

**The Cheshire Historic District Commission
and
The Cheshire Historical Society present**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR
A WALK BACK IN TIME:**



**TITUS MOSS: CHESHIRE FARMER AND
CIVIL WAR SOLDIER**

A PRESERVATION MONTH ACTIVITY

*Partially Funded By A Grant From CT Trust For Historic Preservation in
Cooperation With The CT Humanities Council*

Performance Date: SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2006

THE WALK BEGINS 2:00 PM AT THE CHESHIRE TOWN HALL,
CONTINUES ALONG THE CHESHIRE TOWN GREEN AND
THE HITCHCOCK-PHILLIPS HOUSE (The Cheshire Historical Society)
FOLLOWED BY A RECEPTION WITH
CIVIL WAR PERIOD FOOD AND DRINK
AT THE CHESHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Version Date: April 7, 2006

*Partially Funded By A Grant From CT Trust For Historic Preservation in
Cooperation With The CT Humanities Council*

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84 South Main Street
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The Cheshire Historical Society

Hitchcock Phillips House
43 Church Drive
Cheshire, Connecticut 06410 USA
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**DESSERT RECEPTION FOLLOWS IN THE MEETING ROOM
AT THE HITCHCOCK-PHILLIPS HOUSE**

HISTORICAL NOTES TITUS MOSS AND HIS CIVIL WAR LETTERS

In 1969, Miss Helen Moss of New Haven gave the Cheshire Historical Society the original copies of 30 letters written by her grandfather, Corporal Titus Moss, to her grandmother, Jennette, in 1862-63. Also included were two letters written by Captain Timothy Guilford describing Moss's death at the Battle of Chancellorsville, May 3, 1863, and a copy of letter of condolence to Jennette on the death of their daughter, Emma, in 1864. At the bottom of this letter, Jennette has written a heart-breaking note about Little Emma's death. After nearly 35 years in our files, the letters were transcribed last year by Society member, and now curator, Marshall Robinson.

It is evident that these letters are only a portion of the original Titus Moss correspondence. Although he wrote almost daily after leaving Cheshire in September 1862, there is nothing from Christmas and only one letter from the critical last three months of his life. The collection must have been divided among family members, possibly among his three granddaughters. Nonetheless, the letters we do have give a special picture of a very kind and decent Cheshire man struggling to adapt to the challenges of Union Army life and vitally concerned with the welfare of his little family at home.

The Moss family figured prominently in Cheshire history from its early settlement, especially in area in the west of town along Ten Mile River known as Moss Farms. The first Moss to come to Cheshire, John Moss, was granted approximately 100 acres of land alongside the Ten Mile River in 1694 for services to the Crown in settling disputes between the Indians and farmers who were moving to Cheshire from Wallingford.



According to a hand-written note in Society's copy of *Old Historic Homes of Cheshire*, 1895, the Titus Moss Family lived at 859 Moss Farms Road, a one-and-a-half-story structure built by

his grandfather, Joel Moss, in 1795. The house also is pictured in *Landmarks of Old Cheshire*, 1976, but has since been demolished.

Titus was born on February 8, 1828, the second of seven children of Joel Moss II and Nancy (Upson) Moss. In June 1851, age 23, Titus married Jennette Beecher of Cheshire. They had two children: Howard, born July 19, 1856, and Emma, born June 22, 1859. Another member of Titus's household was his ward, Carrie, who is often mentioned in his letters. We have no further identification for her. The Moss family were communicants of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. In 1857, Titus was elected junior warden of the church, a position he held when he left for military service with the 20th Connecticut Regiment Volunteers in 1862.

After the attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861, the first call for troops by President Lincoln asked for only one regiment from Connecticut. The response was so enthusiastic, that three regiments were formed and sent. According to a paper on "Cheshire in the Civil War," written by Society member Mrs. E.I. Pardee, it was at this time that a group of young men in Cheshire formed a military company called the Home Guards. Their captain was Timothy Guilford, who had previously held office in a militia company in Waterbury.

In July 1862, when President Lincoln issued the second call for "three hundred thousand volunteers for three years," Cheshire's Home Guards resolved to enlist, calling themselves the Russell Rifles, but later becoming Company A of the 20th Connecticut Volunteers. In August 1862, a special Cheshire Town Meeting authorized payment of a \$100 bounty to each volunteer with a family (\$50 for single volunteers). Company A left New Haven for Washington, D.C. on September 11, 1862 packed in common boxcars. It included 63 men and boys from Cheshire, including Titus and his brother Samuel, and 20 from Prospect. They were kept in Washington until September 29, then ordered to Frederick, Maryland. By some blunder, the company was told to leave their knapsacks in Washington. They waited all night at the depot for transportation and made their bivouac near Frederick without tents or blankets, and with scanty rations. When letters telling of deprivation and hunger reached Cheshire, mothers, wives and sisters rushed to pack boxes of provisions and forward them as soon as possible.

On October 2, the Twentieth was again under marching orders for Harper's Ferry. On November 9, they crossed the mountain into Loudon Valley where they were ordered to build huts and go into winter quarters. While some of the old regiments were provided with comfortable houses with floors, the Twentieth did not get along so well. The privations the men endured are told first-hand in Titus's letters. His close companions were his younger brother Samuel and another Moss, Frank Moss. Both became seriously ill. We know from *The Twentieth Connecticut, A Regimental History*, that Samuel Moss was discharged for disability on January 27, 1863 and that Frank Moss died at Stafford Count House, March 17, 1863. According to Mrs. Pardee's paper, during the first winter, Company A was visited at different times by at least nine men from Cheshire. "They usually found the company enjoying a snow storm," she writes. In his letter of November 8, Titus describes the arrival of "Mrs. Moss & Mr. Beedles" (Amos Moss and Benajah Beadle). We know from the letter of January 29 that another visitor was Titus's other brother, Julius.

The spring campaign of 1863 opened with the Union Army numbering 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 only a little over seven months since Titus had left New Haven. Aside from some skirmishes, the Battle of Chancellorsville, May 1-3, was the first real battle for Company A. It ended disastrously, with the regiment under Colonel William B. Wooster in full retreat. Over 12,000 Union soldiers were killed and another 5,000 missing and wounded. Titus was killed on May 3, the final day of the battle.

(Source: Cheshire Historical Society, www.cheshirehistory.org/titus.htm)

HISTORICAL NOTES

HISTORIC PROPERTIES IN THIS WALK BACK IN TIME

Scene 1. Back of Cheshire Town Hall

CHESHIRE TOWN HALL (1867) Late Greek Revival. Cost \$8,000. The hall opened Jan 1, 1868 with a gala New Year's Ball, and for many years it was the center of Cheshire's social life. In 1913, the building was expanded to add quarters for the fire department and a telephone company office (moved out in 1934). The Fire Dept. remained until 1954, when a new firehouse/police station was built and the space was taken over by town offices. In 1989, the town hall was enlarged again with a major addition, including a new main entrance at the "rear" of the building.

*The **Horse Block** (in front of Town Hall) was brought here from Prospect in the early 1800s by some energetic young Cheshire boys to serve as a "mounting block" for those attending services at the Second Meeting House – directly across the street.*

***Town War Memorial** (next to Town Hall) See the names on the memorial wall and the magnificent old sycamore tree, one of the oldest trees in Cheshire. Erected in 1990.*

Scene 2. Alonzo Smith House

118 South Main Street (Street House - no longer standing)

From Program of the Cheshire Tercentenary Celebration: "Where the Keeler homestead now stands was the cabinet shop of Col. Thaddeus Street. He did an extensive business for those days, employing many apprentices, and found a ready market for the different articles of furniture in New Haven. The handsome pulpit in the Congregational Church on the Green is his work. ... He lived in the house north of his shop from his purchase in 1802, until his death in 1842, and Mrs. Street sold it in 1859 to A.E. Smith."

Scene 3. Keeler's House

168-166 South Main Street (1860 and 1875)

No. 166 was built as a residence by George Keeler, a tinsmith, who also built No. 168 in 1875 for his stove shop and warehouse. He also ran an undertaking business there.

Scene 4. Beach House

SQUIRE BEACH HOUSE (1762), 200 S. Main St. Now Downey's Restaurant, the house used to be on the opposite side of Old Towne Road, facing South Main Street. (Note similarity to Foote House) Moved to present location and converted into a restaurant (1980's) when Old Towne Road was constructed. Originally built by Samuel Beach, who graduated from Yale and practiced law in Cheshire. He served in State Legislature and represented Cheshire in its bid to separate from Wallingford in 1780.

Scene 5. Foote House

FOOTE HOUSE (1767), 219 S. Main St. Colonial/gambrel roof. Renovated and used as a bank since 1973. Built by the Rev. John Foot, second pastor of the Congregational Church for 40 years. His son, Samuel Augustus Foot, was a U.S. Senator and Governor of Connecticut in 1834. His grandson, Adm. Andrew Hull Foote, was a famous during the Civil War as hero of the naval campaign to capture Fort Donelson on the Cumberland

River in 1862. He died of wounds in 1863. His name (with an “e” added) is in large letters on the base of the Civil War Monument on the church green.

Scene 6. Cornwall House

CORNWALL HOUSE (1807), 195 S. Main St. An 18th c. house was torn down to make way for the home of Dr. Thomas T. Cornwall, known for his treatment of cancer. He added a wing in 1816 as a sanatorium for his patients. His son, Edward, was very prominent in public affairs, both church and town, serving as a justice of the peace, town clerk and in the General Assembly. It is now offices, including Chamber of Commerce.

Scene 7. Brennan House

ABIJAH BEACH TAVERN (1750), 137 S. Main St. Federal / gambrel roof. Built to be a tavern; nine fireplaces and a ballroom on the top floor where large parties and dances were held. Now home of Dr. Michael Gaudio family.

Scene 8. Southwest Corner of The Town Green

South Side of the Green:

1796 Dr. Cornwall built a house here,
later occupied by Dr. Shelton’s medical office and tavern.

1850-1892 Munson/Wallace Hotel (burned to the ground in 1892)

1907 Trolley barns

1912-1913 Federal Revival parsonage of Congregational Church, 85 Church Dr.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (1826) Federal, designed by architect David Hoadley. The building has had many additions and renovations. The church was founded in 1724 in a small building at the corner of Lanyon Drive and South Main Street. A second, larger church was built in 1736 on the east side of the green, close to South Main Street. Erected in 1826, this is the congregation’s third meeting house.

Town Clock: Julia Humiston donated the money to the town for a handsome, Seth Thomas clock. Because there was no place for it in the town hall, the clock was placed in the steeple of the Congregational Church. Winding and repairs to the clock are paid from a fund left by Miss Humiston, managed by three trustees.

Scene 9. Herb Garden Behind Hitchcock-Phillips House

Scene 10. Front of Hitchcock-Phillips House

THE HITCHCOCK-PHILLIPS HOUSE (1785), 43 Church Dr. Classical Georgian. Built by merchant Rufus Hitchcock. Passed down to his daughter and then to his granddaughter, who married Andrew W. Phillips, a teacher at the Academy. Family occupied the house until 1903. In the 1930s, the house was bought by Cheshire Academy for a boys’ dormitory. Since 1972, it has been owned by the town and home to the Cheshire Historical Society.

Scene 11. Civil War Monument

CHURCH GREEN AND CIVIL WAR MONUMENT The 20-foot high granite shaft was erected in 1865. It pays homage to the 126 service men who enlisted from Cheshire in the Civil War. In addition, Admiral Foote and Abraham Lincoln are specifically commemorated.

HISTORICAL NOTES HISTORIC CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Joseph P. Beach (1828-1911) Age in 1862: 34. A wealthy publisher. He wrote History of Cheshire, Connecticut (1604-1840)

Martin Brennan (1820-) Age in 1862: 42. He married Adeline L. Parker in 1840. In 1852, purchased the Abija Beach Tavern located at 137 South Main Street. Rather than maintain this as a hotel or tavern or dance hall, Brennan used this as a private home. He did open the top floor ballroom from 1856 to 1859 for Catholic Church services.

Lucretia Hitchcock Clark (birth date unknown). Lived at the Hitchcock-Phillips House. Lucretia Hitchcock married the Reverend Peter Clark, a naval chaplain. For the purpose of this Walk Back In Time, Lucretia Clark has been bestowed with a vast knowledge of herb lore.

Edward A. Cornwall (1802-1889) Age in 1862: 60. One of nine children, his parents were Dr. Thomas Cornwall and the precocious Lucinda Foote. His grandson was Dr. Edward T. Cornwall. Edward Cornwall lived at the Dr. Thomas Tyron Cornwall House 193 South Main Street (Built: 1807). Edward Cornwall built a shop to make coffee grinders. The shop was located at Lockport, or Locks 10 and 11, just south of Beachport.

Capt Timothy Guilford (born 1827) Age in 1862: 35. "Micah Guilford ... had three sons who grew to manhood: Ralph H., Timothy, and William O. Timothy Guilford was educated in the common schools and academy at Waterbury and served an apprenticeship at tool making for the manufacture of cloth buttons. He came to Cheshire in 1859 and engaged with the Cheshire Manufacturing Company; was foreman of the cloth button department, making tools for the manufacture of the same. He introduced an improved method for the manufacture of these buttons. In 1862, he assisted in enrolling a military company in Cheshire, and was elected captain of the same. The company was assigned to the Twentieth Connecticut Regiment, which participated in the great battles of Virginia. He lead his company in the battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburgh. This regiment was transferred to the army of the Cumberland in the fall of 1863. He served until the spring of 1864, when he was discharged on account of ill health. He was next employed by the Waterbury Button Company to add the manufacturing of cloth buttons to their business. He was manager there for five years. In 1878, he engaged in the manufacture of a button made from pressed hoof. The company was located in Leominster, Mass. Under his management the business was a success, and in 1880 was removed to Babylon, Long Island, that it might be nearer to New York City. He married in 1856 to Harriet J., daughter of Samuel Taylor of Waterbury. Timothy Guilford is buried in Riverside Cemetery, Waterbury.

Adm. Andrew Hull Foote (1806-1863) Age in 1862: 56. His father was Samuel Augustus Foote (Governor, United States Senator and Congressman). Foote became an admiral, but was severely wounded in the campaign to capture Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River in February 1862. Said of his family's property, 219 South Main Street, "No homestead in our country has a grander record, none has given to the State and Nation more illustrious sons" (Brown and Paddock, *Old Historic Homes*, 1895).

Eldad Keeler (1810-) Age in 1862: 52. Married Eunice Hill in 1828. He was a natural athlete and something of a showoff. Keeler worked on The Congregational Church. When Beachport was named in about 1824, Keeler (now about 14 years old) stood on the top of the chimney of Richard Beach's store swinging a bottle around his head. At the proper time he threw it into the canal and shouted BEACHPORT and the crowd roared back at him BEACHPORT and the deed was done – Beachport was named.

George Keeler (birth date unknown) Owner of stove shop and coffin manufacturer located at 166 South Main Street with residence next door at 168 South Main Street.

Sarah Moon (birth date unknown)

Emma Jennette Moss (1859-1864) Age in 1862: 3. This is the sweet daughter of Titus Moss and Jennette Beecher Moss. Her brother is Howard Moss.

Howard Moss (1856-1923) Age in 1862: 6. This is the first born son of Titus Moss and Jennette Beecher Moss. His younger sister is Emma Moss.

Jennette Beecher Moss (1828-) Age in 1862: 34. This is the wife of Titus Moss and mother of Howard and Emma.

Captain Joel (II) Moss (1797-1890) Age in 1862: 65. Captain Moss was the father of Titus Moss (Titus was the second of seven children of Joel Moss II and Nancy Upson Moss). The Moss Family first arrived in Cheshire in 1694. The Moss men were known for their diligence and enterprise. About 1830 Captain Joel Moss started the manufacture of hubs for oxcarts, wagons and carriages.

Nancy Upson Moss (birth date unknown). Wife to Captain Joel Moss II. Had seven children. Titus Moss was her second child

Titus Moss (1828-1863) Age in 1862: 34. Titus was born on February 8, 1828, the second of seven children of Joel Moss II and Nancy (Upson) Moss. In June 1851, age 23, Titus married Jennette Beecher of Cheshire. They had two children: Howard, born July 19, 1856, and Emma, born June 22, 1859. The Moss family were communicants of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. In 1857, Titus was elected junior warden of the church, a position he held when he left for military service with the 20th Connecticut Regiment Volunteers in 1862. Aside from some skirmishes, the Battle of Chancellorsville, May 1-3, was the first real battle for Company A. Titus was killed on May 3, the final day of the battle.

Alonzo E. Smith () TBD

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Note: In the event of rain, a truncated
version of the script will be presented
inside

The Cheshire Town Hall - Third Floor -
Council Chambers

No rain date will be extended.