

"Walk Back in Time" To Dramatize Cheshire in 1862

Plans are well underway for the Sunday, May 7, "Walk Back in Time." The walk will start behind the Town Hall at 2 p.m. and continue through the Town Center Historic District, ending at the Hitchcock-Phillips House. **Don't miss this fun opportunity for an outdoor Cheshire history lesson!**

The walk has been organized by the Cheshire Historic District Commission, which has been planning the event since last summer. The five-member Commission was established in December 2004 as the regulatory authority for approval of changes to property in the two historic districts in town: the Cornwall Avenue/ Town Center District and the South Brooksvale District. However, the Commissioners (four are members of the Cheshire Historical Society) now are taking their role a step further with the hope of educating the community and creating excitement about Cheshire's past.

To Re-enact Day of Decision

The walk will take observers back to the year 1862 and re-enact the day when Cheshire farmer Titus Moss made the momentous decision to join the Civil War effort. Commission member Diane Calabro and Commission Chairwoman Jeanne Chesnow researched the Titus Moss letters, which the Society published last spring, and other historical references to create a script with speaking parts from the year 1862 for some 20 Cheshire citizens. The re-enactment will be partially funded by a grant from CT Trust for Historic Preservation in cooperation with the Connecticut Humanities Council.

Thom Peters, who portrayed Titus in the dramatic reading of the letters at the Society last April,

has been cast in the lead role. Sylvia Abbate, who portrayed Jennette Moss last year, will again play his loving wife, soon-to-be a widow. Titus, along with 63 other men and boys from Cheshire, left home in September 1862. He was killed at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863.

Script Focuses on Real People

The script will focus on the actual people who lived in the houses along Main Street in 1862. Those who join the walk will hear stories and learn about the historic properties from the characters living there at that time. Neighbors, shopkeepers, hotel owners and visitors all will have opinions about the Civil War and about Cheshire in general.

The re-enactors and a number of bystanders will be dressed in Civil War-period costumes. According to the script, Titus and Jennette Moss, who were Moss Farms Road residents, will be in town center with their children for the afternoon while Jennette seeks a cold remedy for their little daughter Emma from the herb garden in back of the Hitchcock-Phillips house.

Occupants of the Hitchcock-Phillips house in 1862 were Widow Lucretia (Hitchcock) Clark, daughter of Rufus Hitchcock, who built the house, and her two adult daughters, Maria (who later marries Andrew Phillips) and Lucretia. Adm. Andrew Hull Foote, recuperating from severe wounds received during the campaign to capture Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River in Feb. 1862, will be in town to visit his family. Historian Joseph P. Beach, who often visited Cheshire before his permanent move here in 1867, also will be on hand.

Party at the Society

The walk will conclude at the Civil War Monument, where some of the future will be revealed. After the final scene, everyone will be invited to a party at the "Hitchcock house," where refreshments will be served. Visitors will have an opportunity to view the original Titus Moss letters and tour the house.

