flag. It was later raised by means of a rope running through a tackle block attached to a nearby pole. The other end of the rope was wrapped around Warner's body, and he raised the flag by walking away from the rock.

Photo of Gettysburg Dedication Provides History Lesson

The recent gift of a copy of a photograph of the 20th Connecticut Regiment's 20th reunion at Gettysburg for the dedication of the Regiment monument on Culp's Hill has been a history lesson for all of us. The copy was given to the Society by Randy Bieler, Cheshire, who owns one of the original reunion photographs taken in 1885 by W. H. Tipton, battlefield photographer. An 1865-1885, blue-and-gold reunion ribbon worn by veterans in the photograph is part of the Nettie Smith Collection at the Society.

Chapter 10, The Twentieth Connecticut, a Regimental History by John W. Storrs (1886) describes the dedication and reunion in detail. Both Timothy Guilford and Alonzo Smith of Cheshire were on the committee for the event.

The dedication was held during a 3-day excursion preceding the July 4, 1885 holiday. Over 200 veterans and their guests assembled July 1 at 1:00 p.m. in Jersey City to board a special excursion express (50 mph.) to Gettysburg. The train stopped for supper at Harrisburg, arriving in Gettysburg at 9:00 p.m.

July 2 was devoted to tours of the battlefield. The dedication ceremony was held on July 3. Immediately afterward, "the entire company gathered about the tablet" for the group photograph. The excursion train departed that night at 8:00 p.m., arriving in

New York City at 4 a.m. next morning. Although by today's standards the event appeared to involve strenuous travel, Storrs writes: "Every person participating in this grand excursion to the scene of the greatest battle of modern times express themselves in terms of unbounded satisfaction."

Names of the Excursionists

The following people from Cheshire attended:
Soldiers—Luther Barnes, George W. Bradley, W. C. Doolittle, W. H. Doolittle, Timothy Guilford, Franklin Hotchkiss, Merritt Hotchkiss, Thomas Judd, Jesse Rice, Edwin Thrall. *Citizen Guests*: Benajah Beadle, Samuel H. Brooks, Mrs. W. H. Doolittle, Mrs. Timothy Guilford, S. Augustus Moss, Samuel S. Morse, Mr. and Mrs. Norman S. Platt, Jennie L. Smith (daughter of Alonzo Smith)

In Memoriam

David Baillie
 Sterling Jewett
 Louis Patierno

July 1, 2011
 May 26, 2011
 May 19, 2011

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

NEWS BRIEFS

The Flower Show presented by the **Cheshire Garden Club and the Suburban Garden Club** in June was a huge success. Over 200 people toured exhibits on the first floor and outdoor tents. The rooms have never looked lovelier.

Public Works arranged for the restoration of seven windows and the house got a much-needed new coat of white paint during the summer.

The 4" x 3" **Hull-Ives Family Record** embroidered by Elizabeth J. Hull in 1873 has new UV-proof Plexiglas and archival backing. The framing had not been opened for over 100 years as evidenced by a June 11, 1899 *New Haven Register* pasted on the back.

Two treasured samplers have received new frames: the Clarissa Curtiss sampler, 1806, and the Lucy S. Bradley sampler, 1830. A Victorian fan, given by Dr. Robert J. Craig, also got handsome new framing this summer.

The **Boutique in the Shed** is having a banner year. Receipts already total over \$1,100, and the shop will be open Sunday afternoons, 2—4, p.m., through the end of September. Assistant Curator **Kathy Connolly**, take a bow!

Special thanks to **Jim Jaskot**, town Director of Finance and our new "Indian artifacts expert," who was a great help in redoing the exhibit of Indian artifacts. It now displays only those that were actually found in Cheshire.

Third graders from three elementary schools toured the Hitchcock-Phillips House this spring. Our much-appreciated tour guides included: **Barbara Christoff, Marty Connolly, Joy Irish, Judy Knott, Jane Richards, Alice Santello, and Pat Vita.**

The Cheshire Historical Society is planning a table at the **Fall Festival, Saturday, Sept. 10.** Look for us there!

Diane and Dave Calabro will be doing another Gingerbread House Workshop. Sunday, Nov. 27 - a great way to start the holiday season!

Hannah's Memories of Her "Lost" Farm Inspire Gift of Crocheted Bedspread

The following article was written by Loraine (DuPlessis) Benson of Glen Falls, N.Y. and Lynn (DuPlessis) Jacunski of Olmstedville, NY. The two sisters have donated their mother's beautiful crocheted bedspread to the Cheshire Historical Society.

Johannah Elfrieda Nagel, called "Hannah", was born Dec. 4, 1902 in Cheshire to Albert and Hulda (Flatow) Nagel, immigrants from Germany, on their 100-acre farm on the Wallingford-Cheshire Road (Rte. 68), now the site of the Broad Brook Reservoir. The Nagels purchased the property about 1890 and farmed it until about 1912, when it was taken through eminent domain by the City of Meriden to dredge the reservoir.

Until age 10, before the loss of the farm, young Hannah walked 1—2 miles to the one-room school house near Bishop's Farm. She graduated from 8th grade at the Yalesville Elementary School and attended Lyman Hall High School in Wallingford. She grew up with one sister, Louisa, six years her senior. Two brothers died in infancy from diphtheria prior to 1896.

While in real time, the farm in Cheshire was part



HANNAH in plaid jumper (third row left) at District 3 School near Bishop's Farm. She walked 1—2 miles to school from her family's farm, now Broad Brook Reservoir, on Rte. 68.

of Hannah's life for only her first 10 years, it remained part of her emotional grounding all her life. She frequently recalled details of her childhood: the animals, geese chasing her; milking the cows and drinking the warm milk from their udders; butchering pigs in fall; her mother working in the fields; taking produce to market; gathering walnuts from their own trees; putting real candles on the Christmas tree; sharing farm bounty with a neighboring black family.

An oft-told story was of the day six-year old Hannah stepped into a hornets' nest while picking wild blueberries. She was stung over most of her body and, after this near-death episode, was allergic to bee stings and terrified of them throughout her lifetime. However, when recounting the experience, the tipping over of the full pail of luscious berries so diligently picked seemed to be her biggest regret.

In later years, when Hannah and her children passed the Reservoir, she always pointed out the two walnut trees that flanked the entrance to their modest farm house. Her memories were so vivid that Cheshire became part of her children's memories as well.

Lived in Yalesville, then Meriden

Following the loss of the farm, the Nagel family lived in Yalesville, then in in the Tracy section of Meriden where their father Albert started a milk delivery route to support the family. He died in a tragic accident in 1928 when a car hit his horse-drawn milk wagon. Hannah's mother, Hulda, remained in their Tracy home until her death in 1941.

After high school, Hannah worked as a book keeper at the Wallace Silver Co. in Wallingford and for various Meriden companies until her marriage to Frank DuPlessis in 1924. Hannah and Frank remained in and raised their three daughters in the Meriden-Wallingford area for the next 24 years. Frank, a World War I veteran, died in 1951. Hannah lived on until May 11, 1995. She was 93 years old. She was pre-deceased by her oldest daughter, Fern

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(DuPlessis) Macbeth, who died in 1993.

Because of Hannah's strong emotional connection to Cheshire and the farm, her surviving daughters, Loraine and Lynn, felt it would be fitting to give her hand-crocheted bedspread to the Cheshire Historical Society, and it has been graciously accepted.. (Note: Hannah is also survived by 11 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren.)

The Bedspread

Loraine's recollection is that Hannah, an avid crocheter, started the project in the mid-1930s while living in Tracy and completed it around 1940 while living in Yalesville. It took several years to complete between other sewing necessities and household duties. First there was the painstaking choice of the daisy popcorn pattern. Next, it took time to save money to buy the crochet cotton over many months. There are memories of her deft fingers looping away with her steel crochet hook— but only at day's end when all other work was done or on rare occasions sitting with company and other crocheters.

The spread with its rose-colored liner was displayed on her Victorian bed only on special occasions. It was never in regular use and remained tenderly in a protective pillow case until the day it was delivered to the Cheshire Historical Society, July 13, 2011.

Hannah's bedspread, now part of the Society's permanent collection, will be displayed on the bed in the second-floor bedroom for the next several months.

New Members, Contributors

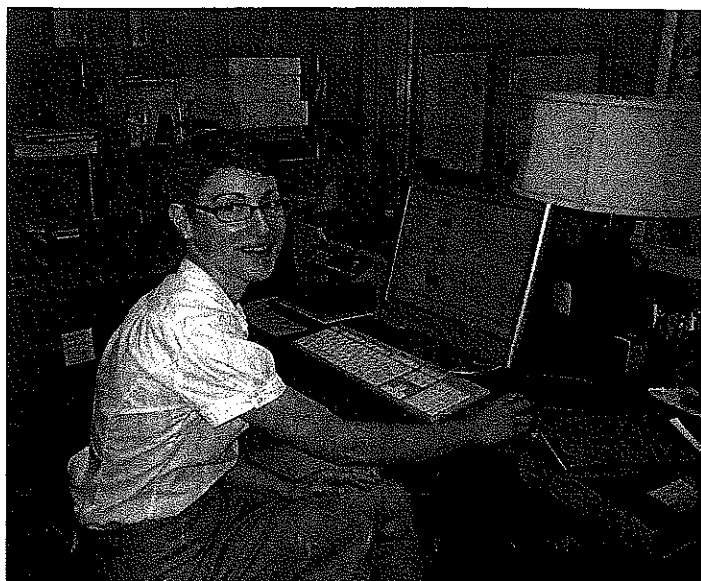
Welcome to the following new members and thanks to the following special contributors since the last newsletter:

New Members:

Joy Irish, 36 Buckland Street, Plantsville
John Scully, 150 Cook Hill Rd., #4101
Robert O'Brien, 2642 Dixwell Ave., Hamden

Additional Contributors:

Elsa Bradford, Robert & Jeanné Chesanow, Robert O'Brien. Also Cheshire Woman's Club, \$100 (special club contribution); Cheshire and Suburban garden clubs, \$119 (donations received at Flower Show).



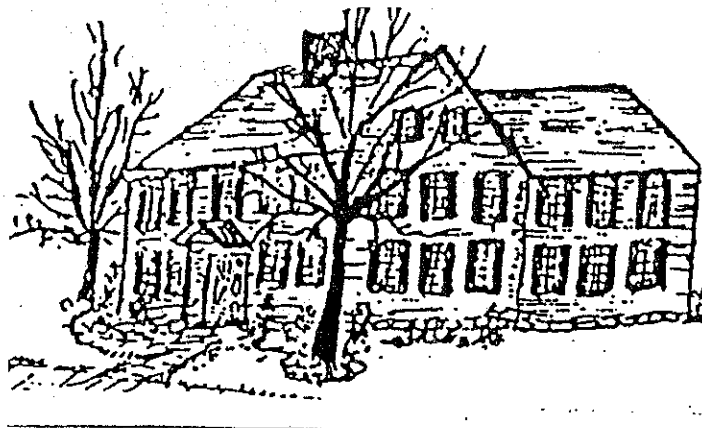
VOLUNTEER SUMMER INTERN Carla Hill, who just received an MA degree in Art History from UConn, worked at the Society from 9 a.m. to 12 noon during the first two weeks in July. Her project, "Civil War Cartes de Visite: Selections from the Nettie Smith Collection of 20th Connecticut Regiment Memorabilia," can be seen on the Society website www.cheshirehistory.org.

News of Cheshire Hotchkiss Descendents in Kentucky

Sherrill Williams, a retired history teacher in Hardin Co., Kentucky, has sent us an interesting account of the many Hotchkiss descendents in Central Kentucky—primarily descended from two members of a Hotchkiss family in Cheshire who went to Kentucky in the 1800s.

Benoni Hotchkiss, born in Cheshire in 1794, migrated to Kentucky as a young man and became a prosperous merchant in Campbellsville, KY. He had seven children. On a business trip north in the 1840s, he invited his niece, Emma Ann Hotchkiss (1832-1924), daughter of William and Mary Hotchkiss of Cheshire and Milldale, to return with him. She only intended to stay in Kentucky for three weeks, but she was asked to teach school. She agreed and next returned to Cheshire on her wedding trip after marriage to widower Thomas Cobb (1828-1909). Together, they had 8 children. Sherrill's account includes genealogies and copies of photographs, letters and post cards exchanged between Emma and her Cheshire family. All documents are on file and available for research at the Society.

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS



FALL 2011

Cheshire Historical Society
PO Box 281, 43 Church Drive
Cheshire, CT 06410
www.cheshirehistory.org

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Diane Calabro

Newsletter Editor

Mary Ellen Kania

SEPTEMBER MEETING: SUNDAY, 9/25, 4 PM
**“Cheshire 25 Years Ago—the 1986 Historic
Resources Survey” Dr. Bruce Clouette**