

CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 28, No. 1

Spring 2005

PROGRAM

Monday, March 28, 7:30 PM "Depression Era Glassware"

At the March meeting, five members of the Nutmeg Depression Glass Club will present a program on Depression Era glassware. Angela Orsene, Cheshire, will discuss why Depression Era glass is so special, followed by Bob and Ginny Morotto of Southington, who will talk about the various glass companies and the different types of glass each manufactured.

The club's teaching collection, which the audience will be encouraged to pick up and feel, will be brought in and set up by Leslie Solkoske, Meriden. Another club member, Tony Bosse, will be available to identify glass owned by audience members.

Plan to attend and bring in your own piece of 1930s glass for identification. It should be an interesting program!

Monday, April 18, 7:00 PM

Member Reception, and Annual Meeting
"Excerpts—Titus Moss Civil War Letters"
Guest readers: Thom Peters and Sylvia Abbate

A dessert 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.

After the meeting, we have a very special treat. Two talented guest readers, Thom Peters and Sylvia Van Sinderen Abbate, both Cheshire residents, will read excerpts from letters written by Corporal Titus Moss to his wife Jennette in West Cheshire in 1862-63. Moss was killed at the Battle of Chancellorsville, May 3, 1963.

The letters were given to the Society in 1969 by Titus's granddaughter, Helen Moss, and were transcribed last year by Curator Marshall Robinson. See more inside about the readers and letters.

Spring Calendar

Except Easter Sunday, the Hitchcock-Phillips House Museum will be open to the public on Sunday afternoons, 2 — 4 PM, through the end of May. To schedule a visit at another time, call 272-8771 or 271-2378.

March 28	Monday 7:30 PM	Membership Meeting & Program
April 3	Sunday 3:00 PM	Memorial Service Lois Jean Meek
April 10	Sunday 1:30 PM	Board Meeting
April 18	Monday 7:00 PM	Reception, Annual Meeting & Program
May 2	Monday Noon—4 PM	Cheshire Garden Club Open Meeting
May 23	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
June 11	Saturday * 9 AM—3 PM	Antiques & Collectibles Sale

*Antiques & Collectibles Sales on the grounds will continue on the last Saturday of the month: July 30, August 27, September 24, and October 29.**

** WEATHER PERMITTING*

Thank You!

Special thanks to the following members who made contributions to the Society in addition to their 2005 dues. Three cheers for:

Norma Andrew	Phyllis Peck
Margaret Barth	John & Rosanne Purtill
Paul Bowman	Richard Chevolet
Sally Bowman	John Romanik
Polly Casey	Elizabeth Shaw
Robert & Noreen Cawood	William Suter
Barbara Christoff	Don & Chris Tall
Robert & Frances Davis	Ingeborg Venus
Robert & Ann Fennelly	Eigel Wium
Mary B. Hobler-Hyson	Brad Zambruski
Richard Miller	

GUEST READERS HAVE TITUS MOSS CONNECTIONS

Guest readers Thom Peters and Sylvia Van Sinderen Abbate, who will read excerpts from the Titus Moss letters after our annual meeting on Monday, April 18, have interesting connections to Titus Moss.

Thom, like Titus, is a warden of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. He is a history teacher and archivist at Hopkins School in New Haven, and a member of the 27th Connecticut Volunteers, one of the oldest Civil War reenacting groups in the state. Thom counts among his own ancestors an assistant surgeon with the 44th Alabama. He and his family have lived in Cheshire 10 years.

Sylvia is a direct descendent of John Moss, an original Proprietor of both New Haven and Wallingford, who was deeded land along Ten Mile River as early as 1678. She lives with her husband Richard on Yalesville Road in the 1846 Terrell farmhouse, which they bought from the Terrell family 14 years ago. Sylvia is president of Cheshire Community Theatre and Vice Chairman of the Cheshire Performing and Fine Arts Committee. She has appeared in roles in the Community Theater; at the Mattatuck Museum as Elizabeth Moss, a fictitious friend of John Frederick Kensett; and, on behalf of her alma mater, as Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke College. Sylvia also performs a variety of WWII living history impressions, utilizing her own collection of vintage uniforms and accessories.

Notes from Hopkins School

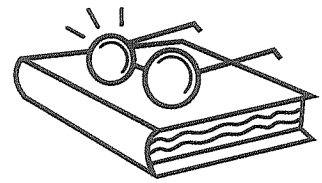
Thom Peters provided us with the following interesting information about Hopkins School. In 1657, Edward Hopkins, second colonial governor of Connecticut, left funds in his will to establish a school "dedicated to breeding up of ye hopeful youths...for the publick serice of the country in future tymes." Nearly 40 youths from Hopkins volunteered to serve during the Civil War, most (but not all) for the Union. At Chancellorsville, where Titus Moss met his fate, two Hopkins graduates were firing at Moss while serving with the 60th Georgia and two were firing alongside Moss while serving with the 5th Connecticut.

Welcome New Members!

Amy Benfer, 370 Payne Drive
Domenic Calabro, 1731 Peck Lane
Gerry & Charlotte Devine, 61 Lansdowne Lane
Our thanks to Richard Copleston, who has converted from Senior to Life member.

New Displays in Exhibit Room Feature Spectacles, Straight Razors

Two new displays in the Exhibit Room feature early spectacles (eye glasses) from the 1700s to the late 1800s and a display of straight razors from the 1700s to the early 1900s. Included is a straight razor owned and used by the Rev. David Brooks.



New Acquisitions

We gratefully announce the following additions to the Society collection:

- **Green Dolphin Restaurant ashtray with 1965 calendar.** No longer in existence, the restaurant was a popular gathering place on South Main Street.. Donor: Annie Duriez, Lennoxville, Quebec, Canada, a member of her local historical society, who found the ashtray in an auction lot and shipped it to us at her own expense.
- **Framed, 19th Century advertisement for Simon Willard, Clockmaker,** now hanging in the parlor adjacent to our Simon Willard banjo clock. This wonderful addition was given to the donor's late wife, Elizabeth Copleston, by a Bryn Mawr classmate in the 1970s. Donor: Richard Copleston, Cheshire.
- **Delft vase shaped like a tiny rocking cradle,** hand-painted in the De Porcelyn Fles factory in 1918. Donor: Sophie Dutton, now in Boston.
- **Collection of Depression Era, Anchor Hocking "Blue Bubble" dinnerware.** Four place settings have been added to our permanent collection. The remainder will be sold in the Boutique-in-the-Shed. Donors: Ed and Marge Breen, Wallingford .

www.cheshirehistory.org

Visit our Cheshire Historical Society website, www.cheshirehistory.org for great pictures from the Christmas Party, our doll collection, and more! Thank you, Webmaster Diane Calabro!

Titus Moss Letters Describe Union Army Life First-Hand, Reflect Concern for His Little Family in West Cheshire

Don't miss the opportunity to hear excerpts from the Titus Moss letters read after the annual meeting, April 18. Although the letters are only part of the original correspondence (we have no information about the other letters), the words

Titus Moss—Junior Warden

from over 140 years ago have a definite impact.

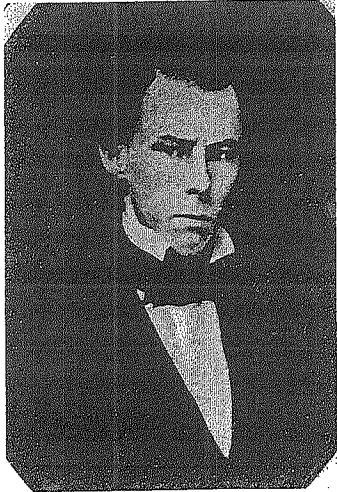


Photo courtesy of St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Most of the incidents Titus describes are fairly routine; but they give a wonderful picture of a very kind, decent man struggling to adapt to Union Army life and deeply concerned about his little family in West Cheshire.

The following information is helpful background:

The Moss family figured prominently in local history. The first Moss to come to Cheshire, John Moss, received a king's grant along the Ten-Mile River in 1694. At the time of the Civil War, Titus Moss and his family were living in a house – now demolished – at 859 Moss Farms Road, which had been built by his grandfather.

Wife Jennette and Two Children

Titus married Jennette Beecher of Cheshire in 1851. They had two children: Howard, who was six when his father enlisted, and Emma, who was three. Another member of Titus' household was his ward, Carrie. They were all active members of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Titus was Junior Warden when he enlisted in 1862 - age 34. Serving with him in the 20th Connecticut Regiment, Company A, were his younger brother Samuel Moss, age 25, and another Moss, Frank Moss – both often mentioned in the letters.

After President Lincoln's first call for volunteers in 1861, Titus joined the Cheshire Home

Guards. When Lincoln issued the second call in 1862 the Home Guards enlisted, becoming Company A, 20th Connecticut Volunteers. In August, a special Cheshire Town Meeting authorized a \$100 bounty to each volunteer with a family (\$50 for single volunteers).

There were 63 men and boys from Cheshire and 20 from Prospect in Company A. They left New Haven for Washington, D.C., packed in common boxcars, on September 11, 1862. Once there, they crossed the Potomac to Arlington and camped on "General Lee's farm," now Arlington National Cemetery. On Sept. 29, they were ordered to Frederick, MD. On Oct. 2, they marched to Harper's Ferry, W.VA – in November, they crossed the mountains into Virginia, where they spent most of the winter – first in Loudon Valley, then at Fairfax Station, then Stafford Court House.

During that winter, Company A was visited at different times by at least nine men from Cheshire, including Benajah Beadle (Curator Emeritus Edgar Johnson's great grandfather) and Julius Moss, another Moss brother.

Killed at Chancellorsville

The spring campaign opened with the Union Army of 124,000 men on the north side of the Rappahannock River. General Lee, with an army of 63,000 was entrenched south of the river. It was now a little over seven months since Titus left New Haven. Aside from skirmishes, the Battle of Chancellorsville, May 1 – 3, was Company A's first major battle. It ended disastrously with the regiment under Colonel William B. Wooster in full retreat. Over 12,000 Union soldiers were killed and 5,000 missing and wounded. Titus was killed on May 3, the final day of the battle.

Complete Letters Available

An annotated copy of the complete transcriptions of all the Society's Titus Moss letters may be ordered at the April 18 meeting. The cost will be \$9.

Death of Little Emma, Age 5, in November 1864 Continues Heartbreak for Widow Jennette Moss

In addition to the Titus Moss letters, our files also contain the following 1864 news item clipped from The Calendar, an Episcopal Church newspaper that was published weekly in Hartford, and an unsigned note that could only have been written by Jennette Moss.

For the Calendar
DIED, IN Cheshire, Nov. 26th, EMMA JENNETTE, only daughter of the late Titus and Jennette Moss, in the 6th year of her age. The father of the deceased, a brave and Christian soldier, fell at the battle of Chancellorsville, and she and a little brother were alone left to the widowed mother, and such amiable qualities of character were exhibited by her, she promised to be a great solace to her afflicted parent. But death as destroyed all hopes connected with her, and added another affliction to that already heavy and severe. During her very painful illness she exhibited great patience, and without fear was conscious of the approach of death.

She was a member of the Sunday school, and took such delight in its exercises and in the services of the Church, as gave evidence of a religious spirit which doubtless would have developed into a lovely Christian character. In an affliction so great we can only say, trusting in God's goodness, which never fails: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Handwritten note, unsigned:

"The occurrences of the last few weeks seem like a frightful dream. But alas it is no dream but a sad reality. Little Emma is gone. Gone to heaven. An angel came and took her away. She was a lovely child – gentle and loving; the pet of our family, the youngest. But she could not stay with us any longer. Now that she has gone I do not feel that I have sinned in loving her too well. If I went from home she claimed it as her right to be the first to welcome me on my return. But all this has changed now.

"Death has set his seal on my beautiful one

and I am bereaved indeed. Seven sad and gloomy weeks have passed since I saw her in her last untroubled sleep. O much as I had always loved her, I never looked upon her with such pride and tenderness as when I saw her wrestling with disease and death. Her sufferings were terrible but she bore up against them with a brave fortitude that seemed wonderful in one of her tender years. To the last hours of her life, her only wish seemed to be that I should be constantly with her. No medicine was so nauseous that she would not take it cheerfully from my hand. And when the last mortal agony was upon her she wished me to take her hand and lay my head beside her on her dying pillow.

"I cup the little hand so often pressed upon my face and at the same time saying Mama I love you more than I can tell. I miss the sound of those little feet upon the stairs. I miss her in any walks & rides, I miss her every where, but I will try not to miss her in heaven. Can I wish her back again? Or would she thank me for that wish & a voice within answers, No But rather let me be thankful for that pleasing hope that though God loves my child too well to permit her to return to me, he will ere long permit me to go to her."

Buried in St. Peter's Cemetery

Jennette Moss lived until 1880. Both she and little Emma are buried in St. Peter's Cemetery alongside a memorial obelisk for Titus, whose body was never recovered. Their son and only surviving child, Howard Titus Moss, married Mary Adila Beach, daughter of Cheshire historian Joseph P. Beach, and was a highly respected local citizen He died in 1923 and, with his wife and their daughter Louisa, is also buried in St. Peter's Cemetery. Nearby are graves of 60 others bearing the name of Moss.

2005 DUES ARE PAYABLE

If you have not sent in your dues for 2005, you will find a dues envelope enclosed with this newsletter. If you feel our records are incorrect, please call Treasurer Connie Field, 203-250-0693.

Update on the Andrews House At Entrance to Elim Park

As a member of the now-defunct Historic District Study Committee, I had a chance to tour the Lillian Andrews house on Cook Hill Road. The little cape, which now belongs to Elim Park, sits very close to the new main entrance to the retirement community. The house very recently housed nurses who were in training at Elim Park. However, road construction workers inadvertently dug up the septic system, making the house temporarily uninhabitable.

The house is in fairly good shape with the exception of a section of the foundation which is bowed out. The main roofline is still straight and true. Under the synthetic siding, the original door and window details are still in place. Up in the attic the rafters were sound and the original peg joining very interesting to see. In the basement we noted some of the vertical supports were logs with their bark left on.

One of the possible plans for the Andrews house, according to Elim Park CEO Ronald Dischinger, would be to use it as a little museum. Several people who live at Elim Park might be willing to donate family items for display. A more costly but interesting idea would be to rebuild the original walk-in oven, the location of which is still apparent. This kind of project has been done at Sturbridge Village in a project aimed at children. Whatever its use, it would be wonderful to see the house saved. This landmark, home of early settlers, deserves to be preserved and kept in use.

Jeanné Chesanow

Memorial for Lois Jean Meek

A memorial service and reception in memory of Lois Jean Meek (1925-2004) will be held at the Historical Society on Sunday, April 3, at 3 p.m. Lois was president of the Society, 1978-81; an active board member; and a devoted docent on Sundays and for school tours for many years. Mary Humpage is in charge of arrangements.

Proposed Slate for 2005-2006

The proposed slate for 2005-2006 officers and directors will be voted on at the annual meeting on April 18.

Officers

President	Ed Kania
Vice President	Gerald Devine
Recording Secretary	Barbara Christoff
Corresponding Secretary	Cara Luciani
Membership Secretary	Brad Zambruski
Treasurer	Connie Field

Directors

2005-2008 Stephanie Casner, Lois VanAlmkerk, Pat Vita

Nominating Committee: Ron Gagliardi, Chairman; Mary Hobler-Hyson, John White

CHD Commission Plans Workshops

The new Cheshire Historic District Commission has announced a series of 12 workshops on the preservation and restoration of old houses, to be held at the Cheshire Public Library on Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The first two workshops are scheduled this spring:

April 9 Alice Washburn, Architect, 1870-1958

Tony Terry of Terry Architecture, Branford, winner of the 2004 Alice Washburn award from the CTAIA, will speak on the life and traditional style and design of Alice Washburn, who was born and raised in Cheshire.

April 23 Defining the Past, Shaping the Future: Cheshire's Historic Districts

To be led by Jeanné Chesanow, chairman of the Cheshire Historic District Commission.

Garden Club to Have Show at House

The Cheshire Garden Club will have an open meeting flower show at the house on Monday, May 2, noon to 4 PM. Rooms on both floors will be filled with flower designs and horticultural exhibits. The courtyard garden, redesigned and replanted by the club in 2004, also should be in bloom. Stop in for a breath of spring.

**CHESHIRE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWS**



A dues envelope is enclosed for any membership still unpaid for 2005. Please re-mit! We're counting on your support!

SPRING 2005

Cheshire Historical Society
PO Box 281
Cheshire, CT 06410

Society Officers

President
Ed Kania
Vice President
Andrew Knott
Secretaries
Barbara Christoff
Sally Clark
Cara Luciani
Treasurer
Connie Field

Board of Directors

Sally Bowman
Stephanie Casner
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Marshall Robinson
Warren VanAlmkerk
Kathleen Connolly, *asst.*
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Depression Era Glassware —March 28
Titus Moss Civil War Letters—April 18