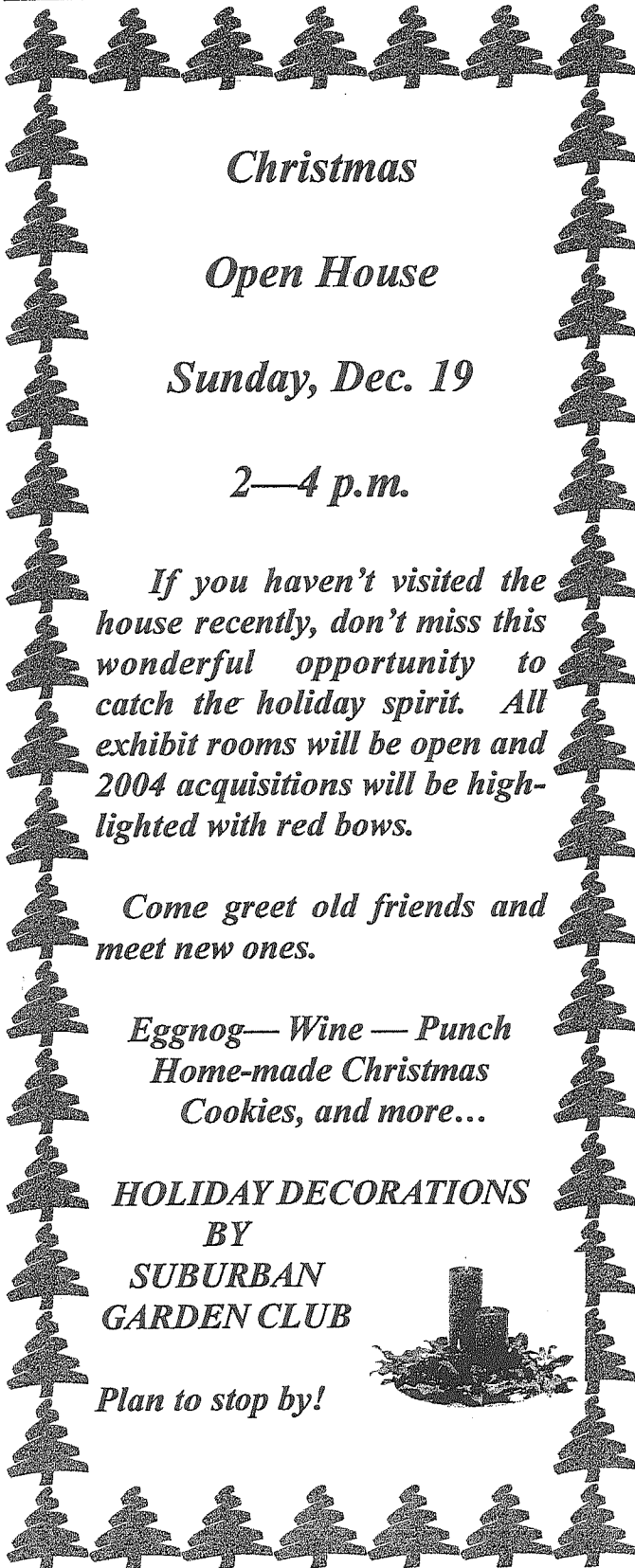


CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 27, No. 3

Winter 2004-2005



Christmas

Open House

Sunday, Dec. 19

2—4 p.m.

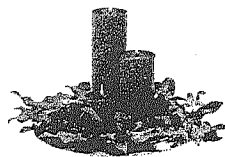
If you haven't visited the house recently, don't miss this wonderful opportunity to catch the holiday spirit. All exhibit rooms will be open and 2004 acquisitions will be highlighted with red bows.

Come greet old friends and meet new ones.

*Eggnog— Wine — Punch
Home-made Christmas
Cookies, and more...*

**HOLIDAY DECORATIONS
BY
SUBURBAN
GARDEN CLUB**

Plan to stop by!



Winter Calendar

Except for Sunday, Dec. 26, and Easter Sunday, Mar. 27, the Hitchcock-Phillips House Museum will be open to the public every Sunday afternoon, 2 — 4 PM. To schedule a visit at another time, call 272-8771 or 271-2378.

No membership meetings in January and February.

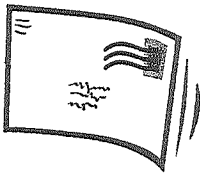
December 19	Sunday 2—4 p.m.	Christmas Party
December 26	Sunday	House Closed*
January 16	Sunday 1:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
February 20	Sunday 1:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
March 14	Monday Civil War Program	D.A.R. Meeting at Society
March 20	Sunday 1:30 p.m.	Board Meeting
March 28	Monday 7:30 p.m.	Membership Meeting
April 18	Monday 7:00 p.m.	Annual Meeting

Old Fashioned Christmas Ornaments On Display in Exhibit Room

Don't miss seeing the north case in the Exhibit Room during the holidays! Assistant Curator Kathleen Connolly has arranged a wonderful exhibit of old-fashioned, Christmas ornaments from her personal collection. According to Kathleen, the items on display are only part of a collection to which she has been adding for years. There is an eye-popping array of old Christmas books, cards, ornaments, lights, tinsel, and little trees. Of special interest are several very fine, antique Santas on the middle shelf.

CHESHIRE PHILATELIC SOCIETY MAKES MAJOR GIFT, DONATES ENTIRE CHESHIRE REFERENCE COLLECTION

At the conclusion of Bob Ca-wood's talk on Cheshire's early postal service at the September meeting, a burst of applause greeted his surprise announcement that the Cheshire Philatelic Society was donating its entire "Cheshire Reference Collection" on the town's postal history to the Cheshire Historical Society.



This is a major addition to our collection. Members attending the meeting were absolutely delighted. The gift includes more than 60 pages of carefully mounted items which trace Cheshire's postal history for some 150 years. The earliest items are stampless covers used prior to 1847, the year the first postage stamps were issued. These have a variety of Cheshire post marks including an 1823 double-line, oval cancellation and an 1846 single-line, red, oval cancel.. A particularly charming addition is a stampless valentine cover and valentine, circa 1849, which was sent from Cheshire to Miss Lucia A. Bradley in West Meriden.

The earliest stamped covers (1851) have a round cancellation with "Cheshire" and the Connecticut abbreviation "Ct" over a red, three-cent Washington stamp. Many of the early covers have

separate "killers", geometric hand-cancels over the postage stamps. There are one-cent post cards (1861), covers with BankNote stamps (1870-1882), two-cent postal stationery (1897), and a Rural Free Delivery (R.F.D.) cancel (1903). The Connecticut abbreviation changes to "CONN" in the 1890s. The first machine cancel is dated 1927.

West Cheshire and Brook's Vale

The collection also includes covers from both the West Cheshire Post Office (1852-1954) and the Brook's Vale Post Office (1858-1913). This office was also called South Cheshire (1885-1889) and "Brookvale" (1895-1913).

1964 Dedication Program

Of special interest is the program from the dedication of the current Cheshire post office building in 1964. It lists the names of all of the postmasters for the main office as well as the postmasters who headed the West Cheshire and Brooksvale offices.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Who was the first Cheshire postmaster? He served from October 1804 to March 1831?
(Answer on next page)

NEW ITEMS FROM METZLER ESTATE ADD TO COLLECTION

Special thanks to Barbara Voegeli, who has made several wonderful donations this fall to the Society from the Estate of Ray Metzler, Hall Homestead, 376 Wallingford Rd. Among the new items are a large wool spinning wheel, a flax wheel, the stirrup from a woman's side saddle, a vintage child's potty seat, and a very interesting three-base sadiron. A sadiron usually has only two bases. These are pointed at both ends and have a removable handle, which can be transferred from base to base. While one base heats on the stove, the user can move the handle to another base to continue ironing.

Diane Calabro Volunteers to Be New Webmaster for Society Site

We are delighted to report that Diane Calabro, a 2003 new member, has agreed to serve as webmaster for the Cheshire Historical Society website, which has been so capably handled by Eric Anderson for the past five years.

Eric has done a wonderful job for the Society, hosting the website on his own, personal domain. Although he asked us last spring to make new arrangements, he has graciously kept the site on-line until we could manage a replacement. Diane is now in the process of establishing the new site, www.cheshirehistory.org.. You should be able to view it next month. A tremendous THANK YOU to Eric for a job well done, and a warm and grateful WELCOME ABOARD to Diane!

1865 Cheshire Map Restoration Underwritten by Town Clerk Fund

Thanks to Town Clerk Carolyn Soltis and the Town Clerk's Historic Document Fund, the original copy of the 1865 map of Cheshire, drawn by Nathan Booth (1801-1887), has been restored. It is now framed and on display in the reference corner of the Meeting Room. (Booth was a civil engineer, inventor and part-time farmer. He is best remembered in Cheshire today as builder of the family homestead at 466 Academy Road, now Norton Farm.)

The map, which is on a single 40" x 27" piece of paper, reinforced on the back with cloth, was rolled in a cylinder-shaped metal container and stored in the Town Clerk's office for many years. In 2002, Town Clerk Soltis inquired if the Society would be interested in the document. Several photocopies of the central part of the map had been made years ago, but this original copy remained in storage. It was discolored and had numerous strong creases as well as a vertical tear in the center and edge tears.

Board Excited About Document

Board members were excited about the document, but concerned about cost of restoration, The Northeast Document Conservation Center, Andover, MA, which was highly recommended to us, estimated the cost of restoration at \$695. An offer from Town Clerk Soltis to underwrite the project from the Historic Document Fund was accepted with great joy. Further approval by the Town Council was necessary, and this was readily voted.

The map is in original pencil and documents Cheshire during the Civil War years. It shows the names of the residents in each house and is surrounded by small vignettes of buildings of note, including the Episcopal Academy. One vignette is a drawing of a man with a pick, undoubtedly pertaining to the barites mines, which operated in Cheshire 1838-1878. Framing in a simple frame selected by Second Curator Warren VanAlmkerk cost \$223, and was paid for from Society funds.

Out-of-Town Visitors Seek Info About Cheshire Ancestors

The Society had special openings twice this fall for appointments with out-of-town visitors seeking local "roots." Marie Parker Flaherty of Nesbit, MS, whose family is related to Thomas Parker, and her husband, James, visited the Society after stops at 1251 Cheshire St. (home of Tom and Georgette Hyman), where Thomas Parker kept a tavern in the house before 1800, and the Cheshire Street Cemetery, where he is buried.

Charles Luther Ives III of Raleigh, NC, a direct descendent of Deacon Joseph Ives, came to the Society at the recommendation of the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce. After showing the Ives information in our reference collection, President Kania took him to see Ives Corner; the Harrison Ives House, 52 Harrison Rd.; and the two Ives homes on Fenn Road. Mr. Ives was particularly interested to learn that the home of his ancestor, Joseph Ives, 280 Fenn Rd., is considered to be the oldest house in Cheshire.

Video Tapes from Eagle Scout Project

Eagle Scout Jerome Palmeri has given us copies of two video tapes created for his Troop 51 Eagle Scout project. The tapes, which are part of the Veteran's History Project sponsored by the Library of Congress, contain interviews with Cheshire residents who are veterans of World War II and/or the Korean Conflict. They are now in our Reference Collection and available for loan to members.

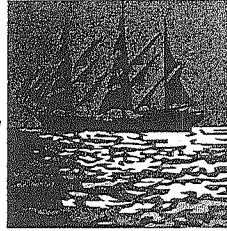
Veterans interviewed include: John Campbell, S/Sgt., Army 6th Armored Infantry; George Ellis, 1st Lt. Navigator, Army Air Corps.; T. Ronald Butler, Sr., Ensign, Coast Guard; Russell Baril, Sgt., 94th Bomb Group, Army Air Corps; Joseph Raines, 2nd Lt., Army Air Corps; Leo Lavalle, Jr., Lt., Army; and Charles and Nora Adams, Navy Machinist and Y2C Naval Reserve.

Answer to "Test Your Knowledge"

Cheshire's first postmaster, serving for 27 years, was Amasa Hitchcock, Jr. He lived and managed the mail from his home, 28 S. Main St., where the Multicare Physicians & Rehabilitation Group is located now.

Excerpt From 1862 Letter Written Aboard Union Ship "Onward", Transcribed By Curator Marshall Robinson

Following is an excerpt from a recent transcription by Curator Marshall Robinson of a six-page letter, dated May 12, 1862, which is on display in the Trophy & Gun Room. It is stored in a frame, and only the first page is visible to visitors.



The writer, Blanche (we have no further identification) is on the Union ship "Onward," that has been blockading Charleston harbor since March. He describes various adventures and the crew's disappointment at not being able to capture a "prize." The following excerpt appears near the end of the letter. While not exactly "p.c." for 2004 readers, we think you'll enjoy it as a vivid account of an incident from Civil War naval history.

"This morning at 4 AM I came on deck and after I had got my eyes open I took the Spy Glass and swept the horizon. In looking toward Morris Island, I saw a steamboat just to the Southard of Fort Sumter edging her way down the shore in the inner channel. Now this be almost an every day occurrence. I did not pay much attention to it but kept my eye out occasionally when it reached the entrance of what they call Ship Channel. I see she kept away from it and was heading straight for us and coming towards us fast. I called all hands and beat to quarters. Got a spring on our cable and hauled her around broadside to her and we were just on the point of giving her a broadside when we saw what was meant for white flag flying from her.

The Crew Were All Contrabands

"She soon drew high and we saw that the crew were all contrabands. She came alongside of us and of all the actions I ever saw these happy

days beat all. Such hallowing and yelling, jumping and dancing, singing and laughing. One old darkey. he was the engineer, got up on the top of the open cabin and shouted out "I'se brot you a steamboat, Massa! "Rite from Fort Sumter, Massa" Then he'd cut a pigeon wing and swing his old hat and hurrah. "I'se brot you some big guns too, Massa." "United States guns, Massa," and upon looking down upon her deck there lay four large Columbiads, a mortar and a thundering great 120-lb rifle cannon, one of the very biggest kind.

*"I'se brot you a
steamboat, Massa"
"Rite from Fort
Sumter, Massa."*

"At this moment three she contrabands came jumping out of one of the cabin windows, and they acted worse than the men. They danced, and sung, and cried, and shouted and hugged one another, and appeared to be entirely carried away by the thoughts of being free from their masters.

We Went Aboard

"We went aboard and, hauling down the old dirty table cloth they had hoisted for a white flag, we run up the Stars & Stripes and put the "Secesh" flag beneath it and took lawful possession. Then the darkeys run wild. They danced around the staff shouting "Run up the blessed flag, Massa". "Thems the flag to live under", "Thems the States to fight under, Massa", and then hurrah, and from all on board our ship joined in with them in three loud huzza's for the glorious flag.

If I Had Got A Chance

"Two of the she's were young yaller gals, the mistress of the white engineer belonging on board. If I had got a chance I don't know but what I should have tried to have a little engineering myself, but good lord they were too much excited to keep still a second."

Cheshire History Books Make Great Gifts

Landmarks of Old Cheshire—Cheshire Bicentennial Committee \$35
 Considered the definitive story of the town from its first settlement before 1700 to 1976. The book includes charming wash drawings and detailed histories of almost all 18th century houses still standing.

Images of America: Cheshire by Ron Gagliardi \$20
 Published in 2001, this book documents the town's history from prehistoric times through 1929. It contains 240 historic photos that capture the spirit of the town's early years.

Our Town—Cheshire, Connecticut, 1780-1890 by Marion Moore Coleman \$35
 Reflections, memories and historical notes from throughout the town's history. Most of the assembled articles were published originally in *The Cheshire Herald*.

The Durand Family of Cheshire, Connecticut by Sterling Jewett \$25
 Collection of information on the musical Durand Family

The Barite Mines of Cheshire by Crawford E. Fritts \$10
 Definitive study of Cheshire's early mines

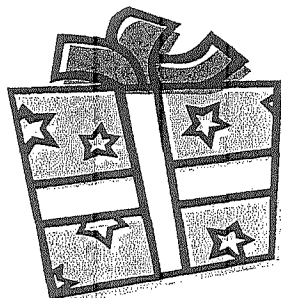
Reflections on the Canal in Cheshire by Raymond L. Beard \$ 5
 With special summary on canal finances by Arthur J. Frechette, Jr. Excellent information on the canal and Cheshire's Lock 12

Also on sale at the Society:

1882 Map of Cheshire—18 x 24 inches \$ 5

"Doors of Cheshire" Poster \$10
 Created by Hope Reinhard, this colorful poster features 20 doorways from local historic houses. Originally priced at \$25. All proceeds benefit the Society.

Set of 10 Historic Post Cards \$ 3



**CHESHIRE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWS**



WINTER 2004-2005

Cheshire Historical Society
PO Box 281
Cheshire, CT 06410

Society Officers

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Ed Kania
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Andrew Knott
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Edgar Johnson, *emeritus*
Marshall Robinson
Warren VanAlmkerk
Kathleen Connolly, *asst.*

Webmaster

Diane Calabro
Newsletter Editor
Mary Ellen Kania

CHRISTMAS PARTY, SUNDAY, DEC. 19